

**Minutes
Environment Scrutiny Panel**

**14 November 2007
5.30 p.m.
Abbey Leisure Centre, Pity Me**

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

Also in Attendance: Councillors Kellett, Marsden and Wilkes.

Mr Jonathan Elmer – Sustainable Development Manager, City of Durham

Mr Gavin Scott – Policy and Regeneration Manager, City of Durham

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mitchell.

Minutes

The minutes of the 17 October 2007 were agreed subject to the amendment to Agenda Item No.4, paragraph four; it was to be amended to read:

“Also the Chair suggested that new build properties should confirm to the standards as set out in the HIPs”.

Draft Report – Review of Fly Tipping, Recycling and Litter Pickers

The Panel agreed that subject to the amendments made at the meeting the report of the Review of Fly Tipping, Recycling and Litter Picker be sent to Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Climate Change

The Sustainable Development Manager gave the Panel an update on the Council's position on Climate Change. He reminded Members that a report was ratified by Cabinet 18 July 2007, which committed the Council to produce a strategy; this is a high level commitment from the Council.

Presently, the Sustainable Development Manager is carrying out an audit of the Council's own omissions and comparing this with other Councils.

Note: 5.35 p.m. Councillor Wilkes joined the meeting.

The Sustainable Development Manager described that he was currently auditing existing levels of Carbon Emissions both stemming from the Council's own activity and that of the wider community. Checks were to be made on energy consumption levels and to calculate amounts of omissions from land fill. Closer inspection of the fuel consumption of the Council's fleet vehicles to establish a base line position and reduce CO₂ omission levels.

Note: 5.50 p.m. Councillor Martin joined the meeting.

The Sustainable Development Manager informed Members that gathering information had been difficult prior to 2004/5, as certain quantities e.g. fuel consumption were not recorded prior to this date. Therefore the Council's baseline position would be taken from 2005/6.

The Sustainable Development Manager then described the process developed for Self Assessment of council services, to identify means of achieving further emissions reductions, and reviewed some of the preliminary findings of self assessment. Efficient working practices should be considered to reduce the Council's carbon footprint – looking at a travel plan (how employees travel to and from work); home working, teleconferencing.

The Sustainable Development Manager advised the Panel that a working group would be made up of various senior officers to investigate how the authority could reduce its carbon footprint. Some of the areas which would be investigated would be Estate Management, Procurement, Housing, Planning and Transport.

The Policy and Regeneration Manager reminded the Panel that the Council not only deals with planning applications but, was also the planning authority carrying out planning policy, which was instigated by Government policy. At a regional level, the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) gives key policies on energy use and climate change. The authority is talking to developers to influence them to employ energy reduction methods and embed into applications that 10% of energy comes from renewable sources.

On a local level the authority has the local development framework which looks at suitable area for development using a detailed appraisal and scoring method.

Planning applications are subject to development control policies document and whilst the authority wishes to set out a sequence for a higher percentage of embedded reusable energy many in the development industry resist this to keep costs down. Also another area which compounds the problem is that the developers are not usually the owners of the building. The way to enforce this would be through new restrictions in building regulations.

Members enquired as to how many Council properties had cavity wall insulation and were advised by other Members that all Council properties had cavity and loft insulation and energy efficient central heating boilers. Members did point out that there were properties in the district where the cavity wall insulation could not be carried out as they old properties which had no cavity to fill.

Aerobic Digester

It was decided to allow time for Members to digest the information contained within this item and that it would therefore be discussed at the December Meeting.

Any Other Business

The Chair thanked the both the Sustainable Development Manager and the Policy and Regeneration Manager for their attendance at the meeting and for their informative presentations.

Actions for Next Meeting

- Invite the Building Control Manager to December meeting.

The Meeting terminated at 6.25 p.m.