

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the Environment

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th March, 2011 at 2.30 pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Michael Green (Chair)

County Councillors

T Ashton

Mrs J Hanson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Mike Calvert, Susie Charles and Mark Perks. Apologies were also received from Liz O'Neill (Environment Agency) and Anne Selby (Lancashire Wildlife Trust).

2. Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No personal or prejudicial interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8th December 2010

Updates were provided on matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting as follows:

Recycling Bins – It was reported that it would not be possible at this time to change the colour scheme of all household waste / recycling bins to a standard uniformed colour in all Districts as the bins as contracts are in place to provide the bins in specific colours in each District. However, it was reported that the issue would be raised at the Lancashire Waste Partnership as a suggestion to be considered at a future date.

Peat Extraction – It was reported that the Government have produced a consultation on the use of peat for horticultural purposes and that the County Council's views could be expressed through the survey.

United Utilities – A briefing note was circulated (attached to these minutes) summarising the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 February 2011 where United Utilities attended and responded to questions raised regarding leakages, the recent hose pipe ban in the North West and other related issues. The Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the Environment noted the comments made at the Scrutiny Committee meeting and agreed to continue to monitor the situation and raise any concerns / queries with United Utilities through the appropriate channels.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2010 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) - Consultation and Compliance Update

Matthew Tidmarsh presented the report. Matthew updated the Committee on the likely impact the changes to the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) scheme will have on the County Council's participation. Matthew reported that schools are included in the County Council's emissions figures, so will affect the County Council's position in the league table and they make up over 50% of the total County Council emissions.

The key concern to the County Council is the cancelling of recycling payments which now turns the CRC scheme effectively into a tax on carbon and means the County Council will face an additional revenue charge of £1.8 million per annum. The omission of a mechanism to change the original rules of the scheme for the purchase of carbon allowances means also that the £900,000 or so of this that relates to schools will have to be borne directly by the Council. However, the Department for Education (DfE) has recently advised that purchase of carbon allowances for schools will be an allowable item against the central part of the schools' budget. Nevertheless this still has the effect of removing any direct incentive for individual schools to reduce their emissions.

Matthew also explained that a further consultation on the CRC scheme has been launched by The Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) as a result of responses received to the first consultation and that the deadline had been extended to allow for the County Council's consultation response to be considered by the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the Environment, and, that with the Chair's approval the response would be submitted.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to:

- A. Note the content of this report and the likely impact the changes to the CRC scheme will have on the County's participation.
- B. Approve the continued participation in the consultation process with Central Government on the future of the CRC scheme.
- C. Support the seeking of redress from schools for the purchase of carbon allowances to help encourage effective carbon and energy management.
- D. Recognise and support the need for regular internal audit of the processes and procedures managed by the Property Group in compliance with the requirements of the CRC scheme.
- E. Note that the Committee will receive further reports as details on the changes to the CRC scheme are made available.
- F. Agreed that the further consultation response be agreed by the Chair and submitted by officers to The Department for Energy and Climate Change as appropriate.

5. Energy Strategy for Schools

Eddie Mather presented the report, Eddie explained that the Directorate for Children and Young People is developing an energy strategy aligned to its Capital Strategy for schools which will seek to support schools to reduce their CO2 emissions.

As part of this commitment the Capital Strategy for Schools 2011/14 is intended to target the following;

- Replacement of time limited/ poorly insulated buildings
- Replace inefficient boilers and heating systems
- Provision of energy efficient heating controls
- Zoning of heating systems
- Roof and wall insulation programme
- Window replacement and double glazing
- Replacement with Energy efficient lighting and fittings.

In addition to the above the County Council currently;

- Works with schools by providing advice on ways to reduce carbon emissions as previously reported to the Cabinet Committee in July 2010.
- Has agreed a loan fund with Schools' Forum of currently £1.1 million in 2011/12.

In support of this latter initiative Schools' Forum has commissioned the County's Energy Team to carry out surveys on 25 schools with the poorest energy performance. However, in order to make faster progress in the collection of information needed for decision making and the targeting of further investment on energy efficiency in schools, there needs to be an increase in the number of surveys carried out.

Eddie also discussed with the Committee alternative options for schools such as companies renting roof space to install solar panels to assist with providing some energy back into the national grid.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to note the report.

