

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

PROGRESS MADE

2007/2008

1. Climate Change

Action within the Council

- The Council took part in the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme between May 2007 and March 2008. Support was provided to help calculate and analyse our carbon footprint and explore opportunities to reduce emissions from Council buildings, vehicles and waste production. A Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan has been produced, which identifies key actions for the Council to take to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2013.
- To reinforce the Council's commitment to resource management, targets to reduce waste, carbon dioxide emissions and water consumption at the Civic Centre have continued to be monitored. The results are the subject of a separate report to this committee.
- Over 30 staff have been trained to be Environmental Champions and have undertaken baseline audits of energy use and waste production at the majority of Council sites. The champions will spearhead a number of campaigns during the year to reduce energy consumption, reuse waste where possible and recycle what is left. This should have a significant impact on carbon emissions across all Council sites.

Action within the Community

- Following the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy in January 2008, work is progressing on implementing the action plan. Five climate change projects have been awarded funding through Exeter's Climate Change Parking Levy, including insulation grants for low-income households, a smart-meter project for local schools, a retailers energy efficiency scheme and aerial heat and renewable energy surveys of the city. Work is also progressing on the idea of developing a local carbon offset scheme for Exeter, which would encourage local people and organisations to make voluntary donations to fund energy efficiency, renewable energy schemes, and sustainable transport projects within the Exeter area.
- Meanwhile, the New Growth Point Board set up to oversee developments east of Exeter has now received a report from consultants setting out options for low and zero carbon solutions at key development sites. The clear conclusion from this work is that site-wide energy solutions are often more cost effective than individual home solutions in relation to the larger sites outside the City. However, delivering and financing the necessary infrastructure to deliver site-wide solutions is logistically difficult. The New Growth Point Board are continuing to discuss the implications of, and next steps for this work.
- A Committee Paper is expected to be taken to Scrutiny and Executive in September setting out proposals for further analytical work by Exeter University to be conducted in partnership with EDF Energy (who have indicated their willingness to offer financial support for this work). This further analytical work will explore

options for renewable energy - possibly delivered on a district level - for those areas of Exwick that are not on the gas network and instead, rely heavily on inefficient electric heating. This study will also consider options for shared energy supply in the key industrial estates, undertaking, in the first instance, detailed mapping of energy use in these areas (and liaising with consultants employed to work on the County Council 'waste-to-energy' plant proposals at Marsh Barton).

2. Energy/Water Consumption

Action within the Council

- A reduction in the Council's carbon emissions has been the main theme through 2007/2008. To achieve this an energy saving transformer has been installed at the Civic centre, which should reduce emissions due to electricity consumption by up to 10%. Automated meter reading has been installed at nine of the higher electricity usage sites. This provides half hourly profile data, which allows electricity consumption to be analysed and identify where savings can be made. Advanced Demand Side Metering, ADSM, have been contracted in to survey water usage across all Council sites and install appropriate water saving equipment.
- On the renewable energy front two projects have been undertaken by the Council. In August 2007 three wind turbines were mounted on the roof of the Civic Centre as a study into the feasibility of using wind generation in the urban environment. In December 2007 the oil boiler at Belle Isle Nursery was replaced with an energy cabin using a wood pellet boiler as the primary heat source. A solar thermal array on the side of the cabin supplements the pellet boiler resulting in zero carbon emissions for heating the greenhouses. Learning from the experience gained at Belle Isle, a feasibility study to replace the oil boilers at the Corn Exchange with a wood pellet boiler is currently underway.

