

# **PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

14<sup>th</sup> JULY  
2010

## **LOW CARBON ECONOMY - POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: DRAFT SCOPING REPORT**

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP: PROSPEROUS CITY**

#### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES: C101: Delivering Customer Focussed Services, C102: Being 'One Council', C103: Efficient and Effective Council, C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to put forward proposals and seek agreement from Members in relation to the forthcoming policy review into Low Carbon Economy.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Marriott Hotel on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010. During the Scrutiny Café sessions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by Members of the Committee. At the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010, following discussions regarding the Work Programme, the Committee agreed to focus on the theme of the Low Carbon Economy.
- 2.2 Members agreed that the study should focus on a number of key themes. The review will explore the definition the potential for further growth of these industries. It will examine the action so far taken to encourage low carbon industries in the city and involve business and residents. It will also look forward to help inform Council policy in the future..
- 2.3 On the 8 June 2010, the Committee also agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider in detail a specific aspect of the review.
- 2.4 The low carbon economy is a central component of the Economic Masterplan. Main areas include car production, offshore wind and software (expand).

### **3. The Scrutiny Review Process**

- 3.1 Scrutiny reviews will carry out a number of stages in undertaking and completing a review. The stages broadly are:

<b>Stage 1 Scope</b>	The initial stage of the review identifies the background, issues, potential outcomes and timetable for the review.
<b>Stage 2 Investigate</b>	The Committee gathers evidence using a variety of tools and techniques and arranges visits where appropriate.
<b>Stage 3 Analyse</b>	The key trends and issues are highlighted from the evidence gathered by the Committee.
<b>Stage 4 Clarify</b>	The Committee discusses and identifies the principal messages of the review from the work undertaken.
<b>Stage 5 Recommend</b>	The Committee formulates and agrees realistic recommendations.
<b>Stage 6 Report</b>	Draft and final reports are prepared based on the evidence, findings and recommendations.
<b>Stage 7 Monitor</b>	The Committee monitors recommendations on a regularly agreed basis.

#### **4. Overall Aim of the Scrutiny Policy Review**

- 4.1 To examine issues relating to the promotion of a low carbon economy.

#### **5. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Policy Review**

- 5.1 The draft Terms of Reference for the policy review are proposed:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of what we mean by the term low carbon economy;
  - (b) To consider the difference between the concept of a low carbon industry and a low carbon place;
  - (b) To investigate the land and infrastructure requirements of a low carbon city;
  - (c) To consider the potential skills requirements of a low carbon economy and the measures that can be taken to ensure that the city's working population are equipped to meet the demand;
  - (d) To explore the number of low carbon industries in operation in the city;

(e) To consider the role of the Council in providing community leadership and championing the low carbon economy;

(f) To consider how best to market the city in order to attract new low carbon industries and consider the promotion of flagship schemes;

(g) To consider how best to involve individuals in making low carbon choices – eg through energy conservation or generation measures;

(h) To look at the action being taken by the city as a whole (businesses and residents) and the work being done to encourage businesses and residents to sign up to the low carbon agenda;

(i) To consider the role of the University in providing research into the development of low carbon industries and meeting the likely skills demands. How can we make courses more attractive to young people and ensure that their skills are transferable?

(j) To map those low carbon businesses already in the city to provide a benchmark for moving forward;

(k) To look at the work being done in schools and other Council buildings to reduce carbon emissions

## **6. Potential Areas of Enquiry and Sources of Evidence**

6.1 The Scrutiny Committee can invite a variety of people, key stakeholders and interested parties to provide written or oral evidence in order that a balanced and focused range of recommendations can be formulated. A list of potential witnesses, though not exhaustive, is included for Members information:

(a) Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders;

(b) Head of Strategic Economic Development;

(c) Appropriate Officers of the Council;

(d) Representatives from City Services

(e) Key Stakeholders and partner organisations (eg. University, One Northeast, Government Office North East, Chamber of Commerce, Arc

(f) Local residents;

(g) Representatives of minority communities of interest;

(h) Ward Councillors;

- (j) Local MPs;
- (k) Local Strategic Partnership, and
- (l) Local Authorities of good practice.

6.2 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the scrutiny process. Consideration will be given to how involvement can be structured in a way that the Committee encourages those views. If felt appropriate the Committee is able to co-opt an additional member to the Committee for the duration of the policy review.

6.3 In addition, diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. As such the views of local diversity groups will be sought throughout the inquiry where felt appropriate and time allows. Consequently, consideration has been given as to how the views of people from minority communities of interest or heritage (for example, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, black and minority ethnic people, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people), which may not be gathered through the usual community engagement routes, can be included over the course of the inquiry.

## **7. Funding from the Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget**

7.1 Consideration has been given, through the background research for this scoping report of the need to use funding from the committee's dedicated Overview and Scrutiny budget to aid Members in their enquiry.

7.2 At this stage it is suggested that funding may be necessary to support the following activities:

- (a) Key witnesses;
- (b) Engagement with voluntary and statutory organisations;
- (c) Delegates for expert jury, or a public event;
- (d) General publicity;
- (e) Visits (as necessary) to deliver effective scrutiny; and
- (f) Task and Finish activities.

7.3 Additional working group meetings are likely to be necessary to complete the evidence gathering.

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1 Members are recommended to discuss and agree the scope of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 2010/11 as outlined in the report.

8.2 Members are also asked to decide upon the membership of any Task and Finish Group they might wish to establish.

### **Background Papers**

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