

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



9 November 2015

Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan Update

Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development

Purpose of the Report

1. To Provide the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan.

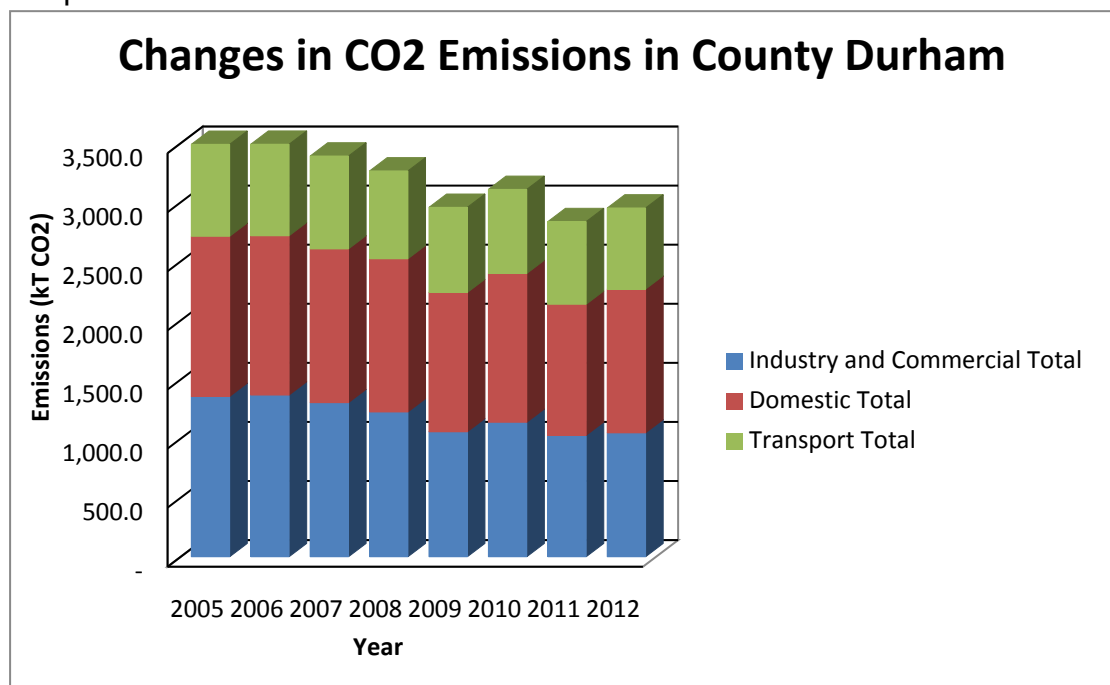
Background

2. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee have received regular updates on the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan since 2012 via overview presentations.
3. At its meeting on 5th March 2015 the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on the progress of the Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan including the key points from the draft strategy delivery plan consultation which was held in the summer of 2014.
4. The content of the Delivery Plan has been shaped by the European Regional Development Fund and the Strategy will be used to strengthen bids for this money. Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to receive further updates including the progress made in obtaining EU funding. Arrangements have been made for Maggie Bosanquet, Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader and Stephen Beresford, Senior Sustainability and Climate Change Officer to attend the meeting on the 9 November 2015 to present the report and answer questions from the committee.
5. A further special meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for the 1 December 2015 and will focus on Fuel Poverty. At the meeting members will receive detail of various schemes/projects within the County to tackle fuel poverty within the home. To avoid repetition this report will concentrate on non-domestic issues around climate change.

Current Position

- The climate change strategy and delivery plan were submitted to and approved by Cabinet on the 15th July 2015. The report specifically highlighted the role that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had played and recommended:
'That Cabinet continues to support the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's role in monitoring progress.'
- In 2012 County Durham emitted 2,951 tonnes of CO₂, a slight increase from the previous year. The winter was colder than 2011, and the graph shows an increase in domestic emissions to reflect this. The long term trend is still down and on target as shown in the following graph.

