

A new sector-led approach to tackling climate change:

“A consultation from the Nottingham Declaration Partnership on how local authorities can best continue and extend their commitment to tackling climate change and be effectively supported in so doing”

Foreword

Climate change is a global phenomenon, but many of its causes and consequences are localised. That's why local authorities have such an important role to play in leading the local response of their communities. Many local authorities have come a long way on that journey over the past decade, helping reduce the UK's carbon footprint and building its resilience to extreme weather and future climate risk.

The Nottingham Declaration Partnership has been very pleased to have been part of that journey, providing a single point of access to local authorities for advice and guidance on climate change and a range of practical support options delivered by partner organisations.

In 2011, some ten years after the original Nottingham Declaration was launched, the circumstances that local authorities now find themselves in are very different. The UK is still trying to recover from a major recession, the Coalition Government has made some major policy changes e.g. through the Localism Bill and public sector resources have been drastically reduced.

However now is not the time to scale back the effort to tackle climate change locally – reducing carbon emissions by cutting energy and resource use saves money, as many local authorities have found. Installing renewables reduces reliance on the national grid and insulates against future energy price rises.

Building on the recommendations of local government's own climate change commission, the sector is well placed to respond positively to

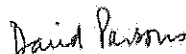
the challenges of climate change that are articulated by interested parties such as the Climate Change Commission, the Adaptation Sub-Committee and Friends of the Earth.

Adapting council buildings and processes builds local resilience to the extreme weather that regularly impacts on the delivery of services. Supporting the low carbon economy locally represents an investment in future local prosperity. Now more than ever is the time to move climate action into the mainstream.

This then is the background to our proposal to re-launch the Nottingham Declaration in its third form. We are calling once again on our colleagues throughout the local government world to step up and demonstrate leadership and ambition in these challenging times. We believe a sector-led approach in conjunction with the Local Government Group is now the best way to move forwards with Central Government playing a less directive and more supportive role than it has in the past.

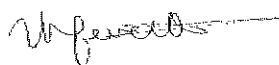
Please let us know what you think of these proposals by responding to this consultation. In order to receive a balanced set of views and to aid the management of responses we are asking for a single response per local authority. Formal responses can be made online via the questionnaire. We also intend to run discussions on the Declaration via the Environment and Sustainability Community of Practice www.communities.idea.gov.uk.

Councillor Parsons



Chairman of the Environment and Housing Board, Local Government Group

Mike Peverill, Climate UK



Chair, Nottingham Declaration Partnership

Purpose

For the past 10 years, the Nottingham Declaration has provided a platform for local authorities and their partners to pledge to systematically address the causes and impacts of climate change. With the changes taking place within local government, we are seeking your views on a new sector-led approach to enable local authorities to identify, demonstrate, measure and improve their local action on climate change.

The Nottingham Declaration Partnership, which has been supporting the Nottingham Declaration, is seeking to refresh and re-launch the whole package: the Declaration itself, the website and all the guidance it contains and the support it provides. It also seeks to redefine its role, purpose and structure to better support local authorities and their partners under the new arrangements Government, local government and the members of the partnership are making. **This document seeks your views on a new sector-led declaration and on the future of the Nottingham Declaration Partnership.**

This document puts forward a series of consultation questions, to which we would value your responses. We are seeking a corporate view from local authorities (informed by their partners if this is helpful), representing the opinions of officers and members, and would like one response per local authority. Other organisations are also welcome to contribute to the local authority's response. Please complete our online survey by **16 September 2011**. We will then analyse all of the responses and report to a Special Meeting, made up of Nottingham Declaration Partners, a range of representatives from local government, and climate specialists, in October 2011. These representatives will then determine the most appropriate way forward,

which we will communicate to all signatories and the wider local government community.

Summary

The Coalition Government has radically changed the way local government sets priorities and is held to account against those priorities. It has removed the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and is seeking a more voluntary, local and transparent way for local authorities to set out their priorities and demonstrate action and improvement against them. With this in mind, the LG Group and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)¹ signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), acknowledging the pivotal role of local authorities in reducing carbon, and setting out how DECC and the LG Group will work together to help and encourage all local authorities to take firm action to reduce their own carbon emissions, reduce emissions in their area and participate in national carbon reduction initiatives at the local level.

