

# ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 JULY 2011

## LOW CARBON VEHICLES: THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND - 2011/12: SCENE SETTING REPORT AND PRESENTATION

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City**

**Corporate Priorities: CIO1 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4 – Improving Partnership Working To Deliver ‘One City’**

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the national and local policy background and overview to the Scrutiny Committee in relation to Low Carbon Vehicles – the Delivery of Public Services in Sunderland policy review along with the a supporting presentation detailing the local context by the Council's Head of Streetscene.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 13 June 2011 the Scrutiny Committee agreed to focus on Low Carbon Vehicles – the Delivery of Public Services in Sunderland as its Policy Review for 2011/12. It was agreed that members of the Scrutiny Committee would receive a scene setting presentation and report to introduce the review and begin to take evidence.
- 2.2 This report contributes principally to the following terms of reference for the review;
  - (a) To examine the role and responsibilities of the local authority with regard to climate change and energy;
  - (b) To consider national and European policy in regard to the use of low carbon transport in the delivery of services; and
  - (c) To investigate the progress made to date and future plans in the council and across partners in regard to the introduction of low carbon vehicles to deliver public services.

#### ***Context***

- 2.3 Climate change is one of the most serious environmental threats facing the world. Its impacts are likely to be felt globally as temperatures increase, sea levels rise and patterns of drought and flooding change.

- 2.4 Rising greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations from human activity (such as burning natural gas, coal and oil) have been attributed to the rapid warming of the earth through their enhancement of the natural 'greenhouse effect'. The impact of climate change in the UK could see rising temperatures; changes to sea levels; extreme weather; threats to the survival of plants and animals; increased disease and a reduction in the availability of a variety of foods.
- 2.5 Transport represents one of the largest sources of CO2 emissions in the UK, with road transport making up over 90% of this, the largest share of which comes from cars.
- 2.6 The Public Sector contributes 3% of the UK's greenhouse gases and of this 3%, local authorities contribute 20%.

### **3. National Policy Direction**

#### ***Climate Change Act (2008)***

3.1 In 2008, legislation was passed in the UK that introduced the first legally binding framework to tackle the dangers of climate change. The Climate Change Bill became law on 26 November 2008. The Act created a new approach to managing and responding to climate change in the UK. Its two key aims are to:-

- Improve carbon management, helping the transition towards a low-carbon economy in the UK; and
- Demonstrate UK leadership internationally.

3.2 The Act contains many provisions to reduce the effects of climate change, including;

- A legally binding target of at least an 80% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, to be achieved through action in the UK;
- A reduction in emissions of at least 34% by 2020;
- A carbon budgeting system that caps emissions over five-year periods, with three budgets set at a time, to assist with monitoring against the achievement of the 2050 target; and
- Powers for Government to require public bodies and statutory undertakers to carry out their own risk assessment and make plans to address those risks.

#### ***Carbon Plan (Department for Energy and Climate Change, 2011)***

3.3 The Carbon Plan, published in March 2011, is a Government-wide plan of action on climate change, including domestic and international activity. The Plan sets out department by department, actions and deadlines for the next five years.

- 3.4 Although a relatively small percentage of greenhouse gases come from the public sector, the Government has set out plans to reduce emissions in the public sector to demonstrate both centrally and locally the commitment and leadership to tackling climate change and has indicated it will seek to encourage local leadership in reducing carbon by tackling the 'barriers to carbon reduction at a local level'.
- 3.5 The Plan also states that the Department for Transport (DfT) will be responsible for the commitment to tackling climate change by;
- Supporting new low emission vehicle technologies;
  - Progressing high speed rail and rail electrification;
  - Developing a framework for sustainable aviation and shipping;
  - Promoting the use of sustainable biofuels;
  - Encouraging travel behaviour change to reduce emissions; and
  - Supporting technical standards for electric vehicle charging systems.
- 3.6 In line with these responsibilities the DfT supports a number of strategies, projects and activities, collaborating across Government departments and with the public and private sectors.

