

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member - Environmental

**DATE:** 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**SUBJECT:** **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMAS) UPDATE**

**WARDS AFFECTED:** None

**REPORT OF:** W.T. Milburn  
Environmental Protection Director

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Stephanie Jukes  
0151-934-4552

**EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To update the Cabinet Member – Environmental on progress made and advise of future plans on the move towards a corporate Environmental Management System.

To obtain approval for external verification of the Environmental Protection Department EMAS system.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

A commitment to a council wide Environmental Management System has been formally made and is one of the council's corporate objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Cabinet Member Environmental notes the progress made within the Environmental Protection department on the development of an Environmental Management System and approves the external verification of the system.

**KEY DECISION:** No.

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not appropriate.

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the meeting.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTION:** Not to seek external verification of the EMAS system. Without external approval of our system, the process would lack credibility and any underlying weaknesses would not be uncovered. Any subsequent roll out would rely on officers duplicating the existing system without the confidence that an external audit would provide.

One of the sources of evidence the Audit Commission will look for as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) KLOE 3.1 Use of natural resources; is

“ A verified environmental management system such as EMAS (EU Environmental Management and Audit Scheme) or ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System).”

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**Budget/Policy Framework:** None.

**Financial:**

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>	<b>2011/ 2012 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date Y/N				When?
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:** Compliance with legal requirements is a fundamental part of any environmental management system. Therefore, the adoption for an EMS will help to ensure full compliance with environmental legislation.

**Risk Assessment:** Having a management system in place will allow risk (associated with environmental impact) to be more effectively dealt with in a proactive way.

**Asset Management:** The efficiencies associated with an EMS should be beneficial to asset management in the medium to long term.

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<b><u>Corporate Objective</u></b>		<b><u>Positive Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Negative Impact</u></b>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People		✓	

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

February 2006 "Environmental Management System" Cabinet Member Environmental

## Background

1. Sefton Council has made a commitment in its Corporate plan to develop a Corporate Environmental Management System. The Cabinet Member – Environmental will recall the report of February 2006 where the environmental Protection Department (EPD) took on the role to pilot the scheme for subsequent corporate roll out and resolved to seek approval for external accreditation once that stage had been reached.
2. An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a mechanism for managing numerous and complex environmental issues in a systematic way. EMS's are used to help organisations to improve the management of their activities that impact on the environment and to demonstrate to others sound environmental management.
3. The Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) was chosen as the system EPD would pilot before rolling the system out corporately because it is the most robust EMS and thus the most credible.
4. Uniquely EMAS requires organisations to produce an independently verified, publicly available report on their performance. EMAS contains requirements that are more aligned to L.A.s methods of working, such as, communication with stakeholders, public statements of performance etc.
5. The Environmental Protection Department began to implement EMAS in 2006. Due to staff secondment/maternity leave, construction work at depots and changes in the structure of the department, the timescale for implementation increased from 24 months to 36 months.

## Progress made

6. Significant progress has been made over the past 36 months. EPD are now at the point of being able to apply for verification of the developed system. The Table below shows the stages we were required to follow.

1	Environmental Policy	Produce a statement of our commitment to the environment.	Complete
2	Environmental Review	Conduct a review of the environmental Impact of the organisation. This is contained within this report.	Complete
3	Environmental Programme	Develop a programme of actions to reduce the impacts of the organisation. This involves identifying and ensuring legal compliance as well as developing programmes.	Complete/ Ongoing
4	Management System	Develop a system of responsibilities, procedures and training which helps	Complete / Ongoing

		implement the environmental programme. This stage is the implementation and operation of the EMS.	
5	Environmental Audit	Carry out regular and comprehensive audits, to check on the system in place.	Ongoing
6	Environmental Statement	Produce a statement summarising the environmental performance of the organisation. This will include a record of changes since the initial review.	Draft Ready
7	Verification	Seek external independent verification of the policy, programme, management system and audits.	Awaiting decision

7. To reach the point of verification has required a considerable amount of work from EPD staff. However it has brought benefits in terms of reduced risks from assured legal compliance and potential future cost savings. Some of the work undertaken includes;

- Investment in depots, e.g. installing new (compliant) drainage systems, resurfacing
- Training all staff,
- Improved risk management e.g. pollution prevention plans at main depots (identifies main risks and puts programmes in place to address e.g. change in practice, improved storage, staff training, provision of equipment and training to deal with incidents e.g. spillages)
- Improved collection of data on energy, water etc.
- Improved awareness of contractors
- Improved documentation of procedures (how we carry out operations)
- Provision of management data to the Departmental Management Team

### **Benefits of EMAS Verification**

8. There are many benefits associated with (1) implementing a system and (2) achieving verification of that system.

(1) EPD have begun to reap the benefits of implementing the system, which include