The LG Group and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have also been exploring how central and local government can best work together to support local adaptation action. In parallel, the LG Group, with the Local Carbon Framework pilot councils, and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will be working together and with the other departments to bring together a new framework for how councils can act on climate change.

The Nottingham Declaration

First launched in October 2000 and then revised in 2005, the Nottingham Declaration has now been signed by more than 300 English Councils and

¹ See www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/lc_uk/local/local.aspx

many local partner organisations. All Scottish and Welsh councils have signed their own versions of the Declaration. In doing so, councils and their partners have pledged to systematically address the causes of climate change and to prepare their communities for its impacts.

A little more than ten years on, much progress has been made by individual councils all over the country and groups of councils working collaboratively on climate related issues, at a range of geographical and spatial levels. These achievements are evident:

- in the development of innovative policy and practice (e.g. the Merton Rule, Green Roofs, Workplace Parking Levy);
- in the progress reported against the (former) National Indicators on climate change, NI185, 186 and 188;
- by public reporting by some councils²;
- in significant projects on the ground and in the pipeline (e.g. sustainable buildings, green infrastructure, sustainable transport infrastructure, sustainable energy); and
- in the enthusiastic responses by councils to support programmes from national and regional organisations.

The Declaration has been backed by a unique Partnership of all of the key bodies that support English local authorities on climate change since 2005. Now, in conjunction with central and local government, the Nottingham Declaration Partnership is seeking to redefine its own role and purpose so that it can continue to effectively support and encourage ongoing action on climate change by local authorities and their partners.

² See <http://www.climate-em.org.uk/projects/nottingham-declaration-public-statements>

This consultation seeks your views on how a sector-led approach to driving action on climate could operate, and how a new partnership structure could support, encourage and oversee local action on climate change.

A sector-led approach

As the coalition government dismantles elements of the current performance and management framework there is a real opportunity to create and influence new arrangements.

This sector-led approach to setting priorities and demonstrating action and improvement is highly relevant to the climate change agenda. There is an opportunity for councils to take ownership of the space left by the CAA to demonstrate that they recognise the importance of acting on climate change and are setting their own priorities based on local evidence, community-will and the local, national and international imperative. Councils have the prospect of setting locally appropriate actions and targets, in a transparent and collaborative manner, which demonstrates to their communities their action on climate change and enables them to challenge performance. The advantages of acting on climate change should make sense to councils and their local community.

The sector-led approach, using new free tools such as Knowledge Hub and LG Inform, offer a powerful way for councils to dynamically share good practice and information, enabling them to challenge their own performance.

The MoU on Climate Change

In March 2011, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed between the LG Group and DECC.

The MoU acknowledges the pivotal role councils have in tackling climate change and in ensuring that climate change policies and programmes protect and help the most vulnerable, particularly the fuel poor. The MOU sets out how DECC and the LG Group will work together to help and encourage all councils to take firm action – underpinned by locally ambitious targets and indicators – that enable councils to:

1. Reduce the carbon emissions from their own estate and operations;
2. Reduce carbon emissions from homes, businesses and transport infrastructure, creating more, appropriate renewable energy generation, using council influence and powers; and
3. Participate in national carbon reduction initiatives at the local level, particularly the roll out of the Green Deal, smart metering and renewable energy deployment.

It is proposed that the success of the MoU will partly be judged by:

1. The proportion of councils signing up to a new sector-led Declaration or equivalent as a demonstration of their commitment to continued action on climate change; and
2. Council progress against the commitments they set out.

Rather than establishing entirely new structures, the MOU suggests building on the success of the Nottingham Declaration and the Nottingham Declaration Partnership. It suggests that the Partnership becomes a representative board of the local government community, consisting of senior and political representatives from the LG Group, councils and invited partner and delivery organisations, which will collaboratively oversee the new sector-led approach and associated action to support it.

Defra and LG Group also recognise the pivotal role which councils play in adaptation and support the

continued inclusion of adaptation within any revised sector-led approach to climate change.

Both the 2010 and 2011 report from the Adaptation Sub-Committee's on the UK's preparedness for climate change reiterates the critical role which local government will need to play in adapting to the impacts of climate change and building resilience.

Consultation questions

Below are 18 questions, which should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete. We very much appreciate your time.

**If you have any queries please contact:
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Locally-led approaches to enable local authorities to identify, demonstrate, measure, and improve their local action on climate change.

