

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP REPORT – DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES IN COUNTY DURHAM

REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONSIDERED BY CABINET ON: 29TH FEBRUARY, 2012

| Review Recommendation | Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation | Resib'ty | Timescale |
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| <p>1) That the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Team continues to develop its role to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise awareness of energy efficiency measures and the opportunities to generate power from renewable energy sources, including the benefits of hydro power from rivers (for example the 7 sites identified on the River Wear). • provide advice and assistance to residents, businesses, town and parish councils and community groups/associations to enable them to benefit from Government initiatives/funding opportunities such as the Renewable heat Incentive, Feed in Tariffs, the Green Deal and the proposed Coastal Communities Fund. • assist the Council in reducing its energy costs through renewable technologies. | <p>The Sustainability and Climate Change Team continue to raise awareness of energy efficiency measures across both housing, community and business sectors. A successful energy awareness project, the 'Big Switch Off' campaign, monitored across a small section of DCC buildings, showed a 12% improvement on energy efficiency in its duration. Hydro-power continues to be at the forefront of renewable energy development, with a 100kW system that would produce up to 500,000kWh/year of renewable electricity in Durham City at Freemans Reach now under construction</p> <p>We continue to assist individuals and Community groups and provide valuable advice and guidance on renewable energy opportunities. We are also working to establish a formal platform for engaging with businesses in partnership with the North East Chamber of Commerce (Durham & Darlington Branch) and Business Durham. This scheme will further develop our links with already pre-forged partnerships allowing a smoother transition in the uptake of energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>DCC has sought to reduce its energy costs by investing in biomass boilers, where appropriate, and paybacks can be expected of between four to six years. To date 8 installations are in use or under development.</p> | <p>Sustainability, Carbon and Climate Change Team.</p> <p>Ian Bloomfield</p> <p>Sustainability, Carbon and Climate Change Team.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| <p>2) 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 within the Council and across the whole of County Durham.</p> | <p>The County Durham Climate Change Strategy and delivery plan now supercedes the Low Carbon Strategy. This Strategy includes plans for all sectors to encourage the uptake of energy efficiency measures and promotion of renewable energy.</p> <p>The Strategy is now in its draft form with a new interim carbon reduction target going to Cabinet in December. It will be out for consultation in January, 2014.</p> <p>The Sustainable Energy Action Plan is an EU requirement of the Covenant of Mayors agreement and is currently under review.</p> | <p>Stephen Mcdonald & Stephen Beresford</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| <p>3) That developers and house builders be encouraged to attain the higher levels of nationally recognised schemes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code for Sustainable Homes for domestic development and • BREEAM (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) for non domestic development. | <p>The government is consulting at present on two key policies that will impact significantly on how local authorities can implement and encourage developers to attain higher sustainability standards.</p> <p>The Housing standards review recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Code for Sustainable Homes is scrapped ○ That local authorities will not be allowed to set higher standards for energy/carbon other than minimum building regulations (Part L) ○ There will be no requirement for any renewable energy technologies at a local level as part of development ○ Consequential improvements will not be included as part of the new building regulations (coming into force on 1 April 2014). ○ The new Part L will require development to have a 6% and 9% improvement in CO2 emissions (on 2010 standards) on domestic and non domestic building respectively. ○ No requirement for builders to use sustainable buildings. <p>Allowable Solutions is the preferred methodology to deal with emissions following the proposed uplift in building regulations due in 2016. Developers from 2016 (in order to attain the new definition of 'zero carbon homes') will be required to pay into an 'offset fund', if they do not meet the proposed standard for their building through improvements to the fabric performance and/or renewables. The current consultation on 'Allowable Solutions' makes it clear that the Government's preferred method is for a central body that developers would pay into and from where</p> | Stephen Mcdonald | Current |

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| | <p>the fund would be distributed for carbon offsetting projects, rather than a local authority led approach which could possibly be more focused on community regeneration and renewable energy schemes.</p> <p>The local authority is likely to see an influx of planning applications in the next 6 months as developers aim to submit before the 1 April deadline, where upon standards will be tightened.</p> <p>The County Durham Plan does contain a set of policies on Sustainable Development (Policy 1) and Design and Sustainability (Policy 16) which sets out what developers must be investigating in order to attain a sustainable development. This currently includes a requirement for BREEAM Very Good for non domestic development.</p> | | |
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| <p>4) That the Council's Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the benefits of the Council's investment in renewable energy technology and the progress made in respect of the EU partnership Project 'REENERGY' and community energy efficiency projects/initiatives within the County.</p> | <p>The REENERGY project is now in its third year with the Final conference being held in Brussels in October 2014, when each partner will produce a Local Action Plan including best practices and energy measures that have been learned from other countries. Earlier in the year (February) Durham County Council hosted the 9 partner countries from the REENERGY project in the Town Hall, Durham. Councillor Neil Foster welcomed each partner to Durham and showcased in particular the Solar PV project (SPA) and the 100kW micro-hydro scheme currently being installed at Freemans Reach in Durham.</p> | <p>Ian Bloomfield</p> | <p>Completion December, 2014.</p> |

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| <p>5) That the Council's Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be updated and respond where appropriate, to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government response to Consultation on Comprehensive Review Phase 1 – Tariffs for solar PV. • Consultation on Comprehensive Review Phase 2A: Solar PV cost control. • Consultation on Comprehensive Review Phase 2B: Tariffs for non – PV technologies and scheme administration issues. | <p>There is now a national phased programme of tariff reduction in place which is intended to match ongoing reductions in the cost of PV panels.</p> | <p>Ian Bloomfield</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |