

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

### AGENDA ITEM

### REPORT TO CABINET

15 MARCH 2007

### REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

## CABINET DECISION

**Environment – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Steve Nelson**

### STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

1. Summary

This report seeks cabinet endorsement for the Stockton Borough Council Environment Policy. This policy sets out the key areas of the environment that the activities of the authority will impact upon and considers how those impacts can be reduced and improved. It recognises that as a major employer in the Borough, with significant use of resources and in a position of leadership that there is a need to take a pro-active approach towards reducing our environmental footprint. Within the policy there are a series of commitments and targets that will enable our progress to be measured.

A key part of the delivery of this policy will be through effective communication throughout the organisation and inclusion of relevant parts of the policy in service plans.

2. Recommendations

Recommended that:

1. Members agree the draft Environmental Policy as a basis for further consultation and delegate final approval of the policy to the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

1. Concerns over environmental issues, climate change and the impacts we are having on the environment are high on the local, national and global agenda. This policy considers our main impacts on the environment through our activities as an organisation and seeks to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive effects.
2. This policy sends out a clear message to the community, our partners and stakeholders that we are serious about these issues and that we would encourage them to take a similar approach.

3. This will enable actions to be developed and incorporated into service plans to deliver the aims and targets set out within the policy document.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.**

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MANAGEMENT TEAM**

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**SUMMARY**

1. This report seeks cabinet endorsement for the Stockton Borough Council Environment Policy. This policy sets out the key areas of the environment that the activities of the authority will impact upon and considers how those impacts can be reduced and improved.
2. It recognises that as a major employer in the Borough, with significant use of resources and in a position of leadership that there is a need to take a pro-active approach towards reducing our environmental footprint. Within the policy there are a series of commitments and targets that will enable our progress to be measured.
3. A key part of the delivery mechanism of this policy will be through effective communication throughout the organisation and inclusion of relevant parts of the policy in service plans.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended that:

1. Members agree the draft Environmental Policy as a basis for further consultation and delegate final approval of the policy to the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

**DETAIL**

Background

1. Several years ago the Council adopted an environment policy that, at the time, addressed what was considered to be the main areas where our activities would have an impact upon the environment. Since that time we have grown as an organisation with potentially a greater impact upon the environment and at the same time concerns over these impacts and the use of non-renewable resources have grown.
2. Additionally there have been other issues that have arisen such as light pollution or have gained prominence for example sustainable design principles in new buildings.
3. It was timely to fundamentally review and effectively re-write the environment policy to reflect these changes and to make clear our position in dealing with our impact on the environment.

4. The policy recognises the fact that there are other strategies, plans and policies that govern our influence on key areas such as transport and planning and does not intend to replicate or replace them. It does however seek to address the impacts on the environment that we have through our day-to-day activities in delivering a range of services.
5. This policy therefore focuses on areas of influence where we can make a difference and in several cases will relate to basic management and use of resources.

#### Policy Context

6. There are a number of plans, policies and strategies that can make a significant impact on the environment such as the local development framework, local transport plan, and the climate change action plan. This policy addresses the need to ensure that our own house is in order whilst linking to, where relevant and appropriate, any objectives and targets in those plans to ensure that actions are complimentary.
7. The environment policy can form the starting point should a decision be taken to pursue an environmental management system in the future.
8. We frequently require potential suppliers and contractors to provide a copy of their environmental policy as part of the procurement process. By adopting this policy we will be setting an example and the standard that we would reasonably expect potential suppliers to strive to achieve.
9. Stakeholders and partners will be supported in developing environmental policies that can mirror our aims and targets. Tristar homes have already taken this opportunity and drafted an environment policy with support from council staff in line with this draft.

#### Delivery Mechanism

10. The commitments and targets have been developed by a cross-service group of officers in a range of specialist areas and with appropriate expertise. The targets are challenging but should be achievable with the level of commitment that has been demonstrated by those working on this policy.
11. To deliver the targets in this policy will require actions to be developed and fed into the service planning process. Some of the targets are to be delivered over the next five years and the actions necessary to carry them through will require review and refinement as part of the service planning process.
12. It is not anticipated that additional resources will be required to deliver this policy; in fact there should be efficiency savings through the improvements in energy efficiency and cutting waste.

#### Monitoring and Reporting

13. Progress towards targets and the delivery of actions will be through an annual report, together with actions taken and planned.
14. The policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

### **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Financial**

The current temporary post of environmental projects officer is to be made permanent in order to steer the delivery and monitoring of this policy. This is to be met from existing resources.

All of the actions required to deliver this policy will be met through existing resources or through an invest-to-save model.

## **Legal**

This policy makes the following commitment:

*“We will comply with, and where practical exceed, all existing environmental legislation or other relevant requirements at all stages of our activities and operations.”*

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Failure to adopt an environment policy exposes the authority to criticism in not dealing with our impact on the environment as a responsible organisation and weakens our procurement policies in expecting suppliers to take steps that have not been adopted by us.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

Contributes to the liveability theme of the community strategy in supporting sustainable communities and improving the quality of life of the community.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

The draft environment policy has been discussed at the January meeting of the Policy Officer Group. The draft policy if approved will be circulated to all Members for comment and discussed in detail at the LSP Environment Partnership prior to adoption of a final version.

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### Background Papers:

Stockton Borough Council Environment Policy

### Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

All

### Property:

Not applicable