

**Economic & City Development Overview &
Scrutiny Committee**

13th March 2012

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Update Report – ‘Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector Scrutiny Review’

Summary

1. At their last meeting Members were verbally informed, under the work plan item, that the ‘Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector’ scrutiny review had been postponed. This report sets out a summary of the information received by the Task Group working on the review and the reasons for postponement.

Background

2. At a scrutiny work planning event held on 25th July 2011 it was agreed that the Economic & City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) would undertake a review in relation to ‘Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector’. The OSC subsequently received information about this topic at two informal meetings and this is summarised in the paragraphs below:

27th September 2011

3. Members received a briefing note on the topic and were asked to complete a Topic Assessment Form to set out clear aims and objectives for the review. However, the meeting had gone on for some length before this item was heard. With only two Committee Members still in attendance by this point, this item was, therefore, deferred to a later meeting.

15th November 2011

4. The briefing note, originally presented on 27th September, was presented again at a meeting on 15th November 2011 and included information on:

- What is a carbon footprint?
- Information on the carbon footprint in York
 - Information on which wards have the highest and which the lowest carbon footprint in the city and reasons as to why this might be
 - Which wards have the highest and which the lowest housing footprint
 - Which wards have the highest energy use
 - Which wards have the highest transport carbon footprint
 - Different attitudes to carbon footprint and 'greenness' across the city
 - Which areas of the city have the strongest and which the weakest levels of green attitudes
 - The York Green Neighbourhood Challenge

5. A further briefing note was also presented and this set out information on the following (specifically in relation to Heslington, Hull Road and Fishergate Wards):

- Housing – private sector stock condition survey 2008
- Range of grants available
 - Area based approach (funding no longer available)
 - One Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) eligible area
 - Landlord newsletter
 - Landlord conference
 - Website information
 - House in multiple occupation licence conditions
 - Code of practice

6. Officers also confirmed that their future focus in relation to reducing the carbon footprint in the privately rented sector would be:

- Completing the CESP area
- Maximising the Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) for all residents
- Preparing residents including landlords/letting agents and tenants for the new opportunities Green Deal including Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- Renewable technology
- Implementing the Energy Act 2011

7. On consideration and discussion of the above information the Committee identified the following specific topic area:

'Review of council policies and procedures in relation to the take up of available measures to reduce the carbon footprint in privately rented accommodation'.
8. The Committee agreed to form a 3 Member Task Group to undertake the bulk of the work on the review and asked for the following information to be presented to their first meeting:
 - An overview of current council policies relating to domestic carbon reduction
 - Regulations on domestic carbon reduction relating to private sector housing
 - An overview of policies relating to the regulation of privately rented accommodation in the city
 - The Government's Green Deal
9. The Task Group met on 20th January 2012 to receive further information on the points set out above. The Housing Standards and Adaptations Manager and the Sustainability Officer gave a comprehensive presentation on the 4 points set out in **paragraph 8** of this report.
10. They indicated that many of the current funding streams to assist with reducing the carbon footprint in the privately rented sector were coming to an end in 2012 and these would ultimately be replaced by the Government's new initiative the 'Green Deal'.
11. Officers explained that the Green Deal was:
 - The customer receives a package of energy efficiency measures at no up-front cost from a 'Green Deal' provider
 - The cost of the measures is paid back over the long term (for example 25 years) through repayments made via energy bills
 - The Green Deal will include owner-occupiers, the private and social rented sectors and the commercial sector
12. However detailed industry guidance was not due until late in Spring 2012 with the first Green Deals due to appear sometime in Autumn 2012.
13. Possible roles for City of York Council were being discussed at Leeds City Region Level and possibilities for these were as follows:

Option 1 Lead on provision of Green Deal directly themselves (likely to involve the procurement of partner organisations) with set up costs borne by local authorities

Option 2 Work in partnership with an existing commercial or community sector Green Deal provider or providers

Option 3 Leave to the 'Market' with no direct involvement in the scheme, although this could involve as a minimum the promotion of available schemes to residents.

14. On consideration of this information and after discussion with the officers present the Task Group agreed the following outcomes:

The review is being postponed (to a date to be confirmed) until further information is available on the Green Deal, this is likely to be in late Spring 2012. This information is key to the review, because without fully understanding what is proposed and what role the Council might well play in this, it would actually be very difficult for the Task Group to formulate any meaningful recommendations. In addition to this funding streams for CERT and CESP are coming to an end and will not be renewed so there is nothing that can be recommended in relation to these. However, despite this disappointing delay to the review, officers have given a commitment to:

- *Continue the Local Advice service until December 2012*
- *Take advantage of any CERT funding available (current funding has been extended until December 2012 to ensure that York Residents can take full advantage of the available CERT funding. The scheme is to be promoted to with a new brand "Wrapping up York" with a view to launching it as part of a wider marketing strategy regarding the local advice service*
- *Continue the CESP programme in the Hull Road area of the city (until funding ceases in December 2012)*
- *Hold a local housing summit in May 2012 (which will include a conference for private landlords which will raise awareness of ways to reduce the carbon footprint in privately rented accommodation)*
- *During 'Climate Week' (March 2012) undertake some ice-breaking measures to introduce the concept of the Green Deal*

Consultation

15. To date no consultation has taken place and this review has now been postponed. However, consultation will take place as appropriate once the review recommences.

Options

16. Members are asked to note the report and the reasons for postponing the review. They also have the option of rescheduling this into the work plan for later in this municipal year or at the start of the municipal year 2012/13.

Analysis

17. Members were made aware of the postponement of this review at their last meeting under the work plan item. This report is being brought to the Committee today to formally record that postponement. In addition to this, as part of their work planning, Scrutiny Management Committee have been informed that this Committee would like to take this topic forward into the new municipal year.
18. The reasons for postponing the review are set out in **Paragraph 14** of this report. Discussions between officers and the Task Group established that a short delay before continuing with the review would be appropriate whilst waiting for further information on the Green Deal.

Council Plan 2011-2015

19. The theme of this scrutiny review is directly linked with the 'Protect the Environment' element of the Council Plan 2011-2015; in particular the 'reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality' strand of this document.

Implications

20. **Financial** – there are no known financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report. However once the review recommences implications may arise and these will be highlighted as part of the review process.
21. **Human Resources** - there are no known human resources implications associated with the recommendations in this report. However once the review recommences implications may arise and these will be highlighted as part of the review process.

- 22. **Legal** - there are no known legal implications associated with the recommendations in this report. However once the review recommences implications may arise and these will be highlighted as part of the review process.
- 23. There are no other known implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Risk Management

- 24. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations within this report.

Recommendations

- 25. Members are asked to note the report and to consider when they might like to recommence the review.

Reason: To formally inform the Committee of the postponement of this review

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Report
Approved



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Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

None