



Evaluation of the Local Carbon Framework Pilots

2. LCF pilots programme and wider context

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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2. LCF pilots programme and wider context

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.

The LCF pilots programme

The UK Government originally launched the LCF pilots programme in recognition of the substantial contribution councils can make to carbon reduction within their sphere of influence. The initial concept was to explore both the feasibility and validity of applying a national carbon budgeting process at a local level.

It was soon agreed that more work was needed on the relationship between local action and monitoring, and achieving national targets. The importance of councils being able to shape and lead on locally appropriate and relevant carbon reduction programmes was regarded as essential in order to gain buy-in for any national-to-local programme. As such, the shape of the programme evolved from establishing 'local carbon budgets' to a broader, more inclusive and exploratory concept of 'local carbon frameworks'. The 'local carbon framework' programme was launched at the Local Government Association's Climate Change Conference in January 2010.

The aim of the LCF pilots programme was to:

- **Integrate** measures to combat climate change into the core business of local authorities as stewards for community action on carbon (at business, commercial and neighbourhood level);
- **Align** carbon reduction to the growth of the green economy and public sector efficiency; and
- **Optimise** the local authority contribution to the national carbon budget and secure local carbon accountability in line with the Government's localism agenda.

Nine pilot areas were selected, representing a range of different scales, council types, geography and levels of progress on climate change:

- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Multi-Area Agreement;
- Bristol City Council;
- Leeds City Region;



- London Borough of Haringey;
- Manchester City Region;
- Northumberland County Council;
- Nottingham City Council;
- Oxford City Council; and
- Plymouth City Council.

The pilots are fundamentally an “action learning process”. They were asked to explore what barriers and obstacles may be limiting local authority ambition – whether national, sub regional or local – and to help understand more about the support councils needed to assemble these strategies, and to secure buy-in from all the parties involved.

Wider context

In March 2011, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the DECC and the LGA. The MoU publically establishes that both central and local government need to work in partnership in order for the carbon reductions the country needs to be realised. It acknowledges that it is the responsibility of DECC, and other government departments, to set positive policies that enable local government to act on climate change, and that it is the responsibility of local government to be ambitious and use these opportunities to act on climate change.

The MoU sets out a partnership arrangement between DECC and the LGA to help councils meet national and local climate change, fuel poverty and renewable energy targets. DECC and the LGA are working together to help and encourage all councils to take firm action - underpinned by locally ambitious self-set targets - that enables councils to:

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

Part of this locally-led approach to acting on climate change is the revitalisation of the Nottingham Declaration. The new Declaration will encourage signatory councils to strategically address the causes and effects of climate change. The Declaration will be applicable to all councils, regardless of their position on the journey of addressing climate change, and will encourage them to commit to various actions and targets to challenge themselves to act on climate change, and to demonstrate publically their progress. Key to the new Declaration will be the ability of the local government sector to benchmark, challenge and lead itself.

Critical to enabling councils to take action was defining how to generate the data and identifying consistent methodologies for assessing what steps need to be taken and at what spatial level. To this end the programme funded the EST to bring together a core group of experts to consider the issues, review the tools available and develop guidance – now published as the 'Council Frameworks on Climate Change baseline Data and Methodology Review', alongside an additional report on: 'Local Authority large scale retrofit: A review of finance models'.

The EST package of materials, together with this evaluation, seeks to provide the foundation from which any council can begin to plan how it can optimise its contribution to tackling climate change, and do so in a way that is wholly compatible with its core aspirations for economic growth, efficiency savings and community engagement.