

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND
DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT**

February 2007

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

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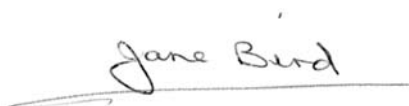
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FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR J Bird

CHAIR OF BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Seemingly almost everyday new reports are published which show how the climate and the environment around us is changing. Sometimes it is very difficult to appreciate how each of us can make any changes that will have a significant positive effect. In these circumstances we often look to organisations to take a lead and break away from short-term planning and fully take account of how what we do today will affect future generations.

I am therefore delighted that South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is able to make such a significant commitment to helping play its part in reducing environmental impact. This Environmental Policy fully recognises and accepts that changes can be made in the way we undertake our activities to help safeguard the environment for the future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Bird". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a baseline for the text below.

Councillor J Bird
Chair of Business Support Committee

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

A USERS GUIDE

Part A of this report begins by examining the need for an Environmental Policy and how the activities of South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (SYFRS) can affect the environment. This is followed by some background information in section 2 on what measures are presently in place within the Service to minimise environmental impact. Section 3 is devoted to looking at what environmental damaging activities the Service undertakes and what can be done to reduce environmental harm. The final sections of the document outlines a proposed structure for helping to bring about change and an environmental action plan for the first 12 months following adoption of the policy.

Part B considers the concept of an Environmental Management System and what needs to be achieved in order to obtain appropriate environmental accreditation.

Appendix A contains the high level Declaration of Commitment.

PART A ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1. WHY HAVE AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY?

Increasingly scientific opinion has moved to a consensus that climate change is happening, whether that is evidenced by melting of glacier ice sheets, rising temperature and sea levels or more volatile and severe weather patterns. This represents a threat not only to all parts of the world but to the UK and to the micro-climates that exist in the South Yorkshire Region.

The Government has set out a strategy to try to restrain and reverse the long-term effects of climate change. The UK has committed itself to achieving reductions in CO2 emissions via the Kyoto Protocol and the 2003 Energy White Paper which outlined a roadway to a low carbon economy setting a 60% reduction target in CO2 emissions by 2050.

The public, employers and employees are increasingly aware of the need to care for the environment, so that future generations will enjoy the benefits of a stable eco-system giving a quality of life that is currently enjoyed by the people of today. It is often difficult as individuals to understand how minor life style changes can have an impact globally. However, as an organisation which is a major employer and one which makes significant investment decisions, the impact on the environment of business conduct is far more quantifiable. This organisation has an opportunity to lead by example.

Adopting an Environmental Policy will be challenging, it will mean focussing on long-term goals which may initially seem financially unattractive and restraining. However, the Stern Review on the economics of climate change, published in October, 2006 highlighted the long-term financial benefits of adopting sustainable solutions now, as more effective than putting the environment right later. As a responsible organisation there are clear moral and financial reasons why an Environmental Policy should be pursued wherever possible, within the confines of practicality and affordability.

2. WHAT ARE WE DOING AT PRESENT?

Environmental concern is not new to the organisation, some initiatives have been implemented already, that attempt to mitigate environmental impact. This however has taken place without any coherent policy or resources framework. An environmental policy with clear objectives and targets will provide that framework when in place.

Areas where action is already occurring include:

- Vehicles emissions – new appliances with up-to date emissions technology
- Fuel additives – current work to move to use of latest additive technology
- Fuel Storage – investment in new storage facilities to meet control of pollution regulations
- Energy efficient buildings – incorporation of energy efficient measures at Doncaster Fire Station and in other new building projects
- Bulk/ joint energy purchasing via Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) contract arrangements
- Carbon Trust accreditation for Brigade via Estates
- Key Performance Information – sourcing and collation of data on buildings and energy use/ costs within AMP development

- Disposal of Waste – changes to methodology to maximise recycling and disposal of electrical equipment requirements

While these actions are credible, there remains much more that can be done.

3. WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

SYFR has a primary aim of reducing its 'carbon footprint' which is a measure of the impact human activity has on the environment in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide that is produced .

In very simple terms sustainable consumption means achieving more with less, our aims should not be focused solely on pollution limitation, instead an Environmental Policy should consider the whole life cycle of goods, services and materials.

Looking at the activities undertaken by the organisation there are a number of key themes that have been identified as forming the basis of the Service's objectives:-

3.1 Waste

Waste arises from our day to day activities and consumption of products from minor activities such as photocopying, to waste products generated from building maintenance works, equipment and vehicles and the operational activities of SYFRS.

Objectives

- T1 - Increase the re-use and the recycling of materials.
- T2 - Reduce waste from the maintenance of buildings, equipment and vehicles and the operational activities of SYFRS.

3.2 Energy

'Greenhouse' gases are produced from a range of activities, such as using vehicles and heating equipment that operate on fossil fuels. There are also more indirect production, for example the use of electricity which has been generated from power stations burning fossil fuels such as coal. The Service needs to identify and where possible quantify emissions due to its activities in order to have a benchmark for future improvement.

Objectives

- T3 - Reduce carbon emissions from its activities.
- T4 - Improve energy efficiency.
- T5 - Increase the use of energy from renewable sources.

3.3 Water

High water usage coupled with unstable weather patterns and high density land usage places pressure on existing supplies leading to environmental concerns, as water courses become dry. The resultant treatment of waste water exasperates the problem further.

Objectives

T6 - Reduce water usage.

T7 - Increase the number and efficiency of measures to avoid water pollution.

3.4 Transport

The use of fossil fuel powered vehicles is recognised as being a major contributor to CO2 emissions. SYFRS uses operational vehicles such as appliances, fleet cars/vans and employees use private cars to journey to and from work.

Objectives

T8 - Increase the number of measures that will reduce the environmental impact of fleet vehicles, appliances, business travel.

T9 - Increase the number of employees cycling, walking, sharing cars and using public transport, in connection with their work at SYFRS ('green' travel plan).

3.5 Land Management

Domestic gardens are a major environmental resource providing habitat for wild life and plants that help to reduce the effects of carbon emissions. Similarly the Authority has 'green areas' that if managed sensitively could be beneficial to the ecology of the area.

Objectives

T10 - Reduce the number of activities being undertaken on the Service's open land that would cause long term harm to natural wildlife and habitat.

T11 - Increase the number of local communities along with other partnership agencies that undertake projects on these land areas.

3.6 Purchasing and Procurement

The Government's 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy set out the goal to make the UK a leader in the EU in sustainable procurement by 2009. The resultant national action plan makes six key recommendations for sustainable procurement:-

1. Lead by Example
2. Set Clear Priorities
3. Raise the standard expected
4. Build Capacity to deliver sustainable procurement
5. Remove Barriers and consider as an example whole life costing
6. Capture Opportunities

As a significant buyer of goods and services this organisation is well placed to develop a sustainable procurement policy that adopts the above recommendations.

Objectives

T12 - Reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services we procure by developing and adopting a formal sustainable procurement policy.

3.7 Sustainability our Partners and the People we Serve

There is general acknowledgement that to reduce the impact on the environment requires global action. In the way we conduct our daily work and lives, can together have a significant positive impact on the environment. The Authority as a member of the South Yorkshire Community and in adopting an Environmental Policy is giving a clear commitment to support sustainability by involving people, leading by example and demonstrating a commitment to deliver.

Objectives

- T13 - Increase the number of other agencies and organisations that work in partnership with us to adopt the principles of a sustainable environment.
- T14 - Promote through our operational duties environmental good practice.

3.8 Operational Service Delivery

In carrying out our operational duties and in undertaking training for dealing with emergency situations, it is recognised that the practices we adopt and the equipment and substances used may cause harm to the environment.

Objectives

- T15 - Reduce environmental contamination due to operational duties and training requirements.

The setting, monitoring and reporting of definitive, measurable targets and performance indicators based upon the above themes will be taken forward as constituent elements of the work outlined in section 5.

