

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

26 NOVEMBER 2009

**REPORT OF ENVIRONMENT
SELECT COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

Environment – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs Beaumont

CARBON MANAGEMENT

1. Summary

The Environment Select Committee undertook this review in order to identify options for future strategy / policy / service provision that will deliver efficiency savings and sustain / improve high quality outcomes for Stockton Borough residents.

The Committee recognised the important role the Council has for public leadership of this issue and how effective the plans need to be on impacting upon carbon emissions. The Council therefore needs to play an effective social leadership role in order to influence external partners and champion carbon reduction.

In addition the Committee wanted to examine and identify any opportunities to reduce the costs of the Council's energy bill.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended to Cabinet that:

- R1 Officers investigate the possibility of starting or supporting a local carbon offsetting scheme ensuring that any monies are retained in the borough or failing that within the Tees Valley.
- R2 A Carbon budget pilot scheme is introduced to explore the practicalities and potential benefits of introducing such a scheme on a Council wide basis and an evaluation report be produced after one full year's carbon budgeting, bringing forward recommendations on the feasibility of scheme across all Council's services.
- R3 The principles set out in the Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement Strategy are endorsed and that all aspects of sustainability including environmental and carbon reduction issues be integrated into each stage of the procurement cycle from necessity of need to award of contract.
- R4 The work of the sub-regional and regional procurement groups in using sustainability criteria when contracting for supplies and services be endorsed.
- R5 In order to identify strengths and weaknesses within schools a report be compiled so that all schools were identified showing their level of commitment to the carbon reduction strategy.

- R6 Options are developed to consider the relocation of the Energy Advice Centre to The Shambles, or a more prominent position, to increase public awareness. If the centre can not be relocated then it should be clearly signposted from Stockton High Street to its current location. Also the role of contact centres in providing additional energy advice services be explored.
- R7 An audit of all Stockton Schools is carried out to identify where mechanical ventilation and air conditioning is used and a plan to replace with natural ventilation be developed.
- R8 All council new build and refurbishment should aim for BREEAM excellent rating or the nearest appropriate achievable efficiency.
- R9 An action plan be drawn up for the refurbishment of SBC buildings to improve the DEC rating as soon as possible.
- R10 The investigation of using SBC community centres as community education facilities to show energy saving and micro generating technologies.
- R11 Publicity is given for the measures used in new and refurbished council buildings in order to stimulate interest in the technologies for both domestic and commercial properties.
- R12 Developers applying to build in Stockton Borough should be advised of, and adhere to, the requirements contained in the Core Strategy on Sustainable Living. Planning consideration should also be given regarding the orientation, layout and material use so that buildings will have the lowest carbon impact.
- R13 The possibility of introducing wireless connectivity and e-readers for councillors and officers attending meetings to reduce the amount of printing required for meetings be explored.
- R14 SBC lobby bodies such as government departments and the Local Government Association to make conferences and seminars available to view online including documentation.
- R15 A concerted effort be made to encourage greater use of phone & video/web conferencing to cut down on business travel.
- R16 The Workwise scheme, allowing appropriate staff to work from home, be increased as much as possible to reduce the number of car journeys and the carbon output in council buildings.
- R17 The Workwise programme address any unfairness that might arise when exporting the carbon footprint and associated costs to council employees.
- R18 A strategy for ICT across the council leads to greater efficiencies and more effective management of the carbon emissions including the use of shared printers and purchasing equipment at the minimum required specification.
- R19 The introduction of an energy saving strategy across all Stockton's schools to ensure energy saving approaches are taken for all non-networked items of technology (i.e. whiteboards, non-networked computers, projectors etc).
- R20 The specification to procure bidders to form a Local Education Partnership to deliver the Building Schools for the Future programme is drafted to ensure that the most carbon efficient ICT systems are provided and maintained under a managed service agreement.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

In order to further improve Stockton Council's position as a local leader within the climate change agenda and assist the reduction of carbon emissions from council buildings.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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not be relocated then it should be clearly signposted from Stockton High Street to its current location. Also the role of contact centres in providing additional energy advice services be explored.

