

Joint Joule Centre/NWEC Meeting to discuss the Consultation Draft “Rising to the Challenge” Climate Change Action Plan held at Manchester University on 24th August

This issues identified as priorities are marked in bold/italics. These notes were prepared by Nick Jenkins to attempt to reflect the mood of the meeting.

1) *Local/Regional Climate Change & Energy Partnerships*

There was wide-spread support for a Regional/Sub Regional Climate Change Agency. Although the various roles of the region/sub-region/local authorities was not discussed in detail, there was support for a well coordinated activity that addressed both energy and climate change matters. As the Chairman of the NWEC, I would like to express my openness to any change in administrative structures that is useful. At present the Region is not well coordinated and a repeatedly expressed ambition of the NWEC is that this coordination is improved.

2) Guidance/criteria to policymakers & co-ordinated responses to consultations
Although not discussed at the meeting, the Joule Centre is happy to act as a focal point for consultations or to support responses in any way it can.

3) *Communications strategy*

There was broad support for an effective communications strategy relating to Climate Change. We are not communicating adequately with the citizens of the Region on this matter. Although Joule and NWEC are happy to support this neither organization has the specialist skills necessary to lead it. In addition it will be necessary to be very clear as to the objective of the communications strategy.

4) *Research, collation and interpretation of regional data*

Again there was broad support for this. Although we do not want to be paralyzed by requiring analysis before any action the very scarce data which we have concerning Regional Energy use makes developing strategy and measuring achievements very difficult. The Joule Centre intends to appoint a Professor of Energy Assessment and Modeling but it is proving slow to attract suitable candidates. The Joule Centre would be happy either to take a Lead on this or to support an initiative by others. The NWEC has already expressed the view that this is an important area that should be supported.

5) Regional energy mapping exercise

6) Financial subsidy for uptake of energy efficient technologies (x3)

7) *Step change in energy efficiency business support*

The NWEC has expressed the view on a number of occasions that energy efficiency business support seems to be too fragmented and we should coordinate this better. Also, we are very conscious of the progress made by

London and some other Local Authorities (e.g. Woking, Merton) in improving energy efficiency in their own estate or in buildings under their control. The view of the meeting was that more could be done in this area. Improving energy efficiency offered “quick wins” while supply side measures are developed

8) Expand Carbon Trust Carbon Management Programmes

9) Expansion of R&D Schemes for low carbon technologies

The position of the Joule Centre would be that we need to build R&D capacity in the Region and this is a slow process. Certainly there is room for additional funding (from National or European sources) and we need to pursue these opportunities vigorously. However it is more important to ensure the long term development of Joule (or equivalent) as building R&D capacity cannot be done on the back of short term projects with no continuity.

10) Link expertise and capacity to attract additional funding

It was felt that the Region does not generally attract the share of additional funding that it ought to do and measures should be put in place to try to rectify this. The next obvious opportunity would be FP7 of the CEU. The Joule Centre is happy to support initiatives in this area. At present many of the regional energy companies/organizations are so busy that without the gradual development of additional capacity they may not be able to attract or accept external research funding. This reinforces the idea of trying to build capacity slowly and consistently.

11) Regional biofuel/biomass supply chain

12) Carbon capture storage mechanisms

13) Large scale low carbon energy generation schemes

Concern was expressed that particular technologies were not mentioned in the consultation document. The 2 mentioned by colleagues at the meeting were tidal and nuclear. It was widely recognized that although demand reduction should give the “early win” it was necessary to address short, medium and long term issues and we should not omit consideration of longer term, larger scale supply side schemes.

Nick Jenkins