
**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 Management Plan Update

- (i) A number of projects have been identified within Operational buildings to deliver energy savings, including installation of Building Management Systems in the Town Hall, altering the running times of the current systems and the consideration of pool covers at the Dolphin Centre. The Server Virtualisation project currently being undertaken by Xentrall will deliver significant carbon savings. It will be possible to quantify these savings in 2011.
- (ii) In addition to the physical works being undertaken, a number of measures are being pursued to ensure that carbon management becomes embedded within the decision making processes of the Council. An awareness raising programme for staff continues to be developed and delivered.
- (iii) The Council is currently pursuing the case for a Solar PV array on the roof of the Town Hall, in conjunction with the North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NEIEP).

- (b) **Covenant of Mayors** - We approved the Darlington's Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for submission to the European Union, following this Council's commitment to producing a SEAP through the signing of the 'Covenant of Mayors' in February 2009. The Covenant of Mayors supports the delivery of the Darlington Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan; supports the national policy context and a commitment in the Climate Change Act to reduce CO2 emissions; and will support progress against performance indicators NI185, NI186 and NI187.

- (c) **Waste Management** – The new waste treatment plant has now been operating for just over a year and performance continues to improve. Prior to the new contract commencing, the Council had a combined recycling and composting rate of 27%. In the first quarter of this financial year, April to June, this had increased to 45.5%. The amount of municipal waste sent to landfill prior to the contract commencing was 62.8%. Again, for the first quarter of this financial year, this has fallen to 18.5%.

The new waste treatment, recycling and disposal contract has delivered significant improvements in the Council's waste management practices. We will continue to see improvements in recycling and composting performance and the amount of waste being landfilled will continue to reduce.

- (d) **Local Food Agenda** – I attended by very successful launch of the Let’s Grow Initiative at the Clervaux Trust Café in Coniscliffe Road on 22nd October. I also intend to be present at the Community Tree Planting event on 13th November at Lingfield Point (which takes place after this report goes to print). I will try and provide a verbal update for Council on this project.
2. On 28 October I Chaired the Greener Darlington Theme Group. The focus of the meeting was on the revision of the Darlington Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Since the original Strategy and Action Plan were approved in 2007 the climate change agenda has moved on, with new National and local targets for CO2 reduction being set. The meeting briefly considered this changing landscape, and the progress that has been made towards implementing the current Plan. The Group considered key issues going forward and concentrated on actions which could be undertaken to influence CO2 reduction, across the areas of Business, Housing, Transport, Local Environment, Communication and Awareness Raising.
- On 12th October I gave a presentation on the local authority’s work on sustainability to the Greener Network group with eVOLution. There was a lively discussion afterwards, and I have agreed to several follow-up meetings to discuss fresh approaches the Council and its partners might take.
- Of particular note, eVOLution have created a new section of their website devoted to a Green Directory, which promotes local businesses which can help us reduce our carbon footprint. It’s well worth a look, and it would be good if members could promote it via their newsletters – the address is <http://www.evolutiondarlington.com/pages/directories/green-directory.php>
3. On 18th November I attended a meeting of the HE-AT project in Bradbury House. As this meeting takes place after the report goes to print I will provide a verbal update for Council.
4. 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) Woodland Road Cycle Lane Provision Study, Greenbank Road to Woodland Road Roundabout.
- b) Whinfield Road/Whinbush Way pedestrian and cyclist provision Study
- c) Green Lane Phase 2 cyclist and pedestrian link
- d) Safer Routes to School
- e) Road Safety Training – cyclists, pedestrians and school activities
- f) School Travel Plans
- g) Community Rail Partnership
- h) North East Active Travel
- i) Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative
- j) Third Local Transport Plan
- k) Plugged in Places

Neighbourhood Services

- a) Street Scene – Route optimisation
- b) Beaumont Hill Affordable Housing – including six homes built to Code for Sustainable Homes level 5
- c) Local Authority New Build Programme – including rainwater harvesting and photovoltaics
- d) Energy efficiency contract awarded

Fire Authority

5. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended a Full Meeting of Durham and Darlington Fire Authority on 11th November. I also attended a half-day session devoted to Neighbourhood and Community Engagement, which will be particularly crucial as budget discussions develop.

I have also met with Senior Fire Authority staff to discuss how Durham and Darlington could develop capacity in the community to ensure that fire safety work continues, especially amongst the most vulnerable groups. A trail scheme is being take forward in Easington, and it would seem that we could learn a great deal from other fire authorities such as Cumbria. I will produce further updates on this issue for Council as the agenda moves ahead.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio