

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Environment

**SUBJECT:** 2009/10 Work Programme

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The Policy and Performance Board have previously agreed that the Use of Natural Resources topic should form their work programme for 2009/10. The topic is very broad and in order to identify those areas with the most need for/offering the greatest scope for improvement this report provides an overview of the current baseline in terms of Halton's approach to green issues.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board identify Use of Natural Resources priority areas for closer scrutiny as part of their work programme for 2009/10.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Use of Natural Resources and the Corporate Area Assessment (CAA)**

**3.1.1** The CAA includes an annual Use of Resources assessment, part of which indicates how well the Council is making effective use of natural resources. There are three key areas of focus:

- 1) How well the Council understands and can quantify its Use of Natural Resources and can identify the main influencing factors;
- 2) How well the Council manages performance to reduce its impact on the environment;
- 3) How well the Council manages the environmental risks it faces, working effectively with partners.

**3.1.2** In terms of CAA the Use of Natural Resources is defined as resources that occur naturally on the earth, which the Council in the conduct of its own operations either consumes directly or impacts upon. The CAA covers the following areas:

**Energy** – the use of electricity, gas, fuel from various day to day business activities i.e. heating, air conditioning, lighting, operating appliances and transport.

**Clean water** – e.g. used in offices, schools, sports and leisure centres, parks, /public conveniences, care homes through to washing vehicles.

**Clean air** – assessing the impact that pollutants, e.g. from fuel and gas boilers have on local air quality.

**Land and soil** – this places an emphasis on maintaining soil quality on land that the Councils manage i.e. gardens, allotments, open space, parks, road verges, cemeteries.

**Materials** – this places an emphasis on the Council's systems and processes to reduce quantities of goods by actively managing use and identifying opportunities to reduce waste, considering the extent goods come from sustainable or local sources/reduce impact from transportation, encourages the use of recycled products and considers approaches to waste disposal of the goods and factors in whole life costs for products.

## **3.2 The Use of Natural Resources current understanding and approach**

### **3.2.1 Energy**

Energy use is currently monitored through the annual collection of data for NI185 (CO<sub>2</sub> reduction from local authority operations) and data is collected through the Council's participation in the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. The Council has data on energy use for buildings, street lighting, fuel from vehicle fleet and business miles.

The Council is in the process of installing automatic meter reading technology (AMRs) on all the gas and electricity supplies across all sites. This will ensure in the future the Council has 100% accurate meter reads to verify CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from buildings. AMRs will enable all energy consumption to be monitored on a half hourly basis via a web portal and this will enable the Council to identify unusually high levels of energy usage at unexpected times.

The Council's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the above activities amounts to 26,503 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

This breaks down as follows:

Buildings (including schools): 18,326

Streetlighting: 6,448

Vehicle fleet: 1,226

Lease vehicles: 74

Business miles, casual/essential: 429

Buildings account for approximately 70% of emissions. Within this figure schools count for approximately 52% of emissions. To date there has been minimal engagement with schools on energy management. The Council is now taking a more proactive approach to reduce energy use as part of planned refurbishments, e.g. the refurbishment of Runcorn Town Hall contains many energy saving features (sensory lighting, boiler controls, photovoltaic tiles,).

Through the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme a number of initiatives to reduce consumption in buildings have been undertaken.

- Installation of power perfectors
- Refurbishment works at Runcorn Town Hall, Halton Stadium, Halton Lea Library
- Introduction of multi-functional devices

There are a range of potential external funding sources to improve the energy performance of buildings which so far the Council has not potentially fully utilised.

In terms of buildings the data available can be broken down to individual buildings and provide an assessment of how each building benchmarks against typical and good practice carbon trust standards. Within certain buildings there are some particular reasons for high usage. For example, in the Municipal Building the Data Centre accounts for in excess of 50% of the consumption. Undertaking a Green Audit of the room may identify opportunities for savings.

Last year (2008/9), the council was required for the first time, to provide Display Energy Certificates (DECs) for council owned buildings, which are over 1000m<sup>2</sup>. From 09/10 the size requirement falls to 250m<sup>2</sup>, which will now include most of our buildings.

The certificates rate the energy efficiency of buildings from A-G (A being the most energy efficient). The first time buildings are rated, there is also a requirement to produce an Advisory Report, which makes recommendations for energy efficiency improvements. This Advisory Report lasts for 6 years, but the DECs must be renewed every 12 months.

