

Cabinet

16th January 2013

Overview and Scrutiny Review :- Reducing the Council's Carbon emissions.



Report of Lorraine O' Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present a report from the Council's Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that looked at the Council's approach to reducing carbon emissions (the report is attached at appendix 2).

Background

- 2 The work programme of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee reflects the five objectives set out in the 'Altogether Greener' section of the Council Plan 2012 – 16. One of these objectives is to mitigate the impact of climate change which will reduce CO₂ emissions in County Durham.
- 3 As a local authority, Durham County Council is well placed to drive and influence carbon emission reductions through the services it delivers and its regulatory and strategic functions and it has been part of the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme since 2009.
- 4 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9th July 2012 agreed to undertake a review of the Council's Carbon Management Programme to assess whether the Council is on course to:
 - a. Reduce CO₂ emissions by a minimum of 40% from the Council's 2008/09 baseline of 105,816 tonnes by 2015.
 - b. Deliver savings in energy costs of at least 20% against business as usual predictions by 2015.
 - c. Quantify the direct carbon emissions from the Council's activities and allocate ownership of those emissions to Service Groupings and services by 2012 to allow emissions reduction targets and carbon budgets to be included in Service Plans and monitored by 2013.
 - d. Create a 'low carbon culture' within the Council by raising awareness, providing formalised training and gaining support from staff and senior management.

- 5 The Committee has considered the Council's Carbon Management Programme, its carbon emissions since 2008/09 and comparisons with other local authorities, energy costs, the capital projects being developed and implemented to help save energy and reduce emissions, the eco-champions network to promote environmentally positive behaviour, the school carbon reduction programme and the progress being made with regard to Service Groupings taking responsibility for their own emissions.

Service Response

- 6 The report has been considered by the Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Service Grouping and the following comment has been received:

'The report reflects very well the positive work that is being undertaken at corporate level.'

Recommendation

- 7 That Cabinet notes the recommendations in the attached report (appendix 2) and formulates a response within the six month period identified in the report for systematic review of the recommendations.

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Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Finance – Prudential borrowing is used to undertake a number of 'invest to save' schemes. Priority is currently being given to those projects which offer the best return on investment. As more projects are delivered typical pay back periods will increase.

Staffing – All staff need to be made aware of the Council's carbon reduction targets, the financial impact of energy use and the savings that can be made by using energy more effectively.

Risk – If projects referred to the report were not undertaken, the Council's energy costs will increase.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of the Scrutiny Review recommendations and is attached at Appendix 3.

Accommodation – Offices are becoming more energy efficient, which will lead to improvements to the internal environment.

Crime and Disorder – none

Human Rights – none

Consultation – none

Procurement – Procurement undertaken in accordance with the Council's Corporate Strategy for Commissioning and Procurement.

Disability Issues – Any disability impacts have been considered through the Equality Impact Assessment which has been undertaken

Legal Implications – The UK Government has prepared legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions.

Council must comply with the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme - a mandatory carbon emissions trading scheme, which commenced in 2010 and applies to almost all local authorities as well as many private companies.