



**Executive**  
24 March 2014

**Report from the Director of Environment  
and Neighbourhoods**

Wards Affected: ALL

**Green Charter 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Monitoring Report**

**1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The adopted Green Charter (2012) policy sets out the Council's wide-ranging areas of influence under the sustainability programme, the Council's contribution to increasing the sustainability performance of the organisation and details the support the Council will provide to encourage those who live, work or study in the Borough to contribute to this agenda.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Executive on progress made against the Green Charter's objectives since last year's update report.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the Green Charter monitoring report in Appendix A and note the achievements listed in section 3.5.

**3.0 DETAILS**

- 3.1 The Green Charter provides a framework of environmental improvements the Council and others can make which lead to more sustainable use of resources, influencing:
- waste reduction and recycling,
  - carbon emissions and energy use,
  - sustainable water usage and flooding,
  - encouraging less polluting passenger transport
  - improvements to air quality
  - protecting biodiversity.
- 3.2 Appendix A provides detailed information on achievements and progress made by the Council since 2012. It also recognises the challenges in some areas of work which can be complex and expensive to deal with.

- 3.3 The Council recognises that to achieve significant progress in this area of work a partnership approach is essential and seeks to encourage participation internally and with everyone who lives, works or studies in the borough, as well as working with community groups.
- 3.4 In addition to improving resource use and mitigating climate change, the Council also seeks to encourage adaptive responses to the consequences of historic carbon emissions and to prepare for increased occurrences of severe weather events such as drought, heat waves, and flooding.
- 3.5 The Council's main achievements include:
- In 2012/13 Brent residents recycled 43% of their waste, making them one of the top performing boroughs in London. More importantly overall waste created is reducing which is the first aim of the waste hierarchy
  - The Civic Centre achieved its BREEAM 'Outstanding' status post construction and is a sustainability focal point for the community
  - Reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 8% is an important achievement against the ambitious target set. This is expected to increase further as the Council disposes of its old assets and the Civic Centre settles into occupancy.
  - The Welsh Harp Centre continues to provide a popular service to local schools to ensure a longer term view for sustainability with our younger residents
  - The Council retains its ISO 14001 accreditation, demonstrating to all the commitment we have to improve our sustainability performance
  - The parks and open spaces are maintained to a high quality and 7 parks have achieved green flag status
  - Brent has retained its "Fairtrade" status for a second year.

### 3.6 Theme outcomes

#### **CO<sub>2</sub> reduction – RAG rating: Red**

Whilst the council successfully achieved an 8% reduction in carbon emissions, unfortunately it did not reach the ambitious target of 25% reduction (compared to a 2009 baseline). The majority of other London Borough's spoken to have also found it very difficult to make significant savings in a short period of time and without large investment. Up to date comparable data has not been released, but data published by the Department for Energy and Climate Change showed Brent is the top performing area in terms of carbon emission reduction achieving a 30% reduction (against a 2005 baseline) compared to an average of 21% across London in 2010/11.

Significant further progress will need large investment which is difficult in the current economic climate. Having already made significant savings in previous years in 2014/15 the Council is faced with saving c£18m from its revenue budget and in addition the Council faces an estimated funding gap of £33.6m in 2015/16 and £19.2m in 2016/17. Most commentators agree that, whatever interpretation is placed on recently improved economic indicators, the downward pressure on public expenditure is likely to continue for some years beyond the Council's current financial planning horizon.

However, the Council is committed to continuing to make progress in this challenging area and the Carbon Management Board will oversee progress moving forward. A number of areas of improvement are being investigated including options to change street-lighting to LED and further physical building improvements across the estate. The Civic Centre is a flagship of the intent to become a truly sustainable organisation and provide leadership to the community in this area. The CRC commitment remains a financial lever for action; the Council remains in the scheme for the second phase and the price per tonne of carbon

consumed rises from £12 tonne to £16 per tonne. The Council paid £324,000 in carbon tax in 2012/13.

### **Reducing Waste – RAG rating: Green**

Reducing waste created is the most sustainable way of tackling the waste hierarchy and fortunately, Brent residents managed to throw away 2.5% less residual waste this year than in 2012/13 which is an excellent achievement. In addition, the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) has been planning a new disposal system to begin in 2016, where non-recyclable waste will be sent to an 'Energy from Waste plant' in West England, which will recover some value from this waste. The recycling rate for 2012/13 was 43% and this year it is projected to be 41% as the lack of spring and summer rain meant that the amount of organic waste dropped.

The new public realm contract begins in April 2014 and will build on recent improvements to the recycling scheme, which include expanding the number and types of properties able to receive a dedicated dry recycling collection, including schools. The amount of litter and street waste being recycled has also increased from last year to 1,309 tonnes in 2013, which is an environmental improvement but also results in a saving of £153,000 in waste disposal costs; and the enforcement teams continue to work with local residents to reduce incidences of fly-tipping.

### **Sustainable Development and Regeneration – RAG rating: Green**

The opening of the Civic Centre and London Designer Outlet were highlights for the Council in 2013. Overall, Wembley Park and South Kilburn regeneration schemes are progressing positively, and work has begun on the place-making study for Burnt Oak-Colindale.

### **Sustainable Transport and Water Use – RAG rating: Green**

A number of safety improvements have been made to highways and junctions to improve cyclist safety and encourage more cycling in the borough and 'bikeability' training is delivered to both adults and children locally. The number of bike stands has increased with further units due to be installed soon at Kilburn tube station and in Queens Park. Planned strategies to deal with flood prevention are on track for delivery in 2015, and the Civic Centre is an exemplar for a low water use building.

### **Sustainable Food – RAG rating: Green**

Brent remains a Fairtrade Borough for the second year. The Brent Fairtrade Network and Brent Sustainability Forum continue to provide a focal point for community work in this area. The Council's food growing and allotments strategy is in place and is leading to improvements in access to allotments. A number of events have been held to promote reducing food waste and healthy eating.

### **Sustainable land use and biodiversity – RAG rating: Green**

Masons Field has now been declared a local nature reserve in September 2013, and was certified organic by the Soil Association in line with the rest of Fryent Country Park, after a long process of restoration involving local communities since receiving Heritage Lottery Funding in 2011. A newly created Chalkhill park in Wembley was opened in 2013.

Improvements have been made across all parks to increase the likelihood of improving the range of biodiversity in parks, as well as increasing the resistance of planting to droughts and reduce the need for watering during the summer.

### **Conclusion**

The Council is making good progress in most areas of the Green Charter. Balancing the need for increasing economic growth and improving social conditions, as well as continuing to

reduce carbon emissions, increase sustainability and ensure efficient use of resources for environmental and financial reasons remain key issues for the Council in the coming years.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Green Charter Policy does not make any additional financial obligations on the Council and all the targets originally included in the Charter are expected to be implemented using existing Council budgets.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Council has a statutory carbon reduction commitment (CRC) set by Government which requires the Council to report annually its carbon emissions, and a fine would be levied for non-compliance.

5.2 The majority of projects within the Green Charter contribute to reducing the amount of emissions the Council produces as a result of its operations. Consequently, the Green Charter aims to reduce emissions and consequent tax levied against the Council under CRC. A Carbon Management Board is in place to oversee this.

#### **6.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no diversity implications from the Green Charter; it impacts on everyone in Brent, seeking to improve the environment in which everyone in Brent lives, works or travels.

#### **7.0 STAFFING / ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS (IF APPROPRIATE)**

7.1 None

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Green Charter Policy (2012)

Green Charter annual monitoring report (January 2013)

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