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**UPDATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member –Councillor Veronica Copeland,  
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio**

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

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of progress to date on Darlington's response to Climate Change and to consider a list of actions being carried out by the Council which could form part of the Climate Change Action Plan currently being prepared.
2. A range of other issues are being examined to take the Council's commitment to help address Climate Change further. This report simply lists things already being done; further reports will be brought on other actions as they progress.

**Information and Analysis**

***Background***

3. In September 2006, Darlington's Climate Change Strategy was supported at Cabinet. The Strategy, and the Darlington Declaration, commit the Council to producing a Climate Change Action Plan.
4. The Darlington Partnership has supported the development of a Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy, and the Council has contributed to funding a fixed term post to develop the sub regional strategy and to provide technical expertise to the Tees Valley authorities in developing their own strategies and action plans.
5. The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy was supported at Cabinet in April 2007. This Strategy represents a high level, comprehensive approach to documenting the current situation in the Tees Valley. It also commits the sub region to achieving both short term and long term carbon dioxide emissions targets:
  - (a) A minimum 8.75% reduction below 2000 levels from 2006-2012.
  - (b) A further minimum 27% reduction from 2012-2030.
6. These targets are cumulative over the whole of the Tees Valley sub region and over the time period of the strategy. This means that whilst action is needed in each of the local authority areas, it is not the sole responsibility of the individual authority to reach these emission reduction targets as there are nine Partners in the Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership (TVCCP).

7. Working in conjunction with the Environment Agency, the Partnership has been able to disaggregate emissions from industry from Local Authority area sub-totals, ensuring that the Environment Agency has the remit, through national legislation, to achieve emissions reduction within industry.

### ***Darlington Climate Change Action Plan***

8. The Darlington and Tees Valley Climate Change strategies provide the framework for producing an action plan. A vital part of any strategy or action plan is to have an accurate inventory for a baseline year. The baseline year for this action plan is 2000, which is in line with the national baseline. Using the Tees Valley Emissions Inventory (TVEI) and the Emissions Reporting Protocol the baseline for Darlington has been established. Baseline emissions have been estimated for housing, commercial, and industrial and transport sectors using data that is published by DTI, DEFRA and the Environment Agency for all local authorities. Waste data was calculated from data collected by Darlington Borough Council.
9. Consultation is essential in developing an action plan as it enables everyone to get involved and have an input into what should be included and prioritised. Consultation on the Climate Change Action Plan has taken place alongside consultation on the new Sustainable Community Strategy. This has included public consultation events, facilitated workshops, and has been open to all sectors across Darlington.
10. Over a thousand people have given suggestions and views on how to make Darlington better. All of these views together with the findings from the Darlington Partnership Enquiry Groups have been collated. Climate Change has been identified as one of the key issues to be considered as part of the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy.
11. On 5 July 2007 a Climate Change event was held at the Town Hall at which guest speakers included Adrian Hilton, Regional Climate Change Co-ordinator, a representative from the Environment Agency and Emma Pryke of Energy Savings Trust. At the event Members were invited to attend to discuss how the Council, through its Scrutiny Committees, could undertake relevant reviews within their remits and feed back their findings for inclusion in the Darlington Climate Change Action Plan.
12. Darlington Partnership hosted an Eco Footprinting Event in November. Representatives from all sectors of the community were invited to take part in workshop discussions around varying policy scenarios relating to Housing, Transport and Food, the three main categories comprising Darlington's Eco Footprint. The outcomes from discussions at this event will be fed into the draft Action Plan, which will then be open for consultation.

### ***Current Work***

13. In the local response section of the Darlington Climate Change Strategy, examples of some of the actions being undertaken in Darlington to tackle the cause of climate change are outlined.
14. An initial draft list of 'What the Council is already doing on climate change' is being put together. These actions are discussed in more detail below.

### ***Energy Policy***

15. The Council has a fully adopted Energy Policy and action plan which was approved in July 2005 and outlined the Council's targets to reduce energy consumption.

### ***Leading Edge Energy Efficiency Project***

16. The main objectives of the project are to review and implement practical measures to reduce energy usage within all Council owned and operated buildings. In this way the Council can lead by example in reducing the carbon footprint of its own buildings.

### ***Key Account Management***

17. The Energy Savings Trust approached Darlington Council in Spring 2007, offering to undertake a Sustainable Energy review of the council's operations and services. The outcome of the review is recommendations are made as to how the Council can tackle climate change through sustainable energy management. It is envisaged that these recommendations will be incorporated into the Darlington Climate Change Action Plan.
18. Together with the Leading Edge Energy Efficiency Project, the review will identify key areas where the Council can reduce the carbon footprint of its own operations and enhance further its commitment to help tackle climate change.

### ***School Energy Audits***

19. TADEA (Tees and Durham Energy Advice) have completed energy audits for all school buildings to identify energy saving opportunities.

### ***Council Building Energy Audits***

20. TADEA are currently commissioned to undertake energy audits, similar to those completed for schools, for all other council owned and operated buildings.

### ***Green Team/Champions***

21. The Green Team/Green Champions initiative has been revitalised. 12 volunteers have been recruited to date, with the recruitment process continuing in December's Flyer. The Green Champions will link closely with the awareness raising element of the Leading Edge Energy Efficiency project. It is anticipated that a number of targeted campaigns will be co-ordinated into a programme for action.

