

<b>CABINET MEETING – September 2013</b>  <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I</b>
<b>Title of Report:</b> The Green Digital Charter
<b>Author(s):</b> Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To advise Cabinet of the relevance of the Green Digital Charter to the agreed priority outcomes for Sunderland.</li> <li>To request approval for the Council to become a signatory to the Green Digital Charter and for the Leader to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council</li> </ul>
<b>Description of Decision:</b> Cabinet is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorse the principles of the Green Digital Charter in respect of the city of Sunderland.</li> <li>Agree to the Council becoming a signatory to the Green Digital Charter and authorise the Leader to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?</b> *Yes/No
<b>If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework</b>
<b>Suggested reason(s) for Decision:</b> Signing the Green Digital Charter will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce Sunderland's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 2020;</li> <li>Reinforce Sunderland's commitment to the Covenant of Mayors and the associated Sustainable Energy Action Plan;</li> <li>Reinforce Sunderland's commitment to the EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change;</li> <li>Strengthen Sunderland's position when applying for future EU structural funds associated to Low Carbon initiatives</li> </ul>

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

- **Do nothing** – Do not sign the Green Digital Charter. However, this may weaken the Council's position when applying for future EU funding associated to low carbon initiatives

**Impacts analysed:**

Equality  Privacy  Sustainability  Crime and Disorder

**Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution?** No

**Is it included in the 28 Day Notice of Decisions?** No

**Scrutiny Committee**

**The Green Digital Charter**

**Report of the Executive Director of Corporate and Commercial Services**

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. To advise Cabinet of the relevance of the Green Digital Charter to the Council's agreed priority outcomes for Sunderland.
- 1.2. To request approval for the Council to become a signatory to the Green Digital Charter and for the Leader to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council.

**2. Description of Decision**

2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- Endorse the principles of the Green Digital Charter in respect of the City of Sunderland.
- Agree to the Council becoming a signatory to the Green Digital Charter and authorise the Leader to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council.

**3. Introduction**

- 3.1. The Council has a long standing commitment to managing our carbon efficiency and recognising the importance of having a Climate Change Action Plan. In November 2008 Cabinet approved the first Climate Change action plan for Sunderland. A report demonstrating progress against the plan was published in January 2010.
- 3.2. In January 2009 the Council, along with other North East councils signed the EU Covenant of Mayors and committed to submitting a Sustainable Energy Action Plan. The Council's commitment to the Covenant of Mayors requires CO2 emissions to be cut by at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2020.
- 3.3. Sunderland now uses 2005 carbon levels as its baseline as this is the most accurate data, and according to the latest Department of Energy and Climate Change statistics, Sunderland's Carbon emissions have been reduced by 14% city-wide compared to 2005 levels. These include measurements on industrial and commercial energy consumption as well as transport emissions. This means that city-wide Sunderland has reduced its emissions by an estimated average of 2.8% year on year from 2005 – 2010.

- 3.4. The council's Sustainability Policy sets out the ambitions of the council to manage the environmental impact of its own operations and services and commits to reducing the council's CO2 emissions by 30% by 2020.
- 3.5. The city's Joint Strategy Needs Assessments (JSNA) also recognises the importance of managing our carbon emissions in relation to the health and well-being of the city and its residents.
- 3.6. The signing of the Green Digital Charter is an opportunity for Sunderland to demonstrate further its commitment to managing Climate Change and to work in partnership with other cities on ICT energy efficiency. It will facilitate access to tools already funded and developed by other European partners to benchmark and measure ICT-related carbon emissions.

#### **4. Background to the Green Digital Charter**

- 4.1. The Green Digital Charter was launched in November 2009; a copy of the charter is attached as Appendix A. It was revised and updated in 2011 and the new version is more flexible and open to new signatories. There are currently 37 signatories, including 6 in the United Kingdom (Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Milton Keynes).
- 4.2. The Green Digital Charter is a EUROCITIES initiative which is now supported by the European Commission. It, like other initiatives such as the EU Covenant of Mayors and EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change, demonstrates that European cities are well-placed to play a key role in finding new and creative solutions for dealing with climate change. The Green Digital Charter recognises that one of the areas of greatest potential for Carbon savings lies in the field of ICT, by working towards a greener digital world.
- 4.3. Real opportunities exist today for harnessing digital technologies to address climate change, especially to increase energy efficiency. EUROCITIES and the European Commission have acknowledged the important contribution ICT can make to increasing energy efficiency, reducing emissions and realising a sustainable, low-carbon society.
- 4.4. The role cities have to play in achieving Europe-wide climate change targets, in partnership with EU institutions and Member States, is vital. Current implementation of recovery plans to address the financial crisis makes it all the more urgent for cities to take the lead in tackling climate change using technologically innovative approaches.
- 4.5. The Green Digital Charter commits cities to work together to deliver the EU climate objectives through digital technologies that increase energy efficiency, facilitate emissions reductions and forestall climate change.