Action within the Community

- The Council has continued to promote energy efficiency grants for home-owners. As well as running the on-going Warm-up Exeter Scheme, which subsidises the cost of insulation for low-income households who are just above benefit levels, a new scheme aimed at landlords has been developed. Private Landlord Energy Action [PLEA] grants are available to landlords to install insulation measures and to provide replacement boilers or full gas central heating systems.
- During 2007/08 a total of 926 households benefited from Warm-up Exeter Grants, which resulted in 1,113 energy efficiency measures (loft or cavity wall insulation) being installed. During the same period 140 privately rented dwellings benefited from the provision of insulation measures, together with either the installation of central heating or the replacement of old, inefficient boilers, through the PLEA Grants. During 2008 Warm-up plus grants, providing free, rather than subsidised, insulation to low income households who are not on benefits are to be introduced. These grants are being funded through the Council's car park levy and will be limited.
- The Council, in partnership with the other 9 local authorities in Devon, has identified 10 Devon Warm Zones in which the full range of energy efficiency grants will be actively promoted by community organisations. The organisations involved will benefit by receiving payment for each insulation measure that has been installed as a direct result of their work. Promotional activity in the Warm Zones will begin in 2008 and aims to install insulation to 15,000 households throughout Devon in the next 3 years

- A further 71 cavity wall and 381 loft insulation measures were undertaken in Council owned dwellings in 2007/08. This means that 88% of Council homes have now been fitted with loft insulation, 98% with cavity wall insulation and virtually all external doors have been replaced. The Council is on track to meet its target of all homes having loft and cavity wall insulation (where feasible) by April 2011. In addition, gas condensing boilers with a SEDBUK 'A' rating have been installed into a further 50 Council homes to replace old, inefficient gas/electric systems and a further 50 properties will benefit in 2008/09. A programme of external rendering and upgraded cavity insulation to 16 British Iron and Steel houses (BISF) took place in 2007/08 and a further 16 will benefit in 2008/09. A new contract for the external rendering and insulation of blocks of flats is being prepared for 2008/09. The average SAP (energy efficiency) rating of Council houses in the city is now up to 69.3 (2007/08), compared to 47 in 2002.
- A pilot solar water heating system has been installed into five Council homes in Leypark Road. The systems will be monitored on a monthly basis to determine the level of savings that the tenants can expect. A small budget of £25,000 has been established to install more solar water heating systems and tenants are being sought to extend the pilot.

3. Waste/Recycling

Action within the Council

- Waste levels have continued to fall at the Civic Centre, resulting in a 59% reduction in May 2008 compared to April 1998 levels. The introduction of a new recycling system at the Civic Centre and accompanying awareness campaign is being explored to make it easier for staff to recycle more of their waste, which could reduce waste levels still further. Through the Environmental Champions scheme (See section 2) the recycling facilities at other sites is also being investigated.

Action within the Community

- The Council achieved a recycling/composting rate of 35% in 2007/08 and is on target to achieve this again in 2008/09 – fulfilling the target of 35% for this year. The Council's garden waste composting scheme continues to expand and 2,219 tonnes of waste was collected in 2007/08. Activities continued to promote home composting, which resulted in the sale of over 1,000 composters.
- A programme of improvements to the MRF processing systems was completed during 2007/8. The installation of the Titech Autosort has improved the quality of the paper sent for recycling by removing 95% of the plastics from the paper line before sorting by hand in the paper cabin.
- The key driver for change over the next few years will be the European Landfill Directive, which requires that the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill sites needs to be progressively reduced; to 75% of 1995 levels by 2010, 50% by 2013 and 35% by 2020. These targets apply to Devon as a whole and projections suggest that without additional treatment facilities, meeting targets will become an increasing problem from around 2010. Waste Disposal Authorities (in this case Devon County Council) can meet their targets either by investing in new collection and processing systems, buying unused landfill allowance permits from other authorities, or paying fines of up to £150 per tonne of material landfilled outside their allowances. The net effect of this new system will be to focus attention on the removal of biodegradable material from the municipal waste stream to reach these progressively more challenging targets. The proposal by DCC to build an Energy from Waste plant at Marsh Barton means that the remaining biodegradable fraction of the waste stream (food waste) would be diverted from landfill fulfilling the targets and prevent the imposition of fines.

