

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT
GROUP HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON
THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2006**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R W Hallett - Chairman

∅ Cllr A R Vale - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr H D Bastone

* Cllr J Brazil

* Cllr B E Carson

* Cllr M Stone

* Cllr A Ward

* Cllr J A Westacott

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

Items 5 (minute EPDG.3/06 refers) – Strategic Director (Community) and
Community Development Assistant

Item 6 (minute EPDG.4/06 refers) – Head of Operations

EPDG.1/06 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment Policy Development Group (EPDG) held on 23 February 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EPDG.2/06 **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.3/06 **DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AND STRATEGY**

A report was considered which set out the draft climate change policy, strategy and action plan. The report demonstrated an improved understanding of climate change issues across the Council and the increased emphasis which had been given to responding to climate change within existing priorities. It was noted that the report was also a synopsis of the policy and strategy.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- a) issues of resources. It was noted that one major concern when looking at options for progressing the action plan was that of resource availability but it was anticipated that this would be addressed as part of the budget process. However, it was noted that organisations such as the Carbon Trust and the Energy Saving Trust offered free consultancy but this would still significantly impact on officer time. Opportunities for working in partnership with neighbouring authorities was also noted along with other organisations/community groups who may be in a position to offer assistance;
- b) a Member's query regarding the level of pressure there was from central government to produce a strategy and policy. Currently there was no statutory requirements, however, it was anticipated that the government's position could change in due course driven by increasing concerns about the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, it was felt that the lack of a policy would not be looked at favourably during any future external inspection of the Council;
- c) a Member's suggestion for a mission statement to put the policy and strategy into context. The Member also offered her time to help produce such a statement, especially in light of her role as Member Champion for Climate Change and Sustainability;
- d) Member's belief that the draft strategy and its context required minor adjustment and editing to incorporate some textual and grammatical amendments;
- e) the use of the South Hams Strategic Partnership as a consultation tool and a further means of communication to a wider audience;
- f) a Member's concern that the Council did not duplicate the work of Devon County Council (DCC) which had planned a publicity drive to raise the profile of the issues surrounding Climate Change and what the public could do to reduce risks. As part of this initiative, the Climate Change Officer for DCC had produced a leaflet to be distributed to all households addressing aspects of climate change. It was felt that the Climate Change Officer from DCC should be invited to a future meeting of the Group. Furthermore, a link from the pages on the South Hams website direct to DCC's Climate Change pages was suggested;
- g) a Member's concern that the strategy document was not succinct in the way the information was being presented if it was for use by the general public. Officers explained that the document was for use by officers and Members when developing policies and not specifically for public use;

- h) the need for consistency between the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Climate Change Policy and Strategy;
- i) the Devon Wide Declaration on Climate Change and Fuel Poverty which the Council signed in December 2005 was noted;
- j) in relation to the action plan, a Member reiterated the importance of establishing a post to coordinate all the various actions as suggested in the plan. A Member felt that such a post would preferably have expertise in both scientific knowledge and administration. In contrast to this, another Member felt that as officer time was identified under existing priorities in the action plan there was no need for a further post to be funded. Furthermore, this Member also felt that a number of the actions as identified would not mitigate climate change and the difference could really be made in the LDF document under Corporate Priority 3 (Retaining the District's Character) by ensuring that all developments meet sustainable requirements. In response to these comments it was noted that a bid during the budget process could be submitted to establish a temporary position to tackle aspects of the action plan, such as assessing the Council's carbon footprint, and developing emission targets;
- k) review of appendix E of the Procurement Strategy. It was noted that appendix E was to incorporate references to climate change and other environmental policies and therefore it was suggested that the Group Member, who was also the Member Champion for Climate Change and Sustainability, liaise with the Head of Improvement on this issue;
- l) Member's appreciation of the work to produce the document was noted;

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive is **RECOMMENDED** that the Environment Policy Development Group has commented on the draft strategy and action plan and recommends approval of the climate change policy statement for consultation with partners subject to further resource issues being investigated as part of the budget process, and minor editing and amendments to the document as identified in the meeting.

EPDG.4/06 **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 provide the Group with an oral update on the progress of the roll-out of the new waste scheme. During discussion Members were informed that dry recycling sacks were being delivered to those properties who were unable to receive wheeled bins. Furthermore, Members were reminded that the change in collection days would commence in the week beginning 25 September 2006.

In relation to trade waste, Members were informed that a Trade Waste Officer had recently been employed and it was their role to develop a trade waste collection scheme for those businesses who desired it. Currently, 50 businesses had agreed to trial the initiative, which was anticipated to be underway by Christmas.

Second homes and holiday homes were still cause for concern in some wards but concerns were being addressed by officers.

In conclusion, a Member of the Group noted how pleased they had been with the small bins situated in towns and villages to specifically collect cans and bottles for recycling.

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 10.00 am and concluded at 12.40 pm).

Chairman