

# Stockton Borough Council

## Draft Environment Policy

### February 2007

#### Policy Statement:

Stockton Borough Council recognises that our day-to-day activities have an effect on the local and global environment. We are committed to the minimisation of any negative impacts and to maximise improvements to the environment, both directly and indirectly through our actions and policies.

We have a position of leadership within the community and believe that environmental stewardship is a key role for the Council.

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

We will communicate our environmental objectives, action plans and achievements to all staff within the organisation to help everyone understand and implement the policy in their work.

We will also ensure that our key partners are aware of this policy and promote the adoption of similar environmental principles.

This policy statement provides the framework on which the environmental programme can be based. It enables us to set targets and measure progress as well as strive for continuous improvement.

In particular we have identified the following key areas of influence where we can make a difference:

#### Energy use and climate change

In November 2002 the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. Our response to this was to develop a climate change action plan that aims to cut carbon dioxide emissions to 8.75% below 2000 levels by 2012.

The Government energy policy has set a target of providing 10% of electricity from renewable resources by 2010. In addition, energy prices have risen by 120% over the past three years. For environmental and economic reasons it would be prudent to reduce our energy consumption and to look at alternatives such as on-site generation, purchasing of "green electricity" and developing renewable energy options.

#### **We will:**

- *Improve the energy efficiency of council buildings by 10% by 2012 from 2005 levels.*
- *Explore the possibility of developing renewable energy technologies to become, as much as possible, self-sufficient.*
- *Reduce total carbon emissions by 8.75% from 2000 levels by 2012.*

#### Procurement

The Council spends around £140 million on contracts, goods and services each year. What we buy and how we deliver services can have significant environmental impacts. Within the procurement strategy there is a commitment to "procure from verified sustainable and fair trade

sources, where available, should be the purchasers first choice unless a business case for selecting other products can be justified.”

We can reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services which we consume through an environmentally sensitive purchasing policy and by influencing suppliers and contractors to adopt the same standards through appropriate tender specifications, contract conditions and providing support and guidance to businesses.

Whilst recognising that cost is an important factor, we will seek to purchase goods and services that minimise the damage to the environment and where possible are derived from sustainable sources. Factors influencing a purchasing decision will include its durability, the recycled material content, and where applicable it's energy efficiency and the ability to recycle or re-use the end product.

**We will:**

- *Develop an Environmental Purchasing Policy by December 2007*
- *Develop a green purchasing guide by March 2008*

## **Transport**

The Council supports the use of sustainable modes of transport, in particular public transport, bicycles and walking both as a means to get to work and where appropriate in delivering services. Our aim is to reduce the consumption of non-renewable energy and the emission of pollution by both our own fleet and that of vehicles used by staff in performing their duties.

**We will:**

- *Achieve 70% of fleet fuel utilised to be bio-diesel by March 2009.*
- *Fully implement the corporate travel plan.*
- *Reduce the business miles travelled by staff by 5% from 2005 baseline.*

## **Waste and recycling**

As a large organisation providing a range of services the waste produced through these activities can include soil, rubble, scrap metal, paper, cardboard and computers. The vast majority of these types of waste can be recycled or re-used if the appropriate systems and staff training are in place.

**We will:**

- *Seek to minimise the volume of waste generated by Council operations and to maximise re-use, recycling and energy recovery from waste.*
- *Establish a baseline position on waste generated by Council operations by December 2007 and develop targets for recycling and waste reduction.*

## **Water consumption**

The treatment of water before and after use requires significant amounts of energy and chemicals that contribute to global warming. With the impacts of climate change, and the more frequent extremes in weather our water resources should be used wisely. The Council will review opportunities and promote measures to conserve water within its own buildings.

**We will:**

- *Reduce metered water use by 5% by 2012 from 2005 baseline.*
- *Incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems in Council buildings where practical and appropriate.*

## **Built environment**

We recognise the importance of protecting our cultural heritage and will protect and, if practical and appropriate, enhance historic buildings owned by the council.

In developing the accommodation strategy for the organisation and in designing new buildings and major refurbishment schemes we will incorporate sustainability principles, particularly in respect of energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, the conservation of resources and the use of renewable materials.

### **We will:**

- *Aim to achieve level 5 rating in DETR Assessment Matrix for sustainability for our Architectural services by 2009.*
- *Ensure that all new council buildings achieve at least 'VERY GOOD' rating in the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM).*

## **Contaminated Land**

Historical pollution of land can lead to unsafe conditions and pollution of our water resources; redevelopment of land can provide opportunities for these sites to be cleaned up and the land to be put back into more effective use.

### **We will:**

- *Encourage the redevelopment of potentially contaminated sites ensuring that measures are put in place to minimise pollution and other environmental effects so that the development is safe for the proposed use.*
- *Implement our Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy.*

## **Natural environment**

Stockton Council owns and manages a significant portfolio of open spaces, which include formal parks, woodland, amenity areas, sports facilities, allotments and cemeteries. The management of these sites can have a positive impact on the local environment, biodiversity and the quality of life of the community particularly in relation to leisure use.

The local aspect of these open spaces can play a major role in the reduction of the need to travel and the use of the car for leisure activities.

### **We will:**

- *Develop planning policies to complement the local development framework core objectives in the protection and enhancement of public open space.*
- *Incorporate the need to recognise the impacts of climate change on biodiversity within countryside management plans.*
- *Actively protect and enhance the natural environment and support others in doing so.*

## Sustainable Communities

In the UK our lifestyle is far from sustainable, in fact with our current consumption of resources it has been referred to as equivalent to needing three times the natural resources available. As key players in the local economy we can make a significant contribution to the creation of sustainable communities through local services and council activities.

### We will:

- *Conduct sustainability appraisals of significant new strategies and policies.*
- *Incorporate sustainable development principles in all planning policies.*

## Light Pollution

Light pollution is light that is allowed to shine in unwanted directions and is often referred to as “sky glow” or “light trespass”. The principal causes are badly designed or poorly installed exterior lights that spill light skywards. This can be from older streetlights, commercial premises, floodlights, domestic security lights, and illuminated signs. It affects everyone’s quality of life, not just astronomers views of the starry night sky, can be a nuisance to local residents, affects wildlife and is a waste of energy.

### We will:

- *Adopt planning policies that seek to minimise light pollution from new development.*
- *Ensure that all new street lighting has minimal contribution towards light pollution.*
- *Utilise the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to tackle nuisance arising from domestic and industrial light sources.*

## Air quality and pollution

The Council will seek to establish and maintain air quality that is conducive to a healthy living and working environment.

### We will:

- *Implement the council smoking policy in all public buildings.*
- *Develop policies to ensure that current and future air quality targets are met.*

## Environmental Noise Regulations 2006

The Environmental Noise (England) regulation 2006 requires noise mapping across the Council and action planning to be carried out on a five year rolling programme. Stockton will be involved in the first round of mapping and action planning. It is expected that first round maps will be produced by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007, with action plans by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008.

The Council will seek to reduce background noise levels, in accordance with the regulations, wherever possible and practicable. Achieving this will be through a range of measures that include regulation, persuasion, education and planning controls.

### We will:

- *Implement the noise action plan that will be developed from the environmental noise regulations mapping exercise.*
- *Review progress on the implementation of the noise action plan annually.*
- *Incorporate the outputs of the noise mapping exercise into future planning policies.*