

November 2006

A climate change and air quality action plan for Blyth Valley

Pride in our environment



Blyth Valley climate change and air quality action plan

The following pages document the actions needed for the nine key topics of:

- travel and transport
- communication, education and promotion
- planning and adaptation
- energy efficiency and renewables
- business and industry
- biodiversity
- waste
- procurement
- general

Not all the actions contained in this document will happen as planned, but rather they indicate the sort of measures we need to take. These will change as technologies emerge, as costs change, as priorities vary and as we learn more about climate change. The action plan will develop over time and will include both mitigation and adaptation measures.

Mitigation means taking actions aimed at reducing the extent or likelihood of human induced (enhanced) global warming which results in climate change. Greenhouse gases must be reduced, and this means drastically reducing our energy consumption. We need to change our behaviour and our technologies to enable us to live work and travel more efficiently. We need to look to becoming much more efficient and prudent in our resource use, and also use alternative sources of fuel, in particular, renewable energy, such as solar, biomass, wind, tidal, geothermal etc.

This is in contrast to adaptation to enhanced global warming and climate change, which involves taking action to take advantage of the

effects of global warming while preventing or minimising the negative effects. We need to ensure that we are prepared for any future risks that are associated with our changing climates. We should be adopting the precautionary approach to all of our decision-making and planning processes to ensure that we do not cause ourselves any problems for the future, or at least can reduce the severity of the problem. We need to future-proof the way we live our lives, to accommodate the new climate that we are now beginning to experience.

Today the UK gets around 90 percent of its energy from fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas). Total energy use has increased by 10% since 1990.

*The Future Starts Here – ‘The route to a low carbon economy.’
Friends of the Earth,
Cooperative Bank, 2006.*

Targets and indicators

A key action within the plan is to define a baseline of emissions and develop an emissions inventory that cover both greenhouse gases and key air quality pollutants. The Action Plan is set out over the next 14 years (from 2006 to 2020), and so long term targets need to be developed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, in particular Carbon dioxide. This will be done in tandem with sub-regional and regional partners, as well as local communities and businesses.

Notes for tables in action plan:

* denotes air quality management area actions. The actions are a mix of education, enforcement, enticement and restriction.

Timescales: **Short:** one to two years
 Medium: 18 months to five years
 Long: five years plus.

CC/AQ – actions relate to either climate change (CC), air quality (AQ) or both.





Travel and transport

In December 2004 Blyth Valley town centre was designated an air quality management area (AQMA). This is largely due to vehicle emissions, specifically particulate matter (PM10) and nitrous oxides, in a confined public space. Transport is also a huge sector in terms of energy consumption. The following actions form the majority of the council's actions for improving air quality within Blyth town centre (and beyond).

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ/CC	New 'clean fuels' taxi rank in town centre	AQAP working group	Short	Under investigation	Low	To be identified
*AQ/CC	Travel plans – chief executive committed to developing suite of plans for all sites for BVBC	Working group	Medium	Cramlington plan in progress 2006	Low	
*AQ/CC	BVBC staf: personal travel planning consultation by specialist company	AQAP working group	Short	Under investigation	Medium	
*AQ	Improve traffic light sequence at Union Street/Bridge Street to improve traffic flow	Highways Authority (NCC)	Short	Under investigation	Low	
*CC/AQ	Investigate potential of Metro (rail not priority) link to serve Blyth centre	SPED /AQAP working group	Long	No progress	High	
*AQ	Increased parking enforcement – explore powers of local authority	AQAP working group	Medium	Under investigation	Low	



AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ	Vehicle emissions enforcement	PEP	Short	Ongoing 2007	Medium	
*AQ/CC	Improved information for bus drivers on good practice, reducing air quality.	AQAP working group/Arriva	Short	Ongoing. Initial info provided 2006 to 2008	Low	
*AQ/CC	Fit all town centre buses with particulate traps	PEP/Arriva/DEFRA	Short	Feasibility study and grant application	High	
AQ/CC	Brand fleet vehicles to inform public that BVBC use biodiesel	AQAP working group	Short	Under investigation	Low	
*AQ/CC	Encourage best practice amongst commercial operators in unloading loading, turn off engines /use specific bays	AQAP working group	Medium	Ongoing 2007	Low	
*AQ/CC	Double yellow lines to stop build up of traffic on Bridge Street	NCC/BVBC	Medium	Under investigation	Low	
*AQ/CC	Improving signage around the town centre especially to the car parking areas.	NCC/BVBC	Medium	Under investigation	Medium	
*AQ	Improving public information about the AQMA and also transport services	AQAP Working Group	Short/ Medium	Ongoing 2006 to 2007	Medium	



AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ	Explore the possibility of a one-way traffic system/inner relief road	AQAP working group	Long	Feasibility study	High	
AQ	Improved monitoring of pollutants across the district to avoid future problems	PEP	Short	Ongoing new real time monitors Cowpen Road – Winter 2006	Medium	
*AQ	Improve appearance and security of some of the less well used car parks	StreetCare/AQAP working group	Medium	Under investigation	Low	
*AQ/CC	Introduce coach park near Regent Street	SPED/PEP	Long	Ongoing 2007	Medium	
*AQ	Restrict port timings of loading and unloading. Installation of new methods and techniques	PEP	Medium	Under investigation	Medium	
*AQ/CC	Clear pedestrian zones and cyclist zones	AQAP working group	Medium	Under investigation	Medium	
*AQ/CC	Real time information for bus passengers at bus tops and stations	AQAP working group Arriva	Short	No progress in 2006	Medium	
*AQ/CC	More competitive rates for bus travel (family rates etc)	AQAP working group Arriva	Medium	No progress in 2006	High	

Communication, education and promotion



By creating greater awareness of climate change and sustainability through education and publicity, we can help to bring about the changes we need to make.

This document sets out to inform the public of the potential local impacts of climate change and to explain the council's aims, along with partners, in reducing CO₂ emissions and how it hopes to adapt to the effects of climate change. By encouraging everyone to "do their bit", we hope to create ambassadors of climate change and supporters of the environment within the local community and demonstrate why it is important for everyone to play their part in promoting a more sustainable way of living.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
AQ/CC	Introduce digital signs at both ends of AQMA stating AQAP zone and providing AQ data	PEP	Short	Ongoing 2006/07 Planning permission required	Medium	
AQ	Introduce real time AQ website accessible to the public providing data and advice	PEP	Short	Winter 2006 to 2007	Medium	
CC	Support European Eco-Schools programme	Environmental Projects (CRAC)	Medium	Ongoing	Low	
AQ/CC	Support and deliver sustainable routes to schools	AQAP working group/county council	Medium	Ongoing	Medium	



AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ/CC	Promotion of cleaner/alternative fuels using council fleet as example	AQAP working group	Medium	No progress in 2006	Low	
*AQ/CC	Produce an easy-to-read version of the climate change strategy and action plans	AQAP working group	Short	To be launched early 2006	Low	
*AQ/CC	Local campaign days about traffic management, air quality and climate change	AQAP working group	Short – Medium	22/09/2006 first local campaign	Low	
CC/AQ	Stakeholder progress meeting for strategy and action plan	AQAP writing groups	Short	Ongoing	Low	

Planning and adaptation



As well as mitigating the effects of climate change through reducing carbon emissions and other green house gases through quality planning and development, we need to be future proofing all of our activities to ensure that people, property and infrastructure and the natural environment can adapt to climate change in the future. With periods of intense rainfall likely during winter months and projected longer periods of dry weather in summer, there is a greater chance of flash rises and falls in local river water levels. The installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) can help reduce surface run-off, reducing the risk of flooding, and can also help with improving the quality of water, especially when low river levels occur during the summer. We also need to future proof our buildings and infrastructure (both existing and new).

