

**Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 10 October 2007**

Item 7

ENERGY REVIEW

LEAD OFFICER: Tim Capper
REPORT AUTHOR: Neil White

Recommendation: that:

- (A) the Council examine the feasibility of Cumbrian authorities working together on Climate Change to ensure possible savings and efficiencies of service and that opportunities for joint working on sustainable development be explored with neighbouring authorities,
- (B) Officers ensure that the Council makes an appropriate input into the Cumbrian Climate Change Strategy,
- (C) external training on Climate Change and other sustainable development issues be given to the Council and be commenced by the end of the Municipal year at the latest,
- (D) the work done by the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's fleet be welcomed and supported,
- (E) Cumbria County Council be requested to consider St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant School in Whitehaven as a best practice example to help other schools in Cumbria on how to acquire and use renewable energy and to reduce their carbon footprint,
- (F) from now on a greater emphasis be put on developers to use renewable energy in new developments and to improve energy efficiency,
- (G) the Council should place greater priority and resources into dealing with energy efficiency, affordable warmth and fuel poverty,
- (H) in light of recommendation (G) above, the Council fills the current vacant sustainability officer post as soon as possible to deal with climate change, energy efficiency, affordable warmth and fuel poverty targets and priority is given to these issues within the post,
- (I) the Car Parking Officer Task Group is requested to investigate the feasibility of the Council introducing a Travel to Work Plan,

- (J) Sellafield Ltd be asked when their travel to work plan will be completed and this issue be placed on the agenda for the next quarterly update meeting with the British Nuclear Group,
- (K) the Council provide a scheme for the installation of energy efficiency measures for people on benefits and provide £100,000 per annum until 2010 as grants to enable those people who live in private dwellings and are not on benefits to apply for help in installing energy efficiency measures within Copeland,
- (L) the Council's plans to introduce additional recycling facilities for the collection of glass, cans and plastic bottles in its major offices be implemented,
- (M) specific funding for the implementation of green issues to raise awareness of energy efficiency and climate change be allocated within the council's budget,
- (N) the Council consider energy efficiency when implementing any future refurbishment work to Council owned property,
- (O) the Council consider the installation of renewable energy features into a Council building as a pilot project in a building when it is due to be refurbished in the near future as an example of energy efficiency,
- (P) the Council implement a programme of public awareness of energy efficiency and climate change across the Borough,
- (Q) the Council implement an internal programme of staff and member awareness of energy efficiency issues,
- (R) Copeland Homes consider the possibility of installing 'smart meters' in a pilot scheme to help encourage better energy use,
- (S) Copeland Homes plan to produce a booklet and information pack containing energy efficiency advice for new and existing tenants be welcomed and implemented,
- (T) the work undertaken by the Eskdale Biomass Project should be promoted as an excellent example of a community led renewable energy scheme and the Council should promote it to other organisations both private and public across the borough,
- (U) the Sustainability (LA21) Forum be reintroduced with a view to sharing resources and costs with Allerdale Borough Council,

- (V) the Energy Saving Trust be requested to help in the development and implementation of a green policy for the Council,
- (W) a target date of 2009 be set for the action in the Council's Corporate Plan to influence home energy conservation plans and tackle fuel poverty,
- (X) the Council explore options for the use of small scale hydropower and other aspects of micro generation, and
- (Y) a report be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in six months time on the progress made on these recommendations.

1. BACKGROUND

This Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2007 agreed to a task and finish group being established to undertake an energy policy review.

The terms of reference of the Sub Group were to:

- 1) explore ways in which the Council can encourage communities to consider alternative energy use, energy savings and efficiency, and to make recommendations to the Council as to how it can lead by example;
- 2) reconsider the Affordable Warmth Strategy in the light of findings under 1 above; and
- 3) assist Overview and Scrutiny to form a view on all energy matters as appropriate.

The membership of the task and finish group was made of Councillors M Woodburn, A Carroll, G Garrity and J Jackson.

The Sub Group has met on six times and heard evidence from:

Council Officers

David Davies, Head of Sustainability and Nuclear Policy
John Hughes, Regeneration Strategy Manager
Chris Lloyd, Business Development Manager
Keith Parker, Head of Leisure and Environmental Services

External Organisations

Suzanne Burgess, Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
Brian Durham, Copeland Homes
Alex McKenzie, Cumbria County Council

The Sub Group also had site visits to St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant School, Whitehaven and Eskdale Green Biomass Project.