### ***Plug-In Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy***

- 3.7 Last month the Office for Low Carbon Emissions published its strategy to develop an infrastructure strategy. The strategy outlines the commitment to growing the market in plug-in vehicles due to the contribution they, and other low and ultra-low emission technologies, can make across the economic and environmental priorities of:
- Climate change;
  - Green growth;
  - Energy security;
  - Decarbonising the electricity system; and
  - Air quality.
- 3.8 As a result of road transport contributing a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions for the UK, the strategy gives a key role to ultra-low emission vehicles in meeting the targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2027, and by 80% by 2050. It is said that plug-in vehicles will make a substantial contribution to meeting these targets. This is a longer term goal as in the nearer future the majority of emissions reductions from transport will come from improved efficiency in internal combustion engines, which is being driven by European regulation.

### ***Plugged in Places Programme***

- 3.9 The Plugged-In Places programme is the key mechanism for commencing the roll-out of recharging infrastructure in the UK and

providing learning to inform the future development of a national network.

- 3.10 The Government is providing up to £30m in matched funding to support the installation and trialling of recharging infrastructure in eight places across the country. These are led by local consortia including private and public sector organisations, local utilities and businesses to secure investment in plug-in vehicle infrastructure for their areas.

### ***The Low Carbon Vehicles Innovation Platform***

- 3.11 The Government's programme of research and development for low carbon vehicle technologies is delivered through the Technology Strategy Board's Low Carbon Vehicles Innovation Platform (LCVIP). This was launched in September 2007 and has delivered a number of research projects targeted at low and ultra-low vehicle technologies. The LCVIP's aims are;

- To reduce carbon emissions arising from vehicles in domestic and international markets;
- To accelerate the introduction of low-carbon vehicle technologies; and
- To help the UK automotive sector benefit from growing demand for low carbon vehicles.

### ***The Ultra Low Carbon Vehicle Demonstrator Project***

- 3.12 Part of the LCVIP; the Ultra Low Carbon Vehicle Demonstration project (ULCVD) is trialling over 340 electric and plug-in-hybrid cars in eight locations around the UK. The trial should provide data on the real world use and performance of electric vehicles, driver behaviour and recharging issues to assist in the future roll out of electric cars.

### ***The Low Carbon Vehicle Public Procurement Programme***

- 3.13 The Government's Low Carbon Vehicle Public Procurement Programme (LCVPPP) supports a trial of over 200 electric and low emission vans in a range of public fleets. One of the programme's van suppliers is Smiths Electric Vehicles, based in Sunderland. The trial will collect data about the performance and usage of the vehicles which will help drive ongoing technological development; as well as providing an understanding of the existing capabilities of the vehicles.

## **4. Local Context**

### ***Sunderland's Commitment to Climate Change***

- 4.1 Sunderland has made a commitment to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, along with an action plan to manage and reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions over the coming years.

- 4.2 Sunderland has made several public commitments to tackling climate change including;
- The Nottingham Declaration (signed November 2001);
  - The EUROCITIES Declaration on Climate Change (signed November 2008); and
  - The EU Covenant of Mayors (signed January 2009).

### ***Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025***

- 4.3 The Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025 details a commitment to reducing the city's transport carbon emissions by developing more sustainable modes of transport through the Sunderland Partnership. This cuts across the key aims of the city including prosperous city; attractive and inclusive city and healthy city.

### ***Economic Masterplan (EMP)***

- 4.4 Sunderland's Economic Masterplan (EMP) was produced in 2010. Aim 2 of the EMP is that Sunderland will be 'A national hub of the low-carbon economy by using the opportunities offered by new low-carbon technologies to stimulate economic activity in Sunderland. This Aim emphasises the city's national potential and the need to showcase projects such as electric vehicles'.
- 4.5 Further local context will be detailed in an accompanying presentation to the Scrutiny Committee.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The report marks the beginning of the evidence gathering for the Committee's policy review into Low Carbon Vehicles – the Delivery of Public Services in Sunderland.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Committee is recommended to receive a presentation from Les Clark, Head of Street Scene to support the report.

## **7. Background Papers**

- Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025
- Sunderland Economic Masterplan (2010)
- Weather and Climate Risk Management Strategy: Revision 1
- Climate Change Act (2008)
- Carbon Plan (March 2011) - DECC
- Department for Transport - [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)
- Department for Energy and Climate Change - [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)

- Making the Connection: The Plug-In Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (June 2011) – Office for Low Emissions

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