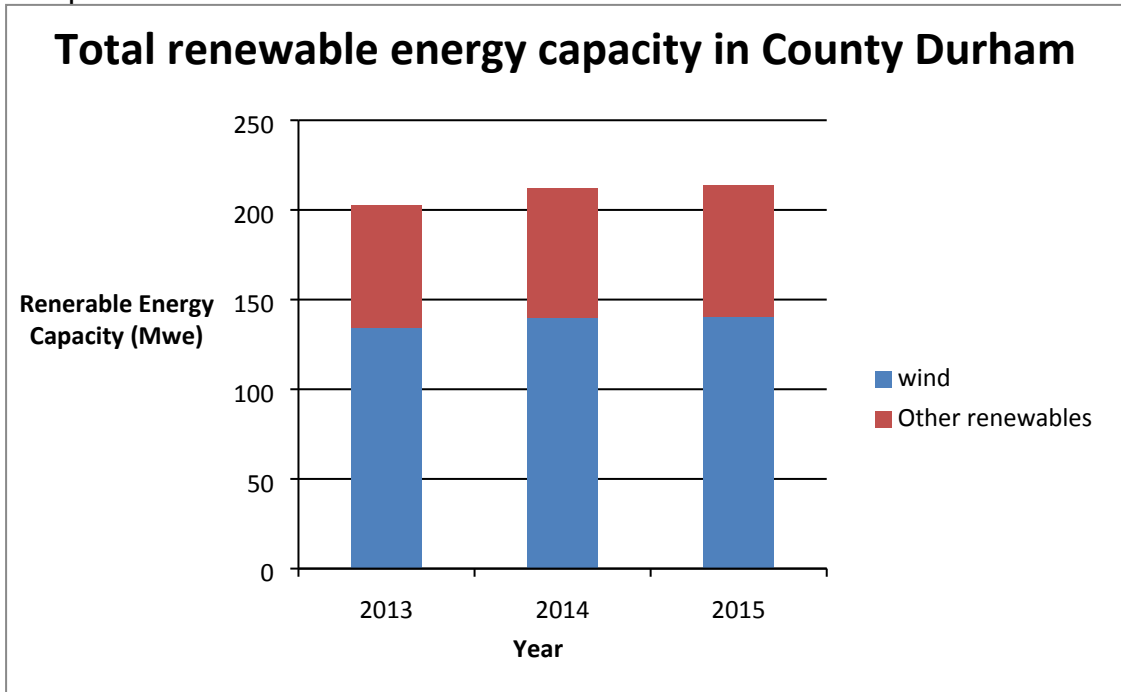
Graph 1:-



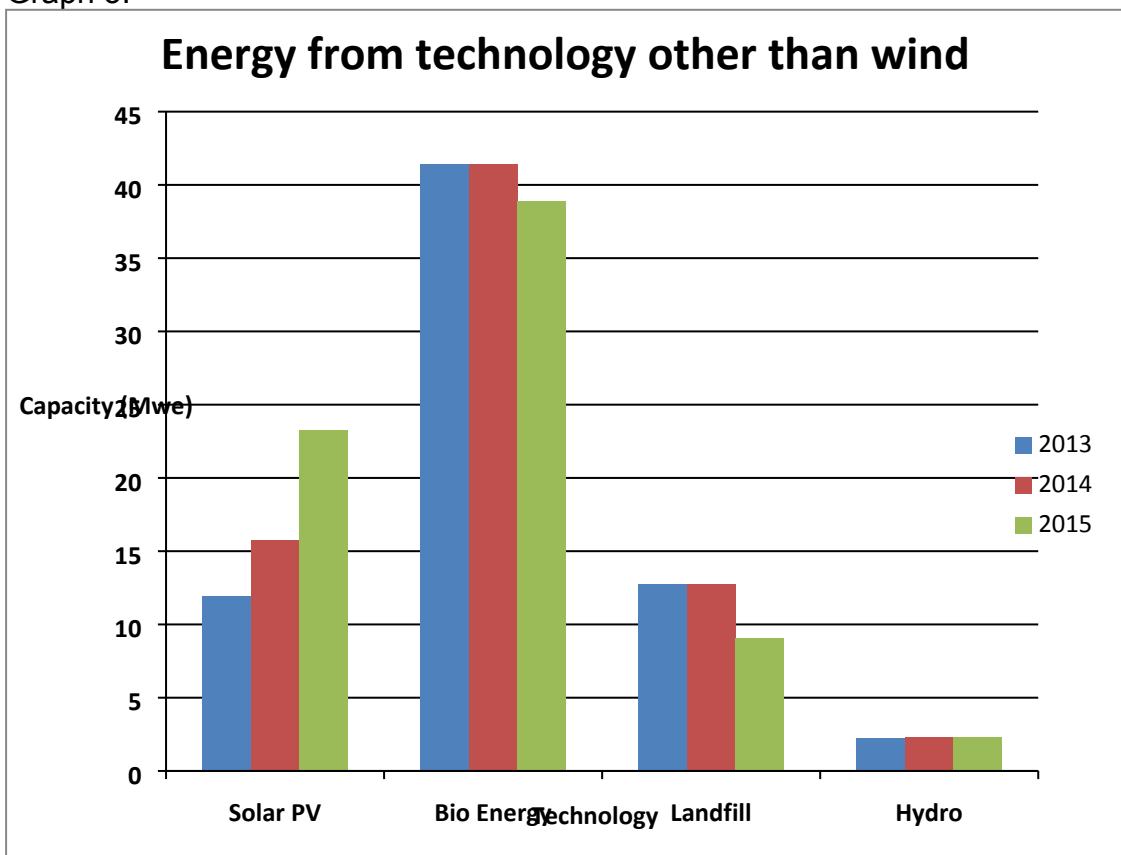
- The following graphs show how renewable electricity generation across the County has increased by about 5% in the past 3 years, with solar PV capacity almost doubling from 12 MWe in 2012 to 23MWe in September this year. There have been no significant changes in the other technologies in this time.

