

Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

5th March 2015



Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan

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

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan. A presentation will be given to the committee from Maggie Bosanquet, Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader and Stephen Beresford, Senior Sustainability and Climate Change Officer.

Background

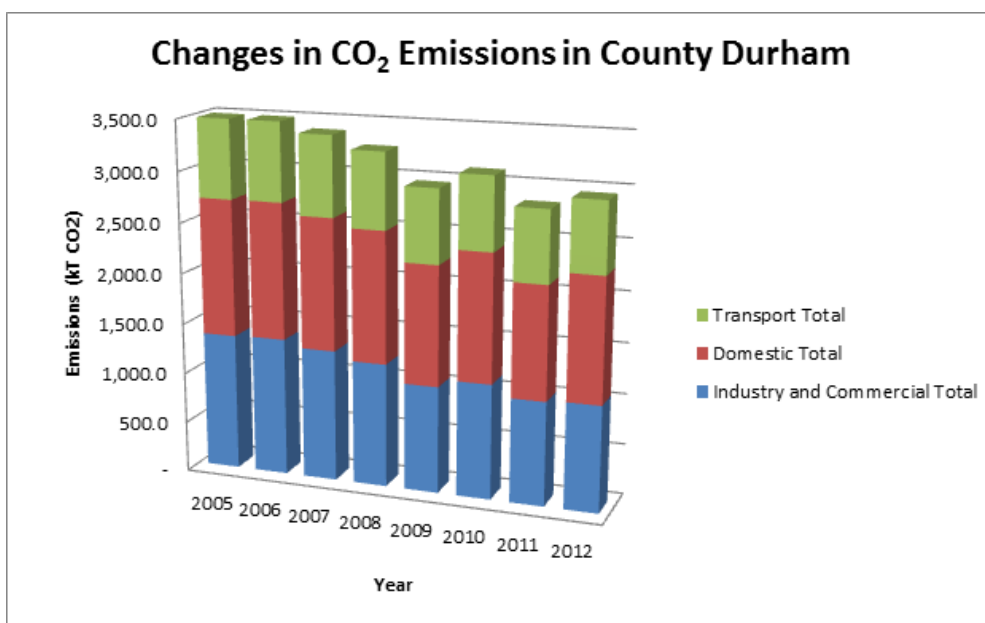
2. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed as part of the refresh of the work programme for 2011/2012 to consider and comment on the draft County Durham Climate Change Strategy, which met the objective of the Altogether Greener section of the Council Plan 2012-2016 of mitigating the impact of and adapting to climate change.
3. At the committee's meeting held on the 25th September 2012, members received an overview of the draft strategy and it was suggested that the committee at a future meeting receive an update on the development of the strategy and delivery plan. An update was provided to the committee on 21st June 2013, where it was agreed that a further update would be provided when the strategy and delivery plan would be out to consultation in 2014.
4. At a Special meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24th January 2014, the committee received an update on the climate change strategy and delivery plan. Members were advised of an intended public consultation and additional information on the process of the consultation. During the presentation details were given in relation to potential ERDF funding. The committee requested that further updates on the development of EU funding programme 2014-2020 in relation to low carbon projects come to the committee in due course.
5. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 2nd May, 2014 provided a response to the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan consultation it requested, as part of the refresh of the committee's work programme 2014/2015 that an update

should be provided that would detail feedback from the consultation and next steps.

6. In accordance with the decision made by the committee at the meeting held on 1st May 2014 arrangements have been made for the Senior Sustainability and Climate Change Officer and Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader to provide the committee with an update on the 'Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan' including feedback from the consultation.

Progress

7. The draft Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan was consulted upon over the summer months during 2014. Further consultation was carried out with schools and Durham University students in the autumn. In addition, earlier in the year, we delivered a Members seminar on Climate Change in Your Community, where attendees were invited to comment on the documents and their feedback has been incorporated.
8. As part of the consultation we held a session with the Disability Forum, and the members made some pertinent points that we have tried to incorporate into the final documents.
9. Key points from the consultation
 - a. The majority of respondents thought that climate change was an important issue and our targets and aspirations were appropriate.
 - b. The delivery of the strategy should work to be as fair and equitable as possible. Projects need to be inclusive, and not limited to sub groups.
 - c. Individuals and communities need to be made aware of the issues and be empowered to take action.
 - d. Pupils at Durham schools are aware of the broad issues and think it is important. They was a mixed response as to whether they thought their school was doing work on climate change, which given the level of engagement, was surprising, and is more likely to reflect observations and communications rather than a lack of actual actions.
10. During the summer, the Chair of the Climate Change Strategy Group resigned to devote more time to his new role as a company director and to ensure there would be no conflict of interest in the future. Tara Duncan, Durham University's Sustainability Manager has now been appointed as the new Chair and is looking to re-focus the group into a delivery body.
11. DECC has released data showing that in 2012, the emissions from County Durham increased slightly (there is a two year lag in the reporting from DECC) This mirrors the national trend and is a result of factors such as a harsher winter and an increase in the use of coal in power stations to generate electricity. The overall trend is still good and we are on track to meet our 2020 targets.



12. The content of the Delivery Plan has been shaped considerably by the up and coming European Regional Development Fund, and the Strategy will be used to strengthen bids for this money. In this regard, the documents have been developing as the bid criteria and indicators have evolved and it has been important to await clarification before signing off the final documents.

The year ahead

13. The final Strategy and Delivery Plan is scheduled to be going to Cabinet for adoption in Q1 of 2015/16.
14. The Climate Change Strategy Group is looking to develop its membership to deliver projects on:
 - a. Education and awareness
 - b. Community energy
 - c. Adaptation/Flood resilience
15. The Council is developing a bid for ERDF money to deliver action on community buildings, business energy efficiency and green infrastructure developments.
16. Additional sources of funding for projects, such as Horizon 2020, Interreg NW Europe and Interreg Europe!, are being explored.
17. It is proposed to report annually on Delivery Plan progress and this could be incorporated into the Overview and Scrutiny timetable if requested.

Recommendation

18. Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the content of the report and provide comment accordingly and to receive a further update at a future meeting of the committee.