

**CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY FOR EXETER****PROGRESS MADE****2008/2009****1. CLIMATE CHANGE****Action within the Council**

- Work has continued to implement the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan, which identifies key actions for the Council to take to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2013. Targets to reduce waste, carbon dioxide emissions, paper usage and water consumption have continued to be monitored. The results are the subject of a separate report to this committee, and show real improvements in satisfying targets set.
- The Environmental Champions have spearheaded a number of successful environmental campaigns during the year. An energy campaign was undertaken in July 2008, to highlight the importance of switching off PCs, lights and office equipment when not in use. A second campaign, focusing on reducing and reusing waste was undertaken in September 2008, to raise awareness of how much paper is used within the Council and how this can be reduced. In conjunction with the introduction of new recycling schemes at 14 Council sites in February 2009, the champions ran a recycling awareness campaign to promote the benefits of recycling to staff, including tours of the Material Reclamation Facility. Follow-up audits were undertaken in April 2009 to measure the effectiveness of the campaigns. At the Civic Centre, the results showed a 40% reduction in waste levels (see Section 3), a 45% reduction in the number of staff leaving their PC monitor on overnight, a 30% reduction in printers left on and a 4% reduction in paper consumption. Similar savings were made at other sites, including a 13% reduction in electricity consumption at Oakwood House and a 39% reduction at the Underground passages.
- Environmental management continues to be promoted as part of the induction process for staff joining the Council. All new staff are invited to attend a session on carbon management within the Council, which includes a chance to see the film, 'An Inconvenient Truth', in which Al Gore sets out evidence to show that climate change is happening.

**Action within the Community**

- Following the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy in January 2008, work is progressing on implementing the action plan. The five climate change projects that were awarded funding through Exeter's Climate Change Parking Levy are progressing well:
  - **Warm Up Plus Exeter Grants** – free loft and cavity wall insulation was provided to households on low incomes and the over 60s. The grants proved to be very popular with homeowners.
  - **Smart Monitors for Schools Scheme** - 8 schools have now taken part in the scheme, in which children borrow a smart monitor to record and help reduce their home energy consumption. The project, which is a joint initiative between the Council (School's Green Team project) and Low Carbon Exeter will be working with 20 schools up until the end of the academic year 2010. Through the project children borrow a meter for 2 weeks to help monitor how much energy they can save by switching off lights and appliances and gain an understanding of how much electricity individual appliances use. The feedback from teachers and pupils has been very

positive, with some households reducing their energy consumption by as much as 40%.

- **Retailers' Energy Efficiency Award Scheme** – the project, a joint initiative between the Council, Global Action Plan and Low Carbon Exeter, was launched in early February, with a 'Greener Retailing' event. 25 businesses have since signed up to the scheme and will receive an audit to help identify opportunities to reduce energy, waste and carbon dioxide emissions. The savings made will be monitored and an energy efficiency award provided where sufficient savings have been made.
- **Heat Loss Survey of Exeter** - a survey was undertaken in January 2009 to identify homes and buildings in the city that are losing most heat. The survey shows that 22% of properties have a high heat loss value and so are of immediate priority in terms of needing better insulation. A further 67% of properties have a medium level of heat loss and in many cases will also benefit from improved insulation. The results have been used to encourage home owners to check that they have sufficient insulation and to insulate their property where needed. A campaign to target those properties that have a high and medium heat loss is being planned, in conjunction with the Devon Warm Zone.
- **Renewable Energy Survey** – a survey to assess the potential for renewable energy in Exeter has been completed by the Devon Association for Renewable Energy and is available on the Council's website.
- Projects that will receive funding from the Climate Change Levy in 2009/10, include continuation of the Exeter Warm Up Plus grants and provision of match-funding towards the establishment of a Carbon Club for businesses in conjunction with Global Action Plan. This will provide businesses with on-site audits, advice, training and networking opportunities to help them reduce energy, fuel and water use and identify opportunities for waste reduction.
- The University of Exeter has completed a study to assess sustainable energy options for the electrically heated homes in the off-gas area of Exwick to benefit the residents and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The conclusions of the study are that many residents cannot afford to heat their homes adequately during the winter months due to poor levels of insulation and the high cost of electricity. Improving the energy efficiency of the homes is therefore an urgent priority. As a result a targeted campaign to promote grants for insulation is being undertaken, in conjunction with the Exwick Residents' Association and Eon Energy.
- The University of Exeter has completed a parallel study to identify potential opportunities for collaborative measures between businesses to reduce energy usage. The research has involved undertaking detailed mapping of energy use in the main industrial sites to identify patterns of energy use and explore opportunities for shared supply through decentralised (local) energy production. The study concluded that there is significant potential for exploiting the heat output from the proposed Waste to Energy Plant. The findings will also be used to deal with development applications in the area and the long term planning of expansion on the South West side of Exeter.
- An initial review of the work being undertaken within the Council to adapt to the effects of climate change has been undertaken, as a first step towards developing a project plan to take this work forward. In parallel to this, a study entitled 'Services in the River Exe Flood Plain: 2009' to identify essential infrastructure serving the city e.g. electrical sub stations, water works, sewage pumping stations that may be vulnerable to flooding has been undertaken with a view to highlighting the risk to the owners.

