

Introduction

In August 2004 the Minister for Environmental and Rural Development asked GTC Scotland to develop an Environmental Management Policy as part of the Scottish Executive's commitment to improve environmental performance across the public sector. To this end, a cross-departmental 'Environment Group' was set up with the following remit:

- a) conducting an audit of current practices;
- b) making recommendations to the Management Team;
- c) developing an Environment Policy which sets organisational targets for improvement.

Initial Audit of Current Practices

The group followed the example of the Scottish Executive's 'Greening Government' policy by splitting the audit into three main areas: resource use, energy efficiency and travel. Areas looked at include recycling, waste reduction, use of recycled materials, use of water, cleaning materials, heat, light and electrical power, business travel and staff travel to and from work.

Various methods were used by the group to conduct the audit, including requesting information from Resources staff, approaching specialist organisations for advice and conducting a staff travel questionnaire. An adviser from Envirowise (a government funded organisation which provides practical environmental advice for business) visited Clerwood house and provided a report suggesting ways in which GTC Scotland could improve its environmental management systems.

During the audit the group found that the amount of paper, water and electricity used by GTC Scotland is far higher than recommended by government guidelines for an organisation of this size.

Recommendations from Initial Audit

- Set realistic and measurable targets for improvement over the next 12 months based on suggestions made in Envirowise report (see specific targets below). Once initial targets have been met use government benchmarks to set further targets.
- Develop an Environmental Policy which focuses on continuous improvement and makes clear the commitment of senior management. The policy should be reviewed at least every 12 months and made available on the Council's web and intranet sites.
- A special staff meeting held to communicate the policy. At the meeting staff informed of current figures for resource and energy use, targets for improvement and how these targets will be met. Every member of staff to be responsible for the policy and have a positive duty to participate in any initiatives. Aim to make staff enthusiastic about change and encourage them to come up with any further ideas.
- Staff regularly reminded of how they can contribute to improving our environmental performance via the intranet, eg a waste reducing or energy saving 'tip of the week', and kept informed of any progress at general staff meetings.
- The organisation's commitment to improving its environmental performance to be emphasised to staff at induction.

Specific Targets for First Twelve Months (from April 2006)

Resource Use

- Reduce use of copy paper, headed paper and ink cartridges by 5% over the next 12 months:
 - encourage staff to use double sided printing and photocopying where appropriate and provide training on how to do so;
 - encourage staff to set printers to use less ink where appropriate and provide training on how to do so;
 - encourage staff to always review print on screen before sending to printer;
 - continue initiative of recycling used paper into scrap pads;
 - give Council members the option to receive papers electronically
 - make more use of the web as a method of communicating with stakeholders.
- Trial high quality paper with 80% recycled content in newer printers [previous trial of 100% recycled paper had caused jams in some of the older printers].
- Encourage staff to take small steps to reduce the amount of waste produced:
 - use metal spoons instead of plastic spoons and stirrers;
 - bring in own mug or water bottle instead of using disposable cups;
 - supply tea bags and coffee for staff who bring in own mugs to prevent wastage of paper cups.
- Resources department to ensure all hygiene supplies are as environmentally friendly as possible.
- Introduce better segregation of paper, cardboard, plastic and aluminium waste to enable these materials to be recycled.
- Reduce water use by 1.5% over next 12 months:
 - handymen to ensure any dripping taps are fixed;
 - ask advice of handymen/plumber re installing individual heaters to hot water taps [currently some taps have to be run for a long time before hot water comes out];
 - ask advice of handymen/plumber on fitting cistern volume adjusters and spray tap outlets, fitting if appropriate.

Energy Use

- Reduce electricity used by 3.5%:
 - encourage staff not to turn on unnecessary lighting, eg consider whether there is enough natural sunlight or if all lights need to be used in open plan areas;
 - remind staff to switch off lights when rooms not in use, particularly in toilets, kitchens and meeting rooms, by placing dymo-tape signs beneath light switches;
 - continue policy of replacing ordinary light bulbs for energy efficient ones where possible;
 - keep reminding staff, via the intranet and staff meetings, to shut down and switch off computers at the end of each day and switch off printers and photocopiers, perhaps allocating responsibility on each floor.
- Investigate having solar panels and a wind turbine fitted to make more use of renewable energy.
- Consider for the future fitting sensor operated lights in these rooms [evidence suggests at least a 40% saving within 20 months].
- Consider for the future replacing electric heaters in corridors, stairwells etc with more energy efficient methods of heating.

Travel/...

Travel

The staff travel questionnaire confirmed that the majority of staff do drive to work. In most cases there are alternatives, but these are far less convenient due to the location of Clerwood House and it would be extremely difficult to persuade people not to bring their cars. Recommendations are therefore limited in this area.

- Encourage car sharing, particularly at lunch times, and consider using the intranet to co-ordinate.
- Make staff aware that the Council offers an interest free loan to pay for an annual travel pass.
- Consider issuing a travel questionnaire to Council members.

Conclusion

The targets detailed in the above plan will mainly be achieved by involving, encouraging and reminding staff to take small steps towards reducing waste. Management support is essential in achieving these targets: those at the top of the organisation must demonstrate to staff that GTC Scotland takes environmental issues seriously and that each individual must take some responsibility for improving the environmental performance of the organisation overall. The costs involved in implementing these recommendations are relatively small; the long term benefits for the environment are considerable.

The Environment Group
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