

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Policy – implementation strategy

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A. Introduction

This document details how we will implement the adopted corporate Environmental Policy. The Policy, this Strategy and the action Plan have been the subject of considerable discussion and consultation. The Policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting on

Environmental management is nowadays seen as an integral part of good governance and is used widely in both the public and private sector to understand and manage impacts on the environment. Promoting environmental management is a key part of the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy¹ and Modernising Government agenda.

Amongst the recognised benefits of environmental management are

- Improvements in the quality of service delivery
- Clarity for suppliers and specifiers
- Consistent and corporate approach
- Demonstration of commitment
- Maintenance of credibility and leadership role
- Staff motivation
- Continued improvement and (if desired) external validation of systems
- And, most importantly, improved environmental performance, reduced waste and financial savings

In developing "Providing for Lincolnshire's Future – a Sustainability Framework and Environmental Stewardship Strategy"² the County Council recognised the need for detailed and clear means of implementing the stewardship aspects. This Strategy details how this will be achieved through environmental management and includes a draft policy for comment.

The approach adopted is based on meeting the requirements of internationally acknowledged standards on environmental management (ISO 14001 and LA-EMAS), although it does not tie us to achieving accreditation.

The Environmental Policy is necessarily all-encompassing. It embraces everyone engaged in delivering services including Members, all employed staff recognised Trade Unions and all contractors and, to varying degrees, people working in partner organisations.

B. Where we want to be

We want to be an organisation that is working towards, and leading others towards a more sustainable Lincolnshire. We want to demonstrate that we understand our impacts on both the global and local environment and that, in our actions, policies and practices we make decisions accordingly. We want to lead by example.

C Alignment with other strategies

Lincolnshire County Council is driven by a number of key strategies. The Environmental Policy links to and supports them all. For example, the Corporate Plan is the organisation's business plan and sets out how we will deliver LEADS. The Environmental Policy assists

¹ Securing the Future March 2005

² Adopted September 2004

us in enriching lifestyle, achieving excellence and increasing security. The Business Plan also sets out two Long Term Strategic Aims:

- Deliver excellent Council Services.
- Demonstrate value for money.

Minimising our environmental impacts will assist us in providing excellent services and demonstrating long term value for money by taking whole life costs into account in decisions.

Caring for our environment reflects our values too (PERFORMS). The Policy and how we implement it supports those values.

Organisational Vision – Changing for the Better

Having and implementing an Environmental Policy will also help us achieve key themes in our vision. In particular it supports the following;

- Be focused on and organise itself so as to best deliver to its customers and communities.
- Be a single organisation focused on common goals.
- Demonstrate leadership through policy and public comment.
- Work with partners to bring about customer and community benefits.
- Be innovative in the way we work.
- Develop new ways of working and constantly seek ways of improving what it does.
- Ensure that it is fit for its stated purpose.
- Ensure that it is responsive to new demands.
- Listen to, involve and engage local people. .

Procurement Strategy

In achieving excellence we need to show that “Procurement decisions are not based solely on lowest cost options but on achieving greatest benefit to the public purse, for example, securing additional health or environmental benefits and opportunities for joint procurement with partners are actively pursued”. Having a sound Environmental policy will assist in this and provide specifiers and suppliers with clarity.

D. Implementation

The key strands in implementation are as follows;

Environmental Policy

A The Policy has been adopted by the Council on..... The wording includes commitment to legal compliance, pollution prevention and continual improvement. On the back of this overarching policy other, more detailed statements will be developed (such as the guidance on Paper and cardboard use. Also attached is a draft Action Plan 2007-8 detailing targets, actions and responsibilities.

Planning

The objectives in the policy reflect our identified significant impacts. Targets are the result of discussion with other officers. Where possible they reflect existing targets. An initial set of actions are proposed in the Action Plan. These are purposely focussed and limited. It is felt that it is important to show some successes and having a limited range of achievable actions will aid this. It will be important to gain a wider ownership and capture any other existing or proposed actions that can contribute in due course. A corporate working group will be established to co-ordinate this and other aspects. Such a group would assist in communicating best practice and co-ordinating.

For optimum effectiveness there will be a focus on four main issues a year. These would piggy back onto national campaigns such as Travel to Work day; Big Recycle week; energy awareness week etc. Events, publicity and awareness raising would be tied in. This aspect will be a key part of the co-ordination by the corporate group. Since officers are often involved in this work already adding a staff dimension will be easier and complement current work.

Implementation and operation

Everyone has a responsibility for implementation and the Policy will be reflected in Corporate and Business Plans. Co-ordination of activity, reporting, review etc. should be the responsibility of a named, higher level manager.

It is particularly important that Managers and staff have specific training (much as they do on equality and diversity) on the general policy, its aims and implementation. There are three key strands to communicate with and achieve the commitment of staff;

Formal training and awareness;

- Part of induction process for new staff at a corporate and Directorate level
- Programme of awareness raising for existing staff (for example short sessions or roadshows for all staff)
- Dissemination – posters in workplaces (as with Health and Safety); hard copy of policy for all staff circulated with pay slips

On-going publicity and awareness

- Wide dissemination and publicity on annual progress reports
- Informal network of informed, trained volunteers
- Programme of focussed action four times per year (linked to national campaigns such as the Big recycle; Bike to work week etc.)

- Annual award scheme
- Information on George and Connect

Managing future action

- Agreement of corporate Action Plan
- Discussed by the corporate group and regularly reported to Assistant Directors through the Business Management Team

Information is on George <http://george/section.asp?catId=7810> and has been added to the induction. Both of these will be further developed.

To increase staff ownership and involvement a network of interested volunteers who will become the on-site reference point and means of communication will be established. With the agreement of managers, they would be part of an informal network that is briefed on environmental matters; a conduit for site based publicity; a source of local advice and support; and a means of feeding staff views to those responsible. This approach has worked well in other authorities. It is an adjunct to management action not a substitute!

Checking and corrective action

Ensuring that actions take place is crucial to effective environmental management. In an accredited system there would be a system of audit and external verification to focus the mind. If accreditation is not to be sought then checking and corrective action needs to be integrated into existing management processes. One way would be to assign responsibility to each Director for relevant action plan items. Further discussion and consideration of the most effective way forward and integration with other performance management is needed.

The Council will publish an Annual report of progress and this could be the responsibility of the Environmental well-being scrutiny Panel.

Regular management review

The Policy states that there will be a review of the system every three years. This is an executive function but Environmental Sustainability Policy Development Group could provide support for the work.