

DARLINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

8th October, 2007

PRESENT – Councillor Copeland (in the Chair); Councillors Robson and York. (3)

APOLOGIES – Councillors G. Cartwright, Jenkinson, Lister, Newall; and Nigel Potter, Brian Denham, Jill Kettlewell and Mr. J.P. Rodwell. (7)

Officers Attending – The Countryside and Rights of Way Officer, the Sustainable Development Officer and the Planning Services Manager within the Department of Development and Environment.

Representing Outside Organisations –

Council for the Protection of Rural England –
Mrs. G. Gibson

Darlington Partnership –
Mr. S. Rose

Durham Wildlife Trust –
Mr. C. Evans

Lesley McGhee –
Friends of Earth

Groundwork West Durham and Darlington –
Ms. Kate Culverhouse

Member of the Public/CPRE –
Mr. A. Winnett

Member of the Public
Dr. A. Britton

Whinbush Residents Group –
Mr K. Fridd

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

2. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Forum held on 25th June, 2007.

IT WAS AGREED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING – With regard to Minute 5/Jun/07, Mr. Rose, Darlington Partnership advised Members of this Forum that feed back had now been received from the Enquiry Groups and priorities have been set from the findings which will be incorporated into the Community Strategy.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members of this Forum on the current work being undertaken on Climate Change.

The submitted report gave details of Darlington's Climate Change Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in September, 2006 with a commitment to producing a Climate Change Action Plan; the work being undertaken by the Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership which aims to develop a sub-regional strategy and support local strategies and actions plans, to set emissions targets and develop an effective emissions reporting protocol and methodology; and the support being give by the Darlington Partnership to the development of a Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy.

The Sustainable Development Officer report that a Regional Climate Change Officer had now been appointed to works towards delivering the Action Plan. She also highlighted actions being taken by this Council workings towards the action plan which included the Leading Edge Energy Efficiency Project which is looking at the Town Hall buildings and schools, Local Motion, the Local Development Framework in respect of renewable energy, and individual work being undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee who will be bringing their findings to a Scrutiny Workshop on Climate Change in December, 2007.

It was also reported that it was intended to bring the draft Action Plan to this Forum for consultation towards the end of March, 2008.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That Members of this Forum support the development of a Climate Change Action Plan.

6. ONE PLANET LIVING – ECO FOOTPRINTING – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the use of Eco Footprinting Analysis as a policy tool.

Eco Footprinting is a tool to measure our ecological performance and how in every day life we impact upon the global environment. It tracks how much individuals, organisations, cities, regions and nations, or humanity as a whole consumes and compares the amount to the resources nature can provide, for example land, water energy and other resources.

The Sustainable Development Officer reported that if all the biologically productive land and sea was divided by the total number of people inhabiting the Earth, the available footprint is 1.8 global hectares (gha) per person, at present the global average is 2.2 gha, however this average masks the huge differences in footprint size between the nations. She also reported that Darlington is a member of the Tees Valley Eco Footprint working group which is looking at ways to take eco footprinting work forward which includes setting targets and headline indicators, adopting a monitoring tool, developing capability for scenario modelling, applying eco footprinting to community strategies, informing policy development, awareness raising of personal footprints, community projects and school based initiatives.

Resources and Energy Analysis Programme (REAP) software is a highly sophisticated model that helps policy makers to understand and measure the environmental pressures associated with human consumption. In 2006, the Environment Agency commissioned the Stockton Environment Institute to produce a Tees Valley report (also previously circulated) which showed that the average Tees Valley resident has an ecological footprint of 5.12 gha, this is equivalent to every person using an area of the size of five football pitches to support their lifestyle.

IT WAS AGREED – That the report be received.

7. REAL NAPPIES INCENTIVE SCHEME – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the Real Nappy Incentive Scheme.

The purpose of the incentive scheme is to encourage the use of real nappies as opposed to disposable nappies, which make up 2.6 % of the average household rubbish in a year. Disposable nappies take up to 500 years to decompose and in Darlington disposable nappies account for approximately 1430 tonnes of total waste.

Several local authorities across the UK have set up incentive schemes to encourage parents to convert to using real nappies and these schemes include offering cashback on expenditure of real nappies while other authorities offer free starter packs to parents. Darlington's incentive scheme will offer £25 cash back to residents who register, and parents must be Darlington residents and be able to provide a receipt of purchase of a pack of real nappies and a photocopy of their child's birth certificate.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That this Forum supports the Real Nappy Incentive Scheme be supported.