From April 2010 the introduction of the Carbon Reduction Commitment will bring increasing financial pressure on local authorities to reduce energy consumption in buildings. The worst performers will face financial penalties.

### **Property Portfolio**

The Council has approximately 275 significant property assets ranging from car parks to arts and sports centres. The Council has an Asset Management Strategy for maximising the potential of its asset base. Key objectives are to

challenge the existing use of, need for and performance of all property assets to monitor and report on performance and support continuous improvement and work with existing partners to identify potential joint use. There are a number of currently external influences for change that will affect the provision of Council property including:

Building Schools for the Future programme  
Primary Schools Capital programme  
Carbon Reduction Commitment  
The Government's Extended Services Agenda

The Council already has shared accommodation with two main partners, Halton and St Helens PCT and the Five Boroughs Partnership. The development of flexible working arrangements may offer further opportunities to reduce the Council's Property Portfolio.

The Council has also adopted an accommodation strategy that sets standards for the use of space and aims to consolidate our operation on property into a smaller number of key sites. The main purpose of the strategy is to seek to accommodate staff in Council owned property and surrender the leases of accommodation elsewhere.

In terms of managing energy consumption buildings would appear to offer the greatest scope for reducing/managing consumption. The Board may wish to explore the Council's approach to this area further possibly in terms of the Council's processes for introducing energy efficient measures in buildings, the approaches to securing external funding for and/or the approach to Asset Management. The Board may wish to consider schools as a separate topic area and explore what processes and procedures are in place for reducing consumption in schools.

Street lighting offers the next biggest potential area of impact. Ways to reduce energy consumption have been considered including:

- Removing unnecessary equipment
- Use of LEDs for zebra crossings and school crossing patrol warning signs and traffic signs
- Dimming street lights

### **Clean Water**

Water consumption for all operational buildings including schools is 84,932 metres<sup>3</sup>. The Council currently operates a water management contract covering all corporate sites but not schools. A series of water saving measures were introduced, these mainly being water controls on urinals and displacement bags within toilet cisterns; they now actively monitor water consumption across these sites. Consumption is reducing and leak detection

is more proactive as unusually high levels of usage are noted and can be investigated.

### **Clean Air**

Based on data collected for NI185 the impact of pollutants on air quality from Council buildings and street lighting is as follows:

	<u>Buildings</u>	<u>Street Lighting</u>
Nitrogen oxides	2,900 tonnes	1,395 tonnes
Buildings PM10 emissions	895 tonnes	405 tonnes

At the present time the impact from fuels that the Council use is not available.

A number of actions have been implemented to reduce the impact of fuel on local air quality. The vehicle fleet is leased and replaced every 5-7 years with most vehicles having been replaced last year. The new leased vehicles comply with the latest environmental criteria, e.g. refuse vehicles are Euro 4 compliant and replacement RCVs due for delivery in June 2009 are Euro 4 compliant. The Council has previously leased vehicles that ran on LPG and all diesel used contains 5% biodiesel. The Council's fleet vehicles have fuel monitoring systems which enable the Council to measure fuel efficiency but it is not clear to what extent this system is utilised by managers. A CO<sub>2</sub> emissions limit from Council lease cars has been imposed at 200 g/km.

The Council's Green Travel Plan the Council has a number of initiatives to encourage staff to reduce the number of car journeys.

These include:

- Pool bikes
- Car share data base
- Secure cycle parking and shower facilities at main locations
- Cycle mileage rates
- Salary sacrifice scheme to enable employees to purchase cycles and annual public transport passes
- A comprehensive travel advice and personalised journey planning service

Given the fleet has recently been upgraded there seems to be limited scope to have a significant impact in this area. As part of the work the Council is undertaking with the Energy Saving Trust the Council will be gathering information about the green fleet management procurement and our approach to commuting and business mileage. It may be beneficial to review this area further when the data is collected and analysed.

## **Land and Soil**

The Council has in place a Natural Assets Strategy which is monitored alongside the Local Wildlife Site Partnership. The Biodiversity Action Plan was reviewed in February 2007 resulting in the habitat and species action plan targets. The Council has conducted a borough-wide phase 1 habitat survey which included land in the Council's ownership. The survey of data is currently being analysed.

There has been an increase in the number of local nature reserves and an increasing number of parks and open spaces have been granted the green flag award.

