

GEM / ISO14001 MANAGEMENT REVIEW

OCTOBER 2004 TO SEPTEMBER 2005



SUMMARY

GEM (Good Environmental Management) helps deliver the Council's Corporate Plan priority to 'protect the environment, including by recycling much more waste and significantly reducing carbon emissions' (5.1) and its environmental policy commitment to "demonstrable and continuous improvement of its environment performance" across all Directorates. The Council is committed to extending its certification to ISO 14001, the international environmental management standard, to all activities and services by July 2006.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Publication of the Environment Strategy with baseline information,
- Carbon Management Action Plan, Resource Efficiency Guide & revision of Environment Policy agreed
- Support for County-wide bid for Fairtrade status
- EcoSchool scheme registration now covers two thirds of the county's schools
- Expansion of ISO 14001 scope continued



1 PROCESS

1.1 Input from senior management – a requirement of ISO 14001

The ISO 14001 standard requires that top management review the environmental management system regularly to ensure that it continues to be suitable, adequate and effective to deliver the Council's policy commitment to environmental performance and full compliance with all relevant legal and other requirements.

These reviews 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 commitment to environmental improvement.

1.2 Information collection and consideration by GEM team

This information was collected through the directorate GEM Lead Officers and co-ordinated by the Sustainability Unit. It has been circulated to GEM Lead Officers by written procedure.

1.3 Roles of Directorate GEM Lead Officers & managers

Directorate GEM Lead Officers are nominated by their Directors to act on their behalf. The corporate GEM Group has met 7 times to date in 2005. Directors have recently been asked to nominate GEM Leads, as there have been many changes due to reorganisation and staff changes. In addition GEM Leads should now be able to support Directorate Management Teams (DMT) in integrating service and corporate environmental targets into their Service Plans and performance management arrangements.

Service Managers have a responsibility to maintain good environmental management in their own services and contribute to the Council's requirement for overall improvement in environmental performance. It is recommended that GEM Lead Officers attend DMT at intervals to support them in this and that GEM continue to be a standing agenda item on DMTs at least twice a year to maintain effective oversight of progress.

2 GEM AUDITS

2.1 GEM Internal Audits

A team of over 30 auditors, drawn from each Directorate, undertakes GEM audits under the direction of the Principal Internal Auditor, Tony Ford. GEM Auditors are supported by training, update meetings, monthly bulletins and GEM Audit material posted on the Intranet. Further support is available from both the Internal Audit section and the Sustainability Unit.

GEM Audit activity during 2005/06 to half year

NUMBER OF PLANNED AUDITS	36
COMPLETED/WORK IN PROGRESS	20

NUMBER OF NON CONS	18
NUMBER OF NON CONS STILL OPEN	14

2.2 Findings and actions taken in response to GEM internal Audit.

Audits identified the following areas of weakness: non-conformances have been raised and corrective action timetabled. Further audits of areas of weakness will be scheduled.

- Support for Officer in Charge - no deputy in place: this can lead to weaknesses in, for instance, testing of fire equipment and drills
- Contractors not signing in when they attend premises - this can lead to work being done on the fabric of the building without reading the Asbestos Register, thus risking disturbing asbestos
- Contractor Communication - difficulties in getting contractors to provide relevant environmental information.
- Document Control - need to ensure that the most up to date documents are in use by relevant staff and that staff are informed of revisions.

Eight new GEM auditors were trained in June 2005 to undertake site audits. Training on auditing contracts was also provided to existing auditors in June.

2.3 Changes to GEM Internal Audits

Quarter 1 and quarter 2 audits were tackled in a fortnight at the end of June 2005 to see if this approach would help to increase the profile of the audits and make it easier for auditors and auditees to make time available. Results were promising and it is now proposed that audits will be concentrated in 2 periods a year.

Extensions in ISO 14001 scope and recent changes to the standard have led to a revision of the audit schedule. There will be a move away from checklist based audits towards service based and systems audits. In addition audits are being transferred to an electronic format that should make access and response to findings easier.