## **2. ENERGY/WATER CONSUMPTION**

### **Action within the Council**

- To continue the reduction of the Council's carbon emissions further emphasis has been placed on automated meter readings by employing UX-online, who offer a host of energy monitoring services. These include bill validation and targeting energy consumption for energy efficiency programmes and benchmarking. Further investigative works are being carried out for the proposed projects for 2009/10, which include:
  - The upgrade of the Livestock Centre's lighting and energy saving transformer
  - The replacement of light fittings at King William MSCP
  - The Corn Exchange wood pellet boiler
  - The installation of an energy saving transformer at MRF
  - Energy efficiency improvements at the Guildhall

### **Action within the Community**

- The Council has continued to promote energy efficiency grants for home-owners. During 2008/09 a total of 1,600 insulation measures (loft or cavity wall) were installed through the Warm-up Exeter Scheme, which subsidises the cost of insulation for low-income households who are just above benefit levels. Utilising funding from the Climate Change Parking Levy the scheme was extended to provide free insulation to households over 60 and on low incomes for a limited period.
- The Council, in partnership with the other 9 local authorities in Devon, continues to promote the Devon Warm Zone, in which the full range of energy efficiency grants are being actively promoted to households. So far, approximately 500 insulation measures have been installed in Exeter.
- Private landlord grants continue to be given to improve the energy efficiency of rented properties. During 2008/09, 239 insulation measures and 31 central heating systems were installed. The scheme has now been extended to all privately rented accommodation (rather than just priority groups), targeting an additional 3,000 homes.
- A further 25 cavity wall and 256 loft insulation measures were undertaken in Council owned dwellings in 2008/09. This means that 90% of Council homes have now been fitted with loft insulation, 99% 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. The programme of external rendering and upgraded insulation to British Iron and Steel houses (BISF) was severely hampered by poor weather in 2008/09 but the programme is back on course to complete the remaining 16 houses in 2009/10. A new contract for the external rendering and insulation of blocks of flats is now in place and five blocks totalling, 58 homes, will be completed in 2009/10 with a further 12 blocks in the pipeline. In addition, gas condensing boilers with a SEDBUK 'A' rating have been installed into a further 100 Council homes to replace old, inefficient gas/electric systems and a further 50 properties will benefit in 2009/10.
- Following the pilot solar water heating systems installed into five Council homes in Leypark Road, a further four homes have benefited from the technology. Low-energy light bulbs are also being installed in every light fitting capable of taking them to void properties. Contractors undertaking kitchen and bathroom modernisation schemes and electrical rewires also fit the lamps wherever possible.
- A number of activities took place in Energy Week in October 2008, including 10 energy displays around the city and a low energy light bulb give away in reception and in Princesshay, where 2500 CFLs were provided to the public.

