

Local Government Association : ‘CLIMATE LOCAL’ CONFERENCE

Monday 11th March. ‘Delivering growth, income and safer communities’.

Attendance – see Attendee list.

Programme – separate sheet.

Keynote speech – Rt Hon Gregory Barker, Minister of State Dept. of Energy and Climate Change.

Confident that the green economy is a driver for growth and an engine to reduce trade deficit.

- Green Deal: L.A delivery. Brought in Feb. '13. Bristol Pilot.
- Reference to ‘Climate Local’ web support.
- Aim: to retrofit 14 million houses by 2020 and 20 m. – homes and businesses - by 2030.
- New supply chains – opportunities for SMEs
- Big cities – opportunities for schemes covering whole communities
- Pioneer Places Programme – approaches to fuel poverty - £25 m. allocated
- Collective switching - £5m. allocated and further grants to be announced.
- Importance of private sector finance ‘locally grown delivery partners’.
- Under the Home Energy Conservation Act, schemes could raise revenue

Questions.

1. Lack of incentives on energy generation – returning energy to the grid etc.
2. Stoke on Trent. As an L.A. energy provider says guidelines are not clear enough.
3. Joseph Rowntree Foundation – interest rates under the Green Deal at 6.9% are of no interest to the poor.

Reports on experiences of two local authorities.

Haringey. Though experiencing cuts in revenue of £144m. out of total £278m(!?) it has increased green expenditure, investing in combined heat and power, retrofit on domestic property and reducing emissions driven by need to reduce waste.

Greater Manchester. Energy costs identified by commercial and industrial sectors as key barrier to growth. Have used government money to achieve energy switching. 10 local authorities within Gr. Manchester work together.

Local Adaptation Advisory Panel.

Works towards resilience in the face of extreme weather effects.

Effect on GDP and on L. A. finances e.g flooding leading to potholes etc.

Environment Agency joint working on local drainage schemes.

Importance of sustainable waste reduction and energy generation.

Launch of 'Climate Local Report'

Cllr. Andrew Cooper LGA Environment and Housing.

- A practical report requiring practical outcomes – if not ‘don’t sign up!’
- Impact of L.A. cuts - but ‘insulation is regeneration’.
- Carbon reduction may well be a result of the recession. For instance local government redundancies means less office space in use etc. However this reduction is compensated for in private sector consumption so still an issue.
- Criticises D.E.C.C. Local authorities report to the department, but what impact do they have – what happens to the information?
- Green Deal is market driven. What we need is ‘Climate National’ as well – i.e government commitment.

ARUP consultants Alison Ball and Philip Monaghan (who wrote the report)

- A series of Loc. Govt. case studies showing ways of driving local growth; making savings and supporting vulnerable communities.
- Highlighted the fact that some L.A.s are involved in energy generation and selling energy.
- Stressed that vulnerable communities are most at risk – e.g. fuel poverty.

(Note: See the report. I have a copy. Case studies are useful for ideas!).

Keynote Speech. Lord de Mauley : Parliamentary Under Secretary; DEFRA

Outlined various government initiatives including Climate Ready Support Service; Severe Weather Impact Monitoring System. Also a National Adaptation Report expected.

Question and answer session.

Q. Since RDAs have ceased to exist our relationship with the utilities is more difficult and accountability has gone. Comment?

A. LEPs need to take up this function.

Q. Flood insurance, Negotiations are dragging on, agreement runs out in 2 months. What assurances can be given?

A. Negotiations continue.

Q. Green Deal and adaptation measures should be co-ordinated and aren't.

Q. Planning issues and Planning Inspectorate. Attitude of Housebuilders Federation, constant requests from developers for local planning to reduce BREAM standards etc. and these are upheld by inspectorate.

A. Housebuilders and the market. Need for profit.

Q. Housebuilders say they need to demonstrate a 15% return in order to get loans from banks. Why not intervene in substantially nationally owned banks to change this?

A. Impossible as we need to get banks into a viable state to sell.

* Discussion ensued, including intervention from Hywel Lloyd; Advisor to Stoke on Trent NESTA . who made a plea for the idea of a 'collective bye law' to uphold sustainability measures to guide developers, nationally or at least regionally applied.

Making savings and generating income.

Richard Rugg: Carbon Trust.

- Have lost government funding, now on a commercial footing.
- Now engaging with SMEs – because of rise in fuel price, commercial imperative to reduce costs (and therefore carbon).Advice on training, metering etc.
- Developed a Low Carbon Planning Toolkit for developers and planning officers.
- Work with schools more difficult since the advent of academies.
- New projects on centralised energy/district heating.

Peter Wiggins: Gloucestershire C.C.

- 60% Carbon reduction target '06/07 to 2020 .
- Report quarterly to cabinet and scrutiny.
- Measures include lighting - rural switch off midnight to 530 p.m. Central management systems needed. Also dimming. Payback 9 years.

John Thorp: 'Thameswey'.

- This is an independent and private body set up by Woking Council..
- Generates heat and electricity to houses and 200 commercial premises returning £1m to the Council. Does not have to tender - value for money.
- Makes developers pay to connect to energy systems provided.
- Runs Thameswey Sustainable Communities consultancy for other L.A.s .

Afternoon: Supporting Communities, Panel.

Dr. Juliet Staples: Liverpool. Flood mitigation programmes in housing areas.

Lucy Padfield: Islington.

- Changing focus from strict reduction of CO2 to reducing fuel poverty under their 'Fairness Agenda' (Note – sounds like our 'One Darlington'). 24% are 'fuel poor'; 40% children 'in poverty'.
- 3,000 homes have 'energy reduction interventions'.
- Data sharing arrangements with their biggest energy users e.g Arsenal FC.
- Boiler replacement schemes private and public sector.
- Combine with other L.A.s to help SMEs.
- Supply heat networks with low carbon energy from a gas fired power station funded partly by E.C and council capital. Built 2008. Procured from in house

research, legal teams and planning expertise, now provide consultancy services.

- These heat networks with 20 kms of pipework now supply 3 council estates, 2 leisure centres and 1 private development.
- Capture waste heat. 'Heatdumps' on top of electricity substation transformers which can be up to 50 degrees C. Also from old tube station ventilation shafts. E.C. funds.

I also attended two workshops.

1. Climate Change: Social Justice and Vulnerability: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Project called 'Climatejust' which is conducting research on the correlation between vulnerability to climate change e.g. flooding, on deprived areas. These are less able to recover quickly from events – lack of insurance, poverty etc.

Very technical – revolving around data mapping etc.

The JRF a useful resource for data mapping/ overlay of data from a range of agencies.

2. Exploring Energy Solutions; Stoke on Trent

Council as an energy generator as well as user. Work with 'Eon' to a 'Memorandum of Understanding' for strict transparency towards a low carbon economy.

Have set up a 'Centre of Refurbishment Excellence' with Stoke College (FE) in an old retrofitted building to teach retrofit skills.

They use geothermal energy from closed mines and waste heat from potteries (still employing 20,000).

More information at

Energysecurity@Stoke.gov.uk

Dorothy Long.

Chair: Place Scrutiny Committee

15/3/'13