

# Sustainability in the News – No 4

**This is your latest extract of news stories around sustainability and regeneration all taken from the regional on-line newsletter – bdaily – in recent weeks.**

**They will help you and your pupils understand some of the current issues surrounding sustainability and to learn of some of the new initiatives, products and services being offered in this growing area.**

**We hope they provide inspiration and ideas.**

## **B daily April 9**

### **Teesside digital development secures more investment**

A development aimed at putting Tees Valley at the cutting edge of digital technology is celebrating further investment. The Institute of Digital Innovation (IDI) in Middlesbrough will move into the next phase of its development after £1.4m of funding from regional development agency One NorthEast.

The investment will allow the IDI to focus on establishing itself as a successful business facility, providing digital academics with the support they need to become leading regional entrepreneurs.

The IDI is one of two components of the DigitalCity initiative. The University of Teesside and Middlesbrough Council established the DigitalCity initiative with the intent of helping the Tees Valley to generate a fast growing, high level economic base in the digital and creative sectors for the region.

The other element of DigitalCity is the BoHo Zone, which will house 27 businesses and almost 300 jobs.

Jim TerKeurst, Director of the IDI, said: "Innovation is at the heart of global business, and these themes working together will make the Institute of Digital Innovation a terrific resource for the digital and creative industries in the North East."

Professor Graham Henderson, Vice Chancellor of the University of Teesside, said: "The IDI has a major role to play in the region, attracting and generating new talent, working with companies on high-level skills and development opportunities, and producing the ideas and the businesses for a digital supercluster.

"With this tremendous investment and vote of confidence from One NorthEast, we're on course with our partners to build a national and international reputation for digital innovation in the North East."

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## **B daily April 10**

### **Waste Management in the Construction Industry**

With [Watson Burton LLP Law Firm](#)

The Site Waste Management Plans Regulations 2008 ("the Regulations") came into force on 6 April 2008 and have a significant effect on how the construction industry manages waste produced on site. The Regulations apply to all construction works where work commences after 1 July 2008 with a cost of over £300,000 and impose obligations upon developers and contractors to plan for and monitor the ongoing progress of the waste produced and its subsequent disposal.

However, where a project is planned prior to 6 April 2008 and work on site commences before 1 July 2008, the Regulations do not apply. Where the cost is over £500,000, the requirements under the Regulations are more onerous.

First, a developer must appoint a principal contractor where more than one contractor will be involved in the construction of the development. If there is to be no involvement from a contractor, the developer will bear the burden of all of the responsibilities of the principal contractor.

A developer who intends to carry out construction works which exceed the above mentioned cost threshold must prepare a Site Waste Management Plan ("SWMP") conforming to the Regulations before construction begins. If the construction project is commenced without a SWMP the developer and the principal contractor are both guilty of a criminal offence under the Regulations.

The aim of the Regulations is to assist in minimising the amount of waste produced on site and to ensure the proper disposal of waste which is unavoidable. It is intended that the SWMP will be integral in the planning stages of a development and will assist in achieving better cost effectiveness as materials should be ordered bearing in mind whether they are actually required to avoid wastage.

The Regulations are enforced by the Environment Agency; in any local government area with principal authority, that authority; any district or county council; or in the City of London, the Common Council.

Further information and examples of pro-forma SWMPs can be found on the following websites [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk), [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk), [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) and [www.envirowise.gov.uk](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk).

If you have any queries relating to this article, or any other Construction matter, please contact Rachael Douthwaite at Watson Burton LLP on 0191 244 4444 or email [rachael.douthwaite@watsonburton.com](mailto:rachael.douthwaite@watsonburton.com).

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## **B daily april 11**

### **Green prize for Durham's SLAG**

Durham University's Sustainable Living Action Group (SLAG) has won a national award for its work on environmental initiatives. SLAG, a University-funded, student-led group beat 8 other shortlisted universities to win a Green Gown Award for Best Student-led Initiative earlier this month at the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) conference. The group was honoured for its success in encouraging students to live more environmentally-friendly lifestyles.

