

## Your Environmental Policy



## **Foreword**

It has been a number of years since “Your Environmental Policies” was originally produced by the Merseyside Environmental Trust in conjunction with the Liverpool Community Environmental Network.

But with the UN Conference of Parties 21<sup>st</sup> (COP 21) meeting taking place in Paris 30<sup>th</sup> November to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and a greater public awareness of climate change, visible evidence of global warming, a rapidly rising global population and the increasing demands put upon the planet’s resources we at MET thought that the time was right for an update of the Policies booklet.

During the revision of the document we reflected on what has happened over the intervening years; changing attitudes, changing technologies, changing government policies, energy security issues, increasing UK and European legislation and latterly the publication of the 2015 edition of ISO 14001 the international environmental management standard.

There has been a significant increase in the corporate, business and voluntary sectors awareness that sustainability has become more and more a mainstream business issue.

In this edition of the Your Environmental Policies we have still focussed on what is practical but also celebrate and highlight the good practice examples to be found all across the Liverpool City region to provide inspiration for others.

We have updated the sources of help and contacts – sadly a reflection of changing times and funding demands, the wealth of environmental support organisations that once existed on Merseyside and the North West has thinned considerably.

The Merseyside Environmental Trust as it enters its 32<sup>nd</sup> year is still here to help support community groups, organisations and businesses to play their part and be more active in a more sustainable Merseyside.

Stephen Sykes (Chair)

Merseyside Environmental Trust

5<sup>th</sup> December 2015

## **What is an Environmental Policy?**

Environmental Policies have become commonplace due to the increased requirements on organisations given to sustainable thinking and development via Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is underpinned by the thought that organisations should take accountability for their actions far beyond the scope of their business activities. This comes as a move away from the previously held view of organisations placing profits above all else. CSR now promotes how organisations should interact with wider society and take responsibility to engage in environmental protection, the local community and other good causes.

As such, local authorities, funding bodies and corporations across the country are asking organisations to illustrate that they have appropriate environmental practices in place. This document will explain what is expected in line with current standards and best practice, including the main ways in which your organisation can help to protect and conserve the environment.

All organisations and society as a whole have a responsibility not to compromise finite global resources for future generations. To ensure that this obligation is being adhered to, an environmental policy is a visible disclaimer that identifies the current activities of any organisation that could affect the environment. From this, actions to minimise harm are showcased, with positive statements created to diminish damage to the environment in the future. These statements together collectively form the makeup of the environmental policy.

## **Why act now?**

ISO14001, is an international environmental management standard designed to provide guidance for organisations looking to improve their environmental sustainability and operational performance in line with best global practice.

ISO14001 was last updated in 2004 and has now been revised after years of consultation, with the improved standard due to be released in September 2015. The revision addresses changing environmental practices, whilst also ensuring that the environmental management system (EMS) is future proof.

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## **What's new in ISO14001:2015?**

With the advent of an updated ISO14001, revisions have been made in line with changing practice and trends within EMS. It is important that these wider trends are taken on board to ensure the smooth running of your updated Environmental Policy as part of your EMS. These new requirements can be split into; Organisational Context, Leadership, Communication, Risk and Monitoring.

**Organisational Context** - The intention is to ensure that the organisation has a high-level understanding of the important issues that can affect, either positively or negatively, its ability to achieve the intended outcomes of its EMS. The issues could be external such as cultural, social, political, legal or economic issues or internal such as activities, products and services.

**Leadership** - The revised standard states that management must be engaged in the operation of the EMS and include environmental performance as a factor when making strategic business decisions. Top management need to demonstrate involvement in audits, inspections and reviews, showing they have full participation in the EMS on an ongoing basis.

**Risk** – Focus should not just be on environmental risks, but also the uncertainty associated with threats and opportunities. Taking action to minimise these can be justified on the basis of the associated risks to business practices, rather than solely the potential, often indirect, environmental outcomes. This is far

more likely to encourage organisations to take action, both improving business performance and reducing environmental impacts.

Communication - Equal emphasis on external and internal communications is vital. This should include communicating consistent and reliable information externally with your green message to the forefront in your marketing materials, encouraging customers to adopt a similar ethos. You should also establish mechanisms for employees to make suggestions on improving the EMS internally.

Monitoring - There is an emphasis on the need for evaluation in addition to the current requirements for measurement and analysis. Evaluation is the interpretation of results and analysis. For instance, processes may be well defined and effective, but do they yield optimum results? How could they be improved further?

