
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 24 JUNE 2010

EEOSP.46/10

ENERGY EFFICIENCY – DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) (Mr Hardman) submitted report ED.07/10 that set out a draft Energy Efficiency Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The draft document was being considered for consultation.

Mr Hardman explained that the Executive had considered report DS.10/10 that set out a draft of a new Supplementary Planning document that related to energy efficiency in new development. The appendix to the Executive's report had been amended to take account of the comments made and to make the document easier to understand by including information on biomass options and diagrams such as the heating and electricity decision trees. Comments made by the Panel would be reported to the Executive who would then give further consideration prior to referring the report to Council for approval to consult.

One thing missing from the report was the sustainability check list. That was based on the North West appraisal toolkit and would develop a score that planning applications could be marked against. It was intended that the sustainability check would be incorporated into the document at some point.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

Council were starting to get applications regarding anaerobic digestion. These should become a 'hard sell'.

Mr Hardman believed there was and would be a lot of controversy around such issues but that the Council would look at, and include, those issues as they became more viable.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bloxham) advised that at a recent meeting with Government Office North West the Government were looking toward using anaerobic digestors with regard to farm and food waste. There was one in Silloth and a couple of others have recently started and he believed that the Council should be looking at encouraging farmers/hotels/caterers to use them as an alternative way to get rid of food waste. If it was possible to include anaerobic digestors in the planning document it would be helpful.

The document referred to the causes of climate change being influenced by human influences.

Mr Hardman believed that there were different opinions about the matter.

What was the source of the information with regard to wooden window frames being more environmentally friendly than plastic?

Mr Hardman advised that he was not sure of the source but would find out. He confirmed that the information was stating that wooden window frames were more sustainable and at the end of their 'life' they would rot down while plastic would not.

The document was very interesting and readable. Who will it be going to? Will developers have access to it?

Mr Hardman advised that ultimately it would be available to developers and the general public and that requests are made for the document when projects are under way.

With regard to climate change Mr Hardman advised that there was an Action Plan for the county and that the report would form part of that.

Is there anything the City Council can use with regard to existing buildings?

Mr Hardman explained that officers were doing a great job and looking at existing buildings to improve energy and repairs. They also give advice to village halls, etc. Councillor Mrs Bowman advised that a village hall survey was carried out every 5 years and that it was a useful document that covered so many areas.

Would the document be going to estate agents?

Councillor Bloxham believed that the document was a good document and that it should be available to all development services and Members for comment and all Portfolio Holders.

How much of the document was enforceable? Housing Associations had to comply with level 4 on new builds.

Mr Hardman advised that from 2016 level 4 would be across the board and that the Government was looking at bringing it in sooner. Restrictions can be enforced as part of the planning process. There was discussion about including the document within building regulations as it was believed that was the best way to get it in place. Although development costs would increase used in conjunction with the sustainability check list it could be incorporated into the system.

Was there anything that could bring kudos to developers for using the documents? An award of some kind?

Mr Hardman stated that the City Council did not have an award but they would be happy to publicise a developer who had used the scheme. There was a national programme and planning awards that officers could promote.

Councillor Bloxham stated that the development at the racecourse would achieve level 4 and that it should have been publicised. He believed that if housing associations had to achieve level 4 then private developers should too.

In response to a question regarding the estimated cost of achieving level 4 as opposed to level 3 Councillor Bloxham advised that the cost per unit was approximately £4,000 – £5,000.

The Chair thanked Mr Hardman and officers for the report and stated that it was easy to read and believed that the public would find it clear too. While the Panel recognised that the document was not enforceable they believed it would be helpful if officers could find a way to encourage developers to raise their standards if some kudos could be given.

RESOLVED – 1) That consultation should be extended to include all Members

2.) That anaerobic Digestion be included in the document