All local nature reserves and green flag award sites have dedicated management plans. These pay specific attention to management of biodiversity and green flag plans including nature conservation, management aims and objectives. Within the Council's green space asset data base consideration is given to management activities that promote greater biodiversity. For example, on expressway road networks areas of grass are cut at variable heights and frequencies which promotes greater variety of species.

## **Materials**

The Council does not have specific data in respect of the environmental impact of procurement processes and waste. The sustainable framework for flexible procurement is a government initiative which aims to encourage more sustainable procurement in the future. The framework has five levels and the Council has a target to reach level three by 2010, and level five by 2013. Progress through the levels would involve key buyers in understanding how they must play an active part in achieving a higher level of sustainable procurement. Although there is no overarching sustainability procurement policy there are a number of positive examples of positive sustainable procurement practices. The Council does purchase a range of recycled products for its stationery contract and 80% recycled paper is used for office printing. The introduction of MFDs has reduced the amount of toner cartridges and settings and the MFDs are designed to use 2-sided printing to reduce the use of paper.

For ICT equipment the Council now purchases Tft monitors which are more efficient than CRTs. Newer dual core laptops are now purchased which are more energy efficient. Consideration is being given to applying energy saving options in line with the Green Government ICT document into the new laptop contract.

It is not clear to what extent the purchase of recycled products is a common feature across the Council. The Council has registered for the buy recycled code through Enviralink which is an organisation that supports the

development and growth of the region's environmental technologies and aims to improve awareness and the principles of including recycled materials and specifying percentage of recycled content within products in contracts. This work remains to be developed and it is hoped in the future to arrange workshops for relevant officers to attend to gain awareness of the opportunities available particularly in construction, highways and landscapes.

The Council has developed an e-procurement system that reduces the amount of paper produced and the need for storage.

The Council has started to collect good practice on sustainable procurement by creating a sustainable register. The register does not represent all contracts and requires further development. At present it is reliant on feedback from individual managers.

There is a strong emphasis in the CAA of the need for Councils to develop greater sustainable procurement practices in the following areas:

- Considering contracts on a whole life cost basis
- Setting standards for the acquisition of products that are more efficient in the use of energy, water, material and resource.
- Consider assessing tenders against environmental criteria
- Developing an overarching sustainable procurement policy

A more sustainable approach to procurement may include a number of elements, e.g. demand of products or using more efficient approaches or products, reducing waste it produces and reusing and recycling resources where possible.

The Council does operate an office recycling service at 30 Council buildings. These facilities recycle paper, cans and plastic bottles. The range of materials currently collected varies from building to building and is determined by the building circumstance and requirements.

Recycling bins are provided for a number of schools for collection of paper or multi-material recyclables. Currently facilities are provided to 24 primary and secondary schools. Landscape Services recycle litter and almost 90% of litter collected in parks, open spaces and highways was recycled last year.

The street lighting contract has a requirement to recycle materials. All street lighting concrete columns are crushed and reused as fill. The old steel columns and signs are recycled. Waste packaging, mainly cardboard, is separated for recycling.

The Council spends in excess of £190m revenue and capital on goods and services. Spend profiles indicate the highest spending areas are as follows:

Residential care: £8.9m  
Domiciliary care: £4.2m  
Grounds/Highway Maintenance: £3.4m  
Catering/Food/Bar Supplies: £1.5m  
Building Construction Materials: £1.4m  
Computer Services: £1.1m

Given the current spending levels and there is no overarching approach to procurement this may be an area worthy of further explanation. One option may be to focus initially on high spending areas and look at current procurement practices in those areas.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This report identifies a number of areas that the Board may wish to investigate further. In summary:

**4.1** Energy – green audit of data centre/computer rooms

**4.2** Energy - operational buildings (excluding schools)  
- school buildings  
- street lighting

**4.3** Procurement – use case studies of high spending areas to identify scope for minimising environmental impact with a view to developing a sustainable procurement strategy

Members are invited to contribute their own ideas with a view to identifying a small number of workstreams (2 to 4) and establishing sub-groups to investigate each one.

#### **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Use of resources links into the council's Corporate Plan and the aims to reduce the use of natural resources that the council consumes in delivering its services. It is also consistent with the cross cutting sustainability principles which the council has adopted. Addressing use of natural resources is also a key line of enquiry in the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

#### **6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

The council's priorities include adopting sustainability principles and addressing climate change as part of the Corporate Plan and the Urban Renewal priority. Addressing the use of resources is consistent with work on



this priority.

**8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

None

**9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SETION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There are no relevant papers under the meaning of this Act