



Evaluation of the Local Carbon Framework Pilots

1. Foreword & Introduction

A report by CAG Consultants in association with Impetus Consulting and Dr Joanne Wade

Commissioned by the Local Government Association and the Department for Energy and Climate Change

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Foreword

Note to reader

This chapter is taken from the full report of the LGA and DECC Evaluation of the Local Carbon Framework Pilots, produced by CAG Consultants in association with Impetus Consulting and Dr. Joanne Wade.

This report is an excellent example of how councils, if they are given the opportunity, can rise to the challenge and tackle the issue of climate change. The breadth of work that the 30 councils in the 9 pilot areas undertook deserves to be applauded. This sector-led approach to improvement has to be the most effective and efficient way for local authorities to make progress – by learning from each other.

These pioneering councils have provided us with a good starting point for launching the Green Deal, which will provide an opportunity for residents and businesses to improve the energy efficiency of their properties at no upfront costs, reaping the benefits through lower bills.

The good work that has gone into the Local Carbon Framework Pilots will form the basis for the development of a 'council framework on climate change', which will underpin our new improvement offering to the sector, 'Climate Local'.

I'm sure councils of all shapes and sizes from across the country will be able to look at the work the local carbon framework pilot councils have undertaken and learn something from it that they can take back to their own council.



Cllr David Parsons

Chairman of the LGA Environment and Housing Programme Board

1. Introduction

Background

The Local Carbon Framework (LCF) pilots programme has sought to develop demonstrable lessons about how councils can integrate measures to combat climate change into their core business. These lessons also provide a practical basis for the development of a new Council Framework for Climate Change. This Framework will seek to act as a local action plan on delivering carbon emissions, encapsulating the varying portfolios of carbon reduction measures relevant to individual or grouped councils¹.

Against this background, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) commissioned CAG Consultants, in association with Impetus Consulting and Dr. Joanne Wade, to undertake an evaluation of the LCF pilots. The evaluation's purpose was to identify the learning from the LCF pilots in order to share learning and good practice with all councils, and to inform the development of the new Council Framework on Climate Change. This report presents the findings from this evaluation.

Research objectives

The key objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Identify and make explicit the replicable models, processes, frameworks, documentation, accounting and monitoring procedures, projects and methodologies that the pilot councils have developed as a LCF pilot;
- Identify practical outputs, good practice and learning that will inspire other authorities to replicate these projects and processes;
- Identify any barriers the councils have experienced in executing their projects, including legislative, policy, ideological, organisational culture, knowledge and resourcing;
- Prepare a report for the LGA that sets out how the learning and processes development through the local carbon frameworks can be developed and taken forward with local government; and

¹ In March 2011, the Local Government Group and the Department of Energy and Climate Change agreed a Memorandum of Understanding MoU setting out how they will progress the Local Government's Offer on Climate Change. In the Offer, local government offers to build on the LCF pilots to create a framework for all councils to develop local carbon reduction plans. See chapter 2 for more details.

- Share learning, good practice and outputs (such as tools) as appropriate given the content, across the pilot areas as well as the whole local government sector.

Research approach

The evaluation was undertaken in three main research phases:

(1) **Scoping phase** (Jan to Mar 2011). The purpose of the scoping phase was to gain an understanding of LCF pilot activity to date and expected timescales for delivery. This involved desk-based analysis of the main documentation and data relating to the LCF pilots and telephone interviews with key contacts from each LCF pilot, with members of the Energy Saving Trust (EST) Expert Group², and with national stakeholders including Friends of the Earth and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

(2) **Headline evaluation phase** (May to Jul 2011). This phase sought to identify the key – or headline – learning from each of the LCF pilot projects. The work involved telephone and face-to-face interviews with one or more contacts involved in the delivery of each project, combined with a review of supporting literature.

(3) **In-depth learning phase** (Aug to Sep 2011). The phase involved in-depth research to explore the collective learning from the LCF pilots on five 'learning themes': housing retrofit, winning hearts and minds, enhancing reputation, mainstreaming climate change and sustainable energy generation. The work involved a combination of in-depth interviews and desk reviews of supporting literature.

In addition, the research draws upon the findings from a workshop held for LCF pilot practitioners by the LG Group in June 2011.

Research parameters

Project delivery timescales. The projects within the LCF pilots were at various stages of completion during the research. The pilots received funds for their projects in December 2010 and so most had just begun as the scoping phase started. The pilots had until the end of March 2011 to spend their funds, but project delivery has continued beyond this and many projects were still underway as phase 3 was being completed in September 2011.

The learning for this evaluation from each project has therefore varied depending on the progress of each project and when the various aspects of the research took place. As such, some of the findings in this evaluation should be regarded very much as a 'snapshot' in time rather than a definitive record of the learning from programme. The

² The EST Expert Group was a group of policy experts and consultants convened by the EST to provide support and advice to the nine pilots.

learning from projects and from the programme as a whole will continue to evolve beyond the publication of this report.

Council-led learning. Readers should be aware that much of the learning presented in the report – particularly chapters 3 and 4 - represents the councils' own experiences of the LCF pilot programme. The descriptions of the individual projects, and the learning points from the individual projects in these chapters come from interviews with the project officers. They should not be read as individual project evaluations, or judgements on the quality of individual projects. In addition, the choice of projects discussed in chapter 4 has been based on the need to reflect a range of different issues, and should not be read as a judgement on the quality of projects not included.

Report structure

Chapter 2 of this report explains what the LCF pilots programme is and the context within which it is set. A summary of the learning from each of the LCF pilot projects is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 outlines the findings from phase 3 of the research, highlighting the collective learning from the LCF pilots around five learning themes. In chapter 5, the report discusses the common learning from the pilots and sets out recommendations building on this learning. Finally, Chapter 6 sets out how the learning from the pilots could be developed and taken forward to inform a Council Framework for Climate Change.