

Report for Information

Report to Executive
30 September 2009
Report of Director of Transformation
Subject Annual Environmental Statement 2008/09

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Purpose

To agree the publication of an Annual Environmental statement which provides an overview of the significant progress made by the Council during 2008/09 against the Council's approved Environmental Strategy.

Recommendations

Executive is asked to:

- Note the significant progress made against targets in the agreed Environmental Strategy and
- Agree the publication of the Annual Environmental statement 2008/09
- Delegate authority for the finalisation of the report to the Director of Transformation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable City Development.

Financial Consequences

There are no financial consequences to this report. Minor printing and distribution costs will be met from within existing budgets.

Risk Assessment

There are no risks associated with this report.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Aiming for excellence – ensuring the Council is efficient in its use of resources, is effective in delivering its plans, is a good employer and communicates effectively with its customers, staff and partners" and the corporate plan priority to reduce our carbon footprint by a total of 30% over a 5 year period.

Executive Member: Councillor Morrey - Sustainable City Development

Ward: All wards

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

Norwich City Council Environmental Strategy 2009-2010

Report

Annual Environmental Statement 2008/09

1. Executive will recall that it agreed the Council's Environmental Strategy 2008-2010 in October 2008.
2. The key commitment within the strategy is to reduce the City Council's carbon footprint by 30% over a 5 year period, from a baseline set at 2006/07 levels. However, the strategy also includes a range of other complementary activities which collectively will help to reduce our impact on the environment, and also save costs through reduced use of energy.
3. Progress against the strategy has been good. It proposed to publish a short annual statement to summarise what has been achieved, and what the next steps and actions are proposed to be.
4. A draft of the text of the proposed 2008/09 statement is attached as Annex A. It is planned that this will be properly produced and published in due course.
5. Executive is asked to consider the draft statement, and delegate authority to finalise and publish it to the Director of Transformation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable City Development .Once finalised, it will be circulated to all elected members, to senior managers, and externally in order to demonstrate progress made so far, and to encourage continued commitment to reducing our impact on the environment.

DRAFT Norwich City Council Environmental Statement 2008/09

SUMMARY

The global challenge of climate change is significant and requires a decarbonisation of the economy and a move away from the use of fossil fuels. Unless we start to make real progress towards reconciling these issues we face a future that is less certain and less secure.

Local Government has a key role in promoting and acting on climate change and carbon reduction. In October 2008 Norwich City Council agreed its first environmental statement which sets out the actions we are taking to improve our own environmental performance, as well as encouraging other organisations and individuals across the city to improve theirs.

This annual statement summarises the progress we have made over the 2008/09 year. We have made good progress, and our successes include:

- ✓ Good progress is being made against the deliverable actions of the Environmental Strategy 2008 – 2010.
- ✓ Successful delivery of the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme
- ✓ Ongoing delivery of the Energy Savings Trust One to One Programme
- ✓ Successful implementation of a SALIX invest to save programme of works
- ✓ Successfully engaging with a number of key charitable partners to promote or manage work in regards to sustainability

All of this has resulted in at least a 4% reduction on the City Council's carbon footprint (measured against a 2006/07 baseline).

This is a good start, but we need to do more. The statement therefore also sets out how we plan to step up our environmental activity over the next few years.

The Local Context

As a low lying county with a soft coastline and a growing population, Norfolk is particularly vulnerable to the predicted long term climate changes such as increased temperatures, drier summers, increased winter rainfall and intense rainfall events.

As a city Norwich has a long standing reputation as a leading player in environmental activity, with the University of East Anglia as a recognised global leader in research and development.

The role of local authorities

Local councils have an important role to play in both directly tackling environmental issues, but also in encouraging local people and organisations to change their

behaviours. The Government has identified 3 national indicators focusing on climate change which all local authorities need to work to:

NI185 – CO2 reduction for local authority operations

NI186 – Per capita CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area

NI188 – Planning to adapt to climate change

In order to ensure that all services are working to improve our performance against these areas, Norwich City Council has agreed an Environmental Strategy which specifies a range of activities around increased sustainability, waste reduction, recycling rates and biodiversity. We also have a Carbon Management Plan which sets out how we will act to reduce the impact of our services and actions on the environment.

