

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Buildings for the Future: Environmental Sustainability of Buildings

A Review by the Enterprise & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Background

The Strategic Director of Development & Major Projects gave a presentation to the Panel on 20 November 2007 drawing attention to the emerging sustainability agenda as it affects the construction, development and regeneration industry. The role of the Council in delivering this agenda was highlighted. Recognising the gap between government aspiration and legislation, he noted that B&NES is lagging behind in both but could be doing a lot more. However to do this, political commitment to the long term agenda would need to be built and the funding gap would need to be addressed. Current budgets and funding policies make it difficult to invest the substantial amounts required by adaptive, environmentally sustainable whole-life costed buildings, and thus good opportunities to invest in environmentally sustainable buildings are being missed.

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to discuss these issues, stressing their relevance to current construction projects and regeneration plans and unanimously decided to undertake a Review of the associated issues across the Council.

Subsequent to this, in April 2008, Planning Policy (with support from Corporate Sustainability) commissioned Sustainable Energy and Planning Research, a district-wide study of the potential for sustainable and renewable energy, covering the range of technologies and growth opportunities. The final report is due early in 2009 and aims to provide:

- the local evidence base for development of robust planning policies in the Local Development Framework on renewable energy and sustainable construction, thus positioning the Council to be able to require standards and targets of all new developments;
- the information needed to develop district wide sustainable energy policies including the assessment of the local viability of the anticipated South West Regional Spatial Strategy policies and targets on renewable heat, renewable electricity, building-integrated and on-site renewable energy and sustainable construction standards.

There is a growing awareness across the Council of the importance of sustainability issues. In particular the environmental sustainability of buildings is seen widely as central to the achievement of several of the Council's strategic priorities, for example:

- *Climate Change* “Taking positive steps to tackle the cause and effects of climate change”
- *Sustainable Growth* “Thinking to the future: developing ambitious plans for the whole area and keeping our economy strong while looking after our environment and community”
- *Affordable Housing* “Ensuring there is affordable, high quality housing for those who need it” i.e. eliminate fuel poverty in new housing, designing inclusive family living space
- *School Buildings* “..energy efficient, inclusive design,...existing building stock should be upgraded as a priority...”

Recognising these concerns and building on work already underway to address them, Overview and Scrutiny is now positioned to undertake its Review, ensuring that the difficult decisions the Council will be making in the future regarding the environmental sustainability of buildings are taken systematically, widely owned by all the relevant stakeholders and founded on strong evidence and best practice.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this review is thus to build the long term political commitment to environmentally sustainable building and act as a catalyst to the development of a Council wide policy and budget framework to enable the necessary investment.

In undertaking this review, the Panel will be operating in their ‘overview’ mode to explore the topic on behalf of the Council and make recommendations about policy to the Cabinet.

The objectives of this review are to:

1. Assess the varying extent of awareness and engagement with the environmental-sustainability-in-construction agenda across the Council;
2. Identify current or future opportunities for B&NES to incorporate sustainability considerations into its construction and regeneration projects;
3. Evaluate the financial and cost implications (both to the developer and the future users) of incorporating sustainability considerations into construction projects;
4. Understand the specific policy, funding conflicts, or other constraints preventing or deterring the Council from investing in building in sustainability measures to improve such projects;
5. Promote and assist in the transition to a low carbon economy for the B&NES area.

The review will aim to make recommendations in the following areas:

- Specific measures to increase the Council's corporate commitment and ability to invest in the environmental sustainability of buildings;
- Specific approaches to closing the funding gaps associated with such investment;
- Priorities for change and associated practical next steps. (As the agenda for this review is large and has major funding and policy implications for the Council, it is important to prioritise subsequent work so as to secure early successes whilst working towards longer term ones.)

Scope

Whilst issues surrounding the organisation of communities and the need for specific buildings are essential to future sustainability, in order to make meaningful recommendations, this Review is constrained to the environmental aspects of sustainability in relation to buildings.

However it will encompass both new and existing buildings, and both buildings we fund ourselves and what we require of developers.

