

**Minutes
Environment Scrutiny Panel**

**19 September 2007
5.30 p.m.
Abbey Leisure Centre, Pity Me**

Present: Councillors Wolstenhome (in the Chair), Carr, Colledge, Crooks, Kelly, Martin, Mavin, Mitchell, Moderate, Simpson, Turnbull and Wilkinson

Also in Attendance: Councillor Thompson.

Mr Jonathan Elmer – Sustainable Development Manager, City of Durham

Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 July 2007

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

Review – Recycling, Internal Waste Management

The City of Durham's Sustainable Development Manager was in attendance to a bring Members up-to-date as regards steps towards best practise for internal waste management. An information sheet outlining the main points to be discussed was circulated to Members at the meeting (attached at Appendix A).

It was explained that currently the City of Durham only recycles office paper, the Durham Company currently collected this and they sell this on, i.e. they are running this as a commercial interest. The City of Durham does not pay for this service from the Durham Company. The Council would hope to look towards also recycling glass, cans and card in addition to office paper.

"Office Champions" would be selected to help raise and maintain the profile of best practise for recycling within different sections, with these Officers to be picked by Department Heads. Instructions and training would come from the Sustainable Development Manager, and the process would be undertaken in conjunction with the Street Scene Manager and the Support Services Managers.

However, Members were made aware that whilst waste office paper was an issue, it was not the only type of waste produced. Indeed, some Departments may have specific waste to their areas, e.g. Property Services may have wood and metal waste that may be recyclable.

Questions from Members – Internal Waste Management

Members asked whether it could be possible to have whichever company collects the waste to shred the documents as necessary, as it may not be an efficient use of City of

Durham resources to have staff shredding paper. It was felt this was something that could be looked at, but in certain areas there was a need to keep a strict control on confidential and personal information the Council holds and that in some instances it may be necessary to shred "in-house".

Members also asked whether there was a perceived timescale for the implementation of some of the measure that the Sustainable Development Manager had put forward. Members were informed that it could be possible to begin the reviewing of office waste within a few months given sufficient support by Office Champions.

Another query Members had was whether it would be cost effective to operate a cheaper service by working with other Authorities within the nearby area in regards to office waste. The Panel was reminded that the City of Durham did not pay was the waste collection service, and therefore no cashable saving could be made in this regard.

As this process of looking at internal waste management was at an initial stage, it was felt that it may be beneficial to look at this particular issue in 6-8 months time to check on progress.

Some Members felt that it may be preferable to have a policy in place that must be adhered to rather than "championing" the subject. Whilst this was an option, it was felt that it would be more effective to raise awareness and motivate staff to want to minimise waste as this would build in the behaviour into all aspects of their work.

New Scrutiny Topic – Climate Change

The City of Durham's Sustainable Development Manager also gave Members an overview of the proposals relating to methods of reducing the impact the City of Durham may have on Climate Change (attached at Appendix B).

The City of Durham had recently signed up to the Nottingham Declaration. By signing, Authorities pledge to actively tackle climate change in your area and work with others to reduce emissions country-wide. Also, the main City of Durham building had been audited for energy efficiency by the Carbon Trust. In addition, a report had been submitted to Cabinet outlining the commitment to the development of a Climate Change Strategy.

Initially a self assessment of would need to be conducted using established tools and models. Records go back to 2004, and therefore a trend for the 2004-2007 period hopefully can be established and then actions planned as required.

One area that could be explored is that of Community Exemplar Projects would involve 6-10 houses sharing heating and electricity generation.

Also through the Local Development Framework, in may be possible to encourage use of embedded technology, e.g. solar panels, ground heat pumps etc.

Also it should be noted that when considering Sustainable Procurement, there needs to be a balance between Gershon efficiencies (a 5% year-on-year saving) and sustainable development.

The Sustainable Development Manager informed Members that he would develop a Sustainable Development Policy for the City of Durham, in consultation with Members and Heads of Service.

There may be a possibility of securing cheaper energy through joint procurement via NEPO, the North East Purchasing Organisation. However, it may be possible to use the large joint buying power of the Organisation to influence how the energy is produced, i.e. an increased percentage sourced from sustainable / renewable sources.

It was noted that the Council's transport fleet already uses a percentage of bio-diesel within the fuel, this could be increased in the future. Also TranMan software has been sourced that can help to plan more efficient routes, helping to reduce carbon emissions.

The Sustainable Development Manager will produce an action plan associated and then produce a draft strategy (with some estimated associated costs) which would then go to Members for approval. Therefore, it maybe necessary for the Sustainable Development Management to take a more advisory role in relation to some functions to enable more focus on these increasingly important Climate Change issues.

Questions from Members – Climate Change

Members questioned whether the methods of shared energy generation between 6-10 houses could present a problem as regards repairs, i.e. if the shared system breaks down rather than a single individual properties being without heat and light, 6-10 properties would be.

Members agreed that the City of Durham does ensure that new buildings meet energy efficiency standard through Part L compliance, monitored through Building Control.

Councillor Martin made the Panel aware of work undertaken by a Task and Finish Group at the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) as regards Climate Change. The Sustainable Development Manager made a note of the information.

Note: *Councillor Thompson left the meeting at 6.20 p.m.*

Any Other Business

There were no further matters to discuss.

Actions for the next meeting:-

- Further discussions with the Sustainable Development Manager regarding the progression of the Scrutiny Topic.

The Meeting terminated at 6.40 p.m.