These changes will be fully embedded for 2006/07. Training for existing auditors to equip them to undertake service and system audits will take place in February 2006. Support of managers to allow time for the completion of audits is essential.

2.4 GEM External Audits

To maintain ISO 14001 certification our certifiers, SGS Yarsley, undertake a surveillance visit audits every 6 months. Certifiers raise Corrective Actions (CA) and Opportunities for Improvement (OI). Progress on these is examined at the subsequent visit and CAs must be formally closed out.

- In July 2004 one CA and eight OIs were raised. These were all addressed by the time of the February 2005 surveillance visit. The CA related to omissions in carrying out the Officer in Charge duties at Garrick House due to inadequate handover.
- In Feb 2005 two CAs and fifteen OIs were raised. The first CA related to changes required by the updated 2004 standard relating to "other

requirements” and control of documents of external origin. The second CA related to shortcomings in the Council’s oversight of Severn Waste’s operation of a Waste Transfer Station.

3 IMPROVEMENTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE & PERFORMANCE AGAINST GEM OBJECTIVES

3.1 Key achievements

A number of key documents have been agreed during this year that lay a firm foundation for evaluation of performance. This is important as the scope now covers service impacts as well as impacts from Council premises.

- Environment Strategy – passed by Cabinet Member in March 2005. Gives information on key Council commitments already in place. Baseline information has also been provided.
- Environment policy - revised and passed July 2005
- Resource Efficiency Code of Practice signed by Chief Executive in June 2005
- Carbon Management Action Plan agreed by Cabinet in March 2005: this commits the Council to a 12.5% reduction by 2012 from 2002 baseline.
- The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in autumn 2005. The Declaration is a voluntary statement of commitment that the Council recognises the seriousness of climate change and will take appropriate action accordingly. The key commitment made by the Council is to devise and implement a community Climate Change Strategy for Herefordshire by March 2006. The Environment Ambition Group of the Herefordshire Partnership is currently co-ordinating this task and have recently completed a major consultation exercise.

ISO 14001 Certification now covers many mainstream Council services so Service environmental impacts are now being evaluated, as well as the longer-established impacts and controls relating to Council premises.

- Increased emphasis on documenting environmental impacts and controls by service and directorate as they come into the scope of certification to enable managers to access this information easily.
- Certification to the 2004 revision of the ISO 14001 in July 2005
- Extension of ISO 14001 scope: in July 2005 the scope extended to cover Strategic Housing, County Treasurers and those elements of Environmental Health & Trading Standards not already covered.

3.2 Performance against objectives and targets 2004/5

Performance on the GEM programme for 2004/5 was reported to the Cabinet Member (Environment) and Environment Scrutiny on 8th December 2004 (half year) and 6th June 2005 (end year).

3.3 Performance against objectives and targets 2005/6

The half-year performance on the GEM programme for 2005/06 was reported to the GEM Group in October. This includes:

- Staff Transport - Performance against first two quarters of last year: Car mileage down 9.5%, cycle miles up 118%, public transport journeys up 7%.
- Targets – A total of 7 GEM Targets were due for completion on or before 01/11/05. Four of these are complete. Three are still outstanding, these are:-

Thorn Salt barn – this is now operational and salt is being transferred

HJS Key Performance Indicators & Environmental Performance Indicators – Baselines have been set and monitoring is underway but targets not yet set (see 4.1)

Biodiversity Action Plan Review – This has not yet been received from Herefordshire Nature Trust.

3.3.1 Carbon Management Action Plan (CMAP) Update

GEM is the reporting instrument for CMAP. See Annexe 2 for a breakdown of progress on actions due to start before September 2005.

3.4 GEM Plans for 2006/7

The scope of the certificated ISO 14001 system will roll out to cover all remaining Council activities and services by July 2006. There will be increased emphasis on including targets to drive environmental improvement in Service Plans and the Annual Operating Plan.

4 CONTINUING SUITABILITY OF GEM

4.1 Performance of contractors and partners

- FOCSA, our waste disposal contractors, achieved certification to ISO 14001 in January 2005.
- Owen Williams, our term consultant, achieved certification to ISO 14001 in April 2005 for their Herefordshire Office.
- West Mercia Supplies have recently agreed an environmental statement, appointed an environmental champion and embarked on a sizeable programme of environmental initiatives.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Environmental Performance Indicators (EPIs) relating to sustainability within the HJS/OW/HC contract have been revised and baselines set. Performance re current projects is being measured and the Partnership Project Management Team will establish targets.

Discussions regarding a corporate catering client officer are in progress. HJS can offer menus using an increased percentage of local food on request.

The HJS Print Unit started producing committee agendas on recycled paper in January 2005 and is now using 100% recycled paper as standard on 4 out of 6 machines. No suitable recycled grade is yet available for the remaining 2 machines. At the Council's request, HJS are currently rolling out a spec for use of recycled paper (50% recycled fibre for coated papers and 70% for uncoated papers) to their print sub contractors.

4.2 Legal compliance

Compliance with environmental legislation was reviewed in November 2005 using the same format as last year. Key findings:

- Continuing compliance problems at Callow Sewage Treatment Works - see 4.3 below
- Delays in responding to the Hazardous Waste Regulations: these are now being addressed

4.3 Corrective Action Forms

Corrective Actions Forms (CAFs) are raised internally 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 recorded and reviewed regularly at GEM meetings.

17 CAFs have been raised since the last Management Review. These can be summarised as follows: -

Consent failures at Sewage Treatment Plants	4
Noise from Council operations	2
Breach of consent by Council operations	2
Potential water pollution	2
Fire	2
Salt storage	1
Air pollution from landfill gas flare	1
Local environmental quality	2
Changes in liability re roadside trees	1

The most recent CAF relates to changes in guidance on inspection of roadside trees. It is important that Council services managing land ensure that their arrangements for inspecting roadside trees are adequate. The Council may also wish to develop guidance for landowners on suitable inspection regimes to minimise unnecessary felling which would have a deleterious effect on the county's landscape.

Eleven CAFs have been closed out. Three CAFs are overdue for close out :-

- Replacement of the Stretton Sugwas landfill flare. A capital bid has been resubmitted.

- Sewage Treatment Works: result of formal sample by Environment Agency awaited. It is hoped that this will demonstrate that preventative measures now in place have been successful
- Noise complaint re Enviroability recycling operations of in Old Station Yard, Ross

4.4 Links to other systems to notify environmental incidents

Health & Safety

The PS01 forms are now headed 'Accident, Incident and GEM report form'. The system has been computerised and GEM related incidents are automatically routed to the ESU. None have been received in the period.

Customer Relationship Management

This system has now been computerised and a link to GEM included for environmental issues raised by those making complaints, comments or compliments. No environmental issues have yet been notified via this route as yet.

4.5 Main changes in legislation or government requirements.

- Clean Neighborhoods and Environment Act - contains a range of measures to improve the quality of the local environment by giving Local Authorities and the Environment Agency additional powers to deal with Fly-tipped waste, Litter, Fly posting & Graffiti, Abandoned vehicles, Dogs and Noise
- High Hedges Act gives local authorities the power to deal with complaints about high hedges which are having an adverse effect on a neighbour's enjoyment of his or her domestic property
- Securing The Future – updated national Strategy for Sustainable Development
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive - the objective of the SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, with a view to preventing environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development
- Hazardous Waste Regulations – these apply controls on movements of substances, such as interceptor waste, on the revised Hazardous Waste List.
- Commons Act - expected to pass in Easter 2006 – brings in considerable extra responsibilities for local authorities

These matters are reported in more detail in the recently completed Legal Compliance Report and Register of Environmental Legislation.

