

**OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
PORTFOLIO**

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio:

- (a) **Waste Management** - Cabinet considered options for recycling and composting strategy, agreeing on the option that clearly sets extremely ambitious targets in excess of 50%, which is double what we are currently achieving. There will be changes to the kerb side collection service, removing cans, plastics and textiles but adding cardboard. Cardboard is something that the public have asked for over a number of years. Cans and plastics can quite easily be extracted from the output of the new treatment process for recycling. The Council have invested significantly in waste management, adding an additional £1 million to the MPFP. This investment will ensure the Council meets its obligations under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme and delivers challenging targets for recycling and composting.

Officers continue to work with our new contractor Stonegrave Aggregates on ensuring the new service is in place from April 2009. Planning has been submitted to Durham County Council and it is anticipated that the planning application will be considered during September. Subject to approval of the planning application, Stonegrave Aggregates are on target to deliver the new treatment plant for the start of the contract.

On 23 May 2008, Members of Economy & Environment Scrutiny attended the site visit at Wades Quarry. During the visit Bruce Whitley, the Operations Manager, gave a presentation on how the new treatment process would work and what materials could be recycled. Also included was a tour of the site. I myself attended on 4 June 2008 and found the tour to be extremely informative. What I found really reassuring in light of recent publicity on similar treatment processes was that the end product would be landfilled and there was no intention of claiming this as a compost-like output. A further site visit and tour is organised for Cabinet and CMT on 23 July 2008.

Officers and myself will be working very closely with the communications team on delivering the Communications Strategy 'Making Waste Work'. This strategy is aimed at encouraging residents to reduce the amount of waste they produce, reuse where possible and recycle. The focus over the next 6-9 months will be spreading the 'reduce and reuse' message then focusing on recycling as the new contract comes into place.

- (b) **Climate Change Action Plan** - Work has progressed on amending and finalising the Action Plan which will be presented to the Partnership Board for approval in July. Face to face interviews have been held with key partners, to identify their actions for inclusion in the Plan. The Greener Darlington Theme Group will drive forward the Climate Change priorities of One Darlington : Perfectly Placed. The membership,

governance arrangements, role and remit of this newly established Theme Group are currently being developed.

- (c) **Communicating and Tackling Climate Change** - was the title of a regional event attended on 23rd May in Durham. Covering a range of international, regional and local perspectives, speakers focused on how Councils could and should inspire local communities to act on Climate Change.
 - (d) **The Northern Eco** - To mark World Environment Day (5 June), a special 'green' edition of the paper was published, including a 52 page supplement reporting a wide range of informative articles about sustainable initiatives across the North East. Items on the work of the Council's Waste Minimisation and Recycling Officer and on the success of the ongoing Local Motion scheme were included.
 - (e) I hosted a sharing of the film 'An Inconvenient Truth', helpfully organised by the previous portfolio holder Councillor Copeland, with a debate on the issues raised, open to all Members and officers.
2. The following items relate to the transport initiatives that are contributing to the Climate Change agenda, details of which are covered in the Transport Portfolio holders report:
- (a) The creation of a new bus service network for Darlington including marketing and the provision of advice on the new arrangements.
 - (b) The annual Darlington Festival of Cycling took place on 15 June.
 - (c) Work on School Travel Plans, Bike It and Medal Motion continues.
 - (d) Safer Routes to School.
 - (e) Local Motion marketing, media coverage and advertising.
3. The initiative of Town Centre Management and Town Centre businesses, under the Economy Portfolio, to create and promote re-usable bags is progressing well with good sales of the bags. I will be attending a meeting of independent retailers in the town centre on 30th July to see how the Council can work with local businesses to take forward the sustainability agenda.
4. One of the duties of my portfolio is to serve as one of the Darlington Borough Council members on Durham and Darlington Fire Authority (together with Councillors B. Jones, D. Jones and Maddison). I attended the Authority's AGM on 17th June, and was also a delegate to the Local Government Association in Bournemouth from 1st to 3rd July.
5. I am in the process of pulling together a meeting of officers from across the authority to examine in detail how the Council itself is responding to the challenge of climate change. I intend for this to be a regular meeting, charting progress. I hope to report on progress, both to Scrutiny and also to Council through my report.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio

