

This year has seen strong progress on sustainability.

In terms of Home Energy Efficiency

- We won a grant of just under a million pounds from Government to support the first year of our Energy@Home scheme, which includes a capital top up grant of up to £7,000 to enable residents to insulate their homes.
- the full scheme will be launched in April, when the retrofitting provider contract has been let and will enable the council to support local people, regardless of income or tenure, to make their home more energy efficient

In Renewable Energy

- The Planning Inspector has approved our renewable energy targets in the Core Strategy, so we can more strongly encourage renewable energy through the planning process.
- In this year's budget, the Council allocated £1m for a Green Investment and Jobs fund. We have invested half of that so far in Wilmington Farm Solar Array. This project will deliver a contribution to our energy targets, increase the size of the Community Fund and generate a healthy return on investment for the Council.

We have also won Government funds (£95K) to develop an energy strategy for the Enterprise Area to help it become an innovative, low carbon development

For carbon reduction by the Council

- The Keynsham Civic Centre has been built to very high energy standard and includes solar panels and natural ventilation.
- Solar panels have also been installed on Lewis House, helping to cut energy costs for that office
- Our LED Street-lighting replacement programme on main roads is saving the Council £200k a year

- Electric charging points have been installed in three of our car parks
- Through our Corporate Travel Plan, pool cars and bike, including electric vehicles, are in place and business and commuting mileage has been reduced.
- Our schools energy efficiency programme involves all 71 schools and has already resulted in a 30% gas saving compared to last year.

The B&NES Environmental Sustainability Partnership has provisionally approved a new Community Energy Strategy, subject to completion of public consultation. This strategy aims to provide leadership and a framework for action to achieve the Core Strategy targets

These are only a few highlights from a very successful year. In recognition of our success, I am pleased to report that in November 2013 we won the Most Proactive Public Sector Body Award at the South West Green Energy Awards. And at the end of 2014 we were awarded the large employer Outstanding Achievement Award at the West of England Carbon Challenge awards. Well done to all our officers across many departments who were involved, and I look forward to more accomplishments in 2015.