2. EVIDENCE CONSIDERED

Climate Change

The Sub Group received a presentation from Cumbria County Council's Sustainability Manager on the scientific case for climate change and what plans the County Council had for dealing with this issue.

The Sub Group was informed that Copeland Council could undertake a number of actions to reduce carbon emissions. These included joining the Energy Saving Trust's carbon management programme for local authorities which would lead to improved energy efficiency in buildings and vehicles; investing in on site micro-generation; purchasing renewable energy and ensuring that the council's procurement team sources products with a low carbon footprint. In addition the council could exercise community leadership and work with local businesses and local people to raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviour.

The Sub Group noted that the County Council had signed the Northwest Climate Change Charter and had committed itself to taking action on reducing greenhouse gases and adapting to unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The Sub Group considered that there was an opportunity in this case for all the councils across Cumbria to work together on this issue in a similar way to the joint work on waste. It would be particularly worthwhile to pursue the possibility of getting a discount on bulk purchase of renewable energy sources.

It was noted however that it could be difficult to audit the percentage of renewable energy that used by energy suppliers.

The Sub Group noted that the County Council had initiated an Action at Work Programme that involves setting up environmental champions to raise staff awareness of ways that they could reduce carbon emissions in the Council's offices.

The Sub Group agreed that this was an excellent idea and should be introduced in the Council. The Head of Sustainability and Nuclear Policy considered that the best way to initiate such a programme would be to take an audit of energy use by the Council as a benchmark. There was also a need to raise the profile of this issue across the Council. Whilst there was the expertise to monitor carbon dioxide emissions there was at this time no resources to do so.

The Sub Group noted that the County Council was developing a Cumbrian climate change strategy and action plan through the Cumbrian Strategic Partnership. A task group had been established and met monthly and was planning to present a draft report for public consultation in September.

The Sub Group noted that the County Council had received a briefing session on climate change from a consultancy firm, Quantum Strategy and Technology Ltd, who had been hired by the Northwest Regional Development Authority. The sessions which had also been organised by Eden and South Lakeland were designed to raise awareness of climate change and give practical solutions that could be taken to reduce climate change.

Fleet Management

The Sub Group received a presentation from the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services on the council's fleet procurement contract.

The Sub Group noted that the Executive would be asked at its meeting on 10 July to approve the awarding of this contract. One of the areas that the tenderers for the contract were asked was how they intended to reduce the carbon footprint of the council's fleet. It was possible to reduce the carbon emissions by ensuring that:

- the correct specification for vehicles was used – for example forward drive was better than rear wheel drive,
- Euro IV engines were used in all vehicles,
- regular and effective maintenance of all vehicles was undertaken,
- tyre pressures were checked daily,
- proper speed and driving techniques were used,
- vehicles were replaced at the appropriate time,
- measures were put in place to reduce the idling of vehicles, and
- an appropriate amount of green and bio fuels be used.

The Sub Group further noted that it was intended to set a baseline for the fleet's carbon footprint for this year and there would be an agreement with the winning tenderer on a year on year reduction in the Council's fleet carbon footprint.

St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant School, Whitehaven

The Sub Group visited St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant School in Whitehaven to look at its use of renewable energy.

The Sub Group noted that the school had installed a 2.5kw wind turbine for lighting, solar panels and a new energy efficient boiler for heating water and were installing a ground source heat pump to heat the new children's centre being built at the school.

The School has made significant savings in energy bills and had been awarded an Eco-Schools outstanding achievement award in 2005.

Planning Regulations

The Sub Group received a presentation from John Hughes; Regeneration Strategy Manager on the Council's planning policies that dealt with renewable energy and energy conservation.

The Sub Group noted that the Government's 2004 Planning Policy Guidance Note 22 had updated the key principles that local authorities should use in their approach to planning for renewable energy. Copeland's Local Plan 2001-2006 had been written in the context of this advice and Policy EG1 which sets the criteria for any form of renewable energy development and Policy EGY 7 Energy Conservation and Efficiency were up to date.

The Sub Group further noted that Cumbria County Council and Copeland Council were preparing a Supplementary Planning Guidance on wind energy which the Council would be asked to approve.

The Sub Group was informed that the Local Plan currently did not set targets for the amount of renewable energy that should be used in new developments. However in the next eighteen months as the change in the planning system to the Local Development Framework was being completed it was expected that the Government would require such targets as were currently required by some authorities.

The Sub Group discussed the issue of micro generation, it was noted that currently planning and building regulations permission was needed for all micro generation applications. Members were informed that the Government White Paper 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' proposals

included a review and extension of permitted development rights on micro generation.

The Sub Group considered Housing Renovation Grants which were means tested but at this time did not include the use of renewable energy. The Council had contracted out this service and the council did not currently employ an officer to deal with energy efficiency and affordable warmth.

The Sub Group noted that Copeland had areas which were some of the worst hit in England by fuel poverty, and the Sub Group expressed its concern that this was an area that was not being dealt with by the council. It was also felt that the Council should be more proactive and inform the public of their entitlement to Housing Renovation Grants.

The Sub Group further noted that Copeland Homes were to be questioned at a future meeting on these issues and the Sub Group agreed that the Deputy Leader for Promoting Prosperity should be invited to this meeting.

Travel to Work Plan

The Sub Group discussed the potential for introducing a Travel to Work Plan for the Council. It was noted that an Officer Task Group had been set up to review car parking at the Council's offices. The Sub Group considered that this Task Group should be asked to consider the feasibility of introducing a Travel to Work Plan. However it was further noted that in the event of a Travel Plan being developed there would be a need for an officer to be responsible to update and support the long term aims of the travel plan.

The Sub Group was informed that the Government had since 1998 been actively encouraging large employers to develop travel to work plans and travel plans were now required as part of planning submissions for major new development. It was noted that the purpose of a travel to work plan was to increase travel choices and reduce staff travel time and dependence on car use.

Within Copeland West Lakes were currently undertaking a scoping exercise to assess the feasibility for their site and a travel to work plan was being developed for Sellafield by British Nuclear Group.

Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

The Sub Group received a presentation from Suzanne Burgess, Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on the work that the centre did on energy efficiency.

The Sub Group was informed that the centre had been set up in 1996 and was part of a national network of 33 centers. The centre received funding from the Energy Savings Trust and Carlisle City Council. The centre had originally worked in the Carlisle area but since 2000 had covered the whole of Cumbria.

The Centre provided three main services – giving energy efficiency advice, enabling energy efficiency measures to be installed in homes and research and encouragement to use renewable energy. Last year the centre had given energy efficiency advice to 22,000 people across Cumbria.

The Sub Group noted that under the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), electricity and gas suppliers were required to achieve targets for the promotion of improvements in domestic energy efficiency. These improvements were free cavity wall and loft insulation for home owners or private tenants who received means-tested or disability based benefits.

The second round of targets had finished with the third phase of the EEC now known as The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target, was going to run from 2008 to 2011. It was hoped that the Government would release the funds to meet these targets in October/November. Once the funds had been released the Utility Companies would look for schemes to use the funding on.

The Sub Group further noted that The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 placed a responsibility on local authorities to improve residential energy efficiency and reduce energy use by 30% over 15 years, i.e. by 2010. It was estimated that the Council's had so far achieved 19% and would need to achieve the other 11% in the next three years.

The Sub Group were informed that Carlisle City Council had over three years paid £330,000 in energy efficiency measures to aid the council in meeting its energy efficiency targets. This expenditure had overall bought in £9,000,000 of investment into Carlisle.

The Sub Group noted that CEEAC had worked with Eden District Council in some 'Hotspot areas' where for a short period of time the cost of cavity wall and supply only loft insulation was free. The 'Hotspots' were only achievable due to the extra funding from the Local Authority.

In Carlisle, where a similar programme was running, CEEAC had begun by identifying the council wards with highest fuel poverty, that is, where homes have to use more than 10% of their income to heat their property adequately, using the Fuel Poverty Indicator database provided by the Centre for Sustainable Energy. The benefit of working in a specific area at a

time was that marketing and installation can be targeted, and local awareness created which boosts interest.

