

## York & North Yorkshire Climate Change Leadership seminars

### Interim report on Workshop 3: CO2 reduction from local authority operations (NI185)

This note records ideas that emerged during the third in a series of four seminars on Climate Change Leadership, which took place on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010, 0930-1230. The series is supported and funded by the sub regional partners of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. All nine of the sub-regional local authorities were represented at the seminar<sup>1</sup> with 47 members and officers representing their respective authorities, together with participants from the North York Moors National Park Authority, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, NHS NYY Primary Care Trust and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue.

The focus of the workshop was increasing efficiency and cost savings within Local Authority (LA) operations, with National Indicator 185 as the proxy LA performance measure. NI 185 is titled CO2 reduction from local authority operations. The aim of this indicator is to measure the progress of local authorities to reduce CO2 emissions from the relevant buildings and transport used to deliver its functions and to encourage them to demonstrate leadership on tackling climate change<sup>2</sup>. The manner in which the LA delivers its functions can achieve CO2 emissions reductions. The public sector is in a key position to lead on CO2 emissions reduction by setting a behavioural and strategic example to the private sector and the communities they serve. Action by local authorities is likely to be critical to the achievement of Government's climate change objectives.

The stimulus inputs were:

Andrew McDowell, Arup, who outlined measures that could improve the carbon and energy efficiency of local authority building stock. Andrew explained how achieving reduced carbon values of buildings could be achieved through demand minimisation and supply decarbonisation. He illustrated that different techniques have different benefits of carbon per pound spent, with techniques such as ventilation and day-lighting being far more cost effective than fuel cells and photo-voltaics. He described many easy wins such as the use of energy managers, behavioural change campaigns and proper insulation.

Nigel Foster, Arup, who discussed the issues surrounding transport related carbon both within authorities own operations and within their boundary. He illustrated that whilst transport only contributed approximately 7% of NYCC's carbon emissions, by leading the way in carbon emission reduction, authorities would be setting standards and influencing local businesses and people. He stressed the most important immediate initiative is to understand and monitor current emissions generated, and to reduce the need for travel.

Sian Fergusson, Audit Commission, illustrated the implications of the auditing approach to NI 185 and how councils can achieve objectives to reach specific performance levels and what important measures, such as establishing baselines, need to be undertaken. Sian explained how new considerations for 2009 would be included for assessment, such as the use of natural resources and more focus on achievements, outputs and outcomes. She expects at present, to see a greater number of 1 scores (on an assessment scale of 1-4) within the region for NI 185. The Audit Commission are keen to see evidence of councils demonstrating they know how

<sup>1</sup> NYCC, City of York C, Harrogate BC, Scarborough BC, Craven DC, Hambleton DC, Richmondshire DC, Ryedale DC, Selby DC

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk/NIResults.aspx?NIRef=NI%20185>

much energy they use, knowing how to reduce energy use and showing how they can manage resources.

## Summary

The workshop input highlighted the importance of the efficiency of authority building stock in dealing with NI 185 commitments. This often proves problematic due to the performance and maintenance of many properties being outside of direct authority control (e.g. schools). A variety of best practise methods that had been put in place across the sub region were discussed and potential methods for collaboration raised. A key issue was the desire of councillors and officers to encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration to deal with the problems and difficulties inherent in meeting NI 185 commitments.