### **What your Environmental Policy should include**

The key is to have an environmental policy that is both easy to understand and that clearly states the aims and objectives of your organisation. A well written environmental policy helps you to meet current environmental legislation; save money in terms of consumption, waste and recycling; differentiate you from the competition and improve your reputation with stakeholders.

Under the revised standard, organisations will be required to encompass a broader range of environmental commitments. The intent of the revised standard is to encourage a holistic approach to the management of environmental aspects, with integration into organisational strategy and business processes key to success.

Your environmental policy should specifically outline;

- The organisations mission and information about its operations
- A commitment to continually improving environmental performance through regular monitoring
- Senior management's commitment to be fully engaged in the EMS on an ongoing basis
- A commitment to managing environmental impacts
- Your compliance with any relevant environmental legislation
- Your environmental expectations from suppliers and sub-contractors

- A commitment to employee training and an ongoing awareness of environmental sustainability

## **Pollution Free**

All sections of society have a responsibility to prevent unnecessary pollution which can have a dramatic impact on watercourses, land and air quality.

### Does your organisation...

Have restrooms with multiple toilets and sinks?

Have a kitchen with a sink or dishwasher?

Have landscaped gardens or outside space?

Have a dedicated smoking area?

Actions –All pollution adds up, in the same way that efficiency improvements do too! Attempt to implement as many of the following suggestions as possible and make a difference.

### Water

- If you have an older or large cistern, put a brick in the cistern or install 'Save-a-flush' bags in to save approximately 1 litre of water per flush
- Use the plug or a washing bowl when washing hands, plates or foodstuffs at the sink
- Have a tank installed to collect rainwater – Great for watering plants with!
- Check all toilets, sinks and connected water pipes for leaks regularly
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning products
- Ensure that waste is not disposed of down the sink or drain

### Land

- Keep outside areas clean and free from litter and graffiti
- Commit to the three R's, reduce, re-use and recycle to cut your waste to landfill

### Air

- Plant flowers and shrubs (both inside and outside) and trees if possible to help consume CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Consider using local native species to encourage local wildlife.
- Consider reducing parking spaces and installing a bike shed to promote green travel
- Surround your smoking shelter with plant life to absorb the emissions
- Install a mechanical ventilation system to circulate fresh air and prevent moisture, odours, and other pollutants building up inside premises.

### **Sources of further help and information**

**The Environment Agency** works to create better places for people and wildlife, and support sustainable development – [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

**United Utilities** have information about saving water and supply ‘Save-a-flush’ bags - [www.unitedutilities.com/SaveaFlush-orderform.aspx](http://www.unitedutilities.com/SaveaFlush-orderform.aspx)

### **Supply Chain**

A sustainable supply chain ensures that the products you sell or services you deliver have a life cycle approach that considers all environmental impacts.

Does your organisation do any of the following...

Buy locally when possible?

Favour environmentally sustainable products?

Set environmental requirements for suppliers and contractors?

Actions – To be truly sustainable you must think responsibly about the products you purchase and where they are coming from. Not only where you specifically buy from in terms of your suppliers but also what raw materials contribute towards the manufacturing of the products you consume. Thinking along the lines of a life cycle process, consider how you will manage the waste after use.

- Buy products without packaging (or recyclable/reusable packaging)
- Buy wood products from forests where the trees will be replanted

**Halliday Funeral Supplies LTD** are one of the UK's largest coffin manufacturers. They are dedicated to the environment and are a fully FSC Certified company. They are fully committed to recycling first then ensuring that sustainable sourcing policies are met, with re-planting undertaken wherever felling takes place, to guarantee the continuity of raw materials, as well as for the enjoyment of future generations. Crucially as such a large manufacturer, they exert their influence with suppliers to ensure their environmental criteria are met - [www.hallidayltd.co.uk/index.php/environmental](http://www.hallidayltd.co.uk/index.php/environmental)



- When buying appliances or other electronic goods, buy the most energy efficient
- Don't over order if there is a chance some excess may go to landfill
- Buy local, to reduce the transportation emissions
- Buy recycled, to encourage this growing market
- Set environmental requirements for suppliers and contractors to ensure a more environmentally sustainable supply chain
- Buy products from environmentally sustainable sources
- Purchase seasonal produce

### **Sources of further help and information**

**Ethical Consumer** look at the social and environmental records of the companies behind the brand names and aim to make global business more sustainable through consumer pressure - [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)

**WRAP** work between governments, businesses, communities, thinkers and individuals to forge partnerships and deliver initiatives to support a more sustainable economy and society - [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

**The SSCF** research into sustainability in global and domestic supply chains. They work to identify, assess and contribute to standards, best practices and emerging technologies that advance sustainability in every aspect of supply chain management - [www.sustainable-scf.org](http://www.sustainable-scf.org)



**Action Sustainability** provides advice and services that will enable you to embed sustainable supply chain management principles across your business and into your supply chain - [www.actionsustainability.com](http://www.actionsustainability.com)

## **Energy Efficiency**

Becoming more energy efficient in line with diminishing resources and legally binding emissions targets.

