

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT
GROUP HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON
THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2006**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R W Hallett - Chairman

* Cllr A R Vale - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr H D Bastone

∅ Cllr M Stone

* Cllr J Brazil

* Cllr A Ward

* Cllr B E Carson

* Cllr J A Westacott

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

Cllrs S M Fairman, P W Hitchins and R O Yonge

EPDG.12/05 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment Policy Development Group (EPDG) held on 15 December 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EPDG.13/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none was made.

EPDG.14/05 SOUTH HAMS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY: CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

A report was considered that invited the Group to review the climate change policy within the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy.

In the report, particular reference was made to the following:-

(a) the progress of the Core Strategy which Council had considered at its meeting on 22 December 2005, and resolved:

“That:-

- 1. the South Hams Local Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Stage document be approved for publication on 31 January 2006;*

2. *authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Community) in consultation with the Leader of Council, Chairman of the Development Planning Steering Group and a nominated Member from the Minority Group to make necessary final changes to its content.*" (minute 64/05 refers);

- (b) that the comments of the Group on the climate change policy could, therefore, be incorporated within the document subject to the approval of the nominated Members and officers referred to in (a) above;
- (c) the role of the climate change policy in the Local Development Framework and the Core Strategy document, which was to contain the key strategic and spatial planning policies for the district and establish the development pattern for more detailed policies;
- (d) the inclusion of a proposed policy, which it was acknowledged required further development to reflect the need to plan for climate change. It was intended that issues such as reduction of energy use, sustainable transport and renewable energy would be addressed more fully in the LDF Core Policies document, to be accompanied eventually by a Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Development and incorporating a climate sensitive development checklist.

Prior to discussion, an amended version of Appendix 1 to the report presented to the Group was tabled at the meeting and the revised aspects highlighted (see Appendix 1 attached). The Strategic Director (Community) reminded the Group that the strategic objectives (SOs) identified provided the overarching strategy from which all the subsequent core policies were to flow. The document before the Group, therefore, did not represent the detailed policy on climate change but sought to highlight the linkages with the Council's SOs as part of the LDF and thereby strengthen its position on matters relating to development control.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (i) the recommendation in the report presented to the Group. Members were advised that as the policy document was required to go to print before the next scheduled meeting of the Executive on 26 January 2006, it was proposed to submit the Group's comments for consideration under the delegated authority agreed by Council (minute 64/05 refers);
- (ii) the contextual basis of the proposed policy on climate change. The Group was advised that the policy had been informed by extensive national and regional guidance. Members were again reminded that at this stage they were being asked to consider a general policy or statement of

intent that was to be bolstered by substantive and detailed policies;

- (iii) a Member's doubt that the reference in the text to SO10 and SO15 was relevant. A lengthy exchange then ensued regarding the relevant merits of the inclusion of the two SOs.

Members were informed that the SOs contributed to the overarching policy framework within which more detailed policies were to be formulated with demonstrable links to the framework. To remove any of the SOs could skew the general application of the framework and, specifically for climate change, weaken the Council's position in relation, for example, to promoting sustainable development and appropriate rural diversity.

Notwithstanding some Members' remaining reservations, it was eventually agreed to retain the references to SO10 and SO15;

- (iv) the use of the word 'Promote' in SO20 which a Member believed to be of little practical value towards realising the objective;
- (v) a Member's view that the text of 6.29 was insufficiently robust and too reliant on out of date data on the risks associated with climate change.

It was agreed, therefore, that the Member would re-draft the paragraph for submission to the officers' by Thursday 19 January 2006, for subsequent consideration under delegated authority (see (i) above);

- (vi) the Council's commitment to introduce practical measures to ameliorate the impact of climate change. The Group agreed that this matter was best addressed within the detailed policies that were to follow;
- (vii) the relevance of the document for influencing future decisions on land usage, particularly in relation to squaring the tensions of the opposing requirements created by the urban/rural dichotomy when considering sustainable locations for development.

A Member suggested, however, that such a presumed contradiction need not arise if the options to develop rural areas were fully explored and exploited;

- (viii) CS11 climate change policy. In response to a Member's proposal that the policy should include a reference to 'affordable warmth', the majority of the Group maintained that this aspect was well covered elsewhere. The Council's policies on affordable housing were highlighted, in addition to the documentation relating to the future new community at Sherford.

RECOMMENDED

That the Group's comments on the Climate Change policy be considered under the delegated authority agreed by Council (minute 64/05 refers).

EPDG.15/06 ORAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ROLL-OUT OF THE NEW WASTE SCHEME

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Head of Operations, who had been invited to the meeting to provide the Group with an oral update on the progress of the roll-out of the new waste scheme.

