



Builders told: you must help to save the planet

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THE construction and built environment sector must tackle climate change and other environmental issues now, delegates were warned at a seminar in Bracknell.

Speaking to an audience of local authority planning policy and building control officers, keynote speaker Dr Richard Williams, of the Environment Centre (tEC) in Southampton said: "Attitudes have to change - we have to address this agenda now. And it needs to be driven by leadership and ownership at a local level."

The seminar, at the Bracknell Hilton was organised by the South East Centre for the Built Environment (SECBE).

Dr Williams cited renewable energy as a typical challenge.

He said: "The Government has set targets for the amount of renewable energy we need to be generating but how do we achieve them?"

"For example what does 100MW of renewable energy mean and what does it look like? In Southampton, for example, it could mean one in two properties would have a domestic wind turbine! So we will need to innovate with our mix of renewable technologies."

Laura Bramley, SECBE's project manager for sustainable construction, told delegates that the £18 billion construction sector in the South East could save a minimum of £6 billion just from tackling wastage which could be invested in technology skills and development.

She added: "Sustainable construction is not just environmental issues and waste, however; it is also about social and economic development. The agenda is changing fast and we must make better use of resources."

Speaking after the meeting Vincent Haines, head of planning and building control at Bracknell Forest Borough Council, said: "We're taking climate change very seriously and fully support this initiative by SECBE to raise the profile of the issues within the construction industry."

"Our council is working locally to take forward various national and regional initiatives which seek to deliver significant reductions in carbon emissions in the construction, conversion and use of buildings."

The Workshops are part of a pilot project for sustainable construction and are funded by the European GROW programme.

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