



Executive
14 January 2013

**Report from the Director of
Environment and Neighbourhood Services**

Wards Affected: ALL

Green Charter Annual Monitoring Report

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Executive adopted the Council's Green Charter in January 2012. This report updates the Executive on the council's progress since then.
- 1.2 All that one does, whether at work, at home or travelling, has an environmental impact. The council has policies in place to reduce that impact as much as possible and to create a better vision for the future. The Green Charter brings together all the work that the council is doing to improve, enhance and protect the environment, to help respond to the challenge of climate change and reduce its carbon footprint.
- 1.3 The Charter also asks those who live, work or study in Brent to be more environmentally responsible in their daily lives. This report monitors only the progress made by Brent Council as there is limited baseline data collected to monitor progress made by residents. Progress made by both the Council and residents will be presented in the next report.
- 1.4 There are seven areas of focus in the Green Charter. These are:
 - Reduce carbon dioxide emissions
 - Lower waste
 - Sustainable development and regeneration
 - Sustainable transport and streets
 - Sustainable food and purchasing
 - Sustainable water
 - Sustainable land use and wildlife.
- 1.5 The report identifies that the Green Charter is broadly implemented by Officers and that there is progress in all seven areas of work. There is, however, room for improvement over the next year.
- 1.6 Highlights include the Brent Civic Centre BREEAM Outstanding rating; the successful implementation of the new waste strategy and improved residential waste and recycling scheme; and ITU initiatives that have led to staff having a reduced environmental impact.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are advised to note the contents of the Green Charter monitoring report in Appendix A.

3. DETAILS

3.1 The Council seeks to operate in a more environmentally sustainable manner. This involves focusing on reducing carbon dioxide emissions and waste production; developing and regenerating the borough in a sustainable way; encouraging and enabling the use of sustainable transport and the purchasing of sustainable products; using water more sustainably; and treating land and wildlife in a more sustainable manner, in order to protect the local environment. To ensure this broad aim is on target, the internal work done is monitored and reported on annually via Brent's Green Charter monitoring report (Appendix A). This report provides an overview of that document.

3.2 Please refer to The Green Charter Action Plan, Appendix A, for further information relating to the updates below.

3.3 Carbon Dioxide emissions reduction

3.3.1 A key highlight is that emissions in Council buildings were reduced by 15% from 2009/10 to 2011/12. This has been broadly done through upgrading and stream-lining IT systems, building rationalisation and a staff behaviour change programme. Further reductions are expected to be achieved from additional building rationalisation and from the completion of and move to the BREEAM Outstanding rated new Brent Civic Centre.

3.3.2 Despite the imminent move to the BREEAM Outstanding Civic Centre, there is still much more to be done for the Council to further reduce its energy use and carbon emissions and to ensure that the new building performs to its optimum level. Behaviour change will be a key aspect of this and a new programme for the Civic Centre is currently being drafted. More work is also to be done on furthering the borough's Climate Change Strategy and the council's Air Quality Action Plan.

3.3.3 The introduction of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme meant that the Council is required to pay a levy of £12 per tonne of CO₂ emitted. This is likely to increase to £16 per tonne by 2015. In 2011/12 the total cost to the Council including schools was £279K. However from 2014/15 schools will no longer have to pay this levy. Reducing CO₂ will save the Council money from both the purchase of the energy used and the payment of the levy.

3.3.4 The introduction of the vehicle emission based charging scheme in 2011 will help to reduce carbon emission and improve local air quality.

3.3.5 The overall RAG status for carbon dioxide emissions reduction is Amber.

3.4 Lowering Waste

3.4.1 A new, improved waste collection service for street level properties and blocks of flats was introduced in Brent in October 2011. This has resulted in an increase of 13% in recycling performance, from 34% in September 2011 to 47% in September 2012. As part of the

successful bid to DCLG communal food waste collections will be introduced in suitable blocks of flats. A new recycling service for flats above shops will also be introduced. A new One Council Project, Improving Waste Management Performance, focusing on reducing waste sent to landfill, which includes a programme of targeted face to face engagement with residents living in low participation areas, is being implemented.

3.4.2 More work is needed to communicate the internal office recycling scheme to staff and encourage greater participation. There is some confusion as the internal scheme is different to that for residents; it is hoped that the two schemes can be better streamlined when setting up a waste and recycling scheme for the Civic Centre.

3.4.3 The overall RAG status for lowering waste is Green.

3.5 Sustainable Development and Regeneration

3.5.1 Significant achievements include Brent's Civic Centre receiving BREEAM Outstanding and two schools being extended at BREEAM Excellent level. Seven proposals for non-residential schemes approved by the council's Planning Department were rated as Excellent and a further three were scored as Very Good. Thirteen residential schemes were rated as Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) 4 and six as CSH3. Policy development has progressed over the past year; for example, Wembley Area (a key growth area) Action Plan (part of the Local Development Framework) has been drafted, and is currently under consultation. Energy efficiency improvements were made to existing council housing stock during 2011/12. There were:

- 54 homes had single glazed windows replaced with new double glazed windows
- 45 homes benefited from additional loft or flat roof insulation
- 16 homes had cavity wall insulation installed
- 32 homes were fitted with a new, efficient condensing boiler.