To oversee our activity, the City Council has set up an all party environmental working group (the Climate Change Panel) which is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the council. The Panel regularly meets to monitor progress against our environmental improvement targets.

Norwich City Council - headline achievements in 2008/09

Good progress is being made against the deliverable actions of the agreed Environmental Strategy 2008 – 2010. The headline achievements are:

- 60% of the strategy has been completed already, and we are confident that the remaining actions will be completed on time
- The City Council has successfully implemented the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Management Programme and in 2008/09 has reduced emissions from a 2006/07 baseline by over 4%
- The authority has successfully reviewed its service provision to ensure we are ready to respond to severe weather events
- We have joined the Energy Saving Trust One to One support programme.

More detail on actions against key priorities is shown in the rest of this statement.

Norwich City Council - achievements against priorities in 2008/09

Priority 1) Energy consumption – Council owned buildings

Why is this important?

Reducing environmental and financial cost to the authority is important to provide a resource efficient and effective service. Therefore the authority has taken steps to reduce our emissions from its facilities and services by 30% before 2012/13.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Over 4% decrease in CO2 emissions in 2007/8 (from a 2006/07 baseline)
- "Nightwatchman" software installed on all council computers to ensure they switch off automatically
- Successful implementation of the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme.

- Baseline figures calculated for carbon emissions arising from the council's fleet, energy use, office supplies and contracts
- Secured £400,000 funding for a carbon reduction fund to support specific projects.

Our plans for the future

- Implementation of the Energy Savings Trust One to One support programme
- A range of key energy saving projects:
 - Voltage optimisation of City Hall
 - Continued energy efficiency works.
 - St Giles Car Park Lighting upgrades
 - Energy review of Riverside Leisure Centre
 - Energy review of the Norman Centre

Priority 1) Energy consumption - Housing and other buildings in the city

Why is this important?

Providing information to the public and business in regards to resource efficiency aids in the reduction of unnecessary waste. Norwich City Council recognises that we should show leadership in regards to our own estate, and enable others to follow our actions.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Norwich Warm Homes Project to increase take up of energy efficiency grants in private sector
- Delivery of home energy awareness campaign
- Successful pilot of Landlord energy efficiency programme
- Best practice presentation to Regional Cities East
- Promotion of grants and technologies to the business and public

Our plans for the future

- Enable construction of an environmentally sustainable development of 100 affordable homes.
- Ongoing development of the LDF core strategy in regards to environmental sustainability

Priority 1) Energy consumption – Transport

Why is this important?

Vehicles are a huge contributor to the national carbon footprint. Local authorities use a significant range of vehicles, our staff travel a lot in order to deliver services locally. Therefore we have a responsibility and opportunity to improve the use of transport across the city

Achievements in 2008/09

- Continued improvements in transport interchange facilities via the CIVITAS programme
- Improvement of cycling facilities
- Implement permit parking tariffs that favour shorter (low emission) cars

Our plans for the future

- Pilot innovative sustainable transport solutions such as freight transshipment centres or alternative fuels
- A range of other projects including city car club, parking restrictions, and fuel trials
- Improvement in air quality in three air quality management areas
- Implement joint investment strategy to improve bus services with Norfolk CC and First

Priority 2) Greening procurement

Why is this important?

Procurement has been highlighted as central to delivering the objectives of Norwich City Council. Good procurement will lead to buying goods, works and services in an ethical and sustainable way that will optimise our use of resources providing value for money and contribute to the provision of good quality services for the citizens of Norwich.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Environmental criteria embedded into all new contacts
- Sustainability checklist for pre-tender stage of all contracts

Our plans for the future

- Continue to ensure that the Norwich City Council Procurement Strategy is implemented, especially the key principles in regards to the environment and resource use.

Priority 3) Reduce and recycle

Why is this important?

Everyone produces waste, and whilst it cannot be eliminated, we can reduce its environmental impact by prevention, reuse and recycling. The council has a duty to collect waste from its citizens and ensure that every property has the opportunity to access appropriate recycling services.

