

**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) **Carbon Reduction Commitment – Energy Efficiency Scheme** – We have approved delegated powers to be given to the Director of Corporate Services to take the necessary actions to manage the new Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) which comes into force from April 2010. The aim of the scheme is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through energy efficiency whereby participant members purchase allowances for energy consumed. Income generated from the sale of allowances is then recycled to participants through a payment based on their position within the schemes leagues table, which can result in net cost of net gain to individual participating organisations. The incentive being for member organisations to reduce their energy consumption.
 - (b) The Local Authority Carbon Management Programme is being progressed in line with the timescales and process provided by the Carbon Trust. It is anticipated that the Draft 5 year Carbon Management Plan, which will commit the Council to reducing its carbon footprint and identify projects to achieve this, will be completed and considered by Cabinet in coming months.
 - (c) Key to achieving the Carbon Management Plan target will be the extent to which carbon reduction initiatives are embedded within the service delivery of the Council. This issue was addressed as part of a Senior Manager Network meeting in February which included workshops on how the Council is, and will need to; adapt service delivery to deal with the implications of inevitable climate change phenomena. Mitigation, in the form of carbon reduction initiatives will similarly need to be written into Service Delivery Plans.
 - (d) **Covenant of Mayors** – The Council submitted a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) on 27th February to the EU Covenant of Mayors. The submitted SEAP provides the initial framework for further development over the next 6 months to the final SEAP submission deadline in September 2010.
 - (e) **Sustainable Schools Event** – In 2009 the Durham and Darlington Eco Schools network ceased to exist. A Sustainable Schools event was held at Carmel College on 20th January to discuss how to take Eco Schools and Sustainable Schools forward in Darlington. Representatives from 15 schools attended. The next Sustainable Schools meeting will be held early in the Summer term.

- (f) **Waste** – Since the last Council meeting, a visit for Members was organised to John Wades on 9 February 2010 to see the new waste treatment process. A significant number of Members expressed an interest in this visit and put their names forward but unfortunately the weather was extremely poor and the majority could not attend. I know those who did attend found the visit to be extremely useful and were impressed with the new plant and the overall treatment process. I am keen for as many Members as possible to visit John Wades to see how our waste is processed and I have therefore asked officers to arrange another date so those who missed out can attend.
- (g) The new waste plant has been operating since September 2009 and for the first quarter of operation through to the end of December 2009, we have seen a reduction of approximately 30% biodegradable waste being landfilled. This is an excellent start and performance will continue to improve as the operation of the plant becomes more efficient.
2. Together with the Chair of the Greener Theme Group, I judged the Green Awards for 2010 – there were ten in all. This year the Council has launched Green Awards for achievements in the preceding 12 months. Categories include Sustainable Transport, Greener Communities, Good Design and Tackling Climate Change.

It is something of a truism, but the entries, from the organisations ranging from the public to private and voluntary sectors, were uniformly excellent, and any one of them could have won the category for which they were entered.

The results will be announced in a small ceremony at the next LSP Greener Theme Group on 29th March at 4.30 p.m .in Bondgate Methodist Church. Separately, I hope to visit as many of the winners and the runners-up over the next couple of months to see for myself and help promote the excellent work which is being done across the Borough in the field of sustainability.

3. 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) Tees Valley Bus Improvement Network
- b) Cycle Routes – North Road; Great Burdon to Sadberge; Blackwell Radial Route; and the Circular Cycle Route
- c) South Park Footpath/Cycleway Link
- d) Pedestrian Training and cycle training.
- e) Travel Plans – Council; Schools and workplace
- f) Sustainable Travel Towns Report
- g) Bank Top Station cycle parking
- h) Community Rail Partnership
- i) Cycling Demonstration Town Project

Economy

- a) Planning - Local Development Framework Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options consultation.

Health and Leisure

- a) Four X Biking, climbing and walking

Resources

- a) Allotment Strategy

4. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended several meetings of the Durham and Darlington Fire Authority, including the meeting which set the Budget for the Fire Authority for the coming financial year.

I also attended the Local Government Association Fire Conference as a delegate on behalf of the service in Manchester on the 9th and 10th March 2010.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio