

## CABINET – 22ND OCTOBER 2015

### Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration Lead Member: Councillor Eric Vardy

#### Part A

#### ITEM 11 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

##### Purpose of Report

To present the revised Environmental Policy for consideration and to seek its adoption.

##### Recommendations

1. That the Environmental Policy, as set out in the attached Appendix, be approved.
2. That the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Environmental Policy.

##### Reason

1. To enable the approval of an Environmental Policy that reflects the overall direction of the Council in relation to its environmental performance.
2. To enable minor amendments to be made as necessary.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The existing Environmental Policy was endorsed by Cabinet on 18th January 2007 (minute 139, 06/07 refers), although the most up to date version incorporates amendments made to it under delegated authority in June 2012.

Since 2012 the Council has moved towards an in-house Environmental Management System to manage legal compliance and environmental impact rather than operating an external Environmental Management System (International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 14001:2004) and has also adopted more up to date strategies and programmes through Climate Local, a Zero Waste Strategy, Green Spaces Strategy and a Corporate Plan with commitments to 'protect our natural resources'. These, together with the demise of the Leicestershire Together programme means the existing policy needs to be substantially re-written.

The strategic intentions of the Environmental Policy will remain the same; to support the Council's Corporate Plan aim to protect Charnwood for future generations by ensuring the Borough maintain a leading role in local efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change and to protect our natural resources.

The benefits associated with adopting the revised Environmental Policy include assuring customers of a continued commitment to demonstrable environmental management, maintaining good community relations, enhancing image, improving cost control, reducing incidents that result in liability, conserving raw materials and energy. Successful delivery of this policy will help to build the Council's reputation as a borough which takes environmental issues and climate change seriously.

## Report Implications

### *Financial Implications*

The costs of providing strategic management for the implementation of the Environmental Policy are met from within the Planning and Regeneration Service budget. The costs of implementing the Environmental Policy in respect of operations and activities undertaken by the Council are met from within the existing budgets of individual service areas. There are a number of projects contained with the draft carbon management plan that if approved will require funding. The Council's Sustainability Officer provides the strategic resource to manage the Environmental Policy.

### *Sustainability Implications*

The Environmental Policy will provide an overarching policy statement of the contribution the Council expects to make towards Sustainable Development.

### *Equality and Diversity*

An equalities impact assessment of the Environmental Policy has been prepared and published as a background paper to this report.

### *Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Risk Management Actions Planned</b>
Service areas across the Council and operational partners not sufficiently engaged to deliver the environmental policy, resulting in failure to achieve targets	Possible	Minor	Ensure there is a corporate response and engagement with key stakeholders to deliver the environmental policy
Failure to meet identified actions if resources unavailable	Possible	Minor	Influence service planning & prioritise actions identified if necessary. Pursue external funding

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Risk Management Actions Planned</b>
Failure to comply with environmental legislation leads to damage to built and natural assets, reputation, and civil or criminal action being taken against the Council	Possible	Minor	Maintain access to the Newground Legislation Service. Continue with Staff Inductions, Environmental audits, and the sharing of best practice through officer working groups
The Council fails to meet broader environmental objectives outlined within its policy	Unlikely	Minor	Audit and Scrutiny Committees in place to review annual performance

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: Equalities Impact Assessment

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## Part B

### Background

1. The Environmental Policy sets out the organisation's overall direction in relation to environmental performance. The Environmental Policy (attached as an Appendix) recognises that the Council has responsibility towards the local environment and that global issues, such as climate change, need to be tackled through action at a local as well as national and international level. The Policy sets out the Council's commitments to environmental performance through its own activities and highlights where it can influence and encourage others to adopt similar environmental standards. The Environmental Policy provides guidance on how the Council intends to manage the environment in which it operates by adopting an internal Environmental Management System, signing up to Climate Local, incorporation of environmental considerations in the procurement process and across strategic documents, such as the Core Strategy, the Corporate Plan, Open Spaces Strategy and Zero Waste Strategy.
2. The Environmental Policy is an important element of the Council's Environmental Management System setting out the framework for objectives and targets. The Environmental Management System aims to prevent and/or mitigate any harm to the environment arising from activities at the Council's buildings or associated land. The Policy was last updated in June 2012 when the Council was operating an Environmental Management System to ISO 14001. An in-house Environmental Management System was established in March 2013 and is owned by the operational areas rather than being an externally accredited Environmental Management System.
3. The in-house Environmental Management System relates to Council owned property at Southfield Road / Information & Computer Services (ICS) building, Loughborough Town Hall, Charnwood Museum, Oak and Ark Business Centres and Woodgate Chambers. It covers the direct operations of the Council and not to any activities sub-contracted to other operators (such as domestic and municipal waste collection). The Environmental Management System does not deal with activities related to the enforcement of environmental or planning regulations which are aimed at reducing impacts across the Borough, except where these relate directly to the Council's own actions and activities.
4. Each building has an Environmental Practices Manual that provides the systematic management of environmental impacts within that building, area or department under the control of the Council. The Practices Manual provides information regarding environmental management of operations relating to direct emissions to air from council activities; direct emissions to water from council activities; contamination of land from council activities; waste management from wastes arising from the council's own activities; control of Legionella Bacterium; fire risk assessments and safety procedures and the control of asbestos.