Introductory question for Nottingham Declaration Signatories:

Almost all local authorities have signed up to the Nottingham Declaration. Did you find signing the Nottingham Declaration and using the Nottingham Declaration Partnership resources led to increased action within your local authority on climate change?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Comments

Question 1:

Which of the following sector-led voluntary arrangements, if any, do you think would be most effective at driving continued action and ambition on climate change by local authorities at the present time?:

Please tick all that apply

- (a) A new sector-led Declaration, supported by a group such as the Nottingham Declaration Partnership
- (b) Facility/ies for sharing good practice information, data and benchmarking,
- (c) Peer challenge
- (d) Other (*Please specify*)
- (e) None of the above

Comments

Question 2:

If facilities for good practice data and benchmarking were introduced as a result of the consultation, which of the following facilities would be most effective for your local authority in driving continued action and ambition on climate change.

Please tick all that apply

- a. Sharing good practice information and data through means supported by LG Group ([LGInform](#) and [Knowledge Hub](#))
- b. Using other tools currently available from other partners on the NDP (E.g. [EST's](#), [TRACE](#))
- c. A self-assessment and benchmarking tool, to help local authorities compare their progress against others
- d. A participatory forum with access to information, general guidance and case studies

- e. A 'tackling climate change' route map for local authorities to help them continue to progress and improve their performance, e.g. with contributions from different local authorities demonstrating how particular milestones were achieved in practice
- f. Incentives, e.g. an Annual Award scheme
- g. Other sector-led approach or tools (Please specify)
- h. Other (please specify)
- i. None of the above
- j. Don't know

Comments

Question 3:

The Nottingham Declaration has a strong brand and has been signed by over 90% of councils. However, the Nottingham Declaration Partnership has also had feedback from local authorities that they may prefer a name that allows them to include their own local authority. Bearing this in mind, in your opinion, if a new declaration is developed, should it:

- (a) Continue to be called the 'Nottingham Declaration'
- (b) Be called 'Climate Local', with the name of the local authority in the title?
- (c) Another name (*please specify below*)

Comments

Question 4:

The Nottingham Declaration Partnership has been told that one of its strengths has been supporting local authorities on both climate change mitigation and adaptation through a single portal. However, since we are reviewing the structure of the declaration and exploring possible new mechanisms, do you think that:

- (a) There should be a single sector led approach for mitigation and adaptation
- (b) Mitigation and adaptation should have separate approaches?

Comments

Question 5:

The original Nottingham Declaration included a number of commitments local authorities were encouraged to sign up to. The Nottingham Declaration Partnership is proposing a number of possible new commitments for local authorities signing up to a new declaration.

Which of the following commitments, if any, do you think should be considered as part of a new declaration or equivalent?:

Select all that apply

- (a) Producing a Council Framework on Climate Change/local climate change strategy.
- (b) Providing local leadership on climate change, (e.g. including leading by example by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from and increasing resilience of our own estate and operations).
- (c) Working with our communities to set out the local opportunities to reduce carbon and minimise the impact of a changing climate.

- (d) Ensuring that the low carbon agenda is central to economic development policy and practice, planning and infrastructure development, and regeneration partnerships.
- (e) Understanding the impacts on our local communities, infrastructure, businesses and natural environment to minimise the threats, build resilience and utilise the opportunities of climate change.
- (f) Developing and publishing a carbon investment programme for private and community investment.
- (g) Delivering the Green Deal by acting as a Green Deal provider, partner or advocate.
- (h) Protecting critical infrastructure, local residents and businesses from the impacts of climate change
- (i) Ensuring that flood risk is understood and planned for
- (j) Promoting water efficiency in planning policies, in council estate and by residents
- (k) Agreeing to share information and good practice with the sector through the Nottingham Declaration Board on progress towards the Declaration.
- (l) Any other actions (please specify)
- (m) None of the above
- (n) Don't know

Comments

Question 6:

We anticipate that the new declaration or equivalent will constitute a number of commitments. In order to drive ambition, but be a declaration that many local authorities are comfortable to sign, when becoming a signatory do you think a local authority should:

- (a) Have to sign up to all the commitments
- (b) Be able to pick and choose commitments that are most locally appropriate
- (c) Have to sign up to a minimum number of commitments relating to both mitigation and adaptation?