In these schemes CEEAC would market the service, acting as the initial point of contact, preparing schedules for survey and installation work, and following up householders after the work has been completed. Potential customers who contacted CEEAC could be given a quick assessment of how much they would need to pay, followed by a referral to the appropriate contractors for a survey visit and installation.

The Sub Group were further informed that the installation of energy efficiency measures and improved heating systems were all standard measures, in particular cavity wall insulation and loft insulation, which were easy to install in suitable existing properties, and were very cost effective.

CEEAC had also taken great effort to identify good contractors to carry out the installations and to set up a stringent quality control process to ensure that the work was of a high standard and any problems were dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The Sub Group noted that if the Council were to put some funding into providing grants to enable the installation of energy efficiency measures the CEEAC would be happy to provide a similar service to that provided in Carlisle and Eden.

The Committee noted that the Council had recently undertaken a Housing Stock Survey of all the Housing in Copeland and the results of the survey would be helpful in identifying the best areas in which to run such a scheme.

Further investigation following the Sub Group meeting revealed that to make the necessary improvement in HECA figures by 2010 would mean Cavity wall insulation installed in 1445 homes, Full loft insulation installed in 206 homes, Loft top up installed in 3096 homes and Solid wall insulation installed in 254 homes.

The full cost of this work in both the private and social housing would be £6.3 million. Discounts and grants may reduce this to £5.4 million before any customer contribution is made. The income to the local economy would be in the region of £1 million annually and over the lifetime of the insulation around £27 million.

If solid wall insulation was removed the costs would be: Full cost of insulation £1.1 million, discounts and grants would reduce the cost to around 600k, with the cost being reduced by contributions from customers who were able to pay. The income to the local economy would be 245k with a lifetime saving of £8 million.

The Committee noted that the Council had adopted the Copeland Health and Affordable Warmth Strategy and its Action Plan in 2003.

The aims of the Strategy were to:

- Increase income levels,
- Improve the energy efficiency of all homes in fuel poverty,
- Provide easy access to advice about energy suppliers, energy saving solutions,
- Provide easy access to various grants and discounted energy saving products, and
- Raise awareness of affordable warmth benefits and fuel poverty implications.

The Strategy had stated that the number of excess winter deaths in Copeland for 98/99 was 37; 99/00 – 95; 00/01 – 29; 01/02 – 41. Furthermore, The Fuel Poverty Index (Year 01/02) showed that 23.26% of households in Copeland live in fuel poverty and two worst hit wards in Copeland, Sandwith and Cleater Moor South ranked in England's worst 10%.

Council Property

The Sub Group received a presentation from Chris Lloyd, Business Development Manager on initiatives currently in place for energy efficiency in Council owned buildings. Members were given an overview of all Council owned buildings.

The Sub Group were informed of current initiatives in place at the Copeland Centre, which included passive ventilation, Passive Infrared Sensor (PIR) light controls, lighting controls for out of core hours and a high level of insulation. Low energy floodlights and internal lighting are also installed at the Moresby Depot. It was noted that forthcoming planned initiatives included PIR lighting for stairwells and toilets, additional recycling facilities by October 2007 at the Copeland Centre and new low energy boiler replacements at the Moresby Depot.

The Sub Group welcomed the introduction of additional recycling facilities, which due to the new regulations concerning large buildings, to include the collection of glass, cans and plastic bottles. Members were informed that the initial cost of containers had been addressed but that collection details had not yet been arranged.

It was noted that energy efficiencies were being made at both sites by the use of recycled paper and efforts were being made to reduce the use of desktop printers. The authority had joined with the other Local Authorities to

implement a formal shared service for procurement in Cumbria. The Efficient Procurement in Cumbria service would ensure better buying power for all those involved. Members were informed of ongoing work with this group, North West Centre of Excellence and central government and the Cumbria County Council Climate Change group.

The Sub Committee were informed that the Carbon Trust had surveyed all Leisure Trust buildings, resulting in a number of energy initiatives being put in place, including the installation of variable speed pumps to regulate heating.

Resources for 2007/08

The Sub Group were informed that the one year fixed contract post of procurement Officer had now ceased, and that measures had been put in place for one full time property and contracts officer and one part time property officer.

