

GEM PERFORMANCE 2003/4

Report By: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

1. To review the Council's environmental management / ISO 14001 system to ensure that it continues to be suitable, adequate and effective and deliver improvement in environmental performance.

Financial Implications

2. Objectives and targets are met within set budgets and resources.

Considerations

3. GEM (Good Environmental Management) helps deliver the Council's corporate objective to be "responsive to local needs by protecting the physical environment" and its environmental policy commitment to "demonstrate continual improvement of its environment performance" across all Directorates.
4. The Council's certification to ISO 14001, the international environmental management standard, helps to underline the importance of the environment to the Council at a corporate level.
5. Reviews give an opportunity to address the possible need for changes to the policy, objectives and other Environmental Management System (EMS) elements in the light of audit results, performance against objectives and targets, concerns of relevant interested parties, changing circumstances and the Council's commitment to environmental improvement.

6. External surveillance

During 2003/4 the Council received 2 surveillance visits from its external certifiers, SGS.

Corrective Actions (CA) raised by the Certifiers dropped from 4 in July 2003 to 1 in February 2004. This CA related to close out of internal audits and recording of non-conformances.

7. GEM Internal Audits

GEM Internal Auditors drawn from all directorates undertook 59 audits last year of premises, services and contracts. Audits identified the following areas of weakness, which will be addressed over the coming year:- Waste management and documentation, Emergency preparedness including fire drills etc, Control of chemical storage, including cleaning materials, Training, awareness and communication, Poor document control – eg use of out of date procedures/templates and Control of contractors.

8. Performance against objectives

The GEM programme for 2003/4 contained forty eight targets, grouped under eleven objectives. The objectives were medium term aspirations for areas of improvement and are therefore not easily "completed". Good progress was made on seven

objectives. On the others there have been some difficulties, though progress has been made. See Appendix 1, "Summary by objective", for more information.

The authority was placed in the top quintile of local authority respondents in the West Midlands Environmental Index 2003, run by Business in the Community, for the second year running, improving its score by nearly 10%.

9. Performance against targets for 2003/4

Twenty nine targets were completed by the due date set. During the year corrective actions were raised for nineteen targets. Many of these targets were delayed because processes of which they were a part took longer than anticipated, for instance development of the portal and decisions on depot requirements. Eight of these targets have now been completed and another is near completion. Ten targets have been carried through to the 2004/5 GEM programme. Further information for each corrected target is recorded on the Corrective Action Register. The end of year report on 03/04 (Appendix 2) gives information on performance against each target due during 2003/4.

10. Partnership with HJS and Owen Williams

The contracts with Herefordshire Jarvis Services (HJS) and Owen Williams signed in September 2003 set out clearly the importance of the environment.

The outcome specification (SDA Schedule 8, section 12) states that

"The Contract will contribute to the following Council outcomes :-

...To protect and enhance the environment by

- Greater care of the environment
- The preservation of Herefordshire's Character and Heritage
- Employing Environmentally sound working practices
- Utilising environmentally sound materials
- Promoting the Recycling of 'waste' materials."

Section 17 on Environmental Management lays this requirement out in more detail.

HJS achieved combined certification to ISO 14001 (environmental management), ISO 9001 (quality) and ISO 18001 (occupational health & safety) in April 2004. Owen Williams are committed to achieving ISO 14001 certification for their Hereford Office by June 2005 (GEM target 2.3).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the partnership relating to sustainability are currently being discussed. This is a target in the 04/05 programme and work has already started.

There are currently no specific environmental specifications set for the print and catering functions carried out by HJS. These need to be set and performance monitored for these two services, which are used increasingly widely across the Council.

11. Communication

The findings of the Staff Opinion Survey 2003 showed the number of respondents aware of GEM was up from 64% to 71% since the 2002 survey. However the numbers who understood how their job impacted on the environment remained static at 63%. More effort is therefore needed to get the key environmental impacts of their

work across to existing and new staff. A leaflet was circulated to all Heads of Service and included in the Team Briefing in January 2004 to address this point and is available in the Members' Room.

12. Concerns of relevant interested parties (including members) and/or new environmental issues

Information security

The reuse/recycling of redundant Council IT equipment was the subject of close scrutiny due to concerns about confidential data on the hard drives. A protocol for scrubbing this data has now been agreed between ICT Services, Information Security and Worcester Lifestyles. This includes a more stringent erasure procedure for hard drives and servers containing potentially sensitive data.

GM crops

There was lively public interest in this subject, prompting a review of the Council's position. The Environmental Sustainability Unit (ESU) organised two in-depth briefings for relevant members, including the chair and vice chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee. After these the Cabinet Member decided to reiterate the Council's opposition to the growing of commercial GM crops.

Procurement from West Mercia Supplies (WMS)

The ESU has worked with WMS to source recycled paper that is compatible with Council photocopiers and printers. Offices are now expected to use this paper. Discussions with WMS about the standard of remanufactured cartridges for printers are currently underway.

13. 2004/05 programme

The GEM programme for 2004/5 (Appendix 3) has been drawn up in conjunction with the GEM group and relevant officers and managers. The 02/03 objectives have been consolidated and made more quantifiable. The nine objectives set for the year include :-

- 1% energy reduction in Council operational buildings,
- 1% reduction in business miles per head and 5% rise in public transport/cycling
- Waste recycling to cover 90% of major Council sites

14. Extension of scope

During the coming year the scope of the certificated ISO 14001 system will roll out to cover all Council activities and services (agreed by CXMT in July 2003). In July the scope will extend to cover Waste and Transportation. In February 2005 the scope will cover remaining functions, including policy, enforcement and procurement. It is recommended that the Council's environmental policy be reviewed next year when roll out of certification is complete.

15. World Environment Day event

This public event in High Town on 9th June is being co-ordinated by the ESU. As part of the event, the public will be invited to contribute to the consultation on the national sustainable development strategy, "Taking It On", which is being updated this year. Cllr P J Edwards (Cabinet Member, Environment) will be opening the event at 10am and all members are welcome to visit any time between then and the close at 4.pm.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted, subject to any comments Members may wish to make to the Cabinet Member (Environment).

Attached

Background Papers

- Appendix 1: Summary of performance against Objectives (2003/4)
- Appendix 2: Performance on GEM targets due in 03/04
- Appendix 3: GEM Objectives and targets for 04/05

The GEM staff leaflet and end of year report on each GEM target due in 2003/4 are available in the Members' Library or on request. Further information on GEM is available from the Environmental Sustainability Unit or in the GEM folder on the Intranet Info Library