4. OUR COMMITMENT

In order to influence the environmental impact of the activities identified in the previous section, there is a need for the Authority to fully declare itself as an Environmental Champion. The completed Declaration of Commitment outlined within appendix A, fully commits this organisation to a policy which aims to help safeguard the environment for future generations. The following section outlines further in practical terms how this commitment will be integrated into the decision making processes of the Authority.

5. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The active implementation of the environmental policy can only be achieved if it is uniformly accepted as part of the business process and everyone is clear of their respective roles. These responsibilities are outlined below:-

Chair of the Business Support Committee

- Act as ambassador for South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service promoting the objectives of the Environmental Policy at all times.

Business Support Committee (in its entirety)

- Approve the Environmental Policy.

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive of the Service

- Act as Principal Officer Advocate in ensuring that environmental policy is considered in all 'business' decisions.

Corporate Management Board (CMB)

- Will act as guardian to ensure compliance with objectives contained within the Environmental Policy.

The Director of Support Services

- Will represent the Environmental Forum at CMB bringing forward items for consideration as determined appropriate by the Environmental Forum.

Environmental Forum (EF)

Chaired by the Director of Support Services / Head of Asset Management, to act as Steward ensuring that environmental impact is considered in all new policies. Head of Asset Management to provide initial focus and co-ordination. This role may be later undertaken by an Environmental Manager if appointed.

The purpose of the Forum will be to initially oversee the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment to the Environmental Policy. Through its membership it will, at a local service level, collate base data and recommend targets and actions plans based on:- activities generating significant environmental impact; the Environmental Policy and legal requirements in order to fulfil the Declaration of Commitment.

Membership of the Environmental Forum

Core membership will be based on Environmental Policy action areas as outlined below however, it is anticipated that membership will vary depending on particular issues being considered at any particular time:-

Waste - Nominated Lead Officer but all Dept managers responsible

Energy - Property Manager

Water - Property Manager supported by District Managers

Transport - Head of Technical Services
- HR Representative

Land use/ operational activities - District/Station Managers

Procurement - Supplies Manager

Sustainability - Forum generally

Internal/External communications and training - Forum generally

After initial set up and approval of targets, annual reports to CMB, Business Support Committee, by the Head of Asset Management as part of the Asset Management Planning Process.

The Environmental Forum to meet at least once every six weeks.

Internal Audit - To check at regular intervals how well parts of the Environmental Policy are being implemented.

6. FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

The year 1 Action Plan (2007-2008) will commence with effect from April 2007, following the ratification of this policy document.

Action Plan:

	TASK	DATE
AP 1	Complete declaration of Commitment	April, 2007
AP 2	Initial Meeting of Environmental Forum and agreement of Terms of Reference	June, 2007
AP 3	Investigation of collaborative work with other public/private sector organisations	Summer, 2007
AP 4	Initial suggestions for specific work areas and target from Forum members	Sept, 2007
AP 5	Investigation into requirements for EMS accreditation	Autumn, 2007
AP 6	Refinement of targets and work areas	Dec, 2007
AP 7	Presentation of EMS proposals to Business Support Committee to include 2008-09 Action Plan	April, 2008

It is envisaged that by April 2008, sufficient data will have been collated to enable realistic target setting and areas of action identified that will promote environmental improvement in all areas highlighted in the adopted Environmental Policy. The framework for achieving this will be used as a basis for implementing an Environmental Management System post April 2008.

7. CONSULTATION

It has already been acknowledged that to bring about positive environmental change there is a need to act collectively. In support of this philosophy the environmental policy has been circulated for consultation initially to South Yorkshire Police and to Sheffield City Council which facilitates "Sheffield Public Sector Eco Group" consisting of key local public stakeholders.

The City Council has expressed great interest in working with South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service in working towards mutual environmental objectives. It has also welcomed the proposed introduction of the Environmental Policy and is keen for the Service to participate within the above mentioned Eco Group.