The Sub Group was informed that the property maintenance budget for 2007/08 consisted of a Public Building Fund revenue allocation of £166,265 and a Capital fund for programmed maintenance of £165,135. Members were advised that the backlog of programmed maintenance repair established through the five year condition survey of £881,805. Members were informed that no funding had been allocated for the implementation of green issues.

The Sub Group were informed that the council had a schedule for future refurbishment work and agreed that energy efficiency should be considered as part of any such work.

The Sub Group discussed the possibility of a pilot project on a Council owned property to use as an example of energy efficiency through the use of solar panels or more efficient forms of heating.

Staff Awareness

The Sub Group were informed that the property section were taking over the Council's electricity supply and had established a new contract to commence in October 2007 for the provision of electricity, this would bring an approximate saving of 7.5% on the existing contract, the contract would include the installation of Smart meters and a meter reading contract which would enable half hourly records enabling examination and planning.

The Sub Group discussed the issue of staff awareness of energy efficient issues. It was noted that the turning off of PC's, screens and printers presented a considerable problem and that significant savings could be made if this was addressed. The Sub Group felt that statistical reporting of

energy usage would increase awareness amongst staff. It was felt that a programme of staff awareness should be implemented along with energy awareness training for all new employees.

Copeland Homes

The Sub Group received a presentation from Brian Durham, Asset Manager of Home Group. Members were informed that in line with the Government's Decent Homes Standard all of Copeland Homes housing stock should be warm, have reasonably modern facilities and be weatherproof by 2010.

The Sub Group was informed that £8.2 million had been invested since the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Copeland Homes towards meeting this target and a further £15.9 million was to be invested by 2010/11. The Sub Group was further informed that Copeland Homes was slightly below their current target for completed work in 2007/08 which was 59% of the housing stock.

Members were informed that the energy rating of dwellings was measured by the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating and that Copeland Homes, in line with the Housing Corporation Target of 56 – 70 had obtained a rating of 61. Members were also informed of Eco Homes XB, which was an Environmental Efficiency Assessment for Existing Homes that set benchmarks, annual targets and goals and allowed existing homes to be assessed and monitored.

The Sub Group were informed that the current decent homes projects included the installation of double glazed windows and doors to reduce drafts, upgrading of boilers and the installation of loft and cavity wall insulation. Members were concerned that some tenants would not allow work to be carried out. The Sub Group enquired whether the installation of 'smart meters' had been considered and felt that the ability to see the cost of energy being used would encourage energy efficiency.

The Sub Group were interested in what energy saving advice was given to new and existing residents. Members were informed that advice was currently given to residents at yearly servicing inspections but that there were plans to produce a new booklet in partnership with Sunderland Homes. The booklet would be part of an introduction pack for existing and new tenants containing energy efficiency advice, the first draft being expected by the end of the year.

Members were further informed that energy efficient light bulbs had been provided at the Copeland Homes fun days through their association with EAGA.

The Sub Group were informed that Copeland Homes were working in partnership with Cumbria Housing Partnership and GM Procure to reduce costs by buying collectively and sharing contractors and in partnership with Gentoo (formally Sunderland Homes) to reduce CO2 levels. Members were informed that alternative energy sources such as windmills, air source heat pumps, solar panels and photovoltaic cells had been considered but were currently not practical for existing stock.

The Sub Group noted that Copeland Homes had undertaken a staff energy efficiency awareness campaign. This 'Smile Campaign' involved approximately 100 employees who were energy efficiency champions who encouraged energy efficiency issues throughout the organisation.

Eskdale Green Biomass Project

The Committee received a presentation from Tony Fox of the Eskdale Open Community Foundation on the St Bega's School Project.

The Sub Group noted that the Eskdale Open Group had investigated the development of a community biomass heating project. With funding from CLAREN, Rural Regeneration Cumbria (RRC), Lake District National Park (LDNP) Sustainable Development Fund and The Neighbourhood Forum, a feasibility study had been commissioned.

As part of the study, plans and specifications for three demonstration biomass plants were pulled together and the with permission of the Governors of St Bega's Church of England Primary School the first, a 45kW log boiler, has been installed. This was 100% grant funded from the LDNP Sustainable Development Fund, Cumbria Woodlands and the DTI BioEnergy Infrastructure Fund and in total cost approximately £30,000.