A 1 MWe increase represents about 4,000 solar panels so this means that there have been over 40,000 solar panels installed in the past two years.

Graph 2:-



Graph 3:-



- There have been a number of changes to legislation and regulations since the new Government came to power in May. These have created an unstable position regarding renewable energy and energy efficiency work. There are more changes expected and whilst we have cancelled and changed some

projects we will continue to monitor the situation for opportunities. We will also look to local organisations leading the way in the field, for example working with, and inviting speakers from Durham University to share their knowledge.

10. Since January the Climate Change Strategy Group has been chaired by Tara Duncan from Durham University. The group is focussing on three projects areas
 - a. Energy efficiency in community buildings
 - b. Building in community resilience to severe weather
 - c. Modal shift-sustainable transport for young people transitioning from school to further education in South Durham.
11. We are currently looking to support community groups that have taken on DCC buildings through the Asset Transfer and Durham Ask process and are aiming to hold an energy efficiency event in spring to coincide with Earth Hour. This could be complemented with work at a regional level to support community buildings.
12. The Council is investigating options for securing funding and a number of European bids have been prepared for work on public buildings and in communities. We will find out how these are progressing in the New Year.
13. One area of work being pursued is the Business Energy Efficiency Project. Initial research and development work has been completed and an ERDF bid has been submitted which aims to deliver pro-active support to businesses looking to reduce their energy use and become more efficient.
14. There are also on-going feasibility studies being conducted into district heating opportunities for the Durham City area. If viable, they could be included in any major development proposals at Aykley Heads or near the river Wear.
15. The proposals to develop a solar farm on DCC land adjacent to Comeleon House at Tanfield are still progressing. The changes in FIT rates for solar panels mean that we are likely to enter into a land lease agreement and allow a third party to develop the site. The Councils data centre will still be able to use power from the development.
16. A new partnership project entitled 'Activating Community Engagement' (ACE) is being developed by Northern Powergrid, with the Weardale Area Action Partnership and Durham Community Action. A feasibility trial will take place in the area from November 2015 till March 2016. The project is a community based initiative to test whether rewarding people for making small changes to the way they use electricity can reduce stress on the Grid during peak times (4.30-7.00pm).

Recommendations

17. 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.

Background Papers

The Cabinet report and Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan are available from the Cabinet meeting pages:

<http://democracy.durham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=154&MId=8225&Ver=4>

**Contact: Maggie Bosanquet , Climate Change Team Leader,
Tel:03000265549**

APPENDIX 1 - Implications

Finance – None directly, but the Delivery Plan aims to deliver projects that would help to reduce energy costs for County Durham communities. European bids may require match funding but would bring in considerable money to the authority.

Staffing - None

Risk – The Strategy highlights the risks of a changing climate to County Durham

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – A consultation process has taken place as part of the development of the strategy and the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were taken on board.

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications - None