

CLlr Crossley: Sustainability Speech for Council on the 11.7.13

Version 1: Full text

What we are doing

- We are committed to doing our part to tackle climate change. We are also committed to tackling fuel poverty and bringing green jobs to Bath and North East Somerset. We have many initiatives underway to achieve all three of these objectives.
- Our first priority is to help people cope with rising energy costs, by helping them to make their homes warmer and cheaper to heat. We are doing this through our new **Energy@Home** programme.
- The first stage of Energy@Home was the Bath Green Homes project, a two-month programme of events organised with the Bath Preservation Trust and Transition Bath. Bath Green Homes culminated in an open homes event with 900 visits to 19 green open homes. Visitors reported wanting to spend around 1.3 million pounds on renovation in the next 12 months.
- We want to make sure that our local businesses benefit from this demand for eco-renovation, which could rise to over 10 million pounds per year of new work. To ensure that local businesses have the right skills, we've helped set up the Green Skills Academy at the City of Bath and Norton Radstock Colleges which provides a range of sustainable construction courses.
- We are now planning the next stages of the Energy@Home programme, to make sure that the residents of Bath & North East Somerset get the full benefit of Government incentives for greening their homes. This is important, since around 17% of our residents are in fuel poverty, and cold homes are responsible for health problems which cause great suffering and cost our local NHS an estimated 3.8 million pounds a year to treat.
- Studies show that the most effective approach is to get whole communities involved in the drive for green homes. So the Energy@Home project aims to enable neighbours, local groups and trusted local businesses to become ambassadors for the scheme.
- We also want local businesses to generate clean, renewable energy and have helped to set up **Bath & West Community Energy**. This award-winning social enterprise is now hailed as a national exemplar and their schemes include hydro power on the River Avon and solar on our schools, and what's best is that they are investing a portion of their revenues into a community fund.

- In addition to helping our residents, businesses and communities, we need to cut the **Council's own carbon footprint** and have achieved national recognition for converting all our main roads to super-efficient LED streetlights, saving around £200,000 pounds and nearly 800 tonnes of carbon pollution a year.
- And our new Keynsham Town Hall demonstrates how to build green without breaking the bank. It will achieve the highest possible energy rating through clever design, insulation and solar panels, and makes a clear statement that Bath and North East Somerset Council is leading by example on sustainability issues.
- **[Depending on outcome of Fracking motion]** And whilst our country stands at an energy crossroads, here in Bath and North East Somerset we are saying No to fracking, which would threaten our hot springs and release more carbon pollution, and Yes to lower energy bills and clean energy.
- **End note:** As these projects demonstrate, the Council takes its responsibilities in combating climate change and promoting sustainability very seriously and we will continue to work actively in these topics.