We also recognise that we need to not only focus on our residents waste, but as the council as a waste producer. Therefore we will also look at further ways in which we can either reduce the amount of waste we produce or find alternative methods of waste disposal rather than landfill.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Increased our recycling rate to 35.6%
- Waste to landfill reduction of 22%
- The City Council has introduced alternate weekly collection as well as a number of recycling services
- Subscription based garden waste service to 8000 customers
- A strong focus on reducing our residents waste
- New recycling systems in major council buildings. (Paper, Cans, plastic bottles, printer cartridges, confidential waste)

- Promotion of the love food hate waste campaign

Our plans for the future

- Continued investigations to reduce waste from our service delivery
- Further increase of our recycling rate to 38%

Priority 4) Built environment

Why is this important?

The way in which developments are regulated, planned and built, and the way in which resources are used will have a significant impact on their sustainability. By planning how we build things we can save emissions, reduce waste and use resources more efficiently and effectively. Planning also ensures that we build for the future whilst preserving the heritage of our beautiful city.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Specification of high standards “code for sustainable homes” and renewable energy requirements in the joint core strategy completed
- Implementation of parking permits that increase with car size
- City Council website updated with planning and home energy improvement information
- Continued promotion of brownfield locations for building development
- Continued development of improved procedures for managing funding from development for infrastructure improvements
- Implemented appropriate supplementary planning documents (SPD) representing good practice for environmental issues

Our plans for the future

- Master planning of the St Stephen area to ensure sustainable regeneration of retail and office core areas
- Consultation on traffic improvement plans for the removal of significant levels of cars in order to improve air quality and public transport times.

Priority 5) Natural Environment

Why is this important?

The city of Norwich has a high proportion of green space, and the City Council directly manages, or influences policy for these areas. The management of the natural environment enables Norwich to remain rich in biodiversity whilst providing our citizens with quality spaces for recreational enjoyment.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Ongoing development of IT systems for tree stock capturing
- SPD developed and approved
- Capturing geographic data to enable better management of council owned tree stock. Features include flash flood analysis, condition status, asset value)
- Completion of a number of new planting schemes (Native & Rare)

Our plans for the future

- To continue to manage our natural areas using that latest best practice and methods in order to achieve high levels of amenity value as well as the provision of quality habitats for biodiversity
- To continue to enable appropriate guidance to developers and to continue to raise funds for green space improvements from new developments.

Priority 6) Reduce pollution

Why is this important?

Pollution lowers our environmental quality and affects our health. Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into an environment that causes instability, disorder, harm or discomfort to the environment i.e. physical systems or living organisms . Pollution can take the form of chemical substances or energy, such as noise, heat, or light.

Achievements in 2008/09

- Continued development of air quality improvements in our three air quality management areas. Examples include retrofitting buses with new more efficient exhaust systems which enable lower levels of pollution.
- Designing out traffic problems at St Augustines

Our plans for the future

- Improve air quality by promoting cycling, walking and bus use in relation to car use, through planning, appropriate investment and plans.
- Continued management and monitoring of air quality management zones.
- Continued development of policies, plans and procedures to identify and mitigate against issues of pollution.

Priority 7) Leadership

Why is this important?

Councils can make real a real difference through working on service promotion to business and the public or by the provision of information.

Achievements in 2008/09

- A number of environmental articles published in our residents magazine "Citizen"
- Updated website for home energy information, carbon foot printing and general information in regards to the environment and/ or sustainable living
- Internal award for environmental champion established
- External Eco Awards for business, schools and communities established
- Internal and External Awareness campaign called "One Small Step" established
- Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change signed
- Norfolk Climate Change Strategy signed
- Continued support to the Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust, N21 and Transition Norwich.

Our plans for the future

- Communicate the council's environmental achievements to individuals, householders, businesses and other organisations.
- Communicate to staff and businesses how they can act to minimise their environmental impact via the One Small Step Campaign
- Develop and implement a project sustainability checklist
- Consider adopting an environmental management system (EMAS)
- To protect council services and assets from the consequences of climate change
- To support charitable organisations such as the Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust

Getting in touch

We hope you have found this short environmental statement useful. If you would like any further information, please consult our website (www.norwich.gov.uk) or contact our Environmental manager on 01603-212312 or email: richardwillson@norwich.gov.uk