

At a meeting of the PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 13TH APRIL, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Mordey in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Cuthbert, P. Gibson and T. Wright.

Also Present:-

Councillor D. Tate – Chairman of the Management Scrutiny Committee.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors D. Forbes, Howe, Old Snowdon and A. Wright.

Councillor James Scott

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, Councillor T. Wright referred to the recent retirement of Councillor Scott and paid tribute to his excellent service with regard to both the work of the Committee and the Council as a whole.

Declarations of Interest

Item 4 – Low Carbon Home Developments – Gentoo
Councillor T. Wright declared a personal interest in the item as a Board Member of Gentoo (Sunderland) Limited.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 16th March, 2011

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 16th March, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Low Carbon Home Developments – Gentoo

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which introduced Paul Burns (Green Operations Manager) and Sally Hancox (Director, Gentoo Green) who were attending the meeting to provide a presentation on Gentoo's Low Carbon Housing and the efforts of the Gentoo Group to reduce its own carbon footprint.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hancox informed the Committee of the vision and values of the Gentoo Group together with the following low carbon activities:-

- Low Carbon Housing – Retrofit
 - 139 homes completed to date comprising a variety of measures including solar thermal panels, energy efficient boilers, double glazing, external wall insulation and energy advice.
 - The Pay as You Save Scheme (PAYS) which had enabled retrofit measures to be undertaken to 46 properties Citywide, 26 properties at Auckland Homes and 45 homes at Queen Street.
 - The TSB funded competition 'Retrofit for the Future' which aimed to achieve an 80% reduction in carbon emissions. Gentoo had been allocated £150k per property enabling 3 semis (6 properties) to be retrofitted (£75,000 per property) including external wall insulation, triple glazing, MVHR and air tight membranes.
- Low Carbon Housing – New Build

From 2016 all new build properties would require to be carbon zero. Gentoo would look to both a traditional based design (2 storey house types, orientation within 30 degrees of south, solar hot water, photovoltaics, relatively little maintenance) and a PassivHaus based design (ultra low energy buildings based on a design concept developed in Germany).
- Carbon Footprint Reduction

Between 2007-2010 Gentoo had reduced its carbon footprint by 42% through a combination of waste management, staff engagement, sustainable procurement and efficient business travel.
- Services to Assist other Organisations

As a result of Gentoo's own experience and installation capacity the Group was able to assist other organisations with programme support and the installation of photovoltaics.

- Low Carbon Consultancy

Working with like minded organisations, Gentoo would use its experience to offer a wide range of consultancy services, including:-

- Calculating Office Carbon Footprints;
- Reviewing or producing Environmental Strategies and Policies;
- Producing Waste Management Strategies & Site Waste Management Plans;
- Creating, planning and delivering Environmental Awareness Campaigns;
- Delivering Environmental Education Programmes in schools;
- Providing a bespoke Green Advisory Service;
- Delivering Solar PV Support Programmes.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor P. Gibson regarding the PAYS Scheme, Ms. Hancox advised that tenants would pay an extra £4.00 per week over a 20 year payback period. The charge would remain with the property rather than the tenant.

Councillor Cuthbert congratulated Ms. Hancox and Mr. Burns on Gentoo's achievement in reducing its carbon footprint by 42% in just three years and suggested that they could be of assistance to the Council in striving to reduce its own footprint.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor T. Wright, Ms. Hancox advised that very few Gentoo properties were double glazed. At the time of the stock transfer only in those properties where the timber frames had been found to have failed were the windows replaced.

There being no further questions for Ms. Hancox or Mr. Burns the Chairman thanked them for their presentation and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the presentation be received and noted.

Policy review into the Development of the Low Carbon Economy in Sunderland Draft Report

Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, presented a report which provided Members of the Committee with the draft reports on its review into the development of the Low Carbon Economy in Sunderland.

((For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor T. Wright referred to a recent conversation he'd had with the owner of a small local business employing Sunderland residents. He had been both vocal and enthusiastic in talking about his business. Councillor Wright believed that in addition to seeking opinions from the major players in the City's economy such as Nissan and Gentoo, the Committee should also engage with the City's smaller businesses as part of its review.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor P. Gibson, Ms. Snaith, Head of City Business and Investment Team, advised that the charging points provided for electric vehicles by the Council were free to access.

Councillor Cuthbert welcomed what he believed to be a comprehensive report and supported the recommendations. In addition he suggested that an additional recommendation was included on the need to undertake a thorough public consultation where there was an obvious public interest in any potential low carbon development, for example if it was adjacent to high density housing.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Diamond, Claire Harrison and all involved in the preparation of the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

Work Programme 2010-11

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which attached for Members' information the final Work Programme for the Committee's work during the 2010-11 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Diamond advised that the Annual Scrutiny Conference was to be held at the Crowtree Leisure Centre on 19th May. This would provide the opportunity for Members to consider potential priorities for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for 2011/2012.

Councillor T. Wright looked forward to the Scrutiny Conference and welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Scrutiny process.

4. RESOLVED that the Committee's Work Programme for 2010-11 be received and noted.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1st March, 2011 – 30th June, 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st March to 30th June, 2011 which related to the Prosperity and Economic Development Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

5. RESOLVED that the contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and wishing them a safe journey home.

(Signed) M. MORDEY
Chairman