In his report, the Head of Operations made reference to:-

- (a) the roll-out of phase 3, incorporating the outline areas of Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and Totnes. This was programmed for completion during March 2006;
- (b) the commencement of phase 4 of the roll-out in April/May 2006, with refuse bags rather than wheelie bins being supplied to the most rural areas;
- (c) the anticipated date of June 2006 for the completion of the roll-out. It was noted, however, that by that stage work would commence on the re-assessment of weekly collections with a view to eradicating them. Residents that had so far refused to participate in the scheme were to be approached again in an attempt to draw them in;
- (d) the Christmas service. Members were advised that the rota for cover had been successful and that this authority had returned to normal service faster than any of its neighbours.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (i) the separation of waste. The Head of Operations confirmed that, whilst not all residents were complying with the separation requirement, most were. Those that failed to comply, received notification and a visit to offer guidance;

- (ii) the size of wheelie bins available to residents. The Head of Operations confirmed that the largest size of bin was 240 litres. The 360 litre bin was only available for commercial waste. He went onto confirm that the threshold for receiving two 180 litre bins was the presence of five adults in a household;
- (iii) the issue of waste collection relating to second homes. Whilst Members were informed that second homes were treated no differently than a hundred per cent Council Tax payers, some Members' expressed concern that second home owners/occupiers were failing to comply with the waste collection requirements.

The Group agreed that, where appropriate, second home owners should be advised to operate within the commercial waste scheme;

- (iv) the incidence of fly-tipping. It was confirmed that the roll-out of the new waste scheme had not resulted in an increase in fly-tipping;
- (v) future proposals for trade waste. The Head of Operations informed Members that the options for recycling trade waste were being investigated and that a report would be presented to the Group on this topic in due course.

On the conclusion of the discussion, the Group commended the work of the officers in their successful implementation to date of the new waste scheme.

RECOMMENDED

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** that the Environment Policy Group is satisfied with the progress to date of the roll-out of the new waste scheme.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.00 pm).

Chairman

Appendix A

Climate Change

Strategic Objectives

The following section including Policy CS11 addresses these strategic objectives;

- SO10: Maintain and develop a prosperous countryside including rural diversification
- SO14: Development that generates a high number of trips must be located where it is accessible to sustainable transport
- SO15: Conserve and enhance the quality of the district's countryside and coastal landscapes
- SO16: Conserve and enhance the district's geological resource and the diversity of wildlife habitats and species
- SO19: Achieve development which is of a high quality, respects its location and is compatible with the sustainable management of land, soil, air and water.
- SO20: Promote development which will help to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases

6.29 Climate change has the potential to become the biggest challenge facing us all – locally, nationally and internationally. Emissions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases will ultimately result in warmer, wetter winters and drier, hotter summers. Other risks to how we live our lives today are:-

- rising sea levels, threatening coastal areas;
- changes in average temperatures and rainfall threatening food production and major forests;
- adverse effects on wildlife and biodiversity conditions; and
- increased occurrence of extreme weather conditions

(source: Town and Country Planning Association; Climate Change Policy Statement, 2003)

6.30 Each of these threats cannot be considered in isolation, they are all connected. Therefore major changes in attitude and practise are needed so that we can prepare for the changes that are already in the climate system, as well as limiting our future greenhouse gas emissions. The Government has set out its approach in "Climate Change: The UK Programme"¹. The South Hams will be especially susceptible with about 88km of coastline and a number of rivers and estuaries. Within this context the South Hams LDF has a role, and can help achieve the following:-

¹ "Climate Change: The UK Programme" – Summary, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, February 2001, HMSO. At the time of print, an emerging revision of the programme is due to be published at the end of 2005.

- maximising energy efficiency in new development, and reduce inefficiencies of old building stock;
- create opportunities for sustainable energy supply (such as Combined Heat and Power or renewable energy) involving the promotion of renewable energy, including small scale on-site generation developing site self-sufficiency where possible;
- change the pattern of land use reducing the need to travel by private car, and maximise the use of public transport, walking and cycling for access to employment and essential services; and
- mitigate the impacts of climate change on land use by careful strategic and local plan making. Examples of this include not placing development in areas of risk from climate change impacts (such as flooding or subsidence) and encouraging development which promotes the efficient management of water resources.

6.31

Policy CS11: Climate Change

Any development must reflect the need to plan for climate change, through addressing its causes and potential impacts.

Development must progress the:-

- **reduction of energy usage to a minimum;**
- **reduction of private car usage and encouragement of alternative forms of sustainable transport;**
- **development of renewable energy resources; and**
- **management of the impacts of climate change through the design and location of development, including sustainable water drainage, water efficiency measures and ensuring no net loss of flood storage capacity.**

6.32 Greater detail on the Council's approach to climate change will be contained in the Core Policies document which will cover issues such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, and flood defences. A climate sensitive development checklist will follow in the Sustainable Development SPD. Each development plan document will be accompanied by a SA/SEA, part of which links to its climate change objectives – aiming to make all the plan documents more sustainable.