- Ensured compliance with environmental legislation
- Demonstration of leadership
- Environmental benefits (e.g. schemes to reduce energy consumption)
- Potential for financial benefits (e.g. reduced resource consumption, avoidance of fines)
- Positive publicity for the department / council

(2) In addition, achieving verification would also help in the following ways;

- Providing evidence for the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) KLOE 3.1 Use of natural resources, which specifically explores the adoption and verification of EMAS; which could help to achieve a higher rating.
- Increased confidence in the system to be duplicated and rolled out to other departments
- Strategic benefits, e.g. external funding opportunities may increase due to funding bodies having more confidence in our ability to manage projects via our EMS

### **Verification Process**

9. The environmental verifier should be UKAS accredited to ensure they are sufficiently qualified.
10. The environmental verifier checks EMAS functioning and confirms that the publicly available environmental statement contains true data. During the first verification, the environmental verifiers check if:
  1. An initial environmental review has been conducted and has identified direct and indirect environmental aspects (impacts).
  2. The environmental management system & internal environmental audits comply with requirements of EMAS
  3. Compliance with legal requirements and other regulations related to environmental protection
  4. The publicly available environmental statement complies with requirements of EMAS

If all the requirements are met, the verifier validates the environmental statement.

11. We then have to update the publicly available environmental statement annually, so the verifier is involved in that process every year.
12. EMAS regulation requires the verification of the system at least every 36 months. In the period between surveillance audits are performed every year together with validation of environmental statement.

### **Costs / Best Value**

13. Four UKAS accredited verifiers<sup>1</sup> were approached and asked to provide quotations for
  - Pre audit gap analysis, based on EMAS requirements
  - Full audit against EMAS standard (first audit)
14. These verifiers were short listed from a list of UKAS accredited verifiers because of their level of experience and direct experience of working with other local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup>

15. Each verifier was provided with the same information about the EMAS system and the service we require. A range of prices have been submitted giving a range of three year external auditing costs from £9,520 to £27,225;
16. References have been taken up for the lowest quoting organisation. The North West EMS Network were approached and provided a suitable contact. Rotherham Council have used the lowest price provider twice and have been happy with the service provided. Should we proceed with verification the lowest quoting organisation would be appointed.

### **Corporate EMAS; Roll out to other departments**

17. A formal commitment has been made to the adoption of a corporate Environmental Management System<sup>2</sup>. Awareness of this commitment has been raised through the internal quarterly 'Sustainability Champions' meetings. It is also part of the 'sustainable actions' plan, that all departments are encouraged to follow, to make the council more sustainable (see annex 1).
18. There are a number of ways adoption of a corporate EMS could be progressed. These are:
  1. The system could be applied to all Departments simultaneously. However, the initial review and identification of each departments' environmental impacts and subsequent action are activities that are resource intensive. So although this approach has been taken by a number of Authorities, for Sefton to adopt this approach and have a realistic chance of success, the creation of a dedicated EMAS team or unit would be needed.

Those departments who have not yet taken on any of the 'sustainable actions' would be at a disadvantage compared to those who have progressed. Some of the easier activities (level 1/2) will assist departments to achieve the more difficult actions, which includes EMAS verification (level 3).
  2. Each Department could be supported to achieve EMAS independently. Under the existing 'sustainable actions' programme, departments are encouraged to work towards EMAS at their own pace on a voluntary basis. The outcome has been that certain departments have taken action and are progressing well, whilst others have not taken any action at all. If departments were given the option of achieving EMAS independently, at their own pace, it is likely that progress would be sporadic.

This model would also be a more expensive option, as it would fail to realise economies of scale (for example verification fees would be much higher for individual EMAS systems, as opposed to one larger corporate system).  
As with option 1, without a dedicated EMAS team, EPD officers could only provide limited support to other departments who wished to implement EMAS. This support would be given on a first come first served basis and so may not fit in with departmental plans if several act at the same time.

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<sup>1</sup> Sefton MBC Corporate Plan 2008/9

3. The EPD EMAS could be expanded in a planned way to include other Departments. Each department would still need to undertake the process themselves, however, support could be guaranteed for those included on the timetable and there would be the opportunity to reduce costs and provide a more integrated system.

It is proposed that a manageable workload for EPD officers providing support would be to support one 'larger' department (ie lots of staff and/or lots of environmental impacts) and one 'smaller' department (ie fewer staff and/or few environmental impacts) each year.

19. The order in which departments will implement EMAS has yet to be confirmed. However given there are ten Departments, this approach could take five years to complete. Dedicated commitment with resource allocation from Departments will therefore be internally sought to speed up the process.