6. Lancashire Insulation Fund

Debbie King presented the report. In her presentation Debbie highlighted that all 15 local authorities in Lancashire (including the two unitaries) have been working successfully in partnership over the last 3 years to develop and deliver energy efficiency programmes. Together they have recognised an opportunity for Lancashire to maximise its share of Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) funding for the residents of the county in the remaining two years of the programme.

Statistics from the Energy Saving Trust suggest that there are 150,000 unfilled cavity walls and 200,000 lofts without adequate insulation in Lancashire. Additionally, just under one third of carbon emissions in Lancashire come from homes.

With regard to the Lancashire Insulation Fund the officer group setup between all 15 local authorities in Lancashire has recognised a large opportunity to maximise Lancashire's share of CERT funding from energy companies in the remaining two years of the programme.

Energy supply companies and installer have been invited to submit information on the prices and service quality / customer care they can deliver for Lancashire. Expressions of interest were invited during February, and will be followed by an invitation to submit a Pre Qualifying Questionnaire (PQQ). On receipt of PQQs, a group of officers from the Home Energy Group will score and assess submissions based on a pre-agreed scoring matrix and select a preferred installer(s). The scheme is likely to start during March 2011.

Whilst any procurement exercise cannot select a contractor on the grounds of being locally based, the PQQ requests details on environmental impact and specifically on activity being taken to reduce carbon emissions through local delivery and the steps being taken to encourage local employment.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and supported the County Council's role in the Lancashire Insulation Fund.

7. Adrenaline Gateway / Lee Quarry in Rossendale

Andrew Barrow and Tony Lund presented the report and explained that the Adrenaline Gateway is a visitor/sporting destination programme initially conceived for Pennine Lancashire but capable of expansion across the County, aimed at growing visitor numbers exponentially by increasing the scope of, and participation in the outdoor lifestyle sports sector.

Delivery so far has concentrated on the development of the mountain biking facility at Lee Quarry near Bacup, in a number of phases as an initial anchor for the overall programme, This work has been linked to the Valley of Stone Project and the ongoing development of public art in the area linked to the Irwell Sculpture Trail, all of which have received support from the County and Borough Councils in securing external funding.

A 'Test Event' at the site was arranged on the 12th and 13th of July, 2008. A key element of the weekend was obtaining written feedback from competitors. Although the event was not publicised it (the event) attracted competitors from across the length and breadth of the Country, with visitor numbers in excess of 700.

A group of local mountain bike enthusiasts have established the Brownbacks Club which is running a series of Cross Country races in Lee Quarry. These short circuit races follow the same format as the Olympic cross country races and

have proved to be very popular with beginners through to serious athletes. So far there have been over 15 races each one attracting over 100 riders.

The site continues to expand and has also developed excellent links with British Cycling and their Olympic Academy which has been using the site twice a week during the winter for training.

The Programme Team is in the process of preparing a framework to help guide and govern the terms upon which sponsorship may be both sought and accepted.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to:

- A. note the report.
- B. note the principal aims and objectives of the programme, and;
- C. note the significant progress that has been made to implement the programme.

8. The County Council's Duties as a Lead Local Flood Authority - Update

Rick Hayton presented the report which an update on the implications for the County Council of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, both of which impose new duties for the County Council as a "lead local flood authority".

Rick explained that there is a duty on the County Council as the "lead local flood authority" to ensure relevant organisations work together and publish information.

Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council are all designated as lead local flood authorities. The delivery of the new duties will be based on effective partnership between lead local flood authorities and other risk management authorities. At present officers from the district, county and unitary councils across Lancashire are working together in a single partnership with the EA and United Utilities (UU) to develop responses to the new duties, an approach agreed by the Lancashire Chief Executives in March 2009.

Rick highlighted the key duties which the Flood and Water Management Act require of lead local flood authorities as detailed in the report.

In responding to questions from the Committee about how this will be managed in the future, Rick explained that In order to ensure a strong and unified partnership approach to engaging with these emerging new duties, a Lancashire Flood Risk Management Officers Group has been meeting in recent months, under the chairmanship of the County Council. The group is attended by officers from the County Council, all the district and unitary councils in Lancashire, United Utilities and the Environment Agency. This group is developing the strategic approaches to the issues raised in this report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and agreed with the approach being taken to prepare for the new duties arising from the legislation.

9. Urgent Business

None.

10. Date of Next Meeting / Schedule of Future Meetings

It was reported that the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the Environment will be held on Tuesday 12 July 2011 at 2.00pm, Cabinet Room 'B', County Hall Complex, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston