

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
24 JUNE 2010

LIL ✓

1. Executive Member's Priority Agenda 2010 / 2011

I am pleased that this new Portfolio has been created in order to raise the profile of environmental issues for the Council. My aspiration as the new Executive Member is to drive sustainability across all portfolios. We believe that environmental sustainability is essential to improving the health of local people. This third strand of sustainable development must take its place alongside economic and social agendas. I am keen that carbon reduction and climate change issues are given sufficient attention throughout our services.

The environmental appearance of the Borough is a key priority for me and I will be concentrating on street cleansing and the maintenance of our Parks as it is vital that these receive the budgets and resources necessary to improve the environment in which we live.

Whilst appreciating that our recycling rates are good at approximately 45%, I will be working with officers to try to raise this further and thus reduce our LATS liability.

2. Carbon Management

We should aim to see that by 2020 BwD is be a low carbon borough, mitigating carbon emissions and adapting effectively to the changing climate

To achieve this, a climate change strategy is required for the Council and strategic partners, which it is expected will largely emerge from the environment strategy currently in preparation (with a first draft by September). We need to have at least a 34% reduction in emissions from BwD in line with the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy and UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and on track for 80% by 2050. It need to maintain links with other portfolios addressing business, transport and housing.

The Council has an objective to reduce emissions from its own activities by 25% by 2013 and has a carbon management plan/ reduction strategy to achieve this. The 10:10 campaign is a means of getting us back on track and the network of keen environment champions continues to grow and do good work. Having environmental responsibility included in job descriptions and staff induction would demonstrate a real commitment to making efficient use of resources everyone's responsibility.

I cannot provide an update on progress just at the moment as DECC has not provided the new spreadsheet tool for data collection. I am anticipating a reduction but probably this will be short of our target because of the bad winter. This merely reinforces the need to keep driving the carbon/climate change agenda until it becomes an automatic consideration in policy development and decision making. Over the period, any new capital programme needs to exploit renewable energy to achieve real and lasting reductions in emissions.

We are in the process of registering for the Carbon Reduction Commitment. This year will be spent getting compliance right, with processes and evidence packs in place. The first allowances will be purchased in 2011/12 for that financial year. Costs are in the region of £300,000, which we get back plus or minus 10% depending on where we appear in the league table. There is absolutely no way of knowing how we will perform relative to the

other 5000 organisations and companies in the scheme. The Finance Department recommend a watching brief until we understand the scheme better then reassess our CRC strategy. Reward/penalty %age grows every year until reach 50%. We are still debating whether to go beyond this.

Carbon management and climate change are monitored through NIs 185 - carbon emissions from LA activity, 186 - emissions from the borough as a whole, 187 - fuel poverty, 188 - adaptation. These indicators feature in the LAA.

A sustainable procurement project is being developed through the LSP to support this and the climate change agenda, spreading the agenda into our suppliers. In addition to improving use of resources and reducing emissions it should benefit local suppliers and improve their environmental performance (as well as saving them money).

3. Energy Monitor Scheme

An Energy Monitor Loan Scheme has been launched across Blackburn with Darwen's Library Service. Energy monitors are being loaned for three week periods, free of charge. The aim is to encourage members of the public to learn about energy consumption in their home and see where they could make savings. The pack contains an appliance energy monitor, an OWL electricity monitor and energy saving tips.

This project received funding from the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy Fund administered by Lancashire Economic Partnership supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency.

The scheme will run for at least one year and over that time we hope to reach residents through cross cutting work with other departments such as the Neighbourhoods and Learning service through Environmental Champions, Skills for Life courses (Literacy, numeracy and ESOL), community groups, with Children's Services through their network of children's centres and through schools, via the Healthy Schools network and Extended Services and with the third sector.

4. Street cleansing

The service has been re-engineered in May to provide a more neighbourhood based approach to service delivery as part of a 3 month trial. The trial sees all street cleansing resources concentrated in a particular Neighbourhood on the same day of each week:-

Monday = South East

Tuesday = North East

Wednesday = Darwen & Rural

Thursday = South West

Friday = North West

There are still a number of locations that are cleansed more than once a week, but residential areas have now a maximum of up to 3 weeks wait for lightly littered streets to be cleansed, instead of the previous 4 weeks. This change is also including the back street cleansing of adopted highways in the trial.

5. Grounds Maintenance

The recent good weather has seen a marked increase in the grass growth of the landscaped areas within the borough. The grass cutting service in the neighbourhoods is,

in the majority of areas, cut once every 4 to 5 weeks, with arterial routes and town centres receiving a cut once every 2 to 3 weeks. Teams are battling to keep on top of the growth in grass at present.

6. Waste

The recycling rate for 2009/10 was 43.6% against the previous years performance of 41.13%. The kerbside recycling contract has been tendered and awarded to Verdant (Greenstar), who commenced a 10 year collection contract in May this year. The landfill contract has been awarded to SITA for a period of up to 10 years, with the contract starting in July 2010.