

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
10 July 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, G.M.R. Howe, B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens and A. Warburton

In Attendance: V. Chapman, A. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, J.E. Higgin, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, K. Thompson and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors P. Gittins J.P. and D.M. Hancock

PAOS.1/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

PAOS.2/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 held on 24th April, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PAOS.3/07 DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Members were presented with details of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Technical Services Manager, the Sustainable Communities Team Leader and the Energy Officer were present at the meeting to explain the Strategy, and answer any queries.

The Committee was informed that the draft Strategy and actions were being presented that day as part of the consultation process. Members comments would be taken into account and considered for incorporation within the Strategy which would then be submitted to Cabinet.

The Strategy covered the background and drivers for change, climate patterns, impact on service delivery, policy context, the role of local authorities, the current situation, aims and objectives and actions needed.

The Strategy was a medium term framework to cover until 2012. It was

a framework for the authority, which needed to lead by example. A Borough-wide Strategy would be prepared the following year.

Members were reminded that at the meeting of Council in June 2007, the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change had been signed. One of the actions within the declaration was to publicly declare, with plans and strategies, the Council's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations.

There was a need to consider how the Council could adapt to climate change, the impact on services and how the impact could be reduced. There was a need to ensure a sustainable infrastructure so that services were able to adapt to change and earlier effective action could be taken.

The Council's aim was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2012 meeting yearly 3% reduction targets to ensure the dependence on finite fossil were reduced. The Council also aimed to fully prepare services and communities for the potential impacts of climate change.

An Action Plan was drawn up to meet those aims and a number of key actions and objectives were identified in the areas of development and planning, housing, transport, sustainable procurement and awareness raising.

In respect of development and planning, the key actions identified were aimed at reducing the impact of development on climate change through the Local Development Framework, incorporating energy from renewable sources in new development and taking account of climate conditions in the design of new development.

The key actions suggested in respect of public buildings and consumption of natural resources were aimed at encouraging energy conservation initiatives and looking at on-site renewable technology for generating electricity.

Housing was the main area where residents could have an impact. The actions in relation to the Housing functions included providing energy efficiency and grants advice, reviewing heating systems in grouped accommodation and regular inspections of the housing stock in relation to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Green space and biodiversity key actions included the development of a green space strategy and incorporating potential climate change impacts into management plans.

In respect of transport key actions related to the Council's Travel Plan and the aim of reducing costs and fuel consumption of the Council's fleet.

Reference was then made to sustainable procurement and the key actions, suggested to achieve value for money whilst achieving the least impact on the community.

To make progress there had to be awareness-raising by creating a

wider knowledge and persuading people to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and the key actions in this area were identified.

It was noted that the Council had a responsibility to ensure that each key action was improved and maximised where appropriate, the overall programme and actions within the strategy were being implemented effectively and that individual actions were meeting strategic objectives and leading Sedgefield Borough Council towards fulfilling their aims.

A query was raised regarding car sharing. In response it was explained that the Council was encouraging staff to car share and had established a Car Sharing Scheme.

Reference was made to partnership working and the need for the Council to work with other organisations and agencies such as the Environment Agency. It was explained that this particular strategy referred to the provision of Council services and did not provide a strategy for the Borough as a whole. The Borough Strategy would be produced the following year when partnership working with such organisations as the Local Strategic Partnership etc., would take place. Working with the Environment Agency would also be linked to the Borough-wide strategy and any specific issues would be dealt with at that time. The Borough Plan would also be a much wider strategy dealing with transport etc.

A query was also raised regarding funding and grants available to carry out the actions. In response it was explained that there were grants available from DEFRA to deal with renewable energy technologies and the Council worked with the Carbon Trust, which was Government funded, to draw up action plans to reduce emissions.

With regard to a query on the aim of all new developments achieving a 10% renewable energy source, it was explained that there were various innovative ways by which developers could meet the requirements. There was a need to work with those responsible for delivery to achieve an outcome which was acceptable.

In respect of targets towards achieving the figures and comparison with other local authorities, it was explained that each local authority compiled data in different ways and therefore comparison was difficult. The Council was meeting targets in most areas and reducing emissions. However, the Council needed to concentrate on electricity consumption. Information was received from other authorities in terms of draft strategies for comment. When the Council's Borough-wide Strategy was released it would be forwarded to other authorities for comment.

In respect of the Waste Management targets for 2007/8 the aim was to recycle 20% of domestic waste. The situation was that the Council was on target to achieve 25%.

In response to a query raised regarding an analysis of the cost of the exercise, it was explained that the cost over and above the salary of the Energy Officer was minimal.

Dealing with a query regarding information on energy ratings of properties, it was explained that there would be a database which would record the energy efficiency of all housing. Information would be gathered from external sources. Software would be used which would allow the information to be assessed on a Ward basis.

Discussion was held regarding capping and whether capital charges would be ringfenced, in respect of Council houses, from the Housing Revenue Account.

- AGREED :*
1. *That the Strategy and Action Plan be commended to Cabinet for approval.*
 2. *That reports be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis in respect of progress.*

PAOS.4/07 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AGREED : *That the Work Programme be approved.*

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237 email: enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk