

3 July 2014

**Update: Development of
Renewable Energy Technologies
in County Durham**

**Joint report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and
Economic Development**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The attached Appendix 2 describes the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained within the 'Development of Renewable Technologies in County Durham' Scrutiny review report published in February, 2012.

Background

- 2 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 10th June, 2011 received presentations on the regional growth opportunities in renewable energy technologies and on the development of renewable energy in County Durham. Following the presentations members agreed to include in the Committee's work programme, a scrutiny review regarding the development of renewable energy technologies in County Durham.
- 3 A report detailing the findings and recommendations of the review was submitted to Cabinet on the 29th February, 2012. At that meeting Cabinet agreed the recommendations contained within the review report which included a recommendation for a six monthly update on progress against recommendations contained in the report.
- 4 The last update on the progress against the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Review report was presented to the Committee at the meeting on the 24 October, 2013 and it is now considered timely for a further progress update to be given to the Committee.

Terms of Reference of Review

- 5 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the following terms of reference for the review:

- To review the environmental benefits to County Durham of investing in renewable energy technologies. Renewable energy generation is seen as key to achieving the Council's target of a 40% reduction (742,000 tonnes) in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020.
- To review the benefits to the economy of County Durham of investing in renewable energy. Low carbon economic growth offers major economic opportunities for County Durham. The Council is already supporting local small and medium enterprises in renewable technologies and County Durham has one of only two manufactures of photovoltaic panels in the UK.
- To review the social benefits of renewable energy. With the economic downturn and rising energy prices, fuel poverty is likely to become an even greater challenge for County Durham.

Recommendations of Review

5 The Scrutiny review report made recommendations in respect of:-

- The continued development of the role of the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Team.
- That the Council's Low Carbon Strategy and Sustainable Energy Action Plan be updated to include details of how the Council will promote and facilitate the uptake of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures.
- That developers and house builders be encouraged to attain the higher levels of nationally recognised schemes.
- That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the benefits of the Council's investment in renewable energy technology and the progress in respect of the EU Partnership Project and community efficiency projects.
- That the Committee receives updates and responds where appropriate to consultations in relation to Tariffs for solar PV, Solar PV cost control and Tariffs for non – PV technologies and scheme administration issues.
- That a systematic review of the recommendations contained within the report be undertaken within six months after its consideration by Cabinet.

Current position

6 The attached Action Plan (Appendix 2) provides information on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny review report.

Next steps

- 7 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the systematic review process will receive a further update of progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the review report at a future meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations

- 8 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment upon the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny review report.
- 9 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further report detailing progress made against the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Review report at a future meeting of the Committee.

Background Paper(s)

Development of Renewable Energy Technologies in County Durham Scrutiny Review report – February, 2012.

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Update:Development of Renewable Energy Technologies in County Durham – 24 October, 2013.

Contact: Tom Gorman

Tel: 03000 268027 E-mail: tom.gorman@durham.gov.uk

Author: Diane.Close

Tel: 03000 268141.....E-mail: diane.close@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance –None

Staffing – None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity –An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in respect of the Scrutiny Review recommendations.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act – None

Legal Implications – None