- To highlight how much energy can be saved in the home through switching off lights and appliances, a Big Switch Off campaign was undertaken in March 2009, to coincide with Earth Hour. The campaign included a range of events and displays across the city, including a Big Switch Off Day in Bedford Square, which was visited by Brigit Strawbridge's Big Green Bus. A total of 832 people signed the Big Switch Off pledge, including a number of businesses and Exeter Cathedral. During the fortnight 700 reusable green bags, 1,700 energy saving light bulbs and 150 water saving flush devices were distributed to members of the public.
- As part of the Big Switch Off campaign local schools took part in an Energy Detectives Competition, which involved them undertaking a secret energy check of the school to see how many lights and appliances were left on in classrooms at lunch time. A week later each school organised a Switch Off Day during which pupils and teachers were encouraged to switch off as many lights and appliances as possible, to see how much energy could be saved. All of the schools made a significant reduction in their energy usage, ranging from 9% to 33% and the winning school was given a mini renewable energy toolkit as a prize.
- A new smart meter loan scheme for residents was launched in March through the Exeter Visitor Information & Tickets Office. Through the scheme residents can borrow a smart meter for a 3 week period to help monitor and reduce their energy consumption. There has been a great deal of interest and positive feedback has been obtained from residents about how much energy they have saved.

### **3. WASTE/RECYCLING**

#### **Action within the Council**

- A fundamental change to the way waste and recyclables are collected at the Civic Centre was introduced in February 2009 as part of the Environmental Champions scheme. This has greatly improved the accessibility of recycling points and as a result, waste levels have reduced significantly. A recent audit showed a 40% reduction in the amount of waste being disposed of to landfill and the amount of material being recycled has almost doubled, bringing the recycling rate for office waste up to 74%. As a result of the changes, waste levels are now 75% lower than they were when monitoring began in April 1998.
- Improvements to the recycling schemes have been made at other sites, including Oakwood House, Bradninch Offices, The Ark, Belle Isle Nursery, The Corn Exchange, Matford Centre and new recycling schemes introduced in the Car Park Offices, Rougemont House and St Nicholas Priory. Where follow-up audits have been undertaken recycling rates have increased as a result of the changes.

#### **Action within the Community**

- The Council's recycling/composting rate for domestic waste continues to increase, reaching 36% in 2008/09. The garden waste composting scheme also continues to expand and 2,118 tonnes of waste was collected in 2008/09. Activities continued to promote home composting, including 5 compost days, which resulted in the sale of 576 composters.
- To reduce contamination of materials collected through the Recycle from Home scheme, a 'Leave it loose' campaign is being undertaken to encourage people to only put loose, clean and dry items in the recycling container.
- All schools in Exeter continue to participate 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 2008/09 the recycling team hosted 181 events, including visits to the MRF, talks to community groups, fun days, school fetes, compost giveaways and events promoting re-usable bags.

- 12 schools have signed up to the Green Team project where progress on green initiatives is rewarded by the 'building of a tree'. 3 schools are on their first branch, 8 are on their 2nd and 1 school (Alphington) are on their third and final branch. Activities in schools have included paper-making and composting, recycling and prize-giving assemblies.
- A 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 preventing the imposition of fines.
- The trade waste recycling scheme continues to be a success with the amount of material collected increasing by 17% in 2008/09. In July 2008, the service was expanded to include mixed plastics and cans and plans are underway to promote the service to further businesses this year. To raise awareness of recycling services for businesses in the Exeter area, Exeter's Industrial and Commercial Waste Minimisation and Recycling Directory has been updated and is available on the Council's website.

#### **4. SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING**

- Work is continuing to integrate sustainability issues into the Council's procurement activities. The new Sustainable Procurement and Commissioning Strategy has been adopted and demonstrates a practical 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 and increased use of the website provides environmental benefits in terms of moving towards a paperless process and encourages local contractors to work with the Council. The Council is actively working with the Federation of Small Businesses and other procurement bodies to increase their involvement in Council contracts, maximising the environmental and economical benefit to the city.
- The Green Accord, a sustainability accreditation scheme to evidence the commitment of organisations that supply or buy from the Council, continues to be a success. The scheme presently applies to building companies and their allied trades and consultants and is shortly to be extended to design and print consultants. Ultimately the scheme will extend across all Council suppliers. The Met. Office has also adopted the Green Accord and other public and private sector employers are exploring its use for their supply chains.