4.6. The Charter brings European cities together in order to:

- Exploit ICTs as a technical solution and enabler of behavioural change to reduce emissions, including those from ICTs themselves;
- Encourage leadership from public municipal authorities in adopting innovative technical solutions and building new partnerships to deliver on climate change commitments; and
- Share public and private sector experience and expertise in deploying ICTs to address climate change, in cooperation with national, European and international initiatives.

4.7 Signatories to the Charter commit to the following objectives:

- To work with other the signatories on green ICT strategies and energy efficiency;
- To deploy 5 large-scale ICT for energy efficiency pilots within 5 years; and
- To decrease ICT's direct carbon footprint by 30% within 10 years

4.7 The Green Digital Charter supports achievement of objectives under the European Commission's Smart Cities and Communities initiative, which brings together three directorates to lead on the priority policy areas of Energy, Transport and ICT. Sunderland has been eager to engage with this work through membership of EUROCITIES who have city representation in each of four technical areas as well as by their Secretary General on the High Level Group and through policy advisors on the Sherpa Group. Participation in the network's Knowledge Society Forum and representation on the forum's steering group also support this engagement, as does Sunderland's direct link through the EU Smart Cities Stakeholder Platform. Access to tools and expertise via the Green Digital Charter will particularly support the ICT strand of activity under the Smart Cities and Communities initiative and will increase access to related EU funding in this area.

## **5. Relevance to Sunderland's Priority Outcomes**

5.1. The signing of the Green Digital Charter will further demonstrate the council's commitment to delivering a number of the agreed Corporate Outcomes, including the following:

- A city where everyone is as healthy as they can be and enjoys a good standard of wellbeing. As demonstrated through the JSNA, managing of our carbon emissions will have a direct impact on the on-going health and well-being of our residents.
- A national hub of the low carbon economy. The commitment by the council to projects that contribute to a reduction in its carbon footprint

clearly indicates that the council is taking a strategic approach to ensuring Sunderland becomes a low carbon economy.

- A responsible, well looked-after city that is adaptable to change - we will ensure that all our neighbourhoods are desirable and environmentally sustainable. The commitment to the Green Digital Charter will contribute to the development of environmentally sustainable services.

5.2. The commitment to the Green Digital Charter would also support the Council in achieving two key priorities in terms of European engagement:

- maximising the city's access to and take-up of Structural Funds to support achievement of strategic priorities and projects, and
- accessing external expertise in relation to collectively identified key development areas to support achievement of strategic priorities and projects.

5.3 The focus for the next generation of European programmes, spanning 2014-2020, will include both ICT and low carbon economy as key thematic priorities. Signing of the Charter would place Sunderland alongside 37 other European cities at the leading edge of ICT and low-carbon developments and provide an objective benchmark of the City's credentials in these fields. It would provide quick access to expertise and knowledge of new funding programmes, as well as a ready-made network of contacts within like-minded cities.

## **6. Candidate ICT Projects**

6.1. As explained above, the signing of the Green Digital Charter will require the council to commit to five pilot ICT projects that will contribute to the outlined aims (see appendix A). This can be met from the existing Council project portfolio and will not require additional projects to be undertaken. The projects that would contribute to the aims of the Charter include:

- Corporate Computing model roll-out which contributes to the aims of encouraging the use of low-emission ICT equipment, including intelligent “thin client” facilities, smarter uses of laptops and more energy efficient servers; and to implementing a strategic commitment to improve the sustainability of the production, use and disposal of ICT equipment;
- Smarter working and continued reduction in building contributes to the aim of applying innovation in ICT systems, services and more sustainable ways of working;
- Libraries review and service enablement contributes to the aim of developing opportunities for innovation in e-Government to transform public services;

- Internet Phase 2 with increased self-service contributes to the aim of developing opportunities for innovation in e-Government to transform public services;
- The proposed Intelligence Hub will contribute to the aim of developing opportunities for innovation in e-Government to transform public services, for example through mobile channels, enhanced strategic planning, virtual policy modelling, scenario planning, simulations and visualisations;
- Community IT Programme contributes to the aim of transforming engagement through e-participation, greater co-production by citizens of content and services and, consequently better opportunities for improved skills, employment, inclusion, well-being and quality of life;
- Digital Durham contributes to the aim of supporting the creation of low carbon next generation digital infrastructure and broadband networks based on high-capacity optical fibre and advanced wireless and mobile applications.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1. The council is already a member of the EUROCITIES Knowledge Society Forum (KSF) and regularly attends the forum meetings. There are therefore no additional financial implications of signing up to the Charter.

## **8. Reason for decision**

- 8.1. Signing the Green Digital Charter will:

- reinforce Sunderland's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 2020;
- reinforce Sunderland's commitment to the Covenant of Mayors and support delivery of the targets in the associated Sustainable Energy Action Plan;
- reinforce Sunderland's commitment to the EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change; and
- strengthen Sunderland's position when applying for future EU structural funds associated to Low Carbon initiatives and funds from other EU structural and transnational programmes.