- All schools in Exeter schools are now participating in the school recycling scheme, which provides schools with large bins for mixed recyclables and smaller boxes for collecting the materials in classrooms and offices. In addition, many schools and groups have continued to benefit from educational talks and workshops on waste and recycling issues with Council officers either visiting the schools, or using hosted visits to the multimedia suite in the MRF visitors' room. During 2007/8 the recycling team hosted over 100 events, including visits to the MRF, talks to community groups, fun days, School fetes, compost giveaways and events promoting re-usable bags.
- Since June 2007 the Council has been working in partnership with the Express and Echo, EDF energy and the Tidy Exeter Group to reduce the number of plastic shopping bags by 25% during 2007/8. The aim is to save over 8 million plastic bags by promoting reusable jute bags. Over 15,000 of these bags, of varying design, have been given out (or sold for Charity) throughout 2007/8.
- In October 2007, Cleansing Services introduced a new trade waste recycling service for local businesses. Following a survey to existing customers, the scheme was initially set up as a trial, providing collections of bagged paper and bailed cardboard. The take up of this service and the quantity of material collected has been exceptional and as a result the service became permanent at the beginning of May 2008. In July 2008, the service was expanded to include mixed plastics and cans and a radio advertising campaign is being undertaken to create further interest.

4. Sustainable Purchasing

- Work has continued to integrate sustainability issues into the Council's procurement activities. The introduction of a sustainability based evaluation matrix together with the use of a whole life costing approach has meant that all purchasing decisions will be grounded in sustainability, reflecting the true cost to the Council, its residents and the environment. The existing Procurement Strategy is to be redrafted as the Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Strategy to demonstrate the Council's commitment to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the city and surrounding area. The continued use of an electronic procurement system provides environmental benefits in terms of moving towards a paperless process and encourages local contractors to work with the Council.
- The Council has recently introduced the Exeter Green Accord, a sustainability accreditation scheme to evidence the commitment of companies that supply to the Council or buy from the Council. There are three ascending levels of accreditation that can be achieved, with the lowest level needing to be met for companies to be able to work for the Council. To encourage continuous improvement the Council has, by partnering with Government sponsored enterprises, arranged free training sessions in order to help companies climb up the accreditation ladder. The Green Accord has already been nationally recognised through achieving the top Government Opportunities (GO) Sustainability Award in June 2008 and has been recognised by Constructing Excellence South West as example of procurement excellence. At the present time, the scheme applies to building companies and their allied trades and consultants. Future plans are to extend the scheme across all Council suppliers and ultimately to engage with other public and private sector employers to widen the use of the accreditation mark.

5. Sustainable Transport

Action within the Council

- The Green Travel Plan was introduced in July 2006 with the aim of promoting and encouraging more sustainable ways for staff to travel to work and, once at work, for

going about their business travel. Staff have enthusiastically taken up the challenge, saving themselves money, improving their health and helping the environment in the process:

- 54 staff have purchased discounted annual bus tickets
 - 36 staff are now getting a discount on park and ride
 - 38 staff are getting a discount on rail travel to work
 - 70 staff have purchased bicycles under the 'cyclescheme'
 - 21 staff regularly use the pool bikes
- The Council's two pool cars are frequently used and staff have access to two cars from the Exe Car Club, which are parked in Southernhay. The Green Travel Plan also includes a workplace parking charge for staff who bring their cars to work. The money raised from this charge is used to help finance the discounts available to staff.
 - A number of activities have been undertaken through the 'Be Active For Life Project' to promote cycling within the Council. 14 pool bikes are available for staff, 'Dr Bike' Clinics have been arranged and cycle training is available. In addition, new cycle storage facilities have been provided at Oakwood House and the Ark and plans are in progress to improve cycle storage provision at the Civic Centre.
 - Since June 2008, three of the Council's refuse vehicles have been running on 100% bio-fuel, which is produced locally from recycled vegetable oil and has a significantly lower carbon footprint than conventional diesel. Monitoring of these vehicles is currently being undertaken with a view to increasing the number of vehicles running on bio-fuel if successful. The fleet also contains three Citroen Berlingo electric vans and a petrol/electric hybrid car for Planning Officers to use on site visits. In addition, new fleet management software has been installed, which will enable the mileage and fuel consumption of Council vehicles to be monitored.