It was anticipated that this boiler will save approximately 25% to 40% of the existing heating oil fuel bill per annum and reduce CO2 emissions by 8.5 tonnes per year.

The Sub Group further noted that plans were being drawn up for the next two pilot schemes which were to install a woodchip boiler at the Youth Hostel, which should be operational by November 2007, and a small community heating scheme involving six residences.

The Eskdale Open Group had now set up a community company, West Cumbria Wood Products Ltd and it was hoped that the extension of these schemes would create employment in the area over the next 3 years and that any profit would be reinvested back into the community.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub Group, after considering all the evidence, agreed that there were a number of recommendations it would wish to make. These were:

The Sub Group considered that there was an opportunity for work on climate change and sustainable development to be undertaken by all the councils across Cumbria working together on these issues in a similar way to the joint work on waste. It would be particularly worthwhile to pursue the possibility of getting a discount on bulk purchase of renewable energy sources.

- (A) **Cumbria County Council be asked to examine the feasibility of Cumbrian authorities working together on Climate Change to ensure possible savings and efficiencies of service and that opportunities for joint working on sustainable development be explored with neighbouring authorities.**

The Sub Group noted that the County Council was developing a Cumbrian climate change strategy and action plan through the Cumbrian Strategic Partnership.

The Sub Group felt that the Council should be involved in this consultation and asked officers to ascertain how this information was going to be dealt with by the Council.

- (B) **Officers ensure that the Council makes an appropriate input into the Cumbrian Climate Change Strategy.**

The Sub Group noted that the County Council, Eden and South Lakeland had received a briefing session on climate change from a consultancy firm, Quantum Strategy and Technology Ltd, who had been hired by the Northwest Regional Development Authority. The sessions were designed to raise awareness of climate change and give practical solutions that could be taken to reduce climate change.

The Sub Group considered that this would be a worthwhile training session for the council to organise in this municipal year.

- (C) **external training on Climate Change and other sustainable development issues be given to the Council and be commenced by the end of the Municipal year at the latest.**

The Sub Group welcomed and supported the work that had been done by the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's fleet.

- (D) the work done by the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's fleet be welcomed and supported.**

The Sub Group felt that the visit to St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant School in Whitehaven was particularly worthwhile. The School had made impressive strides in reducing its carbon footprint and would make a good best practise case for other schools in Cumbria.

- (E) Cumbria County Council be requested to consider St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant School in Whitehaven as a best practice example to help other schools in Cumbria on how to acquire and use renewable energy and to reduce their carbon footprint.**

The Sub Group felt that Planning policy was an effective way to insist on the use of renewables, particularly including such words as "require" in strategies. In light of the proposed changes in planning regulations and bearing in mind requirements already made by some local authorities the Council should take a more proactive attitude towards energy efficiency in new developments. The Council, through its role as a community leader should use its planning policies to influence the use of renewable energy technologies in the Borough.

It would also be appropriate for relevant planning staff to receive training on sustainable energy technologies so that the maximum possible use of these technologies can be achieved.

- (F) from now on a greater emphasis be put on developers to use renewable energy in new developments and to improve energy efficiency.**

The Sub Group noted that Copeland had areas which were some of the worst hit in England by fuel poverty, and the Sub Group expressed its concern that this was an area that currently was not being dealt with by the council. It was also concerned that progress on the Council's Health and Affordable Warmth Strategy and Home Energy Conservation targets had stopped.

- (G) the Council should place greater priority and resources into dealing with energy efficiency, affordable warmth and fuel poverty.**

The Committee further noted that one of the main reasons for (G) above was that the Council did not currently employ an officer to undertake work

on these areas. It would be particularly useful for an officer to be employed to deal with energy efficiency, affordable warmth; fuel poverty and climate change work so that the Council can restart its work towards its targets.

- (H) in light of recommendation (G) above, the Council fills the current vacant sustainability officer post as soon as possible to deal with climate change, energy efficiency, affordable warmth and fuel poverty targets and priority is given to these issues within the post.**

The Sub Group considered that the Council should explore whether it was possible to introduce a travel to work plan. It was important if the council was to encourage other organisations in the Borough to introduce such a plan that the Council in its role as a community leader had one in place.