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ	Time zoning' – restrict delivery and vehicle access times allowing for pedestrian only times during the day	AQAP working group	Medium	No progress in 2006	High	
*AQ	Additional smaller taxi ranks around town centre to spread vehicular activity	AQAP working group/taxi licensing group	Medium	Ongoing 2007	Low	
*AQ	Produce supplementary planning guidance for developers re AQMA	PEP	Short	Ongoing 2007	Low	
AQ/CC	Produce development control best environmental practice guidance for developers	PEP	Short	Ongoing 2007	Low	
*AQ	Introduce green parking zones	AQAP working group	Medium	No progress December 2006	Medium	



AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ/CC	Review of council's taxi licensing policy, looking at age of vehicles, license fee favourable to operators of alternative or clean fuel vehicles	AQAP Working Group	Short	Ongoing 2006	Low	
*AQ	An all vehicle ban on idling within the AQMA	AQAP working group	Medium	No progress in 2006	Low	
*AQ/CC	Develop planning policies which do not contradict air quality aims. Air quality a material consideration	SPED/PEP	Short	No progress in 2006	Low	
*AQ/CC	Explore with arriva relocation of bus depot	PEP/SPED	Long	Ongoing 2008	High	
*AQ/CC	Investigate car parking charges in Blyth town centre (perhaps as county wide scheme for parity)	AQAP working group	Medium	No progress in 2006	Medium	
AQ/CC	Explore potential of planning obligations to be placed on developers within AQMA to produce a fund for town centre environmental improvements	PEP/AQAP working group	Short	Ongoing	Low	
*AQ/CC	Promote best practice through the planning process requiring developers within AQMA to fund remedial measures/environmental improvements and interventions	PEP	Short	Ongoing	Low	

Energy efficiency and renewables



Energy efficiency is key to the climate change and air quality strategy. Wasted energy or poorly managed energy provision, particularly through heating, can result in high CO₂ emissions, loss of money and damage to the environment. Using energy more carefully will reduce CO₂ emissions and help to promote sustainable development. Using renewable sources of energy, such as combined heat and power (CHP), photovoltaic cells, solar thermal panels, ground source heat pumps and wind turbines, can also create more efficient heating, benefiting in particular fuel poor residents (where households find it too expensive to heat their homes). Reducing the need for travel, and efficient public transport is also key. Alternative fuels, to fossil fuels, need to be sourced.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
CC	Working in partnership with Satchwell Ltd to review outdated energy saving proposals at both leisure centres	Housing Services	Medium	Ongoing	Medium	
CC	Working in partnership with Romec Ltd to carry out lighting surveys of major buildings to reduce lighting costs (first building Civic Centre)	Housing Services	Medium	Ongoing	Medium	
CC	More energy efficient swimming pool filters to be fitted	Housing Services	Medium	Ongoing	Medium	
CC	Adopt EcoHomes standard for all new developments	SPED/Housing Services/PEP	Short	No progress	Low	



AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ/CC	Develop sustainable construction charter for working with developers	SPED/PEP	Short	Ongoing 2007	Low	
CC	Continue working with partners to reduce fuel poverty through energy efficiency and renewable energy measures	Blyth Valley Housing/housing policy/Warmzone	Ongoing	Ongoing 2007	Low	
CC	Promote energy efficiency to all households	Blyth Valley Housing/housing policy/Warmzone	Ongoing	Ongoing	Low	
CC	Achieve HECA targets and SAP targets	Blyth Valley Housing/housing policy	Medium	Ongoing		
CC	Free guide on 'Greening your home'	SPED/NCC	Medium 2007 to 2010	To NCC renewable group as project for 2007	Low	
CC	Adopt the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) guidelines	StreetCare	Medium	No progress	Low	

Business and industry



Without the commitment and also technical support from the commercial and industrial sectors we will not be able to make the enormous reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that we need. Industrial processes and general commercial activity create a huge demand on energy. We need to work together to look at ways in becoming more efficient, and reduce our resource use and pollution. There will also be opportunities for business development, for example renewable technology, pollution control etc.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
CC	Develop a local sustainable developments award scheme for industry	SPED	Medium	To be developed	Low	
CC/AQ	Utilise the LDF to promote siting of new commercial development close to public transport	SPED	Short	In progress	Low	
CC	Encourage local business to sign up to green tariffs from renewable energy suppliers	SPED	Short	To be developed	Low	
CC	Encourage business to implement environmental management systems BVBC to lead by example	SPED/PEP	Medium	To be developed	Low	
CC/AQ	Work with large industry under IPPC to reduce energy consumption under the climate change levy	PEP	Continuous	Ongoing	Low	
CC	Develop and support a renewable energy business sector	SPED to lead working with other partnerships	Medium	No progress 08/2006	Medium	



AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
CC/AQ	Provide a support service utilising the development team approach for planning applications for renewables from businesses	PEP/SPED	Medium	To be developed	Low	
AQ/CC	Work with Newcastle Airport to calculate aviation emissions in Blyth Valley air space.	PEP/SPED	Short	To be developed	Low	

Biodiversity and habitat conservation



Blyth Valley borough has a wide variety of habitats, ranging from coastal plains, fragile dune systems, deciduous forests, estuary, marine and freshwater, plus brownfield sites. Together they provide important habitats for plant and animal life and are important in 'greening' our urban environment. However, the impacts of climate change are likely to affect individual species, as well as habitats.

Changes in seasonal weather characteristics such as drier, warmer summers and colder, wetter winters will affect local plant and animal life. With the prospect of drier, hotter summers, there is likely to be a greater need for irrigation and water resource management. This may put pressure on existing aquatic habitats. Trees are likely to suffer from root shrinkage in dry periods, and this may cause subsidence. Flash flooding may also cause tree roots to rot.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ	'Environmental interventions' – improved planting and greenery	AQAP working group	Medium	To be developed	Medium	
AQ/CC	Tree warden scheme	Environmental projects	Short	Initial launch 2005 – wardens to start training in 2007	Low	
CC	SUDS condition as part of new development	SPED/PEP	Short	No progress	Low	
CC	BVBC to sign up to peat charter	StreetCare	Medium	No progress in 2006	Low	



Waste

Blyth Valley alone produces approximately 31 thousand tonnes of waste each year, with just over 6000 tonnes recycled (2005/2006 figures). Organic matter decomposes in landfill and gives off Methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. By recycling and composting we can reduce the amount of waste that goes in to landfill, and reduce the amount of energy we use in creating and manufacturing new products.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
CC	Increase community recycling points	StreetCare	Short	Ongoing	Low	
CC	Full borough coverage of green waste scheme	StreetCare	Short	Ongoing	Medium	
CC	Deliver county wide waste action plan	StreetCare to lead	Medium to long term	Ongoing	Medium	

Procurement



The source and nature of goods purchased can impact upon the environment. For example, the use of timber from non-sustainably managed forests or a non-sustainable type of fuel used in vehicles have a negative effect on the environment.

It is possible to purchase services in a more sustainable way by looking at factors such as service delivery options and contracts to encourage businesses to operate green and sustainable procurement policies. An example of this could be specifying the use of low carbon fuel for contractors' vehicles.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
CC	Secure true green electricity from renewable energy	Housing Services	Medium	'Dull green' achieved (GQCHP) – need 100% renewable energy sources	Low	
CC	Purchase recycled paper as standard	Housing Services	Medium	No progress in 2006	Low	
CC	Develop sustainable procurement policy	Corporate support	Medium	To be developed	Low	



General

There are important processes that need to be carried out in order to implement, monitor and review this action plan. We will do this by working with partners across the borough and region as a whole.

AQ/CC	Action	Lead	Timescale	Status	Cost	Carbon dioxide equivalent savings
*AQ	Stakeholder working group monitoring and reviewing the success of the AQAP	AQAP working group	Short to long – review plans every year	Ongoing 2007	Low	
*AQ	Increase real time AQ monitoring network to refine the AQMA and assess other hot-spots	PEP	Short	Ongoing 2006/2007 Mobile monitor to assess hot-spots 2007 review	Medium	
CC/AQ	Develop adaptation protocol as part of proposed climate change policy	SPED	Medium	To be developed	Low	
CC/AQ	Produce emissions inventory for BVBC	PEP	Medium	To be developed	Low	
CC/AQ	Devise appropriate targets and indicators at local level	AQAP working group	Short	To be developed	Low	
CC/AQ	Scoping and monitoring for 2007 NAQO Regulations (purchase monitoring equipment)	PEP	Medium (December 2007)	To be developed	Medium	



This document is available, on request, in other languages, audio tape, large print and in Braille.



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2002-2003
Tackling Fuel Poverty
2005-2006
Getting Closer to Communities

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