

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Allan Holliday, Portfolio Holder
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy
REPORT AUTHOR: Rachel Osborn, Sustainability Officer

Summary and Recommendation:

This report sets out a strategic approach for improving the environmental performance of the Council's operations using the Cumbria Business Environment Network Award scheme process. This process includes the adoption of an Environmental Policy Statement. Achieving the CBEN Bronze Award is stated as an action in the 2010/11 Corporate Improvement Plan and will demonstrate the Council's commitment to improving the Council's in-house environmental performance. On completion of the Bronze Award, the Council can then progress onto the Silver and Gold Awards.

Executive are requested to:

- a) note the Cumbria Business Environment Network Award process;
- b) agree the appended Environmental Policy Statement;
- c) refer the Environmental Policy Statement to OSC Management Committee with amendments delegated to the Head of Development Strategy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Copeland Borough Council plays a major role in determining the environmental quality of the borough through the policies it implements and the services which it provides. However the Council is also a consumer of goods and services which consequently have an environmental impact. In its role as a community leader, the Council can set a good example to others through the way it reduces and manages its environmental impacts.
- 1.2 This report outlines the process for assessing and improving the Council's environmental performance in a systematic manner within a manageable timeframe and existing resources. This approach of using the Cumbria Business Environment Network Award will provide the means for the Council to ensure that its own actions support our objectives of being recognised as a community leader, making efficient use of resources and exercising effective performance management.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 Copeland Borough Council has a good track record of working with local communities and delivering services that improve the local environment. This is demonstrated by the Council's recent achievement of best performer in the Association of Public Service Excellence for parks services in the UK. In addition a number of in-house measures are currently being implemented to manage our environmental impacts including a programme of energy efficiency measures in our buildings and fuel efficiency practices associated with our transport and travel. However we need to agree our strategic approach to improving our in-house environmental performance.
- 2.2. Under the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) framework, the Audit Commission will be assessing two tier councils against a new Key Line Of Enquiry (KLOE) on their use of natural resources in 2009/10. This assessment will focus on the Council's own impact on the environment from the resources it consumes in the delivery of its services. The Audit will examine the Council's understanding of what resources it consumes and what strategic approach there is in place to manage those resources. It will cover, for example, the use of energy and water in our buildings, waste arising from our own operations and use of natural products. This assessment is a clear driver for establishing a co-ordinated approach to managing our environmental impacts.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 There are a number of recognised environmental management systems and standards that the Council could adopt in order to facilitate a strategic approach to improving our environmental performance. These include;
- a) ISO14001 which is an international standard for environmental management
 - b) the Local Authority Eco-Management and Audit Scheme.
 - c) the Cumbria Business Environment Network Award which is based on the ISO14001 accreditation.
- However 'a' and 'b' represent an ambitious step for any organisation. It is therefore proposed that the Council adopts the Cumbria Business Environment Network (CBEN) process which has also been used by Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council.
- 3.2 Cumbria Business Environment Network has operated for a number of years and offers environmental business support across Cumbria. The Award scheme provides a framework through which organisations can audit and improve their environmental performance. The framework is designed to be implemented and managed by an organisation's own staff

thereby encouraging ownership of the issues, a key factor if the scheme is to lead to long lasting benefits.

- 3.3 The CBEN Award scheme is a three stage process. Organisations must complete the Bronze Award before going onto the Silver then Gold Awards. In summary, the Bronze Award is about making a commitment to putting an environmental management system in place; Silver involves putting the system in place; and Gold is demonstrating continual improvement. The criteria are detailed in Appendix A.
- 3.4 The CBEN Award scheme will be co-ordinated by the Sustainability Officer with support from the Council's Sustainability Group which has officer representation from across the Council. The aim will be to achieve the Bronze Award in 2010/11, the Silver in 2011/12 and Gold in 2012/13.
- 3.5 One of the criteria for the Bronze Award is the adoption of an Environmental Policy Statement which is a series of statements that publicly indicate the intentions of an organisation, and is also the starting point for developing an environmental management system.
- 3.6 An Environmental Policy Statement for the Council has been developed with guidance from CBEN (appendix A). The Policy reflects the Council's aims and priorities in terms of improving environmental performance. The Policy should be reviewed on a three yearly cycle to reflect changing priorities and achievements.
- 3.7 Alongside the adoption of an Environmental Policy Statement, CBEN will assist in carrying out an audit of our environmental impacts and how the Council currently manages them. This audit will inform the development of environmental performance plans for each of the Council's sites and services that will define initiatives (e.g. staff awareness), targets (e.g. energy reduction), and responsibilities (e.g. teams and individuals). This is a requirement of the Silver Award.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The CBEN Award process will enable the Council to put in place an environmental management system that will give a strategic approach to managing our in-house environmental impacts. Participating in the CBEN Award scheme will also demonstrate the Council's commitment to leading by example in terms of environmental performance.
- 4.2 Following the adoption of an Environmental Policy Statement and an initial audit with CBEN, the Council will be in a position to achieve the Bronze Award and then progress onto the Silver Award.

