

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

08 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides background information regarding the Final report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Members are requested to support the contents and recommendations of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review;
- 2.2 The Green Growth Scrutiny Report should be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting;
- 2.3 Further reports will be presented to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update members regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

3.1 Council Notice of Motion

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.

3.2 Panel Membership

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

The panel has been supported by a Scrutiny Support Officer, Alan Veitch.

3.3 Scope of the Review

Panel members agreed that the review should focus on paragraph (6) of the Notice of Motion. The review, therefore, concentrated 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".

The main issues were identified in the Scope document for the Review as:

- National Policy –
What is the 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? 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?
- 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 and 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 and 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?

3.4 Evidence Gathering and the Report

The Panel members have used a number of methods to gather evidence for the review:

- Meetings with key officers
- Visits to local businesses already operating in the green sector
- A questionnaire for businesses already active in Wirral's green sector
- Written evidence, from a national, regional and local perspective

The Panel members express their thanks to all those who have assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions.

3.5 The Final Report

The Final Report, 'Green Growth in Wirral', which includes nineteen recommendations, is attached for consideration by the Committee.

Report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Panel Members:

Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair)

Cllr Stuart Whittingham

Cllr Steve Niblock

Cllr Peter Kearney