- (I) the Car Parking Officer Task Group is requested to investigate the feasibility of the Council introducing a Travel to Work Plan.**

In noting that a travel to work plan was being developed for Sellafield, the Sub Group agreed that Sellafield Ltd should be asked when this travel plan will be completed and that this issue be placed on the agenda for the next quarterly meeting with British Nuclear Group.

- (J) Sellafield Ltd be asked when their travel to work plan will be completed and this issue be placed on the agenda for the next quarterly update meeting with British Nuclear Group.**

The Sub Group considered that the Council would not meet its requirements under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 to improve residential energy efficiency and reduce energy use by 30% by 2010. This was also having an effect on the ability of the Council to meet its Affordable Warmth Strategy.

The Sub Group noted that the work by Copeland Homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard would enable the social housing sector to meet its targets through Copeland Homes funding and some private dwellings through the utilities funding for people who qualified i.e. means-tested or disability based benefits.

The Sub Group was concerned that this would leave the rest of the private sector dwellings where the level of energy efficiency per dwelling was the lowest. In noting the highly successful work done by the Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre in Carlisle and Eden the Sub Group felt that a similar project should be undertaken in Copeland.

The Sub Group was particularly impressed with the level of economic regeneration as well as the improvements in energy efficiency that had been created in Carlisle by the Council providing funding for discounted energy efficiency measures. Similar figures could be achieved in Copeland.

- (K) **the Council provide a scheme for the installation of energy efficiency measures for people on benefits and provide £100,000 per annum until 2010 as grants to enable those people who live in private dwellings and are not on benefits to apply for help in installing energy efficiency measures within Copeland.**

The Sub Group noted that the Council was required due to new regulations concerning large buildings to introduce additional recycling facilities at its main offices. This would include the collection of glass, cans and plastic bottles.

The Sub Group welcomed these proposals although the final budgetary cost had yet to be determined.

- (L) **the Council's plans to introduce additional recycling facilities for the collection of glass, cans and plastic bottles be implemented.**

The Sub Group noted that the Council did not have any budgetary resources earmarked specifically for green issues. The local authorities which appeared to have made most progress in energy conservation and sustainability have carried out a strategy of "ring fencing" savings made from energy conservation. In this way there is a permanent fund available for the implementation of further carbon saving schemes.

If the Council allocated a specific budget it could start using this budget to implement green issues particularly energy efficiency improvements.

- (M) **specific funding for the implementation of green issues to raise awareness of energy efficiency and climate change be allocated within the council's budget.**

The Sub Group noted that the council had a schedule for future refurbishment work. It further noted that the installation of appropriate energy efficiency measures could reduce the council's energy usage and thereby produce a saving for the council.

- (N) **any future refurbishment work to Council owned property should look to significantly improve the energy efficiency of the building.**

The Sub Group felt that there was a need to set an example of good practice to the public and business community on the use of renewable

energy and energy efficiency. A number of authorities had taken the opportunity to do this and installed renewable energy technology into their buildings.

The Council should undertake a pilot scheme that incorporated renewable energy technology or highlighted significant improvements in energy efficiency.

- (O) the Council consider the installation of renewable energy features into a Council building as a pilot project in a building when it is due to be refurbished in the near future as an example of energy efficiency.**

The Sub Group considered that due to the lack of resources there had been little work done by the council to promote energy efficiency or climate change issues across the Borough.

There was an urgent need to run a public awareness campaign particularly to raise the profile of fuel poverty issues and the links between fuel poverty and ill health.

- (P) the Council implement a programme of public awareness of energy efficiency and climate change across the Borough.**

The Sub Group noted that it did not have any energy efficiency awareness training for staff or members.

The Sub Group felt that there was a need for energy awareness training for existing staff and as part of induction training for new Council employees in the basics of energy saving, such as the correct use of lighting, heating, and IT equipment.

It would need a behavioural change amongst staff and members but it would be one of the most significant, and cost effective, ways of achieving energy savings.

- (Q) the Council implement an internal programme of staff and member awareness of energy efficiency issues.**

The Sub Group considered the projects that Copeland Homes had introduced in the borough to enable them to meet their Decent Homes Standard targets.

