

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 29th June, 2009.

Present: Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg (Chairman), Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mick Womphrey

Officers: M Chicken, S Calvert (DNS), G Birtle and Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: No other persons were present

Apologies: Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Bill Woodhead

ENV 9/09 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Gardner declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to the Review of Carbon Management due to working for Ford Motor Company.

ENV 10/09 **Minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2009**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2009.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st June 2009 be approved and forwarded to Council for consideration.

ENV 11/09 **Review of Carbon Management**

Members were advised that the local authority carbon management programme had been developed by the carbon trust and provided technical and change management support to help local authorities realise carbon savings.

A target of 25% carbon saving by 2013 had been adopted, based upon both the experience of other local authorities in previous phases of the programme and from the information supplied by the Council's project team relating to actions that were planned or expected to happen over the next five years.

Members requested that they received minutes of the project group's meetings.

The scope of the project included schools, leisure facilities, council administrative buildings, libraries, the fleet, business mileage, and street lighting. As the carbon impact of our waste management strategy was highly complex it was subject to a separate review process. However, it was expected that carbon 'expenditure' would be a major consideration in determining waste management strategies and would add to the Councils overall target.

Tristar homes had not been included in the scope of this programme as there were other drivers and programmes in place to improve the energy efficiency of the social housing stock.

The Carbon Management Programme had links to, and would contribute towards targets and objectives within:

- The Stockton on Tees Climate Change Action
- The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy
- Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2021
- Asset Management Plan
- Building Schools for the Future
- Procurement Strategy
- The Corporate Travel Plan

A cross-service project team was established, including membership from Tees Active. This group had brought together the necessary information to form the baseline position in terms of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's carbon emissions and the Council's energy costs as well as the following:

- Developed a project plan with objectives, deliverables, governance and some potential opportunities for energy savings;
- Setting the target of 25% carbon reduction by March 2013, from the 2005/06 baseline;
- An innovative awareness campaign including a draft communications strategy, considered an example of excellence by the Carbon Trust.

Quarterly progress reports were considered by the corporate management team with annual reports presented to Cabinet before submission to the carbon trust and to the Salix finance organisation primarily to record carbon savings and spend on projects.

Since joining the carbon management programme there had been a number of additional drivers to take action to reduce our carbon emissions. The most significant being the impending carbon reduction commitment which was in effect a tax on carbon emissions if the Council did not achieve savings year on year. This was likely to be £12 per tonne starting in 2011 but was likely to rise in later years of the programme.

The comprehensive area assessment was looking much more closely at the Council's use of natural resources and having a carbon management plan as well as a sustainable procurement strategy with measurable impacts on carbon emissions was likely to put the council in a good position.

The new national indicator NI 185 which measured the carbon emissions from our operations was included within the local area agreement and as such set very clear targets for reduction over the next few years.

There was also a new national indicator NI 194, which measured the air quality impact from the Council's operations and looked at not only the carbon emissions but also the oxides of nitrogen emitted from vehicles and boiler plant. Set backs had been encountered on the supply of some equipment where companies had gone into receivership such as those supplying electric vehicles.

Members requested that all Community Centres be included in the programme and were advised that it was a five year plan so alterations to the plan were expected. Members also suggested that small companies who wished to test their carbon reducing equipment could install and test them in community centres.

Officers were requested not to remove waste from the carbon management programme and although difficult to monitor Officers had not rejected the principle of monitoring trade waste.

Members queried what Stockton Council were doing to ensure that new schools were carbon neutral i.e. building, lighting and heating. Members were advised that building regulation would change and become more stringent.

Members observed that a Carbon Reduction Officer would be going into secondary schools but not primary schools; however Members were advised that this was not the case as all schools were visited.

Members suggested other sources of energy such as ground source heating which was used in Conyers and other schools already and the utilisation of the River Tees.

The Chair proposed that an additional Environment Select Committee meeting be organised for the sole discussion of Schools and carbon reduction which Members agreed.

Member's queried what Stockton Borough Council planned to do to reduce vehicle mileage and were advised that a target of 5% reduction was planned by the use of robust measures. It was suggested that Stockton Council could use pool cars which would be used by employees who would be allowed to take them home and would reduce the need for their own cars, thus reducing the number of cars on the road. Members felt that more could be done to encourage cycling to work.

Members suggested that Trade Union representatives could be encouraged to be 'Green Ambassadors'.

Members discussed sites which could be used for renewable energy within the Borough. Members also queried the payback time for wind turbines and were advised that they were 6 to 7 years but one turbine provided approximately 60% saving for one school.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. An additional meeting would be organised to discuss carbon reduction in schools.

**ENV
12/09**

Work Programme

- To prepare questions for witnesses attending the next meeting**
- To review the project plan in respect of the current review**

Members considered the work programme.

The meeting scheduled for 15th July would be used to discuss carbon reduction

in schools. As well as Council Officers Members wished to invite utility representatives for the schools

The meeting for 3rd August would be used to consider Information Technology issues and its impact on energy usage.

CONCLUDED that utility representatives and Council Officers be invited to the meeting on 15th July to discuss carbon reduction in schools.

**ENV
13/09**

Chairs Update

The Chair informed Members on the progress of the cemeteries review that had taken place.

Care For Your Area had begun returfing, replanting and personalisation in the old children's area of Durham Road Cemetery, where no-one had responded to letters regarding the tidying up of the area. It was hoped that once parents who tended the graves of their children saw the sympathetic improvements to the sites, they would want the Council to improve the sites their children were laid to rest.

It was hoped that the Cabinet Member for Environment would be able to secure funding to tackle the rats and pigeons issue in Stockton Town Centre.

CONCLUDED that the Chairs update be noted.