“Northern Ireland, Climate Change and the Challenges

Dr. John Gilliland OBE

NI. Commissioner and Vice Chair, SDC

Chairman, Rural Climate Change Forum, DEFRA

Belfast Healthy Cities

February 2008
Who is the UK Sustainable Development Commission?

- An independent Advisory Body, with 19 members from Businesses, NGOs, local and regional Government, and Academia.

- Reports jointly to the Prime Minister and the Leaders of the Devolved Assemblies.

- Established in late 2000

- Chaired by Jonathon Porritt
What does the SDC do across UK?

• Evidence based public Reports on contentious issues e.g. nuclear.

• Responds openly to Government policy initiatives e.g. climate change

• Invites debates on controversial subjects e.g. sustainable consumption, food miles, carbon footprints etc  www.sd.commission.org.uk

• As Watchdog, appraises & publishes Government’s progress against targets in SD strategy
SDC role in N.I.

• Works with Government, Business Community & wider society, in communicating, engaging and embedding Sustainable Development

• Advised on constructing & implementation of N.I. SD Strategy & Implementation plan

• Embedded within OFMDFM as a “Critical Friend” & Watchdog role to be agreed by 09/07
“2007” The Defining Year for The UK and Climate Change

- Mildest Spring on record
- Wettest Summer on record
- “Blue Tongue” arrives in England for 1st time
- Publication of draft UK Climate Change Bill
- Bali Agreement – Replacement for Kyoto by 2009
- 1st Carbon footprint appears on a food label

The Three Key Drivers – Weather, Policy & Market!
Northern Ireland and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 3.2% of UK’s total, 20.7mt of CO² equivalent
- Last 15 years, 16% fall in UK, only 5.6% in NI!
- GHG Emissions per person – NI worst in UK!
- Main Outputs – Energy production and consumption
  - Transport
  - Agricultural land, farming and food production
  - Landfill
The Policy drivers & Targets

Northern Ireland Programme for Government
- 25% reduction below 1990 levels, by 2025
- PSA 22 (Protecting over Environment and reducing our Carbon Footprint)

Draft UK Climate Change Bill
- 60% below 1990 levels, by 2050 (Scotland 80%!!!)
- 30% below 1990 levels, by 2020 (surpassing PFG!!)

NB. UK International reduction targets – currently not devolved!
UK Climate Change Bill

- Unique to UK (A Policy Pioneer!!)
- Climate Change Committee – To Advise, Scrutiny & Oversee
- Targets to achieve emission reductions to be legally binding!
- A Pathway of a series of 5 year Carbon budgets
- Non CO² GHG’s to be included – Landfill & Agric.
- Royal Ascent expected by June 2008
Northern Ireland Assembly
The Challenges??

- Route map for GHG emission reductions in Northern Ireland needed – How & When??
- Devolution of UK GHG emission reduction targets is essential to focus the mind!!
- 12% Renewables by 2012 (2008 <3%) – How??
- 40% renewables by 2025, (25% from non wind) – How??
Possible Solutions for Northern Ireland?

- Political Courage and Leadership – Essential!
- Lead by example – The role of Gov. Estate!
- Northern Ireland participation in UK Climate Change Bill - Essential
- NI Strategies must be developed to allow UK to hit International Obligations & Agreements
- Creation of a NI knowledge based economy focusing on developing sustainable technologies
Practical Solutions for Northern Ireland?

- Mandatory introduction of Code for Sustainable Homes (fuel poverty, energy efficiency and renewables)
- Extend Environment and Renewable Energy Fund
- Use Economic Regulation to reduce consumption and allow alternatives
- Develop Renewable Heat Strategy
- Invest in integrated Transport Systems
- Use flag ship projects to demonstrate the possible
The American Experience

**Tri Met Public Transport**
- More people than any other US transit system of same size
- Nos increased for last 17 consecutive years
- 8.5% increase last year
- 26% of afternoon Rush Hour commuters use it
- 70% people do it by choice
- Eliminates 199,300 daily car trips

**e.g. Portland, Oregon**
The German Experience

City Centre Hotel – 100% Renewable
The German Experience

Sustainable Rural Communities - 160% Sufficient in Heat & Power, including the use of AD!
Northern Ireland Experience

Omagh College
Vision – 1st NI College to be 100% renewable!!
Northern Ireland Climate Change and the challenges

- Real Challenge!
- Must engage!
- It is deliverable!

But need vision and leadership & only when this generation realises it can NOT leave this mess to the next Generation!!