4.6 Changes in premises, staff or services affecting GEM

Reorganisation has resulted in changes to the GEM group and responsibility for some environmental aspects such as purchasing. Directors have been asked to review their GEM Lead Officers in the light of this and developments in the brief of the GEM group.

The development of the incoming Local Area Agreement (LAA) has led to proposals for a change in the vision for the Herefordshire Plan and the Corporate Plan. This vision still places the environment centrally. However it has been proposed that ambitions are changed to reflect the LAA blocks. This would mean that there would

no longer be a discrete environment ambition and the Herefordshire Partnership Environment Ambition Group would not be expected to continue in its present form. This group is one of the interested parties defined in the Council's environmental management system because of the number of key environmental groups represented on it. Work is in hand to propose further environmental outcomes for the LAA., currently in its first draft.

4.7 *Communication*

The findings of the Staff Opinion Survey 2004 showed the number of respondents aware of GEM was up to 79% (71% in the 2003 survey). The numbers who understood how their job impacted on the environment also rose from 63% to 70%. However only 16% of respondents felt the authority was taking sufficient steps to reduce the environmental impact of their area of work. Over half of respondents supported more action to reduce waste, increase recycling, reduce energy use and control the use of paper and other resources.

As a result of this positive support, the GEM team worked with officers responsible for Gershon to draw up the Resource Efficiency Code (annexe 3) to drive both financial and environmental savings.

5 CONCERNS OF RELEVANT INTERESTED PARTIES (INCLUDING MEMBERS) AND/OR NEW ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- **Transco pipeline** – potential effect on Council owned land and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) such as the county's rivers
- Case law related to claims from falling **roadside trees** could increase the potential for removal of roadside trees by private landowners to eliminate risk.
- **Potential loss of orchards:** this has led to work to assess their social and environmental benefits as well as their indirect economic benefits to the county, eg for tourism
- **Quality of school meals / use of local food:** a group including the Council and the Bulmer Foundation are undertaking a Sustainable Food Project to source more local food for school meals. Property Services has refurbished or installed new kitchens in ten schools this year to date.
- **Fairtrade:** The Council passed a motion of support for the community bid for Fairtrade status for the county in May 2005. The council is now working with the county steering group to progress the bid and is now serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings.
- **Climate Change** continues to rise up the national agenda and is one of the 4 priorities in 'Securing the Future'. The new UK Climate Change Programme is due out by the end of the year and the updated Nottingham Declaration will be launched on December 5th 2005.
- **Sustainable procurement** – national targets dates for local authorities are coming up. These are included in the current programme.

6 OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 *Review of Council environmental aspects*

- Local environment quality – added to list
- Animal & Human Health (relevant to the work of Environmental Health) – awaits discussion by GEM Group

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Trish Marsh, Sustainability Officer on 1930

6.2 Sustainability Framework

This is currently under development, led by the Director of Environment. A Sustainability Report on 2004/05 information will be produced by end of 2005/06.

6.3 Review of procurement strategy

The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government requires that we

“Build sustainability into the Council’s procurement strategy, processes and contracts”.

The Procurement Strategy was updated in July 2005. It states at para 6 that :-

“In the context of a procurement process, obtaining the best value for money means choosing the bid that offers the best combination of whole life costs and benefits to meet the Council’s requirements. This is not necessarily the lowest initial price option and requires an assessment of the ongoing revenue and resource costs, as well as the capital investment. The Council’s requirements will include social, environmental, sustainability and other strategic objectives defined at the earliest stages of the procurement cycle. “

A Cabinet Member for this portfolio is now in post. Strategic responsibility for Procurement will be transferred to the new Resources Directorate.

6.4 EcoSchools

Sixty-Eight Schools are currently registered on the EcoSchool scheme, six of which have the bronze award, seven of which have the silver award and eight of which have one or more green flags.

An EcoSchool Day was held at Lugwardine Court on 9th June 2005 around the themes of the EcoSchools programme, including food, transport and waste. The Sustainability Unit coordinated the event. Over 25 schools and more than 150 children attended. Feedback was very positive.