

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**21 July 2010**

**ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Chairman's Statement**

1.0 The Committee has met once since my last Statement, on 30 June 2010. The agenda for that meeting included the following items.

**2.0 Community-led carbon reduction initiatives**

2.1 Kirkbymoorside Transition Towns Initiative

Kirkbymoorside is one of the most advanced transition towns in North Yorkshire and a representative of the Kirkbymoorside Environment Group told us about their progress, activities and future plans. The initiative has involved people coming together to look at how to increase resilience to peak oil as a community and reduce carbon emissions. Sub-groups focus on food, transport, local economy, waste and recycling etc. The group has had successes such as producing a local shopping guide and a local transport website; organising a town feast; producing 'morsbags' to give away to reduce carrier bag use; and 'give or take' days to encourage re-use. The group has identified that it would benefit from working in a more co-ordinated way with statutory agencies and finding new sources of funding.

2.2 York Green Streets Challenge

We heard from two people who are involved in setting up and running a pilot scheme called the York Green Streets Challenge, which is focussing on communities as a vehicle for reducing carbon. The scheme involves selected households in York in cutting their carbon footprint by 10% by the end of 2010 by making small changes to their lifestyle and sharing resources. Households were chosen following analysis of neighbourhood characteristics, people's lifestyles and spending on energy. The success or otherwise of the scheme will be known by the end of the year.

**3.0 Green Lease Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme**

3.1 The Committee had a brief update on this scheme, which enables staff to lease a new low emission car of their choice, fully maintained and insured by the provider. The scheme contributes to the Council's carbon saving efforts and we were pleased to hear that the take-up amongst staff has been very good. Management information on carbon reduction resulting from the scheme wasn't available for the meeting but will be reported to future meetings.

#### **4.0 Climate Change Strategy/Internal Environmental Campaign**

- 4.1 The Local Climate Impacts Profile for York and North Yorkshire (which helps organisations to assess their exposure to weather and climate) has been completed and we have been assessed as having reached Level 1 in terms of progress in our climate change adaptation work. In working towards achieving the next level we are making use of the expertise that other councils have in adaptation work.
- 4.2 Members were asked how we might contribute towards the Small Steps Big Difference internal environmental campaign, due to be launched on 28 July. The campaign is aimed at the County Council cutting its carbon reduction by focussing on four areas over the next year: travel, energy, waste, and water. We felt strongly that Members should be encouraged to do more car sharing for meetings to save unnecessary journeys.

#### **5.0 Final meeting of Committee**

- 5.1 This was the final meeting of the Committee and our current work programme items will be carried forward to the new Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I would like to thank all those who have served on the committee during my time as Chairman for their contribution to the many varied subjects we have dealt with, but in particular I wish to thank my Vice Chairman, Stuart Parsons, whose enthusiasm and support have been invaluable to me. I would also like to mention Stuart's predecessor Richard Hall, whose contribution I also appreciated. Finally I wish to pay tribute to our Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Rushforth, whose work for the Committee has been outstanding, and much of our success is due to her thoroughness and enthusiasm in researching the many subjects we have reported on. It has been a pleasure to work with Rachel and I cannot speak too highly of the support she has given to me and the Committee during my time as Chairman.

**County Councillor John Blackburn**  
**12 July 2010**