

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 5th SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT OF THE GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERS

GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW - PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress with the Green Growth Scrutiny Review.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, held on 6th June 2011, members agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review to produce an informed response to the Notice of Motion that was approved by Council on 18th April 2011. The Notice of Motion, which was agreed unanimously, was:

That Council:

(1) Recognises the importance of environmental sustainability to future business growth and the development of the Borough's economy, not just the Green economy.

(2) Recognises that aligning resource efficiency, sustainable procurement, waste reduction strategies, commercial waste infrastructure, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources are common across all sectors of the economy and key to long term success and sustainability.

(3) Notes the ENWORKS report 'Making an impact in the Liverpool City Region' and the excellent resource efficiency support that this organisation has offered to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), making businesses stronger through better use of resources.

(4) Instructs officers to review the Council's economic regeneration policies to ensure that businesses in Wirral can access appropriate information and support tools to enable them to benefit from increased profitability, productivity and sustainability through improved energy and resource efficiency.

(5) Recognises the green value of Wirral's Home Insulation Programme, set up under the previous Labour/Liberal Democrat administration and continued by the present administration, which will benefit Wirral householders, increase employment opportunities and reduce the Carbon Footprint of the Borough.

(6) Believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a "cluster" of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country.

- 1.2 The Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a panel of members should be formed to undertake the scrutiny review. Subsequently, the following members volunteered to be members of the Panel:
- Councillor Mark Johnston (Chair)
 - Councillor Peter Kearney
 - Councillor Steve Niblock
 - Councillor Stuart Whittingham

2. Scope of the Review

- 2.1 The Panel members have met on two occasions to discuss the scope of the review. Panel members suggest that the review should focus on paragraph (6) of the Notice of Motion. The review will, therefore, concentrate on “the best ways to create and support a ‘cluster’ of companies to lead the way in driving a green economy on Wirral and across the country”.
- 2.2 A draft Scope Document, agreed by the Panel members, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Committee members are requested to consider this draft document for approval.
- 2.3 The Panel is recommending that this scrutiny review focuses on the following major issues:
- National Policy –
What is national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral?
 - Current business support provided by the Council –
What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy and how can we support these companies to expand?
 - Marketing -
How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs, for example, through involvement with trade fairs?
What will be the opportunities for the green economy arising from the proposed Enterprise Zone?
 - Creating a green market –
What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy?
 - Education / training –
What are the educational / training needs of the sector?
 - Planning and land availability –
Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth?
What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space / land and how suitable is it?
 - Council properties –
What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?

3. Evidence Gathering and the Report

3.1 The Panel members propose to use a number of methods to gather evidence:

- Meetings with key officers
- Meetings with representatives of the business community
- Visits to appropriate sites

3.2 Further written evidence will be gathered from recent Committee reports, relevant Government reports and strategies as well as from other Councils.

3.3 It is planned that the final report for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review will be completed before the end of 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee approve the Scope for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- (2) That the Panel members be confirmed as Councillors Mark Johnston (Chair), Peter Kearney, Steve Niblock, and Stuart Whittingham.

Report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Panel Members:

Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair)

Cllr Peter Kearney

Cllr Steve Niblock

Cllr Stuart Whittingham

Appendix 1: Scope Document for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review

Review Title: Green Growth Scrutiny Review

Scrutiny Panel Chair: Cllr Mark Johnston	Contact details: mobile: 07986 540930
Additional Panel members: Cllr Peter Kearney Cllr Steve Niblock Cllr Stuart Whittingham	Contact details: 0151 343 1719 mobile: 07583 395300 mobile: 07939 578041 0151 653 5539 mobile:
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Other Key Officer contacts:	
<p>1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</p> <p>1.1 Market Wirral as a world class location for businesses and visitors.</p> <p>1.2 Make Wirral Council one of the most business friendly and supportive Councils in the country.</p>	
<p>2. What are the main issues?</p> <p>2.1 National Policy - What is national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral?</p> <p>2.2 Current business support - What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy and how can we support these companies to expand?</p> <p>2.3 Marketing - How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs, for example, through involvement with trade fairs? What will be the opportunities for the green economy arising from the proposed Enterprise Zone?</p> <p>2.4 Creating a green market – What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy?</p> <p>2.5 Education / training – What are the educational / training needs of the sector?</p> <p>2.6 Planning and land availability – Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth? What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space / land and how suitable is it?</p> <p>2.7 Council properties – What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?</p>	

3. The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:

3.1 Council agreed a motion on 18th April 2011 which included:

"This Council believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a 'cluster' of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country".

4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:

4.1 To understand the current position regarding the green economy in Wirral.

4.2 To gauge the current strength of the low carbon sector in Wirral.

4.3 To develop proposals to help stimulate further green growth in the borough.

5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?

Further scrutiny will help to raise the profile of green growth within the Council and, hopefully, remove barriers to future development.

6. Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

6.1 Appropriate Cabinet members and Directors, Wirral Borough Council.

6.2 Indirectly, potential investors.

7. Duration of enquiry?

Report due at the end of 2011.

8. What category does the review fall into?

Policy Review x Policy Development x

External Partnership Performance Management

Holding Executive to Account

9. Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?

The review will be conducted by councillors with the support of existing officers. However, the panel are looking for advice from people with expertise on this topic.

10. What information do we need?	
<p>10.1 Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).</p> <p>Relevant Government Departmental documents</p> <p>Recent Committee / Cabinet reports</p> <p>Relevant national documents</p> <p>Reports from other Councils into similar topics</p> <p>Examples of good practice from other Councils, for example, Bristol.</p>	<p>10.2 Primary/new evidence/information</p> <p>An evaluation of the businesses currently operating in the green economy sector in Wirral. (How many businesses, number of employees, type of business, etc..)</p> <p>Interviews with key officers</p> <p>Interviews with representatives of the business community</p> <p>Possible survey of representatives of the business community</p>
<p>10.3 Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc).</p> <p>Several meetings will be held including: Ben Lavell (Invest Wirral, WBC)</p> <p>Mark McManus (Managing Director, Stiebel Eltron) plus other representatives of the business community</p> <p>Kevin Adderley, Interim Director of Corporate services, WBC) – to discuss Inward Investment strategy</p> <p>Gill Rutter (Destination Marketing, WBC)</p> <p>Andrew Fraser (Strategic Development, WBC) - to discuss the planning regime and land issues</p> <p>Ian Brand (Asset Management, WBC)</p> <p>Alan Evans (Strategic Development, WBC)</p> <p>Visit to the Green Energy Training Centre (Stiebel Eltron)</p> <p>Wirral Metropolitan College</p>	<p>10.4 What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p> <p>Which part of the Council's current service provision is particularly successful?</p> <p>Where can improvements to service provision be made?</p> <p>What are the current barriers to green growth in Wirral?</p> <p>Can these barriers be removed?</p> <p>What should be the priorities for the future?</p>

11. What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).

11.1 Meetings with officers and representatives of the business community

11.2 Visits to include the Green Energy Training Centre, Invest Wirral

11.3 Survey of businesses in the green economy sector

11.4 Desk-top analysis

12. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).

12.1 None at this stage, other than through the business community