It is envisaged that the following aspects will be included:

- Land form and building orientation
- Maximising energy efficiency e.g. maximising natural ventilation for cooling and solar gain in summer, insulation
- Energy generation i.e. either building-integrated or on-site renewable and sustainable energy
- Drainage, water conservation and waste management within, and during construction of, the building
- Whole life of building and what it may have to withstand i.e. designed to adapt to changing climates and uses
- Use of reclaimed, recycled or recyclable materials and those from certified sustainable sources
- Sustainable transport arrangements to support and build the building
- Implications of current and emerging codes and best practise in relation to sustainable construction
- Impact of development on the natural environment required to achieve sustainability in the built environment e.g. trees to provide wind breaks and shade

Carbon reduction, and the associated funding issues, are central to many of these, and thus the Carbon Management Plan process is also central to this Review. The review also shares concerns with other energy, sustainability and waste management initiatives currently underway and the exact nature of this interface will need to be clarified as the review progresses.

However the review will not be dealing with issues covered in the Bath Transport Package.

Approach

The Panel has charged three of its Members to work with Officers as a Steering Group, responsible for developing and co-ordinating the review and its activities. In order to achieve the Review objectives, these are likely to include:

1. Research

- An exploration of current codes and best practice in relation to sustainable construction e.g. aims and cost implications of widely used industry codes
- How sustainability considerations have been successfully incorporated into design and build
- Approaches other local authorities have taken to funding such investments etc.
- A review of B&NES' current and future construction and regeneration projects with respect to their potential for incorporating sustainability improvements and the associated costs or funding issues such investment would be likely to present.

2. Consultation activities

- Contributor session to hear from relevant expert witnesses and stakeholders
- Visit to a local authority exemplifying relevant best practice
- Focus group of representatives from different Council Directorates and areas

3. Consideration of evidence gathered

- All information gathered in this review will be considered by the Steering Group so as to inform the final conclusions and recommendations to be brought to the Panel.

Outputs of this Review

- Notes and papers from public EED O&S Panel meetings
- Notes and papers from contributor sessions
- Report incorporating key findings, conclusions and recommendations to be produced at the end of the whole review process
- Recommendations to be presented to the Cabinet

Constraints

The review must be managed within the budget, timescale and resources available to the Panel. Given the importance of the subject matter and the range of stakeholders involved, this review has considerable potential to expand. Thus care must be taken throughout to ensure that any additional activities or extension of the scope are deliverable and are justified in terms of the value they add.

Project Team

From the outset the review needs to engage widely within the Council, whilst given the large numbers of people involved, being clear about the degree of involvement desired or required.

The following Directorates should be included:

- Development & Major Projects
- Planning & Transport
- Policy & Partnerships
- Property & Facilities
- Directorates commissioning major builds e.g. Children’s Services with respect to Schools for the Future

The relevant Cabinet portfolios involved in delivery of the built environment are primarily ‘Development & Major Projects’ and ‘Customer Services’ (Planning Authority aspects) but the review potentially impacts on issues in all Cabinet portfolios . The Panel may therefore invite full Cabinet involvement and/or the Cabinet may nominate a member to engage with the Review on their behalf.

Enterprise & Economic Development O&S Panel	Councillor Martin Veal (Steering Group) Councillor Peter Edwards Councillor Richard Maybury (Steering Group) Councillor Brook Whelan Councillor Colin Darracott (Steering Group) Councillor Nigel Roberts Councillor Dine Romero
Strategic Director	John Betty
Service Officers:	Jane Wildblood (Corporate Sustainability Manager) Kaoru Jacques (Planning Policy Officer) Funda Willets (Senior Urban Designer) Mike Gray (Major Projects Sustainability Champion)
O&S Project Officer:	Nicolette Boater
Panel Administrator, Democratic Services	Mark Durnford

Draft Outline Project Plan

<i>Date</i>	<i>Stage / Activity</i>	<i>Meeting Type</i>
11 th November 2008	Draft Terms of Reference taken to EED Panel meeting & Steering Group membership agreed	Public
Mid November to end 2008	Steering Group to further agree review activities and develop the project plan	Private
January & February 2009	Research activity and Consultation planning	Private
March & April 2009	Consultation activity (Contributor session, Visit & Focus Group)	As appropriate
May to June 2009	Consideration of evidence and formulation of recommendations	Private
July 2009	EED Panel receive final report incorporating findings from the review, and overall conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet	Public
September 2009	Cabinet response to the recommendations reviewed by EED Panel	Public