

HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

27th October 2009

Update on Climate Change

Introduction

The Earth’s climate is changing and this is already affecting local weather events. We need to plan and act now to limit the scale of the change (mitigation) and to adapt to the changing climate (adaptation). Even if all global greenhouse gas emissions could be stopped today, the immense inertia in the Earth’s climate systems means that changes to our climate for the rest of this century are unavoidable. Preparing for these inevitable changes is not an alternative to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, but a parallel and complementary action.

Economically, fossil fuels such as oil and gas will also increase in price as world demand increases and capacity either lags behind or falls. Changes in the way we use fossil fuels are therefore inevitable and we need to prepare for a future where fossil fuel is expensive and its use restricted. If we do not prepare now future generations will face sudden and enormous changes, for which they will be un-prepared.

The greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon in which naturally occurring gases trap the sun’s energy and warm the planet. The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide, CO₂. Climate change is happening because of an increase in greenhouse gases – predominantly carbon dioxide –caused by human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation,

Climate change is a global issue. Internationally, targets and frameworks have been established to tackle the issue – starting with the Rio conference in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol, which was agreed in 1997 and came into force in 2005. Further international agreements are expected in the future.

It is now accepted that if we do not address this issue, the Earth’s climate will change significantly.

Key Elements

Priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy

- Attractive, sustainable and accessible transport
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Well designed borough, with sustainable buildings, public spaces and transport

The effects of climate change and adverse air quality is mitigated
The protection of wildlife is balanced with recreational use of open spaces
The borough is clean with high standards of waste recycling and reuse

Priorities in the Local Area Agreement

Reduce CO2 emissions in Harrow
Improve street and environmental cleanliness
Increase domestic waste recycling and composting
Improve local biodiversity
Reduce the use of the car as a mode of travel used for children travelling to school

The Place Survey 2009 indicates that 52% of residents feel to some extent that local public services are working to make the area cleaner and greener.

Harrow has one of the highest household recycling/ composting rates in London which has increased dramatically over the last few years, ranking 2nd of the London Boroughs at 44% for 2008-9. Harrow has introduced compulsory recycling and has an alternate weekly collection for recyclables and residual waste.

The ecological footprint in Harrow is 5.39 global hectares per capita, which ranks 17th of all the London Boroughs, lower than the overall London footprint of 5.48. Primary contributions are from housing and food.

The carbon footprint of Harrow is 12.06 tonnes CO2 per capita, ranking 17th of all the London Boroughs. The majority of CO2 emissions come from the domestic sector. Transport is also significant and 91% of this is due to road transport.

In Harrow 3% of properties are at risk of fluvial flooding.

There are 3 parks awarded a Green Flag in Harrow

Through the West London Partnership Harrow has run the West London Warm Zones scheme offering heating installations and repairs to over 200 vulnerable households, and free or discounted insulation to over 1000 households.

Over 60 households have had solar hot water panels installed through the Heating Harrow Greener scheme.

Worked with Green Homes Concierge Service providing free surveys to 75 properties.

Run the Harrow "Go Green" helpline providing impartial advice on energy, transport, water, biodiversity, sustainable construction and waste.

Run the No Excuses grant offering £400 for energy improvements to vulnerable residents.

Affordable warmth caseworker visits the most vulnerable residents to provide advice and assistance on reducing fuel bills and making energy improvements.

Held community events such as the Climate Change Fair and Green Homes day.

Introduced a Sustainable Design SPD.

Introduced planning restrictions on the conversion of gardens into hard standing.

Harrow Council has agreed a Climate Change Strategy that sets out a range of actions that will be taken by the Council and working partners.

Actions for the HSP Board

The HSP has a forum called Greener Harrow that meets to discuss a range of related issues including Climate Change. The meeting on 1 December will discuss Climate Change. Partners are asked to send representatives

Partners should consider the direct impacts of their activities on climate change and introduce actions to mitigate the impact, in particular through reduction in carbon consumption.

Partners could share experience and ideas at a seminar that Harrow Council would offer to co-ordinate.

Recommendations

The HSP Board considers the impact of the activities of the partnership on climate change, both positive and negative, and commits to the development of strategies of mitigation and adaptation.