South Yorkshire Police currently has the benefit of an Environmental Manager. The Police Service has offered exploratory talks to establish what opportunities might exist for joint working and the sharing of the above expertise on environmental issues.

It is envisaged that further consultation and investigation of joint working with other organisations within the South Yorkshire region will take place as the environmental objectives within this policy document start to be progressed.

PART B - THE NEXT STEPS 2008 AND BEYOND... ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)

8. WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)?

An Environmental Management System (EMS) provides a structured, documented approach to managing a business's environmental performance and responsibilities. An EMS must include certain elements, as required by the international standard ISO 14001. Businesses can choose to be certified that they meet the requirements using either internal (in-house) mechanisms or external certification organisations.

In the UK, businesses may achieve certification under three standards or schemes:

- ISO 14001 is the international standard for EMS's, and specifies the requirements necessary for organisations to implement an EMS.
- EMAS (the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) is a voluntary EU wide scheme. ISO 14001 is effectively the management element of EMAS and can stand alone. Registration under EMAS requires an ISO 14001 based environmental management system as well as additional elements, such as an Environmental Statement that has been verified by a suitably competent person.
- BS 8555 is a new standard launched by the British Standards Institute, aimed particularly at small to medium sized enterprises (SME's). The standard breaks down the implementation process for ISO 14001 or EMAS into six separate stages. Under the Acorn Inspection Scheme, developed by The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), businesses can gain accredited inspection and recognition for their achievements at each step as they work towards full implementation of ISO 14001 or EMAS.

9. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING AN EMS?

The key benefits of an EMS to any organisation are listed below:-

- Complying with environmental legislation can improve relations with the Environmental Regulators, and help an organisation avoid enforcement action and associated liability costs.
- Cost savings can be achieved through more efficient use of materials and energy.
- Independent certification of the system to a recognised standard may improve the public image of the organisation and community relations. It can also enhance competitiveness. Many businesses, as part of their own EMS, require suppliers and contractors to have an accredited EMS.

10. THE ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY AGENCIES AND EMS

Adoption of an EMS is not a regulatory requirement for organisations. However, implementing an EMS can make it easier to comply with the requirements of the law, and the organisation may benefit from implementing an EMS.

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has issued a government position statement on EMS's. This statement outlines the uses and benefits of a robust and credible EMS that follows a national or international standard or scheme, and that is audited by an independent certifier accredited by UKAS.

11. DEFRA POSITION STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

At European level, a three-year project called Remas was set up in 2002 with the aim of investigating whether businesses with a certified EMS show better environmental performance than those without. The initial results indicate that an accredited EMS does lead to overall improvement in systems and procedures.

12. REMAS: EUROPEAN REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In England and Wales, the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) guidance describes an EMS as an integral system of best practice for Part A(1), A(2) and B PPC sites. Any site, but especially Part A(1) and A(2) sites, may have a requirement for an EMS as part of their PPC permit conditions. In general, businesses are encouraged to seek certification to one of the two recognised standards (ISO 14001 or EMAS) through UKAS accredited certifiers.

In England and Wales, the Environment Agency takes into account the existence of certified EMS's in its operator performance and pollution risk based charging schemes (EP OPRA and OPRA for Waste). This may result in lower regulatory fees being charged to those businesses that have a certified EMS.

The Environment Agency views businesses that have a certified EMS registered under EMAS more favourably than those registered under ISO 14001. The Environment Agency views businesses certified by a UKAS-accredited auditing body more favourably than those certified by a non UKAS-accredited body.

13. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMS?

Some of the steps a business or organisation needs to take to implement an EMS that fulfils the requirements of ISO 14001 or EMAS are listed below:-

- Senior management commitment to an environmental policy, which must include:
 - Continuous improvement; prevention of pollution; and compliance with environmental legislation.
 - Establishing and keeping up-to-date a list of the business or organisation's environmental, legal and stakeholder requirements.
 - Identifying and evaluating the areas where the organisation has potential to impact on the environment.