Action within the Community

- Members were updated on Park and Ride developments in Exeter at the March 2008 meeting of the Economy Scrutiny Committee. In short, key developments include the creation of a Park and Ride Strategy which includes an investigation, led by the County Council, into the feasibility of a new park and ride facility close to the A377 Alphington Spur and A30 junction. Given its position in a sensitive location, a major consideration for this site will be the need to develop measures to reduce its environmental impact. Improvements have also been made to toilet and baby changing facilities at Matford and at Honiton Road.
- Other examples of progress on sustainable transport initiatives include:
 - further pathway enhancements to the green circle route and the production of an updated leaflet pack
 - further progress on developing an 'Exwick walking loop', with completion of the path from Exwick Lane to St Peter's Mount;
 - the publication of a new Exeter Walking Map and the completion of a shared use pathway from Willow Way to Pinhoe Road.
 - continued support to the Cycle Demonstration Town Project (combining infrastructure works and 'soft' measures to increase the take-up of cycling) led by Devon County Council. The Project has recorded a 25% increase in cycle trips across Exeter between 2005 and 2007.
 - partnering Sustrans (the sustainable transport organisation) and Devon County Council in development work linked to the new TravelSmart individualised travel marketing project for Exeter and Exminster (launched in April 2008)

- As part of National Bike Week 2007, Cycle Sunday, an event incorporating two family bike rides and workshops was organised in conjunction with Sustrans and Devon County Council.

6. Street Cleanliness

- Since the comprehensive review of the cleaning of streets and public spaces in the city in 2005 the new street sweeping regimes have settled down well and there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of complaints about litter and detritus. This is reflected in the results for BVPI 199 (see Appendix) and the Local Public Service Agreements survey results. One of the newest additions to this service is a "Red Coat Tour" cleaner who sweeps and litter picks points of interest on these routes. Extra resources have also been applied to the leaf fall season, again with positive results.
- To improve street cleanliness in the city, litter and dog patrols have continued and refuse that is put out too early for collection continues to be targeted. These activities resulted in 559 litter and 97 dog control order tickets being issued to offenders in 2007/08. There were 133 litter, 2 fly-tipping, 1 dog fouling and 2 dog off lead prosecutions for failing to pay the fixed penalty ticket. New Dog Control Orders were introduced in February 2007, which brought our existing orders in line with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and introduced dog controls on the Cathedral Green in line with the new legislation.

7. Air, Land and Water Quality

- In April 2007 the five existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were replaced by a single AQMA covering all the main routes into the city. During 2007/08 officers worked with Devon County Council Transport Officers to draft an Air Quality Action Plan to tackle the pollution from road vehicles within this area. The AQAP is due to be submitted to DEFRA in August 2008.
- As part of the implementation of the Contaminated Land Strategy, sites within the city with a current or historical industrial use have been identified and recorded on GIS. A database of these sites has also been compiled and the sites prioritised for further investigation. Assessments are being undertaken on the "higher risk" sites and many sites are being dealt with through the planning process. Action in this area of work is being monitored via two new BVPIs.

8. Countryside and Wildlife

- A new Countryside Ranger Post (2 year temporary contract) is proving invaluable in helping the Council to deliver its biodiversity obligations. This includes provision of biodiversity advice for planning applications, production of action plans for the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and a popular programme of countryside events aimed at families and young children.
- Several projects have been completed as part of the Riverside Valley Park Enhancement Scheme, including improvements to Belle Isle access and the maritime buoy installation and interpretation at the head of the canal. Other projects that will be completed during the next year include a youth angling lake near to the Double Locks and a series of canoe loops on the river and canal.
- Several projects have been undertaken to increase the wildlife value of the city including:
 - Wild flower meadow creation in Ludwell.
 - Cirl bunting project, in partnership with the RSPB, to create habitat at Mincinglake, Ludwell and Topsham.

