





















July Update

Key to icons used

Sector					
Transport		Waste		Local Government	
Finance		Planning			
Energy		Economic Development			
Region of the UK					
Scotland		North West England		East of England	
Northern Ireland		Yorkshire and Humber		South East England	
Wales		East Midlands		South West England	
North East England		West Midlands		Greater London	
General					
Climate Change background text					

Defra Adaptation website and framework launched



Defra has launched a climate change adaptation website with the long-awaited adaptation framework available for download. The new website aims to help businesses, planners and others to adapt to climate change. The website is a one-stop shop offering easy access to the most comprehensive collection of resources on adapting to climate change available in the UK, and is part of the Government's drive to ensure that Britain is ready to deal with the impacts of climate change that are already irreversible. It includes details of how the climate will alter, links to practical tools for adaptation, and examples of what is already being done around the country.

Go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/adapt>

Huge rise in fuel costs means belt tightening for councils



Huge rise in fuel costs means belt tightening for councils. The rising costs of oil, petrol and diesel have increased the cost to councils of providing local services by £239m in the last 2 years, according to new research undertaken by the LGA.

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=772673>

Composting



Charlie Trousdell of the Composting Association says councils need to consider more than just composting when reducing landfill waste.

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=791982>

Legal challenge to eco-towns



Lawyers for the LGA publish advice arguing that the Government's current approach is open to serious legal challenge.

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=833451>

Fuel poverty



A £500 million a year charge on energy suppliers to lift 500,000 people out of fuel poverty was considered by MPs this week. The proposal is set out in an amendment which Alan Whitehead MP tabled as part of the Climate Change Bill.

Pitt Review (and others) report on flooding



The Pitt Review of the July 2007 floods came out in June, with wide-ranging recommendations. These include: creation of a Cabinet committee on the risk of flooding, establishment of a National Resilience Forum, above-inflation increases for flood resilience measures, a review of building regulations, better co-ordination of information for the production of more accurate flood warnings, a duty for local councils to compile better information about local drainage and who is responsible; and action to protect critical infrastructure.

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview.aspx>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jun/25/flooding.weather>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7472564.stm>

Alongside this a number of reports and initiatives on related issues were also launched.

* **'Lessons of the 2007 floods – the perspective of fire crews' from the Fire Brigades Union** The FBU is seeking a legal duty for fire and rescue authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to respond to floods, enabling them to access extra resources.

http://www.fbu.org.uk/newspress/pressrelease/2008/06_23.php

* **'Flooding: Engineering Resilience'**, was the report from the Institute

of Civil Engineers (ICE). This report sets out recommendations for the conclusions of the Pitt Review, and also looks at other issues which must be addressed in order to improve the ability of infrastructure to deal with future flood risks.

http://www.ice.org.uk/downloads/2008_flooding.pdf

* The Association of British Insurers (ABI) produced '**The summer floods 2007: one year on and beyond**' which assessed the insurance industry's response to the flooding and proposed recommendations for future action. It is available to download at

http://www.abi.org.uk/display/default.asp?Menu_ID=773&Menu_All=1,773,0&Child_ID=910

* The Government and the ABI have recently reached agreement on provision of flood insurance, with insurers continuing to provide affordable cover in return for a commitment to investment in flood defences. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7501034.stm>

* Defra has announced funding for two pilot projects to research how land management can reduce the risk of flooding. For more details, go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/envIRON/fcd/policy/strategy/multiobjectiveproject.htm> . The deadline for applications is 29 August.

[Learning lessons from the 2007 floods – the Pitt review final report - LGA response](#)

This LGA response calls on the Government to take a more 'strategic role' in making the case for adaptation to climate change and highlights the role of local authorities in improving adaptation to cope with extreme weather.