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 5.1 The CBEN Award process will enable the Council to identify opportunities for saving energy, waste, water and other resources and consequently cost savings. These will be quantified at the Silver Award stage.
- 5.2 The Bronze Award costs £150 for organisations with over 200 employees and includes two half day visits from CBEN advisors. This will be financed through existing resources.
- 5.3 The CBEN Award process will be managed by the Sustainability Officer with support from the Sustainability Group. The implementation of an environmental management system is essentially about raising awareness and putting management and operational procedures in place. All Staff and Members will be required to be engaged with the process as will our Facilities Managers, contractors and suppliers.
- 5.4 Existing programmes like the Council's capital programme of energy efficiency improvements across our buildings will support the CBEN Award. New programmes will be carried out within existing resources or subject to a budget bid.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The CBEN Award is a three stage process as outlined in Appendix B. Support is given by CBEN advisors in the form of visits and audits to help organisations progress.
- 6.2 The implementation of an environmental management system will put in place a formal approach to identifying and managing environmental risks associated with our operations, for example pollution incidents. There are reputational risks for the Council associated with not taking a strategic approach to managing our environmental impacts.

7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 Achieving the Cumbria Business Environment Network Bronze Award for environmental management is stated as an action under the theme of Transformational Leadership in the 2010/11 Draft Corporate Improvement Plan.

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Environmental Policy Statement

Appendix B - Cumbria Business Environment Network Award criteria

List of Background Documents: Cumbria Business Environment Network guidance.

List of Consultees: Cumbria Business Environment Network, Sustainability Group, Corporate Team, North Country Leisure, Capita, Kier Facilities, Portfolio Holder, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

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| Impact on Crime and Disorder | Not applicable. |
| Impact on Sustainability | The CBEN Award process will enable the Council to put in place a system to manage our in-house environmental performance. |
| Impact on Rural Proofing | No adverse impacts. |
| Health and Safety Implications | An environmental management system will support health and safety policies and procedures. |
| Project and Risk Management | To be delivered within existing resources. Procedures for managing environmental risks will be agreed as part of the environmental management system. |
| Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues | An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the Environmental Policy Statement. |
| Children and Young Persons Implications | Not applicable. |
| Human Rights Act Implications | Environmental issues have wider consequences which can impact on people's quality of life e.g. resource depletion. |
| Monitoring Officer Comments | No comments. |
| Section 151 Officer Comments | No additional or significant financial issues arising from this report and achieving the bronze standard. However, acting upon the environmental audit and undertaking environmental improvements may result in cost pressures which on a case by case basis would need to be evaluated – but reduction in our carbon footprint should yield cost savings too. |

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision NO

**Appendix A: Copeland Borough Council
Environmental Policy Statement**

Copeland Borough Council is committed to minimising and managing the environmental impacts of our activities. In order to achieve this we will:

1. Identify the significant environmental impacts of our activities, developing suitable objectives, targets and programmes to manage and reduce our impacts.
2. Tackle climate change by reducing our carbon footprint and adapting our services and activities to the impacts of climate change.
3. Make effective use of natural resources and endeavour to re-use or recycle where practicable, disposing of the remainder responsibly.
4. Implement procedures to prevent pollution by the Council's activities.
5. Conserve and enhance the quality and biodiversity of our land holding.
6. Minimise the environmental impact of the Council's procurement of goods and services, working with our partners, suppliers and contractors to help achieve this.
7. Comply with relevant environmental legislation and regulations.
8. Raise awareness and motivate Staff and Members to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible manner. Making sure that environmental responsibilities are defined, communicated and understood at all levels across the Council.
9. Encourage our partners, developers and residents of Copeland to reduce their environmental impact.
10. Carry out regular reviews of the Council's Environmental Policy Statement to enable us to strive for continual improvement.

Appendix B: Cumbria Business Environment Network Award criteria

Bronze Award

- 1) Awareness of the major environmental impacts of the Council's operations.
- 2) Commitment to improving the environmental performance of the Council through the development of an environmental management system.
- 3) An organisational structure for the management of environmental issues.
- 4) Adoption of an Environmental Policy Statement.
- 5) Conducting an initial review (audit) of all the Council's environmental aspects (e.g. energy) and impacts (e.g carbon emissions).

Silver Award

- 1) Communication of the Environmental Policy Statement.
- 2) Identify relevant statutory requirements.
- 3) Adopt specific targets and objectives to reduce environmental impacts.
- 4) Production of an environmental management programme.
- 5) Environmental manager is appointed.

Gold Award

- 1) Appropriate monitoring and measurement is carried out.
- 2) Regular audits are carried out.
- 3) Non-conformance procedures are in place.
- 4) A Management Review has been carried out.
- 5) Document controls are in place.