## **9. Alternative Options Considered**

- 9.1. Other options considered are:

- Do not sign the Green Digital Charter. However, this option this may weaken Sunderland's position when applying for future EU funding associated to low carbon initiatives and Structural Funds

## **10. Background Papers/Appendix**

The Green Digital Charter

## **Appendix A – The Green Digital Charter (official text)**

We, mayors and leaders acknowledge that:

- Information and communication technologies are critical enablers for sustainable growth and must be integrated into the work of European cities to mitigate climate change;
- European good practices for low-emissions ICTs must be based on the practical experience of public authorities who can set an example for others;
- Cities can lead Europe in maximising the potential for ICTs to reduce emissions, by delivering innovative technical solutions and encouraging behavioural change.

We, therefore, declare our commitment to:

- Develop cities as platforms for innovation through digital planning and new digital infrastructures and services, which will enable low carbon activities and achieve systemic carbon efficiencies;
- Demonstrate that cities can lead by practical example by ensuring that a city's own ICT infrastructure and digital services have the smallest possible carbon footprint, and by promoting these practices towards the private sector and wider community;
- Create new partnerships by connecting leaders and stakeholders together in each city to secure practical commitments for implementing a new green digital agenda;
- Promote integrated approaches and large-scale solutions through a series of digital applications for improving the measurement, transparency and visibility of energy use, and by involving citizens, service providers, public sector organisations and businesses in test-bed implementation projects;
- Support open innovation by encouraging and promoting low carbon activities in all sectors, through R&D activities and deployment projects in user-driven, open innovation environments.

We agree to:

- Implement a strategy to promote green connected cities, making the most effective use of ICTs as a platform for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of all citizens;
- Deploy ICTs to change the way our communities link to each other, and more critically, in the way they link to the environment;
- Promote inclusive sustainability by recognising that action on climate change is required by all members of the community, including households and SMEs;
- Ensure that ICT-enabled climate change initiatives will go hand in hand with work to promote social cohesion, given the large concentrations of socially excluded people in many cities;
- Promote ICT innovation for climate change mitigation which maximises the benefits for local communities and businesses.

We aim to achieve this by ensuring:

- That ICTs are more energy efficient by:
  - Encouraging the use of low emission ICT equipment, including intelligent “thin client” facilities, smarter uses of laptops and more energy efficient servers;
  - Using renewable energy resources both to power ICT and to utilise energy emissions from ICT, to heat buildings for example;
  - Ensuring that city use of hosting and data centres is as green as possible, by maximising renewable energy use, sharing services with other users and using planning rules, compliance arrangements and service level agreements to control ICT emissions and encourage green ICT;
  - Implementing a strategic commitment to improve the sustainability of the production, use and disposal of ICT equipment;
- The measurability, transparency and visibility of emissions & energy data by:
  - Developing common standards to collect, collate and analyse emission and energy data across city administrations and cities as a whole;
  - Ensuring the compatibility of data on ICTs impacts with the measurement of data on emissions, including working in partnership with initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors;
  - Being innovative with the use of new tools to make data and their analysis as transparent and visible as possible, for example through “ecomaps”, the use of Geographical Info Systems (GIS) and the Urban Atlas initiative.
- That ICT solutions facilitate energy-efficient, “smart” processes by:
  - Improving the energy efficiency of buildings by applying common standards for new buildings and for retro-fitting existing buildings;
  - Applying innovation in ICT systems and services for transport and urban mobility, including smart public transport networks, greater use of tele-conferencing and more sustainable ways of working;
  - Developing “smart” energy grids to support greater use of renewable energy, micro-generation and more energy efficient lighting systems;
  - Collaborating with industry to support greener production and logistics and using green procurement.
- Transformational approaches to ICT, which drive new values and behaviours, by:
  - Supporting the creation of low carbon next generation digital infrastructure and broadband networks based on high-capacity optical fibre and advanced wireless and mobile applications;
  - Developing or supporting innovative new services based on the highest speeds and capacities of these networks to transform the way that we run our cities and in the way that we work, live and play;

- Enabling the “restructuring” of the way we organise economic processes so that the use of materials and energy can be reduced while enhancing both the quality and quantity of jobs;
- Developing opportunities for innovation in e-Government to transform public services, for example through mobile channels, enhanced strategic planning, virtual policy modelling, scenario planning, simulations and visualisations;
- Transforming citizen engagement through e-participation, greater co-production by citizens of content and services and, consequently better opportunities for improved skills, employment, inclusion, well-being and quality of life;
- Providing a commitment to open innovation platforms and methodologies through the further development of the Living Labs network across Europe, including creating new city-based Living Labs and developing new open innovation initiatives for low carbon solutions.

We, mayors and leaders, aim to:

- Work with Green Digital Charter signatories on ICT & Energy Efficiency;
- Deploy five large-scale ICT pilots per city addressing the above areas within 5 years;
- Decrease ICT's direct carbon footprint per city by 30% within 10 years.

We will work on the above by:

- Making use of the vast expertise within the EUROCITIES network and in particular the EU funded project NiCE (Networking intelligent Cities for Energy Efficiency) to coordinate our efforts, develop an implementation roadmap on the commitments above, exchange experiences and build benchmarks of good practice, as well as seeking external sources of funding to support our ambitions.