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**NORTH EAST SUSTAINABILITY ENERGY CENTRE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Stephen Harker,  
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Cabinet of a bid from the North East of England to become a pilot region for the establishment of a Sustainable Energy Centre funded by the Energy Saving Trust.

**Information and Analysis**

2. The Government published its Energy White Paper in February 2003. The paper sets out goals relating to carbon dioxide emission reductions, reliability of energy supplies, promoting competitive markets and adequate and affordable heating for homes.
3. Regional action can contribute to some of the goals of the White Paper and there is an expectation from Government for regions to deliver.
4. The Energy Saving Trust (EST) is a non-profit organisation funded by the Government and the private sector, with a remit to achieve the sustainable and efficient use of energy and to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The EST funds a Regional Strategy Co-ordinator in the North East and also supports a network of 52 Energy Efficiency Advice Centres, of which there are two in the North East. One covers the Tees Valley and County Durham and the other covers Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.
5. The regional centres deliver impartial and objective advice and assistance on the efficient and sustainable use of energy in the home. They also provide services to small businesses, access grants in partnership with local authorities, local strategic partnerships etc.
6. The EST has proposed that the 52 regional centres are developed in response to the Energy White Paper and their remit expanded to include sustainable transport and renewable energy. The 52 existing centres would be replaced by 22 Sustainable Energy Centres.
7. The EST intends to test the Sustainable Energy Centre concept by running three pilots in the last quarter of 2004/05 and for the whole of 2005/06. If the pilots are successful the remaining centres will be rolled out over a two-year period. The EST intends that the two North East Energy Efficiency Centres will be replaced by one Sustainable Energy Centre if the proposal goes ahead.

8. Following a selection process the North East is one of five areas invited by the EST to bid to be one of the three pilots. The bids are being led by the North East Energy Policy Group (the key regional body with regard to energy policy and strategic delivery of the Energy White Paper in the North East).
9. A Sustainable Energy Centre would bring together the key issue of energy efficiency, renewable energy and transport. The service would be fully funded by the EST and provide a valuable asset to local authorities and other organisations across the region. The Centre could contribute to a wide range of local authority activities including affordable warmth, home energy conservation, small business support, climate change strategy, sustainable transport and decent housing.
10. A strong bid from the North East will require support from as many potential partners as possible, key among which are local authorities.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

11. The matter was presented to the Tees Valley Chief Development Officers at their meeting held on 1 September 2004. It was agreed that the proposal should be presented to each Councils' Members, seeking formal support for the bid.

### **Legal Implications**

12. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

13. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Council Policy Framework**

14. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

### **Decision Deadline**

15. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

## **Recommendation**

16. It is recommended that the proposal for a North East bid to pilot a sustainable energy centre, as outlined in the report be supported.

## **Reasons**

17. The recommendations are supported because a Sustainable Energy Centre will be able to deliver and support enhanced services in the region.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

## **Background Papers**

‘North East Sustainable Energy Centre’: Report to Tees Valley Chief Development Officers,  
1 September 2004

Bill Westland : Extension 2557  
BAH