

MEETING: 29 MARCH 2010

SUBJECT: REVISED ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, FINANCE OFFICER AND CLERK
TO THE AUTHORITY**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information in respect of the Authority's revised Environment Strategy and seeks endorsement of the Strategy and the accompanying high level action plan.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority has had a long standing commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability, formally recording a first strategic commitment to environmental responsibility in 1997. Since this time the Authority has delivered a wide range of initiatives aimed at reducing its negative impact on the environment. (These initiatives are outlined in section 4.1 of the attached Strategy).
- 2.2 Such initiatives are becoming increasingly important in light of the fact that concerns about the increasing rate of climate change continue to build, to the extent that these concerns are now reflected in both national and international policy.
- 2.3 This is in turn reflected at the local level, where Authorities and their partners are required to set a leading example in achieving Government climate change objectives, with two of the National Indicators introduced in 2008/2009 measuring success in reducing carbon emissions.
- 2.4 The 2009 UK Climate Projections report reinforces the need for the introduction of long term strategies to reduce the impacts of climate change. Recent data indicates that in future decades the country will experience warmer weather, heavier concentrations of rain and rising sea levels. All of these pose additional community risks which will need to be accounted for in the strategic planning process for all organisations, including Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 2.5 In light of this, under the 2009/10 IRMP Action Plan, work was undertaken to establish a baseline for the Authority's carbon emissions from both vehicles and buildings. Information that was not available when the first Environment Strategy was produced.

- 2.6 In addition to this, work was also carried out to produce a Carbon Plan in partnership with the Carbon Trust and other Fire and Rescue Authorities in the region and to undertake a Green Fleet Review in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust. The findings of both these studies have informed this revised strategy.

3 ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Environment Strategy document sits within the Authority's overall approach to helping deliver sustainable communities as set out in the Strategic Community Safety Plan and IRMP. However, the Environment Strategy is specifically concerned with how the Authority will mitigate climate change by minimising the negative impact of its activities on the environment.
- 3.2 In essence, the Strategy seeks to deliver three objectives:
- to use natural resources efficiently and reduce overall consumption (with a 22% reduction target in CO2 emissions from April 2010 to March 2015)
 - to reduce pollution and waste through our management of operational activities, buildings and fleet
 - to promote engagement of the whole organisation in improving our environmental impact, and work with partners to improve environmental sustainability
- 3.3 These objectives are driven by the Strategic Community Safety Plan and IRMP goal, *to deliver a modern, effective service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the communities we serve*, and the associated priority *to provide efficient and effective services whilst minimising negative impacts on the environment*.
- 3.4 The Strategy will be delivered through the routine planning and performance management framework of the organisation, with agreed targets and oversight being undertaken by the Strategic Management Team. It is also proposed that the carbon reduction target be adopted as part of the Authority's suite of key Performance Indicators and monitored by both officers and Members.
- 3.5 A high level Action Plan is appended to the Strategy. Along with actions derived from workshops with middle managers and with the Environment Steering Group, the Action Plan includes a number of investment actions drawn from the Carbon Plan. These have been fully costed and the implications taken into account in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme.
- 3.6 Further work will be carried out during the life of the Strategy to develop more actions and related targets to reduce waste and pollution

through service delivery, estates development and procurement.

4 LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 At present there is a legislative requirement / mechanism to record organisation utility use / emissions. It is also expected that, in the future the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) threshold limits may be lowered which will place further requirements upon smaller organisations currently exempt, including TWFRS.

5 ICT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Effective use of ICT impacts positively on the carbon footprint and energy consumption of the service. A number of current and future activities within the ICT development programme, including the consolidation of servers, will assist with the delivery of this Strategy.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Provision has been made within the Capital Programme for a three year programme of investment in carbon reduction initiatives derived from the Carbon Plan, as follows:

Year	Capital
2010/11	199,678
2012/13	101,921
2013/14	207,735
Total	509,334

6.2 The implementation of this strategy presents an opportunity to make efficiency savings, for example by reducing the use of utilities (water, gas and electricity) resulting in savings to revenue budgets.

7 EQUALITY & FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications envisaged in respect of this report.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There is a risk of not meeting anticipated legislative requirements (Carbon Reduction Commitment) if the Environmental Strategy is not implemented. Legislation is being introduced to reduce the effect we have on the environment. There is also a public expectation that we take steps to improve the environment; failure to do this may have a detrimental impact on our reputation and this may also be reflected in future audits and inspections.

9 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no health and safety implications envisaged in respect of this report.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members are requested to:

- I. Approve the attached Environmental Strategy and the overall target for CO2 emissions
- II. Receive regular updates on progress through quarterly performance reports

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Environment Strategy (included)
- Carbon Trust – Carbon Management Plan
- Commitment and Guiding Principles for Environmental and Sustainable Improvement
- Energy Saving Trust – Fleet Review