LGiU Local Sustainability Briefing

<http://www.lgiu.gov.uk/briefing-detail.jsp?id=1906&md=0§ion=briefing>

Local Area Agreements - Local Priorities



CLG have published the local priorities that have been negotiated for each Local Area Agreement. The targets have been chosen from the government's set of 198 national indicators for local authorities and local authority partnerships. The most popular target areas from the local economy and environmental sustainability section were as follows:

1. NI154 - Net additional homes provided
2. NI155 - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
3. NI186 - Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the local authority area
4. NI163 - Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
5. NI171 - New business registration rate
6. NI152 - Working age people on out of work benefits

7. NI 195 - Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)
8. NI192 - Percentage of household waste sent for reuse recycling and composting
9. NI153 - Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
10. NI188 - Planning to adapt to climate change

Improving the energy efficiency of our buildings: A guide to Display Energy Certificates and advisory reports for public buildings



In October 2008 all public service buildings which are visited by the public and exceed 1000m² will be obliged to have Display Energy Certificates. A Display Energy Certificate shows the energy performance of a building and must be updated annually. Alongside a DEC will be an advisory report containing recommendations for improving the energy performance of the building. This guidance includes a useful checklist to identify which buildings will be affected and steps to take if the building is eligible.

Heatwave Plan 2008



There are likely to be more heatwaves due to climate change - by the 2080s it is predicted that a heatwave similar to that experienced in England in 2003 will happen every year. Local services need to be prepared in advance for the effects of heat on health; once a heatwave starts there is little time for effective action. There are specific factors that mean people cannot adapt to changes in heat and they will need additional support, this includes older people, those with chronic and severe illness and anyone that becomes overexposed to heat. This plan outlines the actions that should be taken at national and local level depending on the severity of the heatwave. There also needs to be long-term multi-agency planning to adapt to heat, for instance local authorities may consider the role they can play through parks and open spaces in greening the local environment and providing shade.

Recycle on the go



Defra have produced a good practice guide and a voluntary code of practice for local authorities to make recycling accessible in public places. There are four principles to the code:

1. provide recycling opportunities along with provisions for the correct disposal of non-recyclable waste
2. adopt standard signage on all recycling receptacles
3. maintain and upkeep the infrastructure
4. re-use, recycle and/or compost the materials collected.

The guidance emphasises the impact this could have in reducing litter and boosting recycling rates. The method could be applied to a range of spaces, indoors and outdoors. Implementing the steps in the guide should ensure waste services deliver the recycling bins that local people need and will use, while using national branding to create an easily recognisable system.

Government invites partnership approach to waste



In the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* there are powers to allow for the creation of joint waste authorities (JWA). Following a consultation on the draft regulations and guidance in March 2008, local authorities interested in forming joint waste authorities are now able to submit a no-commitment expression of interest to Defra. The relevant secondary legislation will come into force in the autumn and at this stage the first formal proposals may be submitted.

Eco-town Challenge - Notes and recommendations from session 1



After meeting all of the eco-town promoters and local authority representatives the Eco-town Challenge Panel has produced a series of recommendations to improve each of the proposals. The panel has an independent view but taking these points seriously would obviously improve the proposals chances. There is an overarching theme that the proposals need to be more ambitious, going beyond existing good environmental standards. There are also common themes around improvements in transport, need for local employment, consideration of local food production and integrated waste strategies. All of the areas need to consider how they fit with their existing surroundings - whether culturally or environmentally. They must avoid the risk of these towns becoming either dormitory towns or isolated pockets. Local authorities will also need to understand how an eco-town will impact on local services.

Planning Performance Agreements



CLG have published a guide to Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) for local authorities and planning applicants with large and complex applications. The guide provides a management framework that aims to reduce problems in the planning application process and speed up major developments. A PPA will commit both parties to an agreed timetable that clarifies the expectations from both sides, for instance the level of evidence, sustainability assessments or community engagement required. Local authorities are also able to agree a charge for providing this service. This is one part of a number of new measures aimed at making the planning process less time consuming for developers - see also *Planning Bill* currently in parliament.

Public Space Lessons Land in limbo: making the best use of vacant urban spaces and Adapting Public Spaces to Climate Change



CABE have produced two related guidance documents looking into the use of public space. The first provides ideas for the use of vacant urban spaces, particularly in large scale regeneration projects where land is left for many years, to be used inspirationally for the benefit of the local environment and community. There are obstacles as this land can be locked in complex ownership and funding arrangements, with neglect being an easy option. However, the guidance provides examples of where local authorities have intervened to make effective use of the

land in the short-term. The second publication provides ideas for using public spaces to make towns and cities more resilient to climate change. There is an emphasis on greening the urban area to provide alleviation from the 'heat island effect', creating areas for sustainable urban drainage and flood sinks.