5. The method of updating legal information about the environment is provided by Newground Legislation Update Service on a monthly basis. This information has been used to compile a legal register, showing all environmental legislation applicable to Council operations. An environmental audit schedule has been developed to ensure regular environmental auditing of Council managed buildings.
6. The Policy underlines how the Council intends to reduce its carbon footprint by signing up to Climate Local and developing a five year carbon management plan. Climate Local provides the action plan for the Council to maintain and potentially improve its environmental performance. The Council signed the Climate Local commitment in November 2013 and developed an action plan to help combat the effects of climate change. A project board and carbon management team has been set up to help deliver a five year Carbon Management Plan to reduce the Council's carbon footprint by 15% by 2020.
7. As part of the Council procurement process bidders are asked to supply an Environmental Policy as it may be difficult to establish whether potential suppliers can provide goods or services whilst minimising effects on the environment, or whether they can meet the requirements of environmental protection legislation. A scoring system of 'Environmental management system present' gains higher marks and 'Environmental management not specifically addressed' lower marks, is suggested in the new policy. Evidence of actions undertaken would add further marks. A copy of the Council's Environmental Policy is referenced in the Procurement Strategy and made available to bidders in the tender process.
8. The Council has signed up to taking part in an environmental behaviour change programme known as Green Impact. Green Impact has been used to cascade information to staff in support of environmental improvements throughout the whole organisation. The Green Impact programme aims to promote positive environmental behaviour such as improving recycling, minimising waste, improving efficiencies on use of finite natural resources.
9. The policy will be made publicly available and communicated to all staff. It will be posted on the Council website, Intranet and noticeboards. It will be provided to bidders as part of the tender process and contractors on site. There will be a copy of the Policy available in the main reception. To raise staff awareness of the Environmental Policy and the objectives it contains an on-line environmental induction module will be made available to all new and current members of staff.

## Appendix – Environmental Policy





## **CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Charnwood Borough Council cares about the environment and has a legal duty to protect it. Through our strategic planning we are committed to the achievement of sustainable development within our Borough for the benefit of present and future generations.

Our environmental policy is woven into the fabric of other strategic documents, such as the Core Strategy and the Corporate Plan. This means we will strive for sustainability in our roles as a planning and enforcement authority, major employer, land and property owner, provider of services, a significant purchaser within the local economy, leading grant-maker and facilitator of community initiatives.

Charnwood Borough Council recognises that managing the environmental impact of our own operations is essential. The Council operates an internal Environmental Management System (EMS) and conducts regular audits of all buildings and functions which can impact the environment. This allows us to identify areas where we can improve our environmental performance as well as ensuring that environmental considerations are consistently put at the heart of how we operate.

We also operate a Procurement Strategy, which requires the Council to consider environmental impacts as part of the procurement process and to opt for environmentally positive choices with regard to the purchasing of goods and services.

The Council is aware of both the threats and opportunities facing our Borough as a result of Climate Change. The Council has become a signatory of Climate Local, which commits us to implementing an Action Plan split into three main themes:

- *Raising awareness* both within the Council and with our stakeholders
- *Reducing Our Impact in Climate Change* by having a carbon management plan to control our own greenhouse gas emissions and working with partners and stakeholders wherever possible to reduce the overall emissions arising from the Borough



- *Resilience* to the impacts of Climate Change and how we can adapt to climatic changes

The Climate Local action plan contains a series of commitments and programmes relating to many different Council departments. These programmes are regularly reviewed and refreshed to ensure that they are achieving their aims. More information about the Climate Local action plan and current programmes can be found on the Council website by visiting [http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/climate\\_local](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/climate_local).

Reduction of our own contribution to greenhouse emissions will be achieved via a Carbon Management Plan, which will include detailed targets for each relevant department and function. Details of the final plan will also be published on our website.

The Council has major commitments as a waste collection authority to reducing the amount of waste disposed via landfill. To this end, the Council operates a Zero Waste Strategy, which is regularly updated and contains the Council's targets for recycling of household wastes.

The Council is also committed to protecting Charnwood's Open Spaces and exploiting opportunities to increase the provision of Open Space.

Environmental excellence is at the heart of our Core Strategy, which creates a focus on the future development of the Borough and in which we promise "our community will enjoy a cleaner and greener environment. Charnwood will be well prepared for the impacts of climate change and will be playing its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions".

Cllr David Slater,  
Leader

Cllr Eric Vardy,  
Cabinet Lead Member  
for Sustainability

Geoff Parker,  
Chief Executive