



# A PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## The Core Cities Group

The Core Cities Group is a strong cross-city and cross-party alliance with more than 10 years track record of collaboration on economic development and related issues ([www.corecities.com](http://www.corecities.com)). It includes: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. These cities, forming the economic and urban cores of their surrounding areas – the city regions – are major centres of international competitiveness, key to regional and national economic growth. They are major wealth producers; some city region areas produce 50% and more of their entire region's economic output, with the Core Cities providing the driving force. Their performance is critical to regional and national competitiveness.

## Why are Core Cities important to climate change?

Cities consume 75% of the world's energy and produce 80% of its greenhouse gas emissions. Cities contribute to the causes of climate change, but they can also provide solutions. Climate change is already having considerable social and economic impacts for our major cities, which need to be managed sustainably. The Core Cities have large and dense populations, with high degrees of deprivation. They are located in areas that are adjacent to major rivers, flood plains or the sea and these populations are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts.

The Core Cities' city regions are home to more than 16 million people. Changing the behaviours of these large populations will make a major contribution. Our city region areas are responsible for around 30% of England's carbon emissions – some 135 million tonnes of carbon annually. But because of high-density living, average domestic carbon emissions per person in the Core Cities are 20% less than the average for England. By, for example, increasing local renewable energy supplies and improving public transport, addressing the energy efficiency of buildings and improving waste and water management, the Core Cities can help to greatly reduce England's overall impact on the environment. This means that, where most appropriate, action to tackle climate change needs to prioritise the Core Cities and surrounding areas.



# CORECITIES

A Shared Commitment to Climate Change Action  
from the Core Cities and Government

# 1. Managing resources

## Core Cities will

**1.1** Achieve or exceed targets for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, improving air, water and land quality and reducing resource use in line with the new Climate Change Bill and relevant legislation and policy. We will collaborate on future target setting, benchmarking and other initiatives.

**1.2** Show leadership by:

- promoting culture change for communities;
- climate-conscious procurement and project approval methods;
- engaging public sector agencies, Non Governmental Organisations; employers, and communities in making specific carbon reduction commitments.

**1.3** Engage in the development and implementation of new local government indicators and the new Comprehensive Area Assessment, reflecting the leadership role of cities in tackling climate change.

**1.4** With Government support, evaluate the need for climate change agencies for Core Cities and city regions to:

- lead multi-agency development of integrated strategies for energy, waste, carbon and water use;
- work across functional economic areas to reduce waste and carbon emissions in cost effective and innovative ways.

**1.5** Reduce energy demand and increase renewable energy generation across our own estates, engaging with public sector partners.

**1.6** Report back on progress at future Core Cities' Summits.

## Government will

**1.7** Provide a clear, credible, long-term framework for the UK to achieve its goals of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and becoming a leading low carbon economy, through its Climate Change Bill.

**1.8** Ensure that the Government's policies nationally, regionally and locally are aligned to maximise the potential for sustainable economic growth within environmental limits.

**1.9** Deliver a programme via the Carbon Trust and Energy Saving Trust to:

- pilot a new strategic approach towards carbon management at city level across the Core Cities;
- engage all Core Cities in piloting the new city-wide performance management framework, initially in 3 cities, developing a toolkit of products and support services available to all;
- support the Core Cities in ensuring that public and private sector partners minimise carbon impacts and maximise renewable energy generation; and
- advise Core Cities on the most cost effective opportunities and best mechanisms to do this, including waste and waste-water treatment.

**1.10** Increase the total Salix fund size and consider increasing the cap on loan size to provide the scale needed by Core Cities and other large authorities.

**1.11** Launch a 'zero waste places' initiative with the aim of inviting a number of places to become exemplars of good environmental practice on all waste.

**1.12** Ensure that national and regional government agencies understand and reflect the important role of Core Cities in their climate change policies and programmes.