The Sub Group felt that the installation of smart meters would enable the residents to better understand what their level of energy usage was and the cost of that usage.

- (R) **Copeland Homes consider the possibility of installing 'smart meters' in a pilot scheme to help their residents encourage better energy use.**

The Sub Group noted that Copeland Homes intended to introduce a booklet and information pack containing energy efficiency advice for new and existing tenants. It felt that this booklet was a good idea and should be strongly supported.

- (S) **Copeland Homes plans to produce a booklet and information pack containing energy efficiency advice for new and existing tenants be welcomed and implemented.**

The Sub Group was impressed by the work that had been undertaken in developing the Eskdale Biomass project. It showed that it was possible for a local community to work together to bring energy savings and reduce its impact on climate change.

The use of a cheap renewable energy source worked well particularly where the area had no connection to a main gas pipe. There was great potential for the use of this energy to be used by other communities and organisations throughout the borough.

- (T) **the work undertaken by the Eskdale Biomass project should be promoted as an excellent example of a community led renewable energy scheme and the Council should promote it to other organisations both private and public across the borough.**

The Sub Group noted that the work of the Local Agenda 21 Forum had ceased following the Council's Sustainability leaving the council's employment. The forum had been jointly run and funded with Allerdale Borough Council.

The Sub Group felt that as part of a programme of public awareness of energy efficiency and climate change across the Borough the forum should be reintroduced and renamed the Sustainability forum.

- (U) **the Sustainability (LA21) Forum be reintroduced with a view to sharing resources and costs with Allerdale Borough Council.**

The Sub Group noted that the Council's Corporate Plan had an action to develop and implement a green policy for the Council in 2008. It further noted that the Energy Saving Trust had been contacted to help officers to develop a green policy.

The Energy Saving Trust would help by offering guidance, support and consultancy through a methodical approach to analysing selected local authority carbon footprints and devising an action plan to reduce them.

- (V) **the Energy Saving Trust be requested to help in the development and implementation of a green policy for the Council.**

The Sub Group also considered a further action in the Council's Corporate Plan to influence home energy conservation plans and tackling fuel poverty with a target date of 2012.

The Sub Group felt that this target date, bearing in mind the target of 2010 set by the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and the areas of high fuel poverty in Copeland, should be brought forward to 2009.

The Sub Group considered that with the help of the Energy Saving Trust an action plan could be developed within this timetable through the work on a green policy referred to above.

- (W) **a target date of 2009 be set for the action in the Council's Corporate Plan to influence home energy conservation plans and tackle fuel poverty.**

The Sub Group considered the possible use of micro generation projects particularly hydropower. It noted that there were a number of hydropower projects in Cumbria but none in Copeland.

The Sub Group felt that small hydro schemes were particularly suited to rural areas and provided a number of environmental and economic benefits. There were a number of possible sites in Copeland that could be ideal for hydropower and the Sub group agreed that the Council should explore the options for delivering or encouraging small hydroelectric projects on streams and rivers within Copeland.

- (X) **the Council explore options for the use of hydropower and other aspects of micro generation, and**

The Sub Group felt that progress in these areas was long overdue and would like to see progress made in the near future on the council's targets.

- (Y) **a report be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Safer in six months time on the progress made on these recommendations.**

4. CORPORATE PLAN

Sustainability has four actions in the Corporate Plan. These are:

Action	Outcomes (measurable)	Target date
Influence home energy conservation plans and tackling fuel poverty	Reduction in fuel bills, Increased energy efficiency, Reduce household bills for low income households, and Improved educational attainment	2012
Prepare and implement an environmental sustainability programme	Environmental sustainability programme outcomes defined and achieved. Support for the environmental aspects of Parish Plans	2012
Demonstrate the Council's commitment to the environment by achieving environmental management accreditation	Achieve ISO 14001 accreditation	2012
Develop and implement a green policy for the Council	Recycling rates from Council premises increased, waste minimised and energy use reduced. Environmental footprint reduced.	2008

5. CONCLUSION

The Committee is invited to consider the recommendations of the Energy Review Task and Finish Group at the head of this report.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents:

None