Comments

Question 7:

Central Government has committed itself to a number of national targets on climate change, energy and fuel poverty. In designing a new declaration that asks local authorities to commit to targets to set out their ambition, do you think that signatories should be asked to:

- (a) Adopt only national targets to ensure that they are met; or
- (b) Only set their own targets (with advice from the sector and partners if needed)
- (c) Adopt national targets, but also set some of their own targets locally as well.

Comments

If answered 7b or c):

Question 8:

If local authorities are setting their own targets, should a declaration or equivalent ask local authorities to adopt any of the following targets, allowing the level of ambition to be determined locally?

Select all that apply

'By (a locally agreed amount)' and 'By (a locally agreed date)' indicates that councils can set their own individual targets

- (a) To reduce CO2e from own estate and operations by *(locally set amount)* by *(locally set date)*
- (b) To reduce CO2e from homes, businesses, and transport in our area(s) by *(locally set amount)* by *(locally set date)*
- (c) To reduce fuel poverty by *(locally set amount)* by *(locally set date)*
- (d) To increase renewable energy deployment by *(locally set amount)* by *(locally set date)*
- (e) To reduce average water use per person by *(locally set amount)* by *(locally set date)*
- (f) Other *(please specify)*
- (g) Don't know

Comments

Question 9:

Climate change adaptation targets are particularly difficult to quantify and demonstrate progress on. However, the partnership would like climate change adaptation to be represented in any targets councils sign up to.

Considering this, do you think any of the following proposed targets are appropriate?

Select all that apply

- (a) Ensure that no inappropriate new developments are located in areas at risk of flooding
- (b) Completion of Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (under Floods and Water Management Act) by *(locally agreed date)*
- (c) To increase resilience of existing properties through retrofitting of SUDS
- (d) To include resilience to weather events in Local Resilience Forum plans by *(locally agreed date)*
- (e) To consider UKCP09 projections in service planning
- (f) To complete surface water management plans (under FWMA) and measures to reduce existing and future surface water flooding by *(locally agreed date)*
- (g) To identify Coastal Change Management Areas and adoption of appropriate planning policies by *(locally agreed date)*
- (h) To increase green infrastructure and green space by *(a locally agreed amount)* by *(a locally agreed date)*
- (i) Other *(please specify)*
- (j) Don't know

Comments

Question 10:

The Partnership wants to enable as many local authorities as possible to commit to taking action on climate change, but we are aware that local authorities have different local geographies, priorities, and starting positions. We also recognise that the type of authority you are will affect the action you can take.

With this in mind, which of the following statements do you agree with?

Select only one option

- (a) All local authorities should commit to a single declaration or equivalent with the same commitments and targets, or
- (b) Local authorities should be given the opportunity to sign up to a range of commitments and targets, allowing some to sign up to a few commitments and lower targets, and other to all commitments, higher targets, and their own additional commitments.
- (c) There should be a different type of declaration or equivalent for different types of local authorities (e.g. district, county, unitary, metropolitan)
- (d) Other suggestions (please specify)
- (e) None of the above

Comments

Question 11:

The Partnership would like signatories of a new declaration or equivalent to share progress with each other in order to drive ambition and provide peer-support. The information will also help to demonstrate to the public and to government the action local authorities are taking on climate change. However, we are aware that reporting structures can be onerous.

With this in mind, which of the following statements comes closest to your view on who local authorities should share information about their progress with?

- (a) Local authorities should commit to sharing information with other **local authorities, local communities and government** on their progress against any commitments or targets they agree to?
- (b) Local authorities should commit to sharing information with **other local authorities and local communities** on their progress against any commitments or targets they agree to?
- (c) We should be seeking for local authorities to commit to sharing information with other **local authorities only** on their progress against any commitments or targets they agree to?
- (d) Local authorities should not be asked to share information on their progress against any commitments or targets they agree to?

Comments

Question 12:

The Memorandum of Understanding the LG Group signed with DECC committed the group to producing an annual high-level update on what local authorities are doing to tackle climate change. As well as providing useful examples of good practice, this will provide evidence to government and the public that local authorities are able to take the lead on this issue. Its effectiveness will depend on local authorities making a contribution.

Would your local authority support an annual report?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Comments

Question 13:

Do you think it would lend credibility and encourage local authorities to commit to a new declaration or equivalent if it were endorsed by:
Please tick all that apply

- (a) The Secretary of State for DECC
- (b) The Secretary of State for Defra
- (c) The Chair of the LG Group
- (d) All of the Nottingham Declaration Partnership members
- (e) None of the above signatories will make a difference
- (f) Other signatories (please specify)
- (g) Don't know

Comments

The Nottingham Declaration Partnership

Question 14:

The Nottingham Declaration Partnership is considering the proposal in the MoU between the LG Group and DECC on evolving the partnership into a 'board', to give it greater powers in developing the role of local authorities on climate change.

