

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer detailed below. The Councillor asking the question may then ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion. A second supplementary question may be asked by any other Member of the Council which shall also be put and answered without discussion:

(i) Councillor Steedman

“At the previous Sustainability Cabinet Committee, members discussed the new ‘Procurement Code of Practice – Sustainability’ and rejected proposals for minimum sustainability standards for purchases made by the authority.

Could Cllr Mears please let me know the following information:

- The number of refrigerators, freezers and fridge-freezer combinations; washing machines; electric tumble dryers; combined washer-dryers; dishwashers; lamps; electric ovens; and air conditioners purchased by the Council in the last year and the A++ - G rating given to each product on its mandatory Energy Label?
- The number of cars and vans purchased or leased by the authority during the last year and the A-G carbon emissions rating given to each?
- The amount of a) chicken and b) eggs purchased by the authority/supplied through the Council’s catering contracts in the last year and the proportion of this which was free-range?
- The amount of fish and fish products purchased by the authority/supplied through the Council’s catering contracts in the last year and the proportion which were either Marine Stewardship Council-certified or appeared on the Marine Conservation Society’s ‘Fish to Eat’ list?
- The amount of wooden office furniture purchased by the authority in the last year and the proportion of this which was a) Forest Stewardship Council-certified; b) covered by another sustainability certification scheme?”

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Sustainability Cabinet Committee

“This is a very detailed and complex set of questions, which would have required a disproportionate amount of officer time to answer in full detail. But officers have produced the following summary:

- While we have extensive records of the “white goods” bought by the council over the past year on our financial system, this does not extend to their energy ratings.
- The council’s Fleet Manager was already undertaking a detailed review of our fleet, purchase and lease arrangements; data for the last year is not immediately available but once the review is complete, we will send you details.
- The amount of a) chicken: 1872 products – diced, strips etc – none of which was free range. b) Approximately 18,000 eggs a very small percentage <1% were free range. c) 2055 fish and/or fish products were purchased by the authority/supplied to the school meals contracts in the last year - none of this was either Marine Stewardship Council-certified or appeared on the Marine Conservation Society’s ‘Fish to Eat’ list.
- On a more positive note, we aim by September 2009 to have gained the Bronze Food for Life accreditation for school meals served within BHCC Primary Schools, which includes the use of eggs from cage free hens. More information can be found at <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/awards/criteria/bronze>
- Furniture expenditure for the calendar year 2008 was £128,006.58. Suppliers Portsdown Office furniture said all of the wooden furniture we buy is covered by the FSC certification; while Eurotek confirmed that all their wood-based products are accredited with FSC and PEFC certification. Eurotek were also one of the first furniture manufactures to receive FISP award (Furniture Industry Sustainability Program) and in fact have been used as the benchmark of good practice. They have also calculated the carbon footprint of our products.

Looking ahead the Environmental Management System proposed for introduction at this meeting will steadily address any shortcomings in sustainable procurement – this is covered in paragraphs 3.4, 3.5 and 3.10 of the report on the agenda today.”

(ii) Councillor Steedman

“There are also very real fears in the energy industry and more widely that global oil supply will soon fail to meet demand, putting up prices of oil and gas (the price of which is pegged to oil’s) and leading to potential security of supply problems. Peak oil production is the point at which existing oil reserves can no longer be replaced by new ones. Conventional wisdom has been that the peak is many years in the future, but the International Energy Agency has warned of an oil crunch by 2013. Other authoritative voices warn of severe problems sooner than this.”

So says the draft text of the City Sustainability Partnership’s input to the consultation draft of the Local Strategic Partnership’s refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Could Cllr Mears tell me what preparations her administration has made to protect the residents of the city from the consequences of peak oil, especially, but not exclusively, in regard to:

- the local economy;
- transport;
- energy use and bills for the Council and for local residents;
- planning and the built environment;
- food;
- emergency planning?"

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Sustainability Cabinet Committee.

"The implications of the Peak Oil issue are a matter for national government to advise us on, right across all the sectors you have mentioned.

Any failure of global oil supply or security of national supply chains are matters first to be addressed by central rather than local government, and its plans (e.g. National fuel emergency plan NEP-F) would be implemented if and when the risks were felt to be sufficiently severe.

Business continuity plans for council teams look at how they respond to potential risks and if the global oil supply becomes one of them then teams will consider this how to plan to mitigate any issues for the service.

The council's emergency plan is similarly based on nationally, regionally and locally relevant risks relating to actual emergencies as defined by relevant legislation / guidance - and is regularly reviewed on the latest information made available.

We are, of course, also supporting local resilience through the Be Local, Buy Local campaign which supports the local economy, local businesses and localised transport."