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DETAIL

1. The Government wants to encourage and empower local authorities to take additional action in tackling climate change, where they wish to do so. It believes that people should increasingly be able to look to their local authority not only to provide established services,

but also to co-ordinate, tailor and drive the development of a low carbon economy in their area.

2. The Government's ambition for new public sector buildings to be zero carbon from 2018 and that all new schools will be zero carbon by 2016. In addition, over the next fifteen years, all secondary schools and up to 50% of primary schools will be refurbished to be better adapted to climate change and have lower carbon footprints. Schools nationally are responsible for 15% of public sector carbon emissions arising from energy use in school buildings, school travel and transport, the procurement of goods and services and the production of waste in schools.
3. Stockton Borough Council is part of the Tees Valley Climate Change partnership, which aims to tackle climate change in the most efficient way through sharing resources and efficient sub-regional collaboration on cross-boundary issues. The Council accounts for 2 per cent of carbon emissions in the borough which although is not a significant percentage overall is considered high as the Council is not a manufacturing organisation.
4. Participation in the local authority carbon management programme sends out a clear message that the Council is committed to reducing its contribution to climate change and is utilising resources responsibly. Since joining the programme there have been a number of additional drivers to take action to reduce our carbon emissions. The most significant being the impending carbon reduction commitment which is in effect a tax on carbon emissions if we do not achieve savings year on year. This is likely to be £12 per tonne starting in 2011 but likely to rise in later years of the programme.
5. A recent addition to building regulations is the Display Energy Certificate (DEC) Rating (A to G). DEC's have been introduced to raise public awareness of the actual energy use and energy efficiency of the buildings they visit. A DEC certificate presents the actual energy use of a building on an A-G scale where A is the most energy efficient and G is the least. Over 60% of Stockton Borough Council buildings and 70% of Stockton Borough schools are rated D to G.
6. The Committee was interested to gather evidence concerning the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the Council's ability to reduce its carbon footprint. ICT has been used to automate many functions and processes within the Council and this has helped to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of our services. However, it can be argued that this has had a detrimental impact on the environment and also on the organisations running costs. All of this computing power consumes energy and thus increases our Carbon footprint. The challenge is to reduce this relatively large carbon footprint by implementing measures aimed at improving the ICT environment so that it is managed in a more ecologically friendly way.
7. Video conferencing was of interest to Members particularly to reduce the amount of travelling to and from conferences which tend to be placed in the south of England. The Committee was introduced to the concept of 'Webinars' which mixes available technology. Presentations can be viewed on-line with the participants to the seminar based in their office. This has added benefits in that little or no cost is incurred and no travelling is necessary. In addition, the feasibility of using video conferencing facilities at key locations within Stockton BC offices is being examined. This will potentially reduce the demand for travel for officers needing to attend meetings and this reduces our carbon footprint.
8. The Committee shares the seriousness with which Stockton Council is treating its carbon management responsibilities and as a result of this review became a staunch advocate of the carbon reduction agenda.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

6. An estimated cost of £20,000 was given for video conferencing equipment. The cost could be recouped from savings to travel and subsistence costs.
7. The introduction of wireless connectivity and e-readers would have an initial financial outlay but this could be offset by continued savings of printing costs.

Legal

8. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

9. This scrutiny report is categorised as low to medium risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Environment

10. Tackle Climate Change – Reduce CO2 emissions from Council buildings and deliver the Climate Change Action Plan and Carbon Management Programme
11. To assist making Stockton a cleaner, greener place to live, work and visit.

Community Safety and Well-Being

12. No significant impact

Health

13. No significant impact

Economic Regeneration

14. No significant impact

Education and Lifelong Learning

15. No significant impact

Arts and Culture

16. No significant impact

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

17. The EIA has a neutral effect as it has no direct impact across the diversity strands. A copy of the impact assessment has been placed in the Members' Library.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

18. No specific consultation exercise was undertaken.

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Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Not ward specific

Property

None