20. Given the current resource constraints it is proposed that option 3 is the most realistic way to proceed to the adoption of a Corporate EMS in Sefton. Although the EPD officers responsible for EMAS will provide support to other departments, the implementation of any form of EMS will require each department to: commit staff time to identify impacts and undertake the process, allow time for training, make resources available to rectify or improve operations, etc. With this in mind, internal consultation will take place to establish a robust timetable for the roll out of the corporate EMAS.

## ANNEX 1

### Guidance To Departments

#### 1. Progressing 'Sustainability' within Sefton Council

##### Introduction

What is sustainability? – “ a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come” UK **Government definition** (1999)

Sustainable development brings together the pursuit of social progress, protection of the environment and economic growth at the same time. It is about assessing our activities to ensure that they can be sustained without putting our own wellbeing (and that of future generations) at risk.

The Government has now published its revised Sustainable Development Strategy. The new strategy increases the expectations for local authorities, amongst others, to operate in a more sustainable manner. There is a requirement for the production of a **sustainable community strategy** (which influences the Local Area Agreement – LAA). In Sefton this has been developed through the Borough Partnership; however Sefton Council is a leading member of the Borough Partnership and will have to show its leadership in adopting sustainable practices if the strategy is to be effective and adopted by other partners.

The Council has adopted an environmental policy statement that states, “**Sefton Council will promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable activities by Sefton Communities and throughout Council service delivery**”.

The annual service planning process gives a opportunity for Departments to embed the principles of sustainability in their operations, that will not require significant extra costs, work and will fit comfortably with their existing operational and reporting procedures.

##### Implementing Sustainability

Many Departments will already have systems and activities in place that contribute to increasing the sustainability of the Council as a whole. Part of this process is to identify and recognise these achievements. This activity, to identify sustainable activities, will also help to identify areas suitable for cross departmental working where priorities and targets are shared. It is also recognised that attempting to introduce the full range of sustainability measures in a short timescale could place an unacceptable burden on Departments and that the individual circumstances of **Departments will determine the speed at which measures can be adopted.**

For these reasons a three level approach is suggested. Level 1 contains measures, which would lead to significant improvements in sustainability performance but could be easily adopted and should be included in next years service plan. Levels 2 and 3 include measures that build on the Level 1 measures. These could be included in the following year's service plans or in subsequent year's plans depending how quickly it is for Departments to progress.

## The Suite of Measures

### Level 1

- Appoint a **Sustainability champion** who will be a member of the Departments DMT, who will: -
  - Report quarterly to the DMT on progress on Corporate and Departmental sustainability issues
  - Be responsible for Performance Management 'Sprint' reporting of sustainability progress
  - Promote sustainability issues within the Department
- Commit to **Sustainability training** for all DMT members and other key managerial staff
- Adopt a sustainable **housekeeping guide** (the sustainability team will provide a guide and support to meet Departmental needs)

### Level 2

- Identify key areas where the **Department** can **act as an 'enabler'** to other Departments and the Council as a whole to help progress internal sustainability issues both through internal activities through to service delivery.
- Identify and **assess policies** and activities using the Sefton Sustainability appraisal toolkit, within the Department that have the greatest impact on sustainability.
- **Extend sustainability training** to all staff.
- **Expand the Sustainable Housekeeping guide** to include measurement of resource use where possible and report baseline resource usage and improvements made (EPD sustainability Team can provide guidance).

### Level 3

- Adoption of the developing **sustainable procurement policy**
- Work actively towards the corporate **EMAS system**.

## Why this is necessary

Reference has already been made to the increased importance placed on this issue by the Government. Sustainability will be addressed more explicitly in **future CAA requirements**.

One of the key findings to come out of the UK Sustainable Development strategy consultation exercise was that government at all levels needed to lead action on sustainable development. This has been accepted by Central government and they have made commitments (both for central/local government and public bodies) to exemplify in several areas.

Increasing sustainability should not be viewed as an extra burden on over-stretched Departments. Actions taken to improve performance on sustainability will have benefits in many other areas. ODPM have estimated that adopting more efficient purchasing policies could save the average unitary authority between £1.5m and £5.6m. Furthermore, adopting sustainable policies and procedures will in many

cases act as a catalyst in obtaining external funding. Improving sustainability increases efficiency with subsequent benefits for Gershon savings.

Table 1 shows how the 7 key elements of creating a sustainable community identified in the Egan report match the Audit Commissions Key Lines Of Enquiry (KLOEs)

**Table 1**  
**Sustainability Element and KLOE**

*7 key elements of creating a sustainable community*

Sustainability Element	KLOE
Governance	Corporate Governance
Services	Corporate Assessment
Social and Cultural	Culture and Leisure
Environmental	Environment
Transport and Connectivity	Health
Housing and the Built Environment	Housing
Economy	Use of resources

The Council has adopted an explicit environmental statement, quoted above, that summarises Corporate Policy 29 on the environment.

**Achievement of these aims will be impossible without improving internal business and service delivery performance around sustainability.**