

**Minutes  
Environment Scrutiny Panel**

**09 January 2008  
5.30 p.m.  
Abbey Leisure Centre, Pity Me**

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

**Also in Attendance:** Councillors Kellett, Marsden and Thompson.

Mr Jonathan Elmer – Sustainable Development Manager, City of Durham

**1. Apologies**

There were apologies for absence received from Councillor Turnbull.

**2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2007**

2.1 Subject to the amendments as set out below, the minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

Item No.3, Para.4

**“From 6 April 2008** a new property cannot...”

Item No.3, Para.5

“New powers **will be** available to Building Control departments...”

Item No.3, replaces Para 11

**“A document “The future of the Code for Sustainable Homes – Making a rating mandatory” produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was issued as a consultation document to relevant stakeholders in July 2007. The Summary of Responses issued in November 2007 refers to a Carbon Improvement of 25% in comparison with the limits within current 2006 regulations. This would be followed up with an improvement of 44% by 2013, and with Zero Carbon being achieved by 2016.”**

Item No.3, Para.14

“Members were informed that the North-East **was embracing** many of the new technologies”

**3. Scrutiny Topic – Climate Change**  
**Witness in Attendance – Mr Jonathan Elmer, Sustainable Development Manager**

- 3.1 The City of Durham's Sustainable Development Manager was in attendance to answer any final questions from Members on issues associated with Climate Change prior to Members finalising their Report.
- 3.2 The Sustainable Development Manager explained the work accomplished so far including an emissions audit and self assessment, largely completed. Also it is noted that new National Performance Indicators include “per capita carbon emissions” and Local Authority carbon emissions, both of which have been included in the Local Area Agreement Priorities Framework. There is now a need to have various Officers across the City of Durham to assess how, if possible, to modify services to reduce carbon emissions.
- 3.3 Within a report to Cabinet, “Climate Change” (*Minute No.113, July 2007*) it was set out that in order to facilitate work to combat the City of Durham’s impact on Climate Change a cross-departmental working group should be set up. Whilst this recommendation within the report was agreed by Cabinet, there was no timescale attached to the setting up of this group. Now that preliminary work has been completed, the Sustainable Development Manager felt that the formation of this working group should be a priority in order to move forward.
- 3.4 Members asked whether it would be beneficial if the Panel were to request regular updates from those Officers who would be involved, to help reinforce the seriousness and urgency of tackling climate change issues. The Sustainable Development Manager suggested that once the relevant Officers were identified, reporting should be monthly to the Climate Change Working Group. Therefore it was felt that in order to help bolster the Working Group that a Senior Officer or a Councillor be made the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group.
- 3.5 Members agreed that Officers should prepare a form of words for recommendations encompassing the abovementioned points and Members would review these at the next meeting.

**4. Information on “Go Warm” formally “Warm Front”**  
**Witness in Attendance – Mr Jonathan Elmer, Sustainable Development Manager**

- 4.1 The Sustainable Development Management informed Members that the City Council was working in partnership with Durham Energy Solutions (DES) to deliver “Go Warm Durham City”. This would entail DES staff going out to properties to perform initial assessments for 3,500 homes across the District by 31 March 2008, with a further 3,000 homes to be assessed over the next two years. Priority cases are determined through the indices of multiple deprivation for the City of Durham area. Priority customers would then receive a detailed household survey and measures fitted where appropriate.

- 4.2 Assessments are paid for by the City of Durham's portion of a £835,000 grant for Durham County area. The works are free to customers who are in receipt of certain benefits. Indeed, advice can be given by DES staff to customers as regards benefits customers may be eligible to that they may not be claiming at that time. These works and materials are paid for by energy providers under statutory obligations.
- 4.3 However, customers not entitled to the works for free may pay a fee of £99 to receive the measures (either cavity wall insulation or a loft insulated to the minimum standard), which is a substantially lower cost than if obtained independently.
- 4.4 The scheme is currently being delivered in the Gilesgate and Pelaw Ward. It was noted that customers can contact Go Warm to ask for an initial assessment, even if they are not within the trial Ward.
- 4.5 Members requested further information to be given as regards which benefits customers would need to be claiming to be eligible for free works. The Sustainable Development Manager said he did not have the exact information to hand, but would forward this to the Clerk for circulation as soon as possible.
- 4.6 It was noted that homes that were energy efficient not only helped to save on bills for those in fuel poverty, but also there is a positive impact on Climate Change if less fuel is burnt to provide heating.
- 4.7 The Panel thanked the Sustainable Development Manager for his attendance and the information he has provided to the Panel.

## **5. Any Other Business**

- 5.1 No further matters of business were raised.

## **6. Actions for the next meeting:-**

- 6.1 Review of the amended Climate Change Report with a mind to forward the agreed Report to the next Scrutiny Committee, 18 March 2008.

The Meeting terminated at 6.00 p.m.