The Green Gown Awards aim to acknowledge the achievement of higher education institutions in increasing environmental sustainability. SLAG holds campaigns all year round to raise both student and staff awareness of environmental issues.



The conference will start on 21 May with a series of workshops. The talks will begin on day two, with sessions on the future of media, the network effect, technology and even happiness. The final day will include sessions on globalisation, mobile 2.0 and management in the digital age.

The Thinking Digital conference is being organised by Codeworks, North East England's centre for digital innovation. It will take place at the Sage Gateshead and Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art on 21-23 May. Anyone booking before Monday 21 April will receive a discounted price of £549.

For more information and to book places, visit [www.thinkingdigital.co.uk](http://www.thinkingdigital.co.uk).

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## **B daily April 28**

### **'Waste' energy plant for Teesside**

Plans to build a £120m electricity plant on Teesside that turns waste into energy were unveiled last week. SITA UK has submitted plans to Stockton Borough Council to build the facility at the Haverton Hill Industrial Estate in Billingham.

The company's proposed energy-from-waste facility - which would be called the North East Energy Recovery Centre or NEERC - would manage up to 256,000 tonnes of household and commercial waste each year. It will produce sufficient electricity each year to supply the homes in a town the size of Hartlepool and create around 40 jobs.

The development will include a railhead, meaning that waste can be transported to the site by rail and the number of road journeys can be minimised.

Graham Ingleson, general manager for SITA on Teesside, said: "It will provide hundreds of jobs during construction and around 40 new full-time skilled jobs will be created to operate the centre.

"The NEERC is an example of a new generation of facility that will produce renewable energy and reduce the need for landfill in the region. It will produce sufficient electricity each year to power a town the size of Hartlepool and also provide heat that can be piped to local industries, helping to reduce their energy needs and reduce the use of fossil fuels."

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## **Darkest skies found in Northumberland**

An observatory has opened in an area of Northumberland recognised as having the least light pollution in England. The £450,000 Kielder Observatory will offer astronomers views of the universe unaffected by light from nearby towns and cities. The Kielder Observatory has been funded by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership with help from regeneration agency One NorthEast, the European Regional Development Fund and the Northern Rock Foundation.

Elisabeth Rowark, director of the Kielder Partnership, said: "The Kielder Observatory aims to become a symbolic gateway to enable people to access the beautiful expanse of stars that illuminate the skies over Kielder Water and Forest Park. The facility is a great way of using one of the region's many assets and allows visitors to get up close and personal with the universe."

The observatory is situated on a hilltop location on Black Fell. For more information go to [www.kielder-observatory.org](http://www.kielder-observatory.org).

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## **B daily April 29**

### **Council tackles climate change with electric cars**

Middlesbrough Council marked its commitment to fighting carbon emissions and climate change when it unveiled two emission-free, electric powered smart cars for its transport fleet last week. The council is one of a handful of provincial fleet operators that are running the smart ed (electric drive) cars as part of a trial set up by Mercedes-Benz UK.

The smart ed emits no carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, unburned hydrocarbons, particulate matter or any harmful substance. There are no fuel pumps as the smart ed is recharged directly from any UK mains three-pin plug socket. The vehicles are being leased from smart in a four-year deal and running costs will be around £1 for every 50 miles.

One of the smart eds will be used by the council's Area Care service to monitor the cleanliness of streets, shopping areas, open spaces, play areas, parks, industrial estates and car parks around the town. The second smart ed will be a pool car for use on official business by council staff and councillors. The council aim is that more people should see for themselves the benefits of driving around in an emission-free vehicle.

Mayor Ray Mallon said: "Reducing our carbon emissions and doing everything we can to tackle climate change is a high priority for the council. "These two smart eds show that the council is determined to keep up the fight to cut carbon emissions, and to tackle climate change - one of the greatest challenges to the future of our planet."

Dermot Kelly, Managing Director Mercedes-Benz Cars, said: "This market trial is an important part of our commitment to sustainable mobility and we're delighted to have the Middlesbrough Council as one of our partners in the trial."