## 1.1 Where and how has the public sector in the sub-region made good progress on reducing emissions?

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- There have been a number of easy wins achieved by North York Moors National Park Authority including: energy efficiency measures in all buildings, low emission pool cars running on recycled bio fuel and car sharing. Emissions from both buildings and travel per WTE have reduced by approximately 20% since 2004. In the wider Park there are 14 renewable energy projects ongoing and around 1m people passing through the two visitor centres have been exposed to climate change messages during 2009. Education work includes engaging over 18,000 young people per year in climate change messages.
- In the Yorkshire Dales National Park a key issue is the application for wind farms. These cannot keep being turned down. Alternatives are required. They are looking into opportunities for hydroelectric power in small villages. This has led to a challenge of living up to expectations. Within their own operations, the YDNPA has reduced mileage payments for business travel, encouraging staff to reduce car usage.
- North Yorkshire County Council has been active in finding out how much energy they are using by measuring supply and usage and moderating supply. The measuring has also been completed at a local level. 'Switch-off' days have been organised but there is evidence to suggest that this hasn't led to long term behavioural change. NYCC has discovered that video conferencing and hot desking can make a difference in travel, with changing working practises resulting from home working and building trust and new management styles resulting in lower use of office space. Vehicles now run on biodiesel where possible.
- Harrogate Borough Council is the lead authority for a York and North Yorkshire sub-region schools project, and is in the process of recruiting a schools climate change officer who will develop a tool kit based on existing best practice for use throughout the sub-reg. In addition they are exploring opportunities for new technology to be utilised in new developments. The Council has also undertaken significant monitoring/auditing of emissions, and have trialled in-house smart meters, with staff being issued with green, yellow or red cards depending on performance and energy efficiency. There is a feeling that a longer term strategy is required now the quick-wins have either been completed or are underway. Harrogate has been able to introduce Ground Source Heat Pumps in over 90 council properties, and have been buying a proportion of green energy for ½ hourly metered properties. The council also has previously developed a schools Climate Action Programme toolkit which has been used in part by approximately 40% of primary schools in the Harrogate district, with further schools taking up the tool-kit in subsequent years. The tool kit's use is one way of raising awareness in communities as children take the message home and encourage others to act.
- The City of York Council has appointed an energy champion to assist with lowering carbon emissions in new developments. An education programme is underway. Furthermore over 100 smart meters are available for free loan from libraries in the City (this service is also provided by County Council libraries), LPG vehicles have been operating since 2003, there is a requirement for 5% renewable energy in new developments and a sliding scale for residents parking permits based on vehicle emissions. In addition, the Council is exploring the possibility of re-locating to a single low-emission site and has set up new legislation to ensure that all new planning applications meet the York sustainability statement. In the discussion, a question was asked as to the impacts of re-locating to a new build, given that it is difficult to reduce

emissions from older buildings. The response from York outlined that the change of usage associated with some sites would mean there is scope for reduced emissions from the older buildings. Another issue raised in relation to York was the similar numbers of people commuting in and out of the city for work, and potential to encourage minimisation of commuting traffic. The City of York Council has started to reduce emissions relating to street lighting, with measurements, timings and controllable lighting being put into place. Social issues have been encountered relating to this, with the issue of evidence against perception being key (street lighting is perceived to lead to higher crime when reduced, not necessarily evidence for this).

- The representative from the NHS/PCT stated that as an organisation with a significant financial deficit it can be difficult to justify the cost of interventions. However, there has been some progress recently with the usage of tele-health units which remotely monitoring patients and reduce the need to regular check-ups, thereby reducing travel costs. North Yorkshire County Council has adopted a similar approach to the NHS with their approach to adult social care and collectively partners gained a 'green flag' in the recent Comprehensive Area Assessment for 'helping older and vulnerable people keep their independence'. It was also mentioned that the tighter funding situation makes it imperative to share knowledge and resources, as the good performers are more likely to receive more funding.
- Craven Council has introduced a range of policies including: fleet driver training, vehicle limiters, 'switch-off' day, introduced alternative weekly collection of waste and recyclables and are bidding for a thermal imaging camera for use to assess schools and other public buildings. Craven have also upgraded their IT infrastructure to reduce costs and increase efficiency.
- Scarborough Council has introduced software to enable remote shut-down of council computers. They have also been submitting bids for Carbon Trust support for building efficiency measures such as passive infrared sensors, boiler control etc.

## **1.2 What action could be taken across the sub-region to improve the performance of all authorities?**

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- The PCT made it clear that there is great scope for working more efficiently with other organisations and departments. This view was shared by most other delegates. NYCC illustrated that collaboration over flood risk sets precedent and shows the cooperation that can occur. There is the potential for work duplication to be removed across the regional hierarchy should further collaboration occur. A bad example of collaboration is that of recycling. This is different by authority boundary with different collection types meaning that vehicles/schemes cannot cross authority boundaries.
- A truly integrated transport system was suggested as a means to reduce emissions, ensuring a coherent and cross-boundary public transport network.
- It was recognised that at present, the infrastructure does not always exist which allows people to make the 'low-emission' choice and that this needs to be completed before behavioural change can occur. Further to this, potential economic infrastructure exists, with National Parks having sustainable development funds for communities and businesses in their boundary. Other sources of funding are present including private partnerships and joint applications at a regional level.
- A key message was set out: that when funding is made available, the local authorities do not want to have to compete for it. Given the short timescales for bidding, there is often no opportunity for collaboration.

- Harrogate Borough Council made it clear that a central resource is required for knowledge sharing.
- Authorities noted that there was conflict and also opportunity between the strands being discussed. Decreased transport use may result in increased energy use; improvements in energy efficiency may result in a more pleasant working environment etc.
- The final point of the session concerned the role of land-use and spatial planning in the long term. This is an opportunity for the local authorities who need to be more proactive in their approach as well as encouraging bottom up schemes such as transitional towns and lift sharing