Carbon Pathways Analysis - Informing Development of a Carbon Reduction Strategy for the Transport Sector



The transport sector needs to change to tackle climate changes as it currently accounts for around 24% of UK domestic emissions of CO₂. This report analyses the potential projects for reducing transport emissions and the drivers behind growing demand for transport. Road traffic continues to be the main source of emissions in the domestic transport sector - accounting for 92% of the total in 2006. The analysis looks at ways to change behaviour, but as people travel for a range of motivations there can be no single solution. However, travel for commuting and for short trips (under 5 miles) are by far the largest proportions of total trips. This may help future policy but will rely on other travel options being available and accessible.

Public Attitudes towards climate change and the impact of transport



The Department for Transport have published the results of a survey, which shows attitudes to transport policy in relation to climate change. The results show that the majority of people would support additional funding on bus and rail services and safer walking to school routes. Not surprisingly there was the least support for measures that tackle car and plane use, with even less support for additional 'green taxes'. Even so the majority of people would support measures from the government persuading people to purchase less environmentally damaging vehicles and about two-thirds favoured measures to encourage individuals trying to limit their car use.

Schools and sustainability



All schools have been tasked with becoming 'sustainable schools' by 2020. Ofsted have compiled a review of primary and secondary schools they have visited to assess teaching about sustainability and progress towards meeting the expectations of the *National framework for sustainable schools*. Although some good practice is highlighted, it was found that most schools had "limited knowledge of sustainability and work in this area tended to be uncoordinated". In these cases sustainability was not integrated into the curriculum or was seen as a one-off event. There were some areas that schools had experimented with but the ideas had not been implemented consistently across the school. There are a number of recommendations for schools and local authorities to show that sustainable development is not an isolated issue, rather it can lead to improvements in education, school buildings and communities.

Policy briefings May - June 2008

PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk Practice Guide



27/6/2008 This guidance explains how to assess flood risk and include the assessment in the spatial planning framework.



Waste Incentive Pilot Schemes - draft guidance



25/6/2008 The government has issued guidance on their controversial plans to pilot waste incentive schemes. It provides more details on the requirements and parameters for local authorities interested in bidding to be a pilot.



England's Rural Areas: Steps to Realise Their Economic Potential



19/6/2008 This report was produced by the Commission for Rural Communities following a request by the Prime Minister to advise on how rural economies could be strengthened.



Controls on the handling, transfer and transport of waste - consultation



19/6/2008 The government has released two consultations that look into ways to tackle waste crime and fly-tipping with new powers for local authorities.



Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning



16/6/2008 This revision of Planning Policy Statement 12 aims to streamline local spatial planning - the process of producing Local Development Plans - and place spatial planning at the centre of creating strong, safe and prosperous communities.



Social Housing and Worklessness: Key Policy Messages



11/6/2008 In this report, possible explanations for the relatively high levels of worklessness among social housing tenants living within reach of major centres of employment are explored, and key policy messages highlighted. This report has policy implications for all of the UK.

Fuel poverty action programme



3/6/2008 With rising fuel prices and a target to eliminate fuel poverty by 2010 there is mounting pressure on government to act. The Fuel Poverty Action Programme commits government, energy suppliers and consumer organisations to initiatives that aims to better target the current programme of support for vulnerable households.



Building a Low Carbon Economy



30/5/2008 This report sets out the Government's response to recommendations made by the Commission for Environmental Markets and Economic Performance (CEMEP). It sets out a strategy for realising the economic benefits of a sustainable economy.

State of the Natural Environment 2008



27/5/2008 This report outlines the current state of the natural environment in England and how it underpins well-being and prosperity. There is a role for local authorities to improve the knowledge base to enhance the landscapes, habitats and species in England.

State of the Countryside 2008

This is the tenth annual State of the Countryside report produced by the Commission for Rural Communities. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic, and environmental state of rural England.

More of this briefing at:

<http://www.lgiu.gov.uk/briefing-detail.jsp?&id=1924&md=0§ion=briefing>