

## **Key points from Rosie Winterton's speech at the launch of the Yorkshire and Humber Vision for Biomass Report at Bradford City Hall, Monday 17 March 2008.**

- The 'Vision for Biomass Report' is an excellent example of partnership working in the region.
- We are all aware of the dangers of climate change. Over two thirds of the world's carbon dioxide emissions come from the way we produce and use energy. So energy policy has a major part to play in reducing those emissions. But at the same time demand for energy worldwide continues to increase.
- The UK is becoming increasingly reliant on imported energy from fossil fuels in fewer and more distant places. Prices are rising and supplies are becoming less secure. This has implications for our energy security.
- We have an opportunity to reduce our carbon emissions while becoming more self sufficient in our energy supply. Biomass is a versatile fuel. Where produced with regard to sustainability and carbon savings it can be carbon lean. Its use will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases we need.
- The Government fully endorsed the role biomass has in meeting our targets in the UK Biomass Strategy published in May 2007. The Strategy acknowledges the importance of fuel sources from biomass in tackling climate change. It indicated biomass will have a central role in providing renewable energy. It identifies significant potential to increase the UK's supply of biomass through more efficient utilisation of agricultural land and unmanaged woodland and waste.
- Biomass is renewable. The second most significant renewable energy resource in the region after wind. It will help meet our renewable energy obligations.

- Biomass use will bring business opportunities and jobs. There are opportunities in biomass production, processing and supply. This is particularly relevant for rural areas. Help is available for new and growing rural businesses from Yorkshire Forward. Other help for biomass production and supply is available from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- Once installed bio-mass fuelled systems are easy to maintain and competitive to run. It is affordable. And local sourcing gives security of supply. That makes it particularly suitable for some of the more remote locations in the region.
- We are ideally placed in this region to produce and supply biomass, and that creates business opportunities. It also gives us opportunities for local heating and combined heat and power solutions that are affordable and self-sustaining with local supplies. On the larger scale we can supply power generation, either through co-firing or dedicated bio-energy. That will make a significant contribution to regional and national greenhouse gas emission reduction and renewable energy source targets.
- I am delighted to welcome and launch this report and to say thank you to those who made it happen. I wish you every success and look forward to hearing updates on your progress.