- Interpretation panels in Ludwell and Riverside.
- Woodland creation.
- Volunteers from the city have helped with tree planting, hedge management and improving access throughout the city's countryside areas. This is in partnership with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers as part of the 'green gym' initiative to encourage people to become healthier by working in green spaces to improve their environment. A wide-ranging, and well attended, events programme has been delivered, including a children's nature week, a fungal foray and a chance for people to watch shire horses ploughing in preparation for barley sowing to help conserve the city's rare farmland birds.
- The Wild City Project, a partnership project between the Council and the Devon Wildlife Trust is underway. The purpose is to encourage initiatives across the city that make the city richer in wildlife and help people to enjoy it. The Wild City Project Officer is now in post and the project is currently in the development stage.

9. Sustainable Construction

- Work is continuing on the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Exeter, which will provide planning guidance up to 2026. The draft Submission Core Strategy includes policies requiring sustainable urban drainage systems, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and green infrastructure in new developments. To provide an evidence base for the Core Strategy, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Green Infrastructure Study are nearing completion.
- In early 2008, planning conditions to require a proportion or 10% of energy from renewable sources for large residential and commercial developments were introduced. For the period prior to the adoption of the LDF a sustainability checklist has been adopted for completion as part of the planning application process. This asks applicants to measure their development against (BREEAM) Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method and Code for Sustainable Homes standards.
- Plans are being progressed to construct 50-70 new affordable homes on Council land. These homes will conform to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and additional sustainable features, not covered by the Code, may be included where possible. A very successful 'Green Housing' consultation has been undertaken with tenants to help identify their priorities for sustainable homes. The homes will be developed in partnership with Sovereign Housing Association who will apply for Housing Corporation funding for the project.
- A project is also underway to build 2 homes to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes on Council-owned land in the Heavitree area of the city. It has been a challenge to find a suitable design on such a constrained site but negotiations are underway with the planners and an application for full consent is expected shortly. Funding has been obtained from the Housing Corporation to deliver the project, and the Executive has agreed to dispose of the land for this purpose. The homes will be built in partnership with Devon and Cornwall Housing Association. A firm of architects who specialise in ecological design are employed on both projects and we are working with them to develop a cost-effective technical approach that can provide thermally efficient and more sustainable homes with low running costs for future residents.
- The Council's Empty Homes Team is likely to soon start proceedings for the first Empty Dwelling Management Order to bring long-term empty properties back into use.

10. Fairtrade

- Exeter's Fairtrade City campaign has continued and after a successful application to the Fairtrade Foundation the status has been retained. Since gaining the award the campaign has continued to gain momentum with an estimated 40 shops and 50 cafes in the city now selling Fairtrade products. To mark this increase the fifth edition of Exeter's Fairtrade Directory was launched in Fairtrade Fortnight in March. In addition, Exeter's campaign won the 'Media and Communications' Award in the National Fairtrade Fortnight Awards 2007. The Awards, which are organised each year by the Fairtrade Foundation, reward examples of best practice in terms of promoting Fairtrade within the local community.
- Events and media publicity continued throughout the year in order to promote Fairtrade to both Council staff and members of the public. In Fairtrade Fortnight 2008, activities included a Fairtrade cocoa event for Exeter primary schools with Divine Chocolate, a launch event in Princesshay, a Fairtrade promotion at Exeter City Football Club, campaigns at the University of Exeter and Exeter College and a range of exhibitions and sampling stalls across the city. In addition, a Fairtrade breakfast was organised for Council staff. The campaign gained extensive media coverage from the Express and Echo, whereby an article was printed every day throughout the fortnight.
- The Council has continued to expand the range of Fairtrade products available to staff and visitors. A range of Fairtrade drinks and snacks are available in the vending machines and committee rooms at the Civic Centre and at other sites. Napkins to promote Exeter being a Fairtrade City have been produced and are available in the committee rooms.