#### **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. A full review of the Green Travel Plan was undertaken in 2008, which included a staff consultation exercise. The consultation results were published and a number of amendments made to elements of the Plan. In the last year, the following facilities were used by staff:

- 50 staff have purchased discounted annual bus tickets
- 44 staff are now getting a discount on park and ride bus tickets
- 35 staff are getting a discount on rail travel to work
- the pool bikes at the Civic Centre and Exton Road were used 208 times by 21 members of staff in 2008/09
- The 'Be Active for Life Project' continues to promote cycling within the Council with additional pool bikes being provided at Oakwood House and the Ark to support the new cycle storage facilities at those sites. In addition, Be Active has been running Cyclescheme, the tax exempt cycle purchase scheme. Since the introduction of the scheme in 2006, 105 staff have purchased bicycles to be used for commuter use to and from work.
- The Council's two pool cars are frequently used and a third vehicle has been provided for the Council's Temporary Housing Accommodation staff. All staff have access to up to five cars from the Exe Car Club, which are parked in Southernhay and other locations throughout the City. The Green Travel Plan 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 travel discounts available to staff. Because of the increasing number of staff cycling to work and using the pool bikes, additional secure cycle storage facilities have been provided in the staff car parking area.
- Five of the Council's refuse vehicles are running on 50% 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, fuel usage and mileage travelled is being monitored through new fleet management software, with a view to monitoring the annual mileage travelled by each vehicle. All refuse collection vehicles are being tracked in order to monitor efficiencies and reduce duplication of routes, plus all new vans will be fitted with a tracking system for the same reasons. Routes are being monitored on an ongoing basis and additional systems are being installed on a regular basis.

### **Action within the Community**

- The County Council are progressing plans for a Park and Ride site at Ide. The County Council are currently seeking government funding and expect to submit a planning application in the near future.
- The County Council are preparing detailed proposals for a High Quality Public Transport service which will operate from the new community at Cranbrook, through the City Centre and out to Alphington. The intention is that this and other associated improvements to the bus network will deliver a major change in the quality of local bus services, thereby encouraging a switch from car-based travel.
- A series of highway improvements are being designed and implemented, which will improve priority for buses and reduce capacity constraints at key pinch points, with a view to lessening localised air quality problems. Officers of the County and City Councils are developing a framework for the long term enhancement of the Exeter/Exmouth railway and the Council has made a £15,000 contribution to the works.
- A series of enhancements to walking and cycling facilities have been implemented in the last year:

- Joint cycle/ footways at Summer Way, Pinhoe Library Field, Eastern Fields.
  - Luggs Farm - St Peters Mount to Exwick Lane
  - Lighting improvements to Haven Banks / Kings Arms
  - Strategic Signage Phase 2
  - Footpath 20/Sir Alex Walk
  - Link between Budlake Road and Alphin Brook
- The Cycling Demonstration Town programme has been extended by two years due to its significant success in funding infrastructure improvements and significantly increasing levels of cycling at secondary schools and at other key travel generators. In addition, the TravelSmart programme, providing individualised travel marketing to residents, has now reached Phase III and the evaluation of this project will be undertaken during the latter part of 2009/10.

## **6. STREET CLEANLINESS**

- Since comprehensively reviewing the street cleaning regime and committing extra resources the Council has seen a considerable reduction in complaints from the public about the cleanliness of streets. An independent public perception survey commissioned in 2008 showed that over 90% of residents were satisfied with the cleanliness of streets in the city. In addition, the target for the national performance indicator on street and environment cleanliness (NI195) was exceeded by Exeter during 2008/09 (see Appendix III). The recent 'Place Survey' asked Exeter residents what makes the city a good place to live and 'clean streets' was the second highest factor. Concern over rubbish and litter show a sharp fall compared with the previous survey. Similarly, graffiti and fly-posting is at a significantly lower level than it was about three years ago.
- To further 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 369 litter and 49 dog fouling tickets being issued to offenders in 2008/09. There were 61 litter and 4 dog fouling prosecutions for failing to pay the fixed penalty ticket.

## **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. In August 2008 the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was submitted to and approved by DEFRA. Officers are working with Devon County Council Transport Officers and Exeter University to implement and monitor the impact of the Plan.
- Sites within the city with a current or historical industrial use have been identified and recorded on GIS. A database of these sites has been compiled and the sites prioritised for further investigation. Officers continue to undertake assessments of the "higher risk" sites and many sites are being dealt with through the planning process.

