
**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) Members will be aware that the Council recently transferred its contract for the disposal of waste from Premier Waste Management to Stonegrave Aggregates and that all waste produced by the Council is now treated and disposed of by Stonegrave Aggregates. As part of these changes, Stonegrave Aggregates have built a mechanical and biological treatment plant at their Aycliffe headquarters for the treatment of all non-separated waste collected by the Council. The plant opened on 7 September 2009 in conjunction with the Council's own changes to its kerbside recycling scheme.

The new kerbside recycling service, "Bag It, Box It, Bin It" began Monday 7 September across Darlington Borough. The new method of collection offers residents a simpler and quicker way to recycle their household waste by following three simple steps as set out in our 'Making Waste Work' communications plan; these simple steps are:

- (i) Paper and Card in the Blue Bag
- (ii) Glass only in the Green Box
- (iii) Everything Else in the black sack

This has been a significant change in service for residents as they no longer need to sort plastics and cans from their domestic waste, instead these items simply go into the black sack for collection by the weekly refuse teams. A positive addition to the scheme however is the introduction of cardboard recycling.

The communications plan was set out at the beginning of the project to ensure the Council achieved as wide an audience as possible, using a number of different communication methods. These were:

- (iv) Making Waste Work identity – A bespoke identity for 'MWW' in the form of the 'flower' identity.
- (v) Making Waste Work website - Aimed at supporting existing 'Recycle for Darlington' Website.
- (vi) A short DVD explaining how the new service would work and the introduction of MBT (Mechanical Biological Treatment).

- (vii) 'Making Waste Work' information and recycling advice in Town Crier Magazine (every edition since February 2009) including a Front and Back Cover, several editorials and advertisements.
- (viii) Eight week 'Streetliner' Bus advertising campaign.
- (ix) Sponsorship of the 'Community Carnival 2009' brochure.
- (x) 'MWW' Roadshows at Green Fair and Darlington Community Carnival.
- (xi) Radio interviews and updates with Alpha 102.2 Radio, Darlington's local radio station.
- (xii) Press releases and photos in local press (Northern Echo, Herald & Post, and Darlington Advertiser).
- (xiii) Leaflet to all residents properties (also available on-line from the Council's website) providing information of new MBT service, collection calendar and simple instructions on how to participate in the recycling service.
- (xiv) A 'Final Reminder' sticker campaign at the end of the 'old' service – for the last two weeks of the campaign additional staff were used to follow the recycling vehicles and leave reminder stickers on green boxes. Two stickers were produced, one detailing the collection week and the other with details of how to participate.
- (xv) A non-collection card to be left by the operators when residents put out the 'wrong' items for recycling.

Broadly, the compliance rate with the new arrangements suggests that the communications strategy has been successful – around 75% of households have placed their waste in the correct containers.

It's been heartening that lots of new boxes have been requested by residents – this suggests that the publicity for the scheme has led more people to recycle at home.

We will continue to promote the new scheme, to ensure the highest level of compliance, and the best recycling rates for the Borough.

- (b) At the end of June, I made a presentation to the LSP Greener Darlington Assembly. With the aim of raising awareness of climate change issues the Assembly heard from a range of speakers who outlined the national and regional context, as well as highlighting examples of local good practice in tackling greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the well attended Assembly provided an opportunity for delegates to meet a range of local agencies, organisations and campaign groups and find out the work they are doing to further understanding of the issues, and to consider how they might get involved. Alan Milburn MP addressed the Assembly and launched the Greener Darlington Awards based around the categories of Tackling Climate Change; Sustainable Transport; Greener communities and Good Design.

- (c) Following the example provided by Sadberge Parish Council at the above Assembly, the Council is providing four energy monitors to be loaned out by Central Library. Timed to tie in with Energy Savings Week in October, the initiative is a pilot exercise to enable people to monitor their electricity use, and identify opportunities to reduce CO2 emissions and save on bills. The idea of using the library to let out energy monitors was suggested by a member of the audience at the Green Assembly, and I am delighted that we have been able to follow this up with concrete action.
- (d) The third sector led Health and Energy Affordability Team (HE AT) project continues to address fuel switch / fuel poverty and energy advice to vulnerable Darlington residents. The HEAT Officer has attended a number of local community groups to raise awareness of the new service within the first quarter of the project. The annual Housing Investment Programme 2009-10 has introduced an energy efficiency programme which will focus on cavity and loft insulation works, draught exclusion works and replacement external doors and windows within DBC owned housing stock.

I have held a meeting recently with the Chief Executive of Age Concern and met with members of staff delivering the HEAT project. It is a flagship scheme for the Council and its partners to help tackle fuel poverty. Can I thank those Councillors who have shown an interest in the scheme following the email sent recently about HEAT, and encourage you all to publicise your schemes via your newsletters and surgeries.

- (e) I attended the ceremonial opening of the Darlington Gro-Zone at Lingfield Point. The honours were done by our Mayor, Councillor Jim Ruck..

This is an exciting initiative between Marchday Holdings who operate Lingfield Point and Darlington Friends of the Earth. The launch had the support of Darlington Borough Council. Around 1,000 square metres are available. There aren't any fixed ideas yet on how the scheme will develop, but it might include communal space. The soil is poor, so large bags may be used to grow fruit and vegetables. John Wades, who partner the Council on waste disposal, have agreed to provide top soil.

On a related theme, I attended a recent meeting with partners and chaired by Groundwork North East which is preparing an allotment strategy for the Borough. Local food initiatives, like promoting our allotments and the Gro-Zone scheme, are vital if we are to reduce the carbon used to grow and transport food, and produce good nutritious fare. Too late for me to report on this agenda, there is a meeting of the Greener Theme Group on Monday, 28th October, 2009 which will give further consideration to this important issue. I will continue to support and promote developments in this area.

- 2. The following items relate to initiatives that are contributing to the Climate Change Agenda, details of which are covered in other Portfolio reports.

Transport

- a) School travel planning and Bike It
- b) Bike Club officer
- c) Cycle Demonstration Town, Cycling festival, Cycling England DVD

- d) Workplace Travel Plans
- e) Supported bus services
- f) Tees Valley Metro
- g) Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement

I recently attended a meeting of the Local Motion steering group. I would particularly draw councillors' attention to a presentation given by the 'Beauty and the Bike' co-ordinators Richard Grassick and Beatrix Wupperman. Their film of the Beauty and the Bike initiative will preview at the Darlington Film Festival in the Arts Centre on 9th December 2009. Tickets are available now via the Arts Centre box office on 486555

Also, the group are in the final stages of a bid to realise their DarLOVElo initiative, which could bring between 60 and 100 bikes for hire to Darlington, targeted at young women. To be one of only three recipients nationwide of the New Ideas Fund is a great achievement. Both DarLOVElo and 'Beauty and the Bike' have had the active support of Darlington Borough Council. They are fantastic projects, and are helping to reinforce Darlington's increasing reputation as a bike-friendly town.

You can read more about Beauty and the bike here www.bikebeauty.org/english

Health and Leisure

- a) Teen card
- b) Darlington Doorstep Walks

Durham and Darlington Fire Authority

I attended a recent meeting of the Fire Authority at Framwellgate Moor. I also met recently with the new Station Commander in Darlington, Paul Knox.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio