



**Report of the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods,
and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds**

Executive Board

Date: 22nd July 2009

Subject: Response to the Young People's Scrutiny Forum inquiry 'Protecting our Environment'

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 This report provides the Executive Board with details of the recommendations from the recent Young People's Scrutiny Forum inquiry into 'Protecting our Environment' and details how the relevant Directors and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds propose to respond to these recommendations. The report asks the Board to approve the proposed response.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2 Executive Board are recommended to:

Approve the proposed responses to the Young People's Scrutiny Forum's recommendations.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Executive Board with details of the recommendations from the recent Young People's Scrutiny Forum inquiry into 'Protecting our Environment' and details how the relevant Directors and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds propose to respond to these recommendations. The report asks the Board to approve the proposed response.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 In December 2007, Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) asked the Youth Council to suggest a topic of importance to young people which could be the subject of a scrutiny review undertaken by young people on behalf of the board.

The Youth Council discussed a range of possible topics, and ultimately decided upon 'Protecting our Environment'. The final scrutiny report, containing full details is attached at appendix 1.

- 2.2 The report makes 11 recommendations for action. Due to the nature of the inquiry, these recommendations are addressed to a range of Council departments, and also to Education Leeds.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 Below, each of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum's 11 recommendations are listed along with a response from the relevant Director, and/or the Chief Executive of Education Leeds.

- 3.2 Recommendation One:

That Leeds City Council works to increase the range of materials which can be recycled as part of the doorstep collection, particularly looking at including glass and a wider range of plastics, and that progress is reported back to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

By 2020 we want to be in a position where we are recycling at least 50% of all household waste and we are continually improving our services to help the city achieve this.

Over the past two years Leeds has increased the range of materials collected from the kerbside with the introduction of a garden waste collection service.

Plastics collected in the green bin are types 1, 2 and 4. There are many different types of plastic in use, some of which we can recycle in the UK and other types, including that used to make yoghurt pots and margarine tubs for example, that require new technology to recycle them, which as yet is not available in the UK.

As part of our overall recycling strategy we are now assessing the potential of bringing in a separate food waste collection service and plan to run a trial of this service later this year.

We provide a glass recycling service to 26,753 flats/apartments across the city. Last year we collected 9,700 tonnes of glass for recycling through these services. A full option appraisal needs to be completed to determine the most effective and best value for money collection method for glass. Glass can also be recycled through our recycling bring sites and household waste sorting sites.

3.3 Recommendation Two:

That Leeds City Council writes to DEFRA to ask that the government looks at introducing a national system for recycling, and a clearer national labelling system for recyclable waste, and that the response is brought to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

The Council will write to DEFRA on behalf of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum. However, a national 'Packaging Recycling Action Group' has been set up to explore ways of improving the consistency of recycling services across the country, and the LGA is representing local authorities in these discussions. A new labelling system was launched in March 2009 by the British Retail Consortium, and the impact of this is being monitored by WRAP. The Council are also represented on a number of national forums and groups which are used for consultations on national policies in this area.

3.4 Recommendation Three:

That Leeds City Council works to increase the opportunities for recycling besides using green bins, with a particular focus on making recycling more accessible to everyone. Options for including larger and more attractive recycling bins in the city centre and in public spaces such as parks should be considered, along with ways to encourage community ownership of these bins. That a report on progress is brought to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

We are committed to ensuring everyone in Leeds has access to recycling facilities. In addition to green bins we have 11 household waste sorting sites, 436 recycling bring sites, and 250 communal recycling facilities in areas not suitable for green bins. The Council also currently provide recycling at large events across the city such as Opera in the Park, Party in the Park and events on Millennium Square.

Options for including recycling within the city centre is something which is being considered as part of the updated Integrated Waste Strategy for 2009 – 2012. Work is also underway to encourage those areas which are least likely to recycle to do so, and to map provision across the city in order to develop an improved recycling infrastructure.

3.5 Recommendation Four:

That Leeds City Council does more to promote the idea of 'reducing and reusing' as well as recycling, and that it also takes steps to make this easier - for example by working with local businesses to reduce the amount of packaging being given out, and by increasing the amount of facilities on offer for reusing unwanted items. That a report on progress is brought to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

The Council is already promoting 'reducing and reusing' in the following ways:

- Offering an incentive scheme for parents to use washable nappies.

- Supporting the national campaign 'Love Food, Hate Waste'.
- Working in partnership with WRAP who fund a subsidised home composting scheme.
- Working in partnership with second hand furniture stores and charities across Leeds.
- Working in partnership with Seagulls on the community re-paint scheme.
- Working in partnership with Education Leeds to provide a school recycling education programme as part of the sustainable schools framework.

In addition to these things, a pilot scheme is being introduced to allow people to donate household items at five household waste sites. These items will be reused by the Voluntary and Community Sector. Leeds is also leading on the development of a business handbook, on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humberside Waste Prevention Group, to encourage businesses to recycle.

3.6 Recommendation Five:

That Leeds City Council does more to help everyone in the city to use less energy, by making funding available for people to add insulation, double glazing and other energy saving devices to their homes. More assistance should also be offered to those wishing to install renewable energy generating equipment (such as solar panels) in their homes, and a relaxation of planning restrictions should be considered as part of this. That progress is reported to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

A wide variety of different funding opportunities are already on offer to people wishing to insulate their homes, or undertake other energy saving measures. These include 'Warmfront', 'Health through warmth' and the Carbon Emission Reduction Target work carried out by energy companies. Leeds City Council provides additional funding to 'top up' some of these grants. The Council also runs several in-house schemes which promote energy efficiency. None of these funding opportunities include double-glazing as this is not seen as an effective means of improving the energy efficiency of a home.

The Government have recently relaxed the rules over requiring planning permission for micro-renewable technologies. Generally speaking, householders can install solar panels, solar PV, ground or water source heat pumps, flues for biomass heating or combined heat and power plants provided that it is not too prominent. To assist with this, the Council are producing a Supplementary Planning Document on sustainable design and construction. An accompanying guidance note providing advice to householders wishing to carry out improvements to their property will also be produced as part of the Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

3.7 Recommendation Six:

That Leeds City Council and Education Leeds show their commitment to improving energy efficiency by having a Display Energy Certificate in every one of their buildings, no matter how big or small, and that every effort is made to improve the rating of each building. The certificates should also be prominently displayed – for example in lifts or next to doors. We would like to see the Civic Hall used as an example of this, and ask that an update on the Civic Hall's current rating and any improvement measures being undertaken is provided to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

Currently, the Energy Unit is charged with ensuring that all properties with floor area greater than 1000 square metres should have a current DEC. We are aware that the legislation is due to be changed in the near future to encompass all buildings greater than 500 square metres. This change would cover another approximately 350 sites. Cost to LCC will escalate to approximately £245,000 per year. Extension of the scheme to every site would expand the scheme to approximately 2,500 buildings. We are in the process of acquisition of new software that would enable us to produce these certificates at a cost rather less than the current average of £400 each. We would propose that, once that software is procured, and installed, we would use the same software, and the same team, to produce "unofficial" DECs for internal league-tabling and display purposes.

The purpose of the DECs is to dissuade us from making every effort to improve every building. It is much more designed to isolate the buildings that are worse than others of their type, so as to isolate and concentrate on the poor performers.

Each certificate is available electronically, so could be printed for each building as many times as is deemed expedient by the operator of the building.

The 2 key reasons for the Civic Hall being rated as an "E" rating (in this case 24% worse than average) are:-

- that it does not fit the standard model for such a building. There is a very high energy input for the computer server suite compared to more normal civic buildings
- the building is operated 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

A number of measures relating to the energy performance of the Civic Hall are ongoing. A "switch-off" campaign recently showed that small savings on housekeeping are available. A comprehensive report will be prepared, in cooperation with Corporate Property Management, by Sept 2009.

3.8 Recommendation Seven:

That Education Leeds does all it can to maximize the opportunities for learning about environmental issues in all school lessons, and that an attempt is also made to improve the quality of this education, by developing a coherent approach across all areas of the curriculum, and incorporating some of the ideas from 'Philosophy for Children'. That Education Leeds presents a plan for how this can be achieved to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

Sustainable development is included in one of the initial aims of the National Curriculum, and is a statutory requirement in four curriculum subjects: science, geography, design and technology, and citizenship. It is also a cross-cutting theme with links to all subjects and many other aspects of the curriculum, such as key skills.

The new Key Stage 3 National Curriculum specifically includes the global dimension and sustainable development as a cross-curriculum dimension.

Education Leeds' new PSHE primary scheme of work features an integrated module on waste and recycling, and primary schools on the pilot Leeds Sustainable Schools Programme are trialling a new environmental primary scheme of work for Leeds entitled Planet Protectors.

The roll-out of the Leeds Sustainable Schools Programme beyond the current pilot phase to all Leeds schools will promote a wide range of curriculum opportunities for teaching and learning about the environment. Developing personal, learning and thinking skills with pupils, including consideration of the approach provided by Philosophy for Children, will be an important element of the programme.

3.9 Recommendation Eight:

That Education Leeds and Leeds City Council work together to encourage all schools to join the Council school waste management contract so that they all have the same arrangements for recycling, and so that every young person in Leeds has the opportunity to recycle at school. A report on progress should be presented to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

Education Leeds, through the Commissioning, Procurement and Business Development service, and Leeds City Council, already work together to encourage take up by promoting to schools the advantage of Leeds City Council's waste contract. These efforts will continue in the future, although there are some difficulties to be overcome in terms of termination clauses in schools' existing waste management contracts.

Effective waste management is also a condition of the sustainable schools programme, and schools will have to undergo a review of their existing waste contract arrangements in order to become classed as a 'sustainable school'.

3.10 Recommendation Nine:

That Education Leeds encourages all schools in the city, particularly secondary schools, to involve their pupils in practical activities to increase their understanding of environmental issues. This could include environment clubs in schools, and city wide activities. We would also particularly like to see young people in every school involved in monitoring the energy efficiency of their school building by studying the Display Energy Certificate and keeping track of how the recommendations for improvement supplied with it are being progressed. A report on this should be presented to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

The introduction of the new Key Stage 3 National Curriculum, in particular the inclusion of the global dimension and sustainable development as one of seven cross-curriculum dimensions, provides both an opportunity and challenge to engage in particular with secondary school pupils.

To become a sustainable school in Leeds schools must provide opportunities for involving staff and pupils in practical activities that include the use of information about the schools own improvement measures on a range of environmental issues.

Education Leeds will encourage all schools, particularly secondary schools, to develop practical activities to increase their students understanding of environmental issues.

Some schools have also been involved in the Npower scheme 'Climate Cops Academy', facilitated by Leeds City Council. The Council are exploring opportunities to expand this scheme.

The software note in the response to recommendation 6, above, would enable schools to track energy and water consumption patterns at their schools within a matter of days of the meter reading times. Such data could link into the formal DECs to enable informal "running" DECs to be produced within schools. Note that this activity would not be applicable to PFI schools whose energy is procured by external providers.

3.11 Recommendation Ten:

That Education Leeds moves the deadline to make every school in Leeds a 'Sustainable School' forward to 2015, and that it brings a report on how this can be achieved to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in September 2009.

In developing a local framework for sustainable schools, Education Leeds has adopted DCSF's national framework target for all schools to become sustainable schools by 2020. This timescale has been widely promoted and appears to be a "long way off". However this timescale recognises the significant changes, not only in infrastructure but also in behaviour and attitudes, that will be needed if sustainable schools are to be secured.

Less well known is the subsequent publication by DCSF of sustainable school performance bands which introduced interim milestones for 2010 and 2015 specifying that;

- by 2010 all schools should achieve at least a 'satisfactory' grade for all elements
- by 2015 all schools should achieve at least a 'good' grade for all elements
- by 2020 all schools should achieve at least half of all elements at a 'good' grade and half of all elements at an 'outstanding' grade

Adopting DCSF's interim milestones will be extremely challenging for the local Sustainable Schools Programme as the implications are that, as a first step, all Leeds schools will need to reach a 'satisfactory' level of performance within 20 months i.e. by the end of 2010.

Education Leeds hopes that with this more detailed explanation about the milestones to 2020, Scrutiny Board will accept that satisfactory performance will be achieved by 2010, good performance by 2015 and moving to outstanding performance by 2020.

3.12 Recommendation Eleven:

That Leeds City Council develops a central 'brand' for all of its environmental education materials, and that more innovative techniques are developed for engaging with people, rather than simply giving out leaflets. For example, more use could be made of the radio and the big screen in millennium square and posters could be put up on buses. That the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) monitors the development of these new materials over the next 12 months.

Leeds City Council has adopted the use of the national recycle now branding on all environmental services communications and at household waste sorting sites across the city. Over 90% of local authorities in England now use the recycle now branding.

We have recently put recycling messages on the side of some of our refuse collection vehicles and hope to roll this to more vehicles within the fleet.

We use a variety of different media channels dependent on the types of campaigns we are running and which audience we are trying to target. We have also recently re-developed and made improvements to the recycling and waste area of the Leeds City Council website.

Proposed future improvements to communications include:

- An education campaign, including a doorstep exercise, in areas which have a low participation rate for using the green bin
- Re-branding and better signage at 'bring sites'
- A 'meet and greet' service at household waste sorting sites.

Leeds City Council is currently recruiting to the post of Sustainability Communications Officer. The purpose of the job is to promote Sustainable Development within the City Council and relevant partners by organising and supporting events and campaigns and by producing communication materials using a range of media opportunities. A key responsibility for this post will be to communicate and promote the City's recently adopted Climate Change Strategy and to oversee the production of the Council's Annual Environmental Statement to highlight the environmental improvements in the city as a whole.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 There are no specific implications for Council Policy and Governance.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 There is the potential for significant resource implications in responding to some of the recommendations made by the Young People's Scrutiny Forum. The responses to individual recommendations make reference to specific legislative requirements and the use of existing resources, or plans to evaluate future projects. However, these resource implications are not directly the result of the recommendations of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum, but are part of plans which are already being developed. Where these plans might require significant additional resources, they would of course have to go through the usual approval process. One example of this is the Leeds Sustainable Schools Programme (recommendations 7-10), currently being piloted in draft format (2008-09). Further development of this programme beyond 2009 will cost around £240,000 p.a., although this covers the entire programme and not just those recommendations made by the Young People's Scrutiny Forum. More detailed legal and resource implications will be covered when the Programme is formally approved.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board are recommended to:
Approve the proposed responses to the Young People's Scrutiny Forum's recommendations

7.0 Background Papers

There are no specific background papers relating to this report.

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