
EU INITIATIVE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Nick Wallis, Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio

Responsible Director – Richard Alty (Assistant Chief Executive, Regeneration)

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline a recently launched EU Initiative on Climate Change, the Covenant of Mayors.
2. Association of North East Councils are in full support of the initiative and as such are encouraging each local authority in the North East to sign the Covenant of Mayors.

Summary

3. The Covenant of Mayors (**Appendix 1**) is an ambitious Commission initiative that seeks to bring together the Mayors and Leadership of some of Europe's pioneering cities in a permanent network to exchange and apply good practices to improve their energy efficiency and promote low-carbon business and economic development.
4. The initiative is open to local authorities throughout the EU and authorities that sign up, formally commit to reduce their CO2 emissions by more than 20% by 2020 by developing Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Cabinet agree to signing the Covenant of Mayors.

Reasons

6. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To support delivery of the Darlington Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
 - (b) To support the national policy context and a commitment in the Climate Change Act to reduce CO2 emissions by 26% by 2020.

**Richard Alty
Assistant Chief Executive, Regeneration**

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S17 Crime and Disorder	No direct implications of this report
Health and Well Being	Initiatives to reduce CO2 can have a positive impact on health and well being
Sustainability	Initiatives to reduce CO2 will contribute to the Council's sustainability aims
Diversity	No direct implications
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	No direct implications
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The SCS through the Greener Darlington theme group seeks to raise awareness of climate change. Signing the Covenant of Mayors will contribute to this process.

MAIN REPORT

Purpose of the Report

7. The purpose of this report is to outline a recently launched EU Initiative on Climate Change, the Covenant of Mayors.
8. ANEC are in full support of the initiative and as such are encouraging each local authority in the North East to sign the Covenant of Mayors.

Background

9. The Covenant of Mayors is an ambitious Commission initiative that seeks to bring together the Mayors and Leadership of some of Europe's pioneering cities in a permanent network to exchange and apply good practices to improve their energy efficiency and promote low-carbon business and economic development.
10. ANEC has been working closely with the North East England Office in Brussels to develop stronger and more effective links with the EU and international organisations. ANEC recognises the importance of local authority influence over European Policy and thinking to ensure that the region benefits from policy initiatives which support the North East's objectives, including climate change and energy efficiency.

Covenant of Mayors

11. ANEC see the signing of the Covenant of Mayors as a perfect opportunity to strengthen European links, particularly as it supports the commitment to sustainability issues given by ANEC members.
12. The initiative is open to local authorities throughout the EU and authorities that sign up, formally commit to reduce their CO2 emissions by more than 20% by 2020 by developing Sustainable Energy Action Plans.
13. Almost 100 cities throughout Europe, including 15 capital cities, have expressed their early support for the Covenant.

Information and Analysis

14. The Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership (TVCCP), at its last meeting, discussed the Covenant of Mayors.
15. The TVCCP is set to agree more challenging targets for reducing emissions, to align with national targets. Whilst the TVCCP felt that the Covenant of Mayors does not add anything significant to the work currently being undertaken in the Tees Valley, by being signatories to this initiative the TVCCP may lend support to those communities in Europe that are struggling to find solutions to climate change issues and share experience.
16. Therefore the recommendation is that the Tees Valley local authorities sign the Covenant, and use this European initiative to help raise awareness about the leading edge work on

tackling climate change which is being undertaken by Tees Valley local authorities and their public sector, private sector, and voluntary/community sector partners.

17. Darlington is committed to tackling the cause and effects of climate change. Signing the Covenant of Mayors will strengthen and support work already being undertaken to achieve CO2 emissions reduction.
18. Page 2 of **Appendix 1** outlines the commitment made by a local authority in signing the Covenant of Mayors. The Climate Change work to date in Darlington, the Tees Valley and the North East cover each of the points in the Covenant and therefore signing will not require any work beyond that currently being undertaken.
19. The Covenant of Mayors requires that a baseline emission inventory is prepared. Darlington, as part of the TVCCP, prepared a baseline inventory in 2006. The current Climate Change Action Plan is based on this inventory.
20. The Covenant requires that a Sustainable Energy Action Plan be submitted. The Darlington Climate Change Action Plan will cover this requirement.
21. The Covenant commits localities to mobilise the civil society within the geographical area to take part in developing the Action Plan. Every sector of Darlington's community had an input into developing the Climate Change Action Plan, whilst ongoing awareness campaigns and the work of the Greener Themed group ensure that delivery is everybody's responsibility.
22. It is noted that the Covenant commits to 'Attending and contribute to the annual EU Conference of Mayors', in this regard 'attendance' will be interpreted in its broadest sense and be via regional representation or facilitated through IT.

Next Steps

23. The signing ceremony will take place in February 2009, where a North East regional representative will attend on behalf of ANEC to sign the Covenant of Mayors. It is thought that a regional event will be organised to coincide with the European event in Amsterdam.