

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
29 April 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, P. Gittins J.P., Mrs. I. Hewitson,
A. Smith and B. Stephens

In Attendance: Councillors A. Gray, Ms. I. Jackson and Mrs. E.M. Paylor

Apologies: Councillors D.M. Hancock, G.M.R. Howe, B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison,
J. Robinson J.P and A. Warburton

P&A.37/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

P&A.38/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

P&A.39/07 SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY - 6 MONTH UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) in relation to Sedgefield Borough Council's Climate Change Strategy.

It was explained that Stephen McDonald, Energy Officer, was at the meeting to give a presentation in relation to progress being made on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and to answer any questions. (For copy of presentation see file of Minutes).

The Committee was reminded that the Climate Change Strategy had been examined by the Committee at its meeting in July 2007 when it was agreed that a six month update report would be delivered following Cabinet approval of the Strategy. This approval was obtained in October 2007.

The report detailed how the Council was meeting the key actions outlined in the Strategy and progress towards fulfilling the overall aim of an annual 3% reduction of CO₂ emissions.

It was explained that the report focused on steps departments were making to ensure that they were on track to deliver the actions within the Strategy, the identification of barriers and constraints to the successful

delivery of actions and steps which were in place to achieve the actions in 2008/9. It was noted that since the previous report there had been a rationalisation of service delivery and some actions had been removed which would not be achieved bearing in mind timescales and Local Government Review.

The objectives of the Strategy were outlined.

Achievements in relation to reaching objectives on the following areas included:

Development and Planning

Upholding the 10% embedded renewable energy policy for all new developments over 1,000 sq.mts. in the Borough, and the provision of sustainable construction advice

Public Buildings and Consumption of Natural Resources

ICT energy saving measures; the purchase of variable speed drive; energy management, and a new recycling contract had been put in place.

Housing

The delivery of heating and installation projects with partners; improved energy efficiencies within Group Repair Schemes and the installation of replacement boilers with more energy efficient ones within Council houses.

Greenspace and Biodiversity

Planting and maintenance regime which reduced the requirement for plant watering and the development of a greenspace strategy which would help to identify partnerships and resources required for implementation.

Transport

It was noted that with regard to the reduction of emissions from the Council's own fleet, the action had been affected by the implications of Local Government Re-organisation and reprioritisation of workload.

Sustainable Procurement Objective

The introduction of an electronic tendering system and a new agreement regarding the purchase of electricity.

Awareness Raising

Articles had been published regarding more sustainable lifestyles and a range of publicity had been purchased and distributed.

It was noted that there had been gaps in delivery because of Local Government Re-organisation and timescales. However, progress was being made in relation to development and planning, awareness raising and housing.

During discussion of this item reference was made to renewable energy and in particular a feasibility study which had been undertaken on Council's buildings to assess the suitability for renewable energy. It was

explained that the targets set in the feasibility study had been set in 2007 with a timescale set of 2009. The targets had been set before Local Government Review.

A query was also raised regarding Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, which it was explained was a special surface designed to sustainably manage surface water run-off in new developments.

- AGREED :**
1. *That the Committee is satisfied with progress in relation to the Council's Climate Change Strategy.*
 2. *That a further update report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.*

P&A.40/07 LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME – PROGRESS UPDATE

Andrew Megginson, Capital Project Manager, was present at the meeting to outline progress in relation to the Local Improvement Programme (LIP). (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee was reminded that in January 2008 the Committee had considered a presentation in relation to the Local Improvement Programme when it was agreed that a three month update be given.

Members were reminded of the background to the Programme and the allocations which were on an Area Forum basis and the criteria which allocations had to meet.

The issues which were raised at the meeting in January were also identified and included:

- Current performance
- Timescale of project delivery
- Impact of LIP schemes
- Match Funding secured against LIP monies
- Differing levels of activity across Borough
- Consideration of a “cut off” date for new applications
- Issues facing applicants, quotes process, external timescales

Since that time it was noted that there had been a marked increase in project activity with approximately a third of Local Improvement Programme projects submitted within the past six months. There had also been good press coverage of the scheme and an increase in Member involvement within areas and an increase in project activity in Shildon and Newton Aycliffe.

Consideration was also given to a cut-off date for the Programme. It was explained that the Programme was due to finish in March 2009. A date needed to be agreed to allow schemes to be assessed taking into account average turnaround times, Area Forum dates and other factors. Cabinet would consider an appropriate date. That date would then need to be communicated via press/information articles and engagement with Area Forums.

During discussion of this item, a query was raised regarding the types of applications which had been received and whether there was a variation. It was explained that because of the criteria there were a lot of similarities with the schemes relating mainly to refurbishment of existing buildings and outdoor play areas/public space improvements.

The LIP Team also highlighted an increase in the amount of requests to fund new build proposals.

AGREED : That the Committee is satisfied with progress in relation to the Local Improvement Programme.

P&A.41/07 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that nominations were requested for the two Review Groups for each Scrutiny Review Groups relating to this Committee. Scoping meetings would be held towards the end of May.

Reference was also made to a visit to the training facility in Spennymoor which was to be arranged.

AGREED :

- 1. That the Committees Work Programme be approved.*
- 2. That a further update on the Climate Change Strategy be included in the Work Programme.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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