### ***Local Development Framework***

22. Within the Core Strategy Issues and Options document there are a number of references to climate change, including renewable energy targets, energy efficiency standards of new homes and general sustainability of new developments as a whole. In addition, a Design supplementary planning document is being prepared, which will set out the sustainable building standards for all new development in the Borough. The Housing Corporation have published new Design and Quality guidance (April 2007) for all new affordable housing funded through them. This includes more rigorous and enhanced standards for new build affordable housing which contributed towards energy efficiency and reduced carbon

footprint – available on the Housing Corporation website.

### ***Local Transport Plan (LTP)***

23. The Darlington LTP encompasses many of the aims to reduce emissions from transport. It sets out actions which will lead to increased use of sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling, public transport).

### ***Local Motion***

24. The initiative encourages residents, schools and local businesses to walk, cycle, use public transport and car share wherever possible when making a journey in and around Darlington. This in turn is reducing substantially the level of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. A partnership-based Enquiry Group is currently looking at whether Local Motion should continue past the end of the DfT demonstration funding, and if so in what form and how it might be funded.

### ***Travel Planning for Businesses***

25. The Transport team has worked closely with local businesses in Darlington to develop Travel Plans to promote more sustainable ways to travel.

### ***Biodiesel in Council Fleet***

26. During 2005 more than 200 council vehicles switched to greener fuel. All of the Council's diesel engines are now using biodiesel, which is a blend of mineral oil, low sulphur diesel and plant oils. This fuel emits lower levels of greenhouse gases.

### ***Procurement***

27. The Council procures 100% Green Energy.

### ***Housing Improvements – Tees Valley Energy Savers***

28. Darlington Council have had a close working relationship with TADEA for many years. The result of which has been the promotion of several schemes offering low or no cost loft and cavity wall insulation to residents. These schemes have been funded through the national Energy Efficiency Commitment, which requires utility providers to allocate a certain level of funding each year to support local insulation schemes. It is also funded through Regional Housing Board funding (SHIP2) in 2006-08 of £100k.

### ***Warm Front Grant***

29. Darlington Council has undertaken joint promotions of Warm Front grants. These provide energy saving measures in domestic properties.

### ***Home Energy Conservation Act***

30. Darlington Council has a statutory duty to collect data relating to home energy across the Borough. This data is collated and reported to DEFRA to give year on year CO2 reductions

as a result of energy efficiency measures.

### ***School Travel Planning***

31. The Transport Team have been working with many schools across Darlington to develop individual school travel plans for each of them. These plans put in place actions to encourage more sustainable forms of travel to and from school.

### ***Eco Schools Work***

32. The Eco Schools programme is a national initiative that encourages schools to look at their environmental performance. Topics covered include water, recycling, energy, and litter. At present there are 23 schools in Darlington registered with the scheme.

### ***Countryside Team***

33. There are clear links between biodiversity and tackling the causes and effects of climate change. Enhancing local biodiversity, through tree planting and planning through the Green Infrastructure Strategy will improve the quality of the local environment. This may encourage more sustainable forms of travel, as sites would be more accessible.

### ***Eco Footprint***

34. One of the recommendations of Enquiry Group 5, Environment, was that Eco Footprinting be incorporated into the Sustainable Community Strategy. This would provide an indicator allowing the measurement of Darlington's impact on the environment.

### ***Recycling and Waste***

35. Promoting recycling reduces the amount of waste going to landfill, which reduces the production of methane produced by decomposition of waste. Methane is the most harmful greenhouse gas. The Council is in the final stages of awarding a contract that will divert waste from landfill and increase recycling.

### ***Real Nappies***

36. The Real Nappy Incentive Scheme will contribute to reducing the amount of waste going to landfill by encouraging parents to use re-usable alternatives.

### ***Business and Climate Change***

37. The Economic Regeneration Team promote environmental sustainability to local business.

### ***Adaptation***

38. There are adaptation measures in place as a result of statutory Emergency Planning in relation to flood and other extreme events. Many of the Climate Change events to be experienced in the next 10-20 years are irreversible, therefore there is a clear need for adaptation measures.

## **Conclusions**

39. The Darlington Climate Change Action plan provides the mechanism for co-ordinating and integrating all of the good work being done in relation to climate change. It provides the opportunity to develop new and challenging actions whilst also providing a means by which to quantify these actions in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The actions listed above, which the Council is already taking to tackle Climate Change, can feed into the Action Plan. The Action Plan will also draw on public consultations taking place and on the work of Scrutiny Committees and Darlington Partnership.
40. The report has listed only some of the things that the Council is already doing. A range of other issues are being examined and will be brought forward as they progress.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

41. Consultation has taken place with the public alongside the review of the Community Strategy, through the work of the Darlington Partnership Enquiry Groups and the Scrutiny Committees.
42. Climate Change emerged as a key issue to be considered across Darlington.
43. Future consultation will take place in January 2008 when the draft Climate Change Action Plan is prepared.

## **Legal Implications**

44. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

45. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

## **Council Policy Framework**

46. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

## **Decision Deadline**

47. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

## **Recommendations**

48. It is recommended that:-

- (a) The actions listed above be used as input to the Climate Change Action Plan together with work being undertaken by Scrutiny Committees and Darlington Partnership and with outcomes from public consultations.
- (b) A further report be brought to Cabinet on a draft Action Plan.

## **Reasons**

49. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons: to accord with the Council's commitment to tackle causes and effects of Climate Change as set out in the Darlington and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy.

**Richard Alty**  
**Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

## **Background Papers**

Darlington Climate Change Strategy  
Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy

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