3.5.2 More could be done to encourage the reduction of waste from developments, and to implement measures that will reduce the risk of flooding.

3.5.3 The overall RAG status for sustainable development and regeneration is Amber.

3.6 Sustainable Transport and Streets

3.6.1 The introduction of vehicles emission based charging scheme for parking permits in April 2011 rewards environmentally responsible behaviour and is designed to encourage residents to consider the impact their vehicle makes to climate change and local air quality. At the same time the Council also introduced an 'all zone' permit for car club vehicles which enables car club users to park in parking bays free of charge and reward those residents who surrender their parking permits with a £200 voucher towards the cost of a bicycle, car club membership or Oyster travelcard.

3.6.2 Continued work is taking place to improve access to public transport to travel throughout the borough, particularly to key locations, such as the Civic Centre. Funding from two TfL cycling projects has been awarded to Brent, enabling the promotion of cycling and cycling safety across the borough, and the provision of improved cycling infrastructure. Car clubs are also increasing in availability and use in Brent, and there are now six electric car charging points available in the borough

3.6.3 More needs to be done to promote sustainable travel in the borough, particularly in the run-up to the move to the Civic Centre, as this will be a key time to encourage changes in behaviour regarding travelling to work. The Council travel plan needs to be updated and promoted.

3.6.4 The RAG status for sustainable transport and streets is Green.

3.7 Sustainable Food & Purchasing

3.7.1 A highlight for the council in this area of sustainability was the achievement of Fairtrade borough status in March 2012. In addition, the Food Growing and Allotments Strategy was introduced in September 2012. The aims of the strategy are to:

- Provide efficiently managed allotment sites that provide good value for money and are accessible to all
- Develop and broaden the range of food growing opportunities available through increased partnership working
- Promote the benefits of food growing as part of a healthy lifestyle.

3.7.2 It is important to ensure that sustainable purchasing and the choosing of Fairtrade items continue, and become part of every-day purchasing principles for the council.

3.7.3 The RAG status for sustainable food and purchasing is Green.

3.8 Sustainable Water

3.8.1 The council has developed flood risk plans, helping ensure we are better prepared for dealing with flooding. Flood risk is considered when planning Transportation work. Awareness is growing regarding using water more efficiently, and measures have been installed in council buildings to reduce water demand.

3.8.2 SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage system) regulation will not be implemented until October 2013. This will require all new developments to submit sustainable drainage details as a separate application, to be approved by SuDS Approving Body. Despite progress, there is still much more to be done to reduce the risk of flooding in the borough and to use water more efficiently and sustainably.

3.8.3 The RAG status for sustainable water is Amber.

3.9 Sustainable Land Use and Wildlife

3.9.1 Improvements have been taking place in the way that Brent Council manages its land and protects its wildlife. Some of the highlights include the following:

- from 2012, herbaceous perennial planting has replaced the use of bedding plants, reducing the amount of organic waste produced
- drought-resistant plants are increasingly used, reducing the amount of irrigation needed and the number of journeys required to tend to the bedding displays
- eight Green Flags were awarded to Brent parks and open spaces in 2011 (compared to just two in 2008)

- Brent won four awards at the London in Bloom Awards 2012: gold for Mapesbury Dell in the Small Park of the Year Award; silver gilt for Fryent Country Park in the Country Park Award; third prize in the prestigious Biodiversity Award and silver gilt and second place in the Large City Award category.

3.9.2 Parks' services are to be contracted out in 2013, so the challenge will be to ensure this contract continues to provide the sustainability improvements that Brent's Parks Department have been achieving.

3.9.3 The overall RAG status for sustainable land use and wildlife is Green.

3.10 **Conclusion**

3.10.1 The Council has made substantive progress in all seven areas of the Green Charter over the past year. However, further work is needed over the coming years. Particular effort needs to be given to reducing the council's carbon dioxide emissions and to reducing the waste produced by staff (and increasing the quantities recycled). Ensuring development and regeneration in the borough is sustainable and that water is treated in a more sustainable manner are further challenges for the coming year.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Green Charter monitoring report does not place any additional financial commitments on the Council as all the measures included in the Charter will be implemented using existing Council budgets.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Green Charter has no legal implications.

6. **DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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. **STAFFING / ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no specific staffing/accommodation implications of the proposals included in the Green Charter Monitoring Report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Green Charter

Green Charter annual monitoring report

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