Does your organisation conserve energy in any of the following ways...

Switching lights and machines off when not in use?

Using energy-efficient light bulbs?

Using automatic timers to prevent unnecessary heating out of hours?

Actions – The impact that insulation, heating, lighting and electronic equipment can have on emissions is often overlooked or completely ignored. Yet by championing efficiency in these areas, significant reductions and as such subsequent savings can be made. The biggest obstacle for energy efficiency in this case may be changing the bad habits of staff, and as such communication is key so the benefits are explained and understood.

Insulation:

- If you have draughty doors and windows, seal them up for better insulation
- Put sheets of foil behind radiators to reflect heat back into the room
- Install cavity wall and loft insulation – this is an extremely effective method of insulating your building by preventing heat loss
- In the winter, insulate pipes and tanks to avoid leaks and bursts – old blankets are great for this!

Heating:

- Turn the heating down by one degree, this will go unnoticed and will help to reduce gas and electric bills
- If your heating system has an automatic timer, use it. Setting the heater to come on when needed and to turn off when no longer required (for instance heating may not be required at weekends and Bank Holidays if the premises are empty)

- Ensure that your boiler is regularly serviced to guarantee efficient performance

#### Lighting:

- Switch lights off when you leave a room, try putting up posters and stickers up to remind people to do this
- Use energy efficient lightbulbs
- Take advantage of natural light from the sun during day time hours to avoid the need for artificial lighting

#### Electrical Equipment:

- Consider using laptops instead of desktop PCs as they use a lot less energy
- Do not leave equipment on standby when not in use, or overnight, always switch off
- Turn your microwave off at the plug. Keeping the clock on can use as much power as cooking food

#### **Sources of further help and information**

**The Southport Eco Centre** demonstrates energy saving and renewable energy technologies - [www.southportecocentre.com](http://www.southportecocentre.com)

**Energy Projects Plus** is an independent social enterprise and environmental charity that aims to empower members of the community to take action on reducing their own energy bills by providing information and support on energy efficiency - [www.epplus.org.uk](http://www.epplus.org.uk)

**Energy Saving Trust** is an organisation that is devoted to promoting energy efficiency and sustainability more widely. It provides impartial advice to consumers and conducts research whilst working with businesses and governments - [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

#### **Transportation**

One of the largest contributors to total UK carbon emissions, look to lead by example.

Does your organisation...

Have a Green Travel Plan?

Replace journeys with video conferencing or telephone meetings?

Help employees utilise public transport?

Promote walking and cycling?

Actions – The influence organisations have over transportation is often underestimated. If top management decides to take the lead in this area, perhaps by partaking in car sharing, or by cycling to work then the staff underneath are much more likely to follow this example. Providing feasible alternatives to individual car use should be seen as a priority in line with sustainable transport thinking.

Walking and Cycling:

- Short journeys of under a mile should always be walked, with cycling an option for slightly longer distances, particularly if commuting



**Bike 2 Work** are a provider of the Governments Green Transport Plan which aims to reduce pollution, promote healthier lifestyles and make cycling to work cost-effective, offering tax savings on bikes and cycling equipment. Reports from registered companies say that the vast majority of employees who now Bike 2 Work are more alert, more productive and take far less days of sick than other employees, showcasing the benefits beyond reduced travel emissions - [www.bike2workscheme.co.uk](http://www.bike2workscheme.co.uk)

- Provide a secure bike shelter for staff members who cycle to work
- Provide showering facilities for staff members who cycle to work

Public Transport:

- Provide information on public transport timetables for staff members
- If moving premises, consider choosing an office location situated near public transportation, enabling employees to commute in an environmentally friendly way

- Ensure that venues for meetings, conferences and training events are fully accessible by public transport

Vehicles:

- Promote car sharing between staff members
- Reduce the number of parking spaces available to promote car sharing, public transport and cycling
- When renting vehicles for company use, hire the most efficient
- Introduce new, more fuel efficient company vehicles

Remove the need for transport:

- Promote working remotely from home if possible
- Utilise video conferencing facilities (E.g. Skype)
- Can an issue be solved via email or a phone call?

### **Sources of further help and information**

**Travelwise Merseyside** promotes public transport, cycling, walking and traffic alleviation. It also offers advice and guidance for those unsure of which options are most appropriate for them - [www.letstravelwise.org](http://www.letstravelwise.org)

**Living Streets** is an organisation which supports the rights and interests of pedestrians and aims to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk Living Streets Association - [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)

**The Campaign for Better Transport** is an independent charity who provide practical solutions to transport problems, pressuring national and local government to adopt them, and empowering ordinary people up and down the country - [www.bettertransport.org.uk](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk)

### **Recycling and Waste Management**

Responsibility for waste has never been a bigger issue, this resource can no longer be simply thrown away.

Does your organisation do any of the following...

Paper recycling?

Can recycling?

Plastic recycling?

Empty printer cartridge recycling?

Upgrade or re-use old computers?

Actions – No longer is the concept of being finished with something and simply throwing it away acceptable as a form of waste disposal. All waste is a potential resource and as such should be treated as a commodity. Reducing, reusing and recycling were once seen as optional extras but are now engrained into society as appropriate workings of modern waste management.

You can reduce waste by:

- Using recycled and scrap paper
- Printing and writing double sided
- Using email rather than paper and envelopes for posting
- Store your documents on a USB or The Cloud that can be easily accessed on computers or mobile devices instead of relying on paper copies
- Use reusable not disposable products such as refillable pens and rechargeable batteries
- Getting rid of paper/plastic cups for water dispensers and encourage the use of refillable water bottles

You can reuse:

- Scrap paper
- Glass and some plastic products
- Envelopers (simply put on new labels)
- By buying second hand

You can recycle by:

- Separating your waste for recycling
- Buying recycled paper products
- Buying recycled products
- Composting food waste

The **Liverpool Guild of Students** recently won an Echo Environment Award for a composter that ensures that food waste from the Guild avoids landfill and is transformed into useable compost for the Guild roof garden and planting around the University campus. The initiative was run by the Green Guild, which champions transforming the Guild into a hub for greener living and sustainable development -

[www.liverpoolguild.org/greenguild](http://www.liverpoolguild.org/greenguild)



### **Sources of further help and information**

**Keep Britain Tidy** are an independent environmental charity, which campaign for people's right to live and work in a place of which they can be proud. As well as having a commitment to ending litter, they encourage people, businesses, organisations and public bodies to 'waste less and live more', helping local people to change their lifestyles, creating less waste and making better use of resources - [www.keepbritaintidy.org/Endingwaste/1325](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/Endingwaste/1325)

**Recycle-more** acts as a one-stop recycling information centre. You will find help and advice on all aspects of recycling including where to do it and how whether it be at home, at school or in the workplace - [www.recycle-more.co.uk](http://www.recycle-more.co.uk)

## **Writing your Environmental Policy**

We hope that you have found this guide useful in terms of informing you what is expected to be included in an environmental policy and also the actions that can be taken to improve environmental performance of your organisation. It is key to remember that your environmental policy should relate specifically to your organisation and concentrate on the issues that are relevant to you.

As well as indicating what changes you will be making, make sure to celebrate and champion any existing practices you currently undertake which may be genuinely innovative or go beyond current best practice or standards.

If you still have questions regarding your environmental policies or how to write your own, then don't hesitate to get in touch with MET and we will do our utmost to help you.

### **Useful contacts**

For keeping track of changes to any relevant environmental policies, visit [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

For information relating to the revised ISO 14001 standard, visit [www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso14000.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso14000.htm)

You may also like to contact your local authority's environmental department who will be able to advise you on all current and relevant legislation relating to your groups activities or contact MET for further guidance.

### **Merseyside Environmental Trust (MET)**

MET is a politically neutral charitable body that exists to raise awareness of environmental issues through promoting open discussion of global and local concerns, stimulating scientific enquiry and debate. The Trust is in its 31<sup>st</sup> year of existence and houses a wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts across the environmental and sustainability fields.

MET also provides a programme of small grants to local voluntary organisations carrying out practical work on the Merseyside environment, and acts as a signposting body for environmental events and activities across the region.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the MET, please visit our website at [www.met-net.org.uk/](http://www.met-net.org.uk/) or email us at [merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com](mailto:merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com) for more information.

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'Merseyside Environmental Trust – Promoting Sustainable Development on Merseyside for over 30 years'

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