

GEM PERFORMANCE 2004/5 HALF YEAR

Report By: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

1. To review the Council's environmental management / ISO 14001 system at the half year 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. The report covers progress to date in 2004/5, including the GEM objectives and targets, and the main areas required by the ISO 14001 standard. These are GEM audit results, performance against GEM objectives and targets, continuing suitability of the GEM system, legal compliance and concerns of relevant interested parties.

4 GEM audit results:

4.1 External auditors

The July surveillance visit by our ISO 14001 certifiers, SGS Yarsley (SGS), resulted in 9 Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and 8 Opportunities for Improvement.

Five of these require corporate attention and have been recently discussed by Chief Executive's Management Team. The most serious of these related to undertaking GEM audits on time, timely close out of GEM audits and effective internal corrective action. The GEM group will now track the progress of the audit programme monthly.

Service-related CARs and opportunities for improvement raised by SGS are being addressed by the Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) and services concerned and will be tracked by the GEM group. Appendix 2 gives full information about the Corrective Actions raised by SGS and the planned response.

4.2 Internal GEM audits: position at end of September 2004

Audits completed	31
Work in progress	1
Outstanding audits	14
Number of GEM Audits planned	46

Details of GEM audit non- conformances

Number of non-conformances signed off	8
Number of non-conformances outside date for completion but not closed	13
Number of non-conformances still within date	4
Total number of non-conformances issued	25

All GEM auditees with overdue non-conformances were contacted individually in October. Auditors and Directorate GEM Lead Officers have also been asked to help ensure timely close out.

5 Performance

5.1 Extension of scope

In July 2004 Waste Management & Transportation achieved certification to ISO 14001. These are both services that rely on changes in public behaviour to meet their targets. This represents a step out from the previous scope, which focussed on areas where the Council could improve environmental performance itself.

5.2 Performance against objectives

The GEM programme for 2004/5 is grouped under nine objectives. Appendix 1 shows progress against objectives, which all have the target number "0". Many of the objectives are medium term aspirations for areas of improvement and are therefore not easily "completed".

Objective 1: **Reduce waste** generated by Council services by 1% and increase levels of recycling and the use of recycled materials. Half year figures show the Council has recycled 23 tonnes of paper, card, cans and plastic bottles. This is around 14.7% - just above this year's target for householder waste.

Objective 2, relating to **work with partners, suppliers and contractors**, has seen the largest number of delays. However Owen Williams are currently working on certification to ISO 14001 for their local office.

Objective 4: Achieve 1% reduction in **energy use** in operational property and the use of energy from renewable sources. Figures for larger properties show a 4% overall reduction in energy use in 2003/4. Use of renewable energy in Council buildings and street lights in the last year has reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 10%. The Council is participating in the national Local Authorities Carbon Management Initiative. An estimated 70,500 tonnes of CO₂ is emitted from Council operations, principally from buildings, transport and landfill sites and street lighting. Options for energy reductions are now being explored and could lead to significant savings. Sources of funding and mechanisms to access them are also being researched.

The Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy for Herefordshire is being developed with considerable input from council staff. Consultation is now underway with the public and other interested parties on the key issues to address.

Objective 6, to "Reduce environmental risks relating to the Council's **property** portfolio", is crucially dependent on buy-in from all directorates to undertake the Officer in Charge of Buildings (OiC) role. An incentive scheme for OiCs is being considered.

5.3 Performance against targets

This year's programme contains sixty two targets. Fourteen targets due have been completed. Eighteen targets due by the end of September have been delayed and are now due in the second half of the year. So far this year twenty four corrective actions have been raised. Many targets have been delayed because they have been caught up in larger issues such as reorganisation and national issues. The **half year report** at Appendix 1 gives information on performance against each target due up to the half year. It includes the Corrective Action Register, giving the reason for delay for each corrected target.

All Lead Officers and Managers for targets will be reminded of the importance of achieving the targets by the due date and Directorate GEM Lead Officers will raise this point at DMTs.

Next year's GEM programme will be more focussed on a small number of key areas, with a reduced number of targets, for instance relating to carbon reduction.

5.4 Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Council/HJS/Owen Williams partnership, including those relating to environmental standards, remain the subject of debate. A paper will go to the Partnership Board (HC/HJS/OW) on 6th December. Targets and monitoring then need to be put in place, preferably relating to information from the beginning of this financial year.

It is proving time consuming to link the environmental management systems of the three partners and facilitate links to up to date documentation. Better results could be achieved with the provision of a shared extranet.

5.5 WMS

A new WMS 'Green list' is available on the Council Intranet. WMS now supply remanufactured print cartridges of a higher standard with improved take back facilities in case of failure. Purchase of these as standard could save the Council considerable sums. WMS also supply self stick brown (recycled) envelopes at a similar cost to white (unrecycled) envelopes. Officers will be asked to buy items on the Green list and use brown envelopes to back up our call to the public to recycle their waste.

6 Continuing suitability:

6.1 Review of Council environmental policy

This needs to be updated as the current version (June 2002) predates certification and is restricted to the Council's direct impacts on the environment. Now that waste and transportation are part of the scope the policy needs to be revised so that it refers to our role in encouraging the public to reduce their environmental impact. This will also link better to the public-facing emphasis of CPA and to the achievement of our corporate objective to be "responsive to local needs by protecting the physical environment".

It is proposed to revise the policy so that it will remain applicable when all activities and services are within the scope of ISO 14001. The interested parties defined in the ISO 14001 system will be consulted by written procedure. The interested parties are the Herefordshire Partnership Environment Ambition Group, the Environment Agency and Welsh Water (regulators) and Members (represented by Cabinet Member and Chair and Vice Chair of Env Scrutiny). The revision will then go to the GEM group and on to Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Environment for approval in Spring 2005.

6.2 An Environmental Strategy is currently being drafted. This brings together all the major environmental commitments already made in Statutory Plans and other key documents. The Strategy currently focuses on the Environment Directorate. This document will link to next year's GEM programme.

7 Legal compliance:

All known compliance issues are tracked through Corrective Action Forms (see 7.1 below). There has been one breach of consent relating to Sewage Treatment Works and one relating to the crematorium since the last report: both of these have been closed out.

7.1 Corrective Action Forms

Corrective Actions Forms (CAFs) are raised when non-compliance is identified, including any points raised by regulators. Corrective action is agreed and the forms signed off once these have been actioned. CAFs are now included on the report covering points raised by ISO 14001 certifiers and reviewed regularly at GEM meetings.

Six CAFs have been raised since the last Management Review in May 2003. Four have been closed out. See Appendix 2 for full information.

8 Concerns of interested parties:

None reported.

9 Future developments:

A commitment to extend the scope of ISO 14001 to all activities and services remain. Bearing in mind the number of non-conformances (9) raised in July 2004, the GEM team has recommended that the planned rollout of ISO 14001 certification to other activities and services in February 2005 be delayed until the triennial review in July 2005. The GEM group's current focus is on strengthening the expanded system.

A lead-in period of several months, including 3 months response to environmental audit, is required for all new services entering the ISO 14001 scope. The GEM group will decide in January 2005 which services to put forward for certification at next year's triennial review of certification.

GEM is a corporate system, supporting a key corporate objective. The current review of Service Plans for 04/05 has shown treatment of the environment to be weak. CXMT have therefore recommended that the template for Service Plans for 05/06 require services to show how they support the Council's corporate objectives, including environment.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted, subject to any comments members may wish to make to the Cabinet Member, Environment.

Background Papers

- None identified

Further information on GEM is available from the Environmental Sustainability Unit or in the GEM folder on the Intranet Info Library.