## **8. COUNTRYSIDE AND WILDLIFE**

- Exeter has many natural habitats that are considered to be of County or Regional importance. These include wild flower meadows, woodlands, wetlands and traditional farmland. The Countryside Service continues to manage and undertake projects to improve the biodiversity value of these sites. The team also organised a successful series of events in 2008/09 to help people enjoy the Valley Parks and other natural green spaces in the City.
- Following on from the success of the Riverside Valley Park Enhancements Project, a new Exe BioCorridor Project, to improve the wildlife value of the River Exe, is taking shape. It will enhance the Exe valley, as it passes through the city, so that it becomes an

even more important wildlife corridor. Key projects will include the creation of otter refuges and habitats.

- The Exeter Wild City Partnership with the Devon Wildlife Trust is progressing well. Key projects to improve the wildlife value of the City, and the ways that people can enjoy wildlife, are under development. This includes a major project, in partnership with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, called 'Pathways to Nature'. This will encourage citizens to take an active role in enhancing and caring for the City's natural green spaces.
- The Exeter Green Infrastructure Study is progressing well and will be invaluable in guiding how green corridors and biodiversity should be included in the new Planning Framework.
- A Tree and Woodland Strategy was adopted by the Council in January 2009, which aims to protect, care for and enhance trees, hedges and woodlands in the city. As part of the strategy, more than 20 Tree Wardens have been identified to look after the welfare of trees. The wardens are volunteers trained by the City Council and supported by the Tree Council, to undertake a range of tasks including developing local tree plans, caring for young trees while they establish, generating local interest by engaging with local groups and schools and developing ideas for tree improvement projects.

## **9. SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION**

- Work is continuing on the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Exeter. Following adoption of the Regional Spatial Strategy, policies on sustainable construction, biodiversity, air and water quality and flood risk will be brought forward through the LDF. To provide an evidence base for the Core Strategy a Green Infrastructure Study has been completed. Phase 2 is now underway to develop a strategy and provide guidance on delivery. A draft sequential test for allocating sites for development by applying a risk-based search sequence in accordance with the Exeter Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to the Environment Agency and is awaiting approval. A Residential Design Guide SPD is also in preparation, which will include guidance on sustainable design for new developments.
- The Council, in conjunction with The Highways Agency, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council continue to assess the transport infrastructure needed to serve development in the Exeter area. The outcome of the assessment will form the basis of transport guidance in the Core Strategy. Section 106 agreements have also been used to promote transport sustainability, including the provision of folding bicycles in student accommodation and financial contributions for car clubs at Newcourt and the former Debenhams building.
- Plans are progressing to construct 80 new affordable ecohomes on Council land across the city. The homes will be designed to meet Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, including energy saving features such as triple glazing, high levels of insulation and heat recovery ventilation and so will have very low running costs for the future residents. The homes are being developed in partnership with Sovereign Housing Association and local architects/ and planning applications should be submitted for the first two sites in June 2009 (circa 40 homes). Work is also progressing on a project to build 2 eco homes on Council-owned land in the Heavitree area of the city. A suitable design has now been worked up and a planning application is expected to be submitted in July/August 2009.

## **10. OTHER**

- A range of events and activities were undertaken to promote Fairtrade Fortnight 2009, including a fair trade market in the city centre and a visit from Patron of the Fairtrade Foundation, George Alagiah. This included a Fairtrade Business Breakfast at the Abode Hotel, organised in conjunction with the Exeter Chamber of Commerce, and a Fairtrade



Celebration for campaigners and faith groups at the Guildhall. Considerable media coverage was obtained throughout the Fortnight, including a number of articles in the Express and Echo and radio coverage.

- Sustainability systems based auditing (SBA) control matrices have been developed by Internal Audit. The purpose of the system is to assess the Council's environmental performance. The SBA tests cover areas such as transport, procurement and waste management to check if staff are complying with the Council's policies and procedures and whether measures have been undertaken to help embed sustainability. Sustainability checks are also being built into all financial and non-financial systems that are audited. Three talks have been given about sustainability auditing for the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy to delegates in London, York and Edinburgh. There was much interest in what Exeter has done to embed sustainability, particularly the environmental champions scheme.
- In 2009/10 the Council's procurement practices will be assessed to see how we are performing against the 'Sustainable Procurement Task Force' recommendations and performance measures.

S:CE/PA/Committee/909SCC7 Appx I