- Formulating environmental objectives and targets for the organisation, based on the environmental policy and legal requirements, and the environmental impacts identified.
- Making a plan that outlines how the business proposes to achieve the objectives and targets.
- Implementing the plan. This entails developing the capabilities and support mechanisms necessary to achieve the objectives, and setting targets, including staff responsibilities, competence (training needs) and resources.
- Measuring and evaluating outcomes using internal and external auditors.
- In response to audit, reviewing and continually improving the plan, procedures, and indeed the whole EMS by setting new targets and improving the delivery system.

This is by no means an exhaustive account of ISO 14001 or EMAS requirements. It is only intended to give a flavour of what is involved.

14. EXTERNAL CERTIFICATION

There are many organisations in the UK that certify businesses to ISO 14001 or EMAS. Some of these are accredited by UKAS, the UK Accreditation Service. This means that their work as certifiers is effectively quality controlled by UKAS. Businesses or organisations seeking certification to ISO 14001 or EMAS are advised to use a certifying body that is accredited by UKAS.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (SYFRS) recognises that its operations have an impact on the global and local environment. It is therefore committed to minimising all adverse environmental impacts within operational and resource constraints. SYFRS has a primary aim of reducing its 'carbon footprint' which is a measure of the impact human activity has on the environment in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide that is produced .

Improving our corporate environmental performance throughout our operations is a high and continuing priority, to be achieved through the implementation of an environmental management system and adherence to this policy.

SYFRS will work towards action in the following areas:-

Waste

- Continue to work towards minimising waste and maximising the re-use and the recycling of materials.
- Look at how waste can be reduced from the maintenance of buildings, equipment and vehicles and the operational activities of SYFRS.

Energy

SYFRS contributes to global climate change by producing 'greenhouse' gases from a range of activities. The Service will:-

- Identify and (where possible) quantify emissions, establish targets and implement actions to achieve reductions.
- Encourage energy efficiency and support the use (where possible) of renewable energy generation.

Water

SYFRS recognises the impact on the environment of high water usage and the resultant treatment of waste water. It will therefore:-

- Ensure efficient use and reduce loss.
- Ensure operations and actions cannot pollute water sources.

Transport

SYFRS impacts on the environment by using operational vehicles such as appliances, fleet cars/vans and by employees using private cars to journey to and from work. We will:-

- Consider technological and other options to reduce the environmental impact of fleet vehicles, appliances, business travel.
- Encourage cycling, walking and the use of public transport, developed through a 'green' travel plan.

Land Management

SYFRS has limited areas of open land within its control. However, 'green' areas do exist around fire stations and other buildings. In the same manner that private small gardens when considered as group have a significant influence on the ecology of the area, the Service recognises the importance of good land management. It will, unless it hinders the proper performance of SYFRS duties:-

- Prevent activities being undertaken on open land that would cause long term harm to natural wildlife and habitat.
- Encourage local communities along with other partnership agencies to undertake projects on these land areas.

Purchasing and Procurement

Procurement decisions have a direct influence on how well SYFRS can meet its sustainability requirements. The organisations from whom we buy our services, works and supplies must share our commitment to sound environmental performance and improvement. To achieve this we will:-

- Develop and adopt a formal sustainable procurement policy.
- Work in partnership with our suppliers and contractors to minimise the environmental impact of their goods and services.

Sustainability our Partners and the People we Serve

There is a general acknowledgement that to reduce the impact on the environment requires global action. In the way we conduct our daily work and lives can together have a significant positive impact on the environment. In recognition of this we will:-

- Influence and encourage other agencies and organisations to work towards the principles of a sustainable environment.
- When opportunities arise raise environmental awareness.

Operational Service Delivery

In carrying out our operational duties and in undertaking training for dealing with emergency situations, it is recognised that the practices we adopt and the equipment and substances used may cause harm to the environment. As a result we aim to:-

- Reduce environmental contamination due to operational duties and training requirements.

Signed.......... Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

Date.....17/05/2007.....