Which of the following functions, if any, do you think would be appropriate for a new board to take on?:

Please tick all that apply

- (a) Representing the position of local authorities on climate change to Government and relevant national organisations
- (b) Negotiating on behalf of local authorities with Government and relevant national organisations
- (c) Commissioning and developing support and guidance
- (d) Monitoring and reflecting the contribution local authorities are making to the climate change agenda
- (e) Other (please specify)
- (f) None of the above
- (g) Don't know

Question 15:

Which, if any, of the following should be members of the Board? Please tick all that apply.

- (a) The existing Nottingham Declaration Partnership members (Energy Savings Trust, Carbon Trust, Environment Agency, Local Government Group, Nottingham City Council, Climate UK, ICLEI, UK Climate Impacts Programme)
- (b) Political representatives from local authorities
- (c) Officer-level representatives from local authorities
- (d) Not-for profit consultants providing support to local authorities
- (e) Profit-making consultants providing support to local authorities
- (f) Specialists and academics
- (g) The chairs of regional council-led climate change and sustainability partnerships
- (h) Government representatives as board members
- (i) Government representatives observers
- (j) Other (please specify)
- (k) Don't know

Comments

Question 16:

Would you or your local authority be interested in being on the Board? Or would you like to recommend someone outside of your local authority? Please put details here.

Support for local government**Question 17:**

It would be useful to the Partnership to get a sense of the priorities currently facing local authorities on the climate change agenda, to enable us to shape future funding streams.

Please choose 3 from the following list that you would find most useful to have support on.

- (a) The Green Deal
- (b) Carbon Metrics
- (c) A Council Framework on Climate Change
- (d) Transport
- (e) Waste
- (f) Flooding
- (g) Renewables
- (h) Planning
- (i) Financing climate change work
- (j) Skills for climate change
- (k) Green infrastructure
- (l) Health and climate change
- (m) Carbon management or energy efficiency
- (n) Buildings/refurbishment
- (o) Low carbon/sustainable procurement
- (p) Other (please specify)
- (q) None of the above

Comments

Question 17:

The Nottingham Declaration Partnership may want to contact you again for further information. If you agree, can you please provide a contact details.

Question 18:

We are seeking one response per local authority. Please provide the names and job titles of officers and councillors who have informed your response.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire from the Nottingham Declaration Partnership. The results of the questionnaire will be considered by a group consisting of the original Nottingham Declaration Partnership and invited local authorities and climate specialists at a Special Meeting in October 2011. This group will then decide how to take forward the objectives of the MOU and the recommendations from the consultation in the most appropriate way. This will then be communicated to all signatories of the Nottingham Declaration Partnership and all other local authorities.

The current Nottingham Declaration Partners

Carbon Trust: a not-for-profit company providing specialist support to help business and the public sector boost business returns by cutting carbon emissions, saving energy and commercialising low carbon technologies. www.carbontrust.co.uk

Climate UK: the national network of climate change partnerships from the English regions, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales which each supports awareness raising, knowledge sharing and local action on climate change. www.climateuk.net

Energy Saving Trust: a non-profit organisation that provides free and impartial advice to residents on how to save energy. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Environment Agency: An executive non-departmental public body responsible to the UK and Welsh governments with the principal aims to protect and improve the environment, and to promote sustainable development. From 1 October 2011, the Environment Agency will take on a new role as the Governments delivery body in England for advice on climate adaptation. www.environment-agency.gov.uk

ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability): an association of over 1220 local government members who are committed to sustainable development. Our members come from 70 different countries and represent more than 569,885,000 people. www.iclei.org

Local Government Group: a voluntary membership organisation of local authorities across England and Wales that supports, promotes, and improves local government. The LGG represents and advocates for local government and helps councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. www.local.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council: a unitary local authority serving the needs of the people of Nottingham which launched the Climate Change Declaration in 2000 and founded the Partnership in 2005. www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

UK Climate Impacts Programme: works with businesses and organisations to help them assess how they might be affected by climate change, so they can prepare for its impact. www.ukcip.org.uk