## Core Cities: Tackling Climate Change for The Future

It is possible to have both a sustainable and a prosperous future for our cities, but to minimise the cost of tackling climate change, immediate and coordinated multilateral and domestic action is needed. Unless global emissions are kept within a safe limit, the temperature will rise beyond our means to successfully adapt or secure the resources we need for future prosperity. The impacts of climate change and its associated policy framework are

fundamentally altering the physical, social and market conditions in which the Core Cities operate. The economies of the Core Cities need to grow and to compete internationally, without damaging the quality of life of residents, and in a way that future-proofs the viability of the economy in the long term. The Core Cities are well placed to work with industry, communities and other partners to reduce climate impacts without prejudicing

## 2. Securing prosperity

### Core Cities will

- 2.1** Build on the Stern Review and the Government's response to it, to develop economic impact models to inform future decisions, for medium and long term policy and planning frameworks.
- 2.2** Work with government to consider climate change implications in working to reduce regional economic disparity.
- 2.3** Where appropriate and possible, use local financing powers to support sustainable business growth and ensure that funded projects conform to climate change goals.
- 2.4** Use available planning, licensing and transport powers to reduce fossil fuel use by improving public transport, reducing the need to travel, tackling congestion and providing alternatives to private car usage.
- 2.5** Work with Government to support the environmental technology sector and promote the development and uptake of climate-conscious products and services.
- 2.6** Support Government in assessing and bridging the skills and capacity gap for tackling climate change, sharing learning and benchmarking.
- 2.7** Engage with government on:
- flexible market and licensing proposals for low-carbon electricity supply;
  - delivery of world class low carbon learning environments for children of all ages;
  - identifying and negotiating changes to policies and programmes where they appear to conflict with climate change goals;
  - consider how current and future local authority powers can be used to adopt 'polluter pays' variable charging and minimum emission standards, for the range of licenses and permits they issue.

### Government will

- 2.8** Assist the Core Cities in tackling the challenge of moving to a low carbon, low waste economy through taking forward the recommendations of the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration to:
- improve the flexibilities and incentives for local authorities to work with business to identify opportunities for growth, and to take the necessary steps to make their areas more attractive to business investment;
  - achieve greater flexibility and local control over relevant funding streams.
- 2.9** Through the Environmental Transformation Fund, (and working closely with the Technology Strategy Board and the new Energy Technologies Institute), build on existing programmes such as Science City and develop new initiatives, which support the commercialisation of the innovative solutions and technologies these bodies help to develop.
- 2.10** Support continued investment in technology and knowledge capital programmes such as the Carbon Trust's scheme to accelerate the development of cost-effective solar photovoltaic cells, announced October 2007.

economic growth, and to take advantage of the economic opportunities represented by climate change.

This Shared Commitment is built on our concerns and responsibilities for all our communities, our economies and the key role Core Cities play both in reducing the UK's impact on climate change and in adapting to the change that is already happening. It will translate into partnerships

that can deliver ambitious, innovative and radical solutions for our cities and city regions, to continue to grow a sustainable, prosperous future for all.

# 3. Sustainable placemaking

## Core Cities will

### 3.1 Work with Government and the new Homes and Communities Agency to:

- support housing growth and low-carbon affordable housing within high-quality, accessible mixed communities; and
- reduce energy demand and improve the climate resilience of existing housing stock.

### 3.2 Work with Government and use our own planning and fiscal powers to:

- concentrate delivery of commercial and residential development in areas with flood resilience, low carbon transport and access to low carbon energy;
- bring private sector development into line with climate change targets; and
- communicate policy, process and legislative barriers to achieving these outcomes.

### 3.3 Inform placemaking by:

- researching and appraising the flood, water management, critical infrastructure and other vulnerabilities of our urban environments and communities;
- plan for adaptation as a core element of spatial planning and policy development; and
- champion methods to improve energy management in the community e.g. through exploring Energy Service Companies.

## Government will

### 3.4 Clearly identify the role of the Core Cities in leading placeshaping and acting as an exemplar in their areas to reduce carbon emissions (from housing, local business, transport, public sector and community organisations) and adapting to climate change via their service delivery and community leadership role.

### 3.5 Work with the Core Cities and Government Offices to ensure joint accountability between national, regional and local partners within relevant Local Strategic Partnerships and Multi Area Agreements, including for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction.

### 3.6 Implement the Planning White Paper commitment to legislate on the role of local planning authorities in tackling climate change, remaining sensitive to the role and needs of our major cities in relation to climate change.

### 3.7 Ensure that spatial, planning and construction measures and programmes:

- reflect the advantages of concentrating commercial and residential development in areas with good climate change assets ( e.g. flood resilience, low carbon transport infrastructure and energy sources);
- highlight the importance of avoiding the depletion of natural climate change assets (e.g. carbon sinks, shade trees, outdoor green space, gardens).

### 3.8 Support Core Cities in establishing transparent and robust local accountability for water and energy management.

### 3.9 Increase Government funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management to £800 million in 2010-11 and take into account information from the independent Lessons Learned Inquiry into the summer



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