

East Sussex County Council

'East Sussex County Council: Carbon Management Action Plan'

The County Council has cut its carbon dioxide (CO₂) by over 14% (or 5,534 tonnes) in 5 years.



Flooding in Lewes in 2000



Wind turbine at Ringmer College



Northiam School boiler room insulation



Biomass boiler installation

Notable Features

- Invested in a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, including the single largest biomass boiler scheme in the South East (a winner in last year's awards);
- Converted over 95% of our estate and schools to a renewable electricity tariff;
- Helped others to take action (eg. through our award-winning BETRE business support programme).

Setting the scene

In 2005 the County Council developed a systematic and prioritised Carbon Management Plan to reduce our CO₂ emissions by 14% (5,317 tonnes) by 2009-10 compared to the base year figure in 2001-2 of 37,977 tonnes.

The objectives were to:

- Cut our contribution to global warming, particularly as we have experienced first hand the devastating impact of extreme weather events (eg. flooding in Lewes in 2000);
- Develop a Sustainable Buildings Strategy to embed key sustainability issues into all our refurbishment and new build work (ie. materials, energy, transport and so on), ensuring a minimum BREEAM standard of 'good';
- Manage the continual increase in energy prices;
- Encourage others to take action, through regular features in 'Your County' magazine, which we distribute to every household.

Core funding of £225,000 per year was allocated to implement the Plan, and funding bids were successfully made for a further £280,000 to increase the cash available.

Beating the odds

Key barrier: securing the resources necessary to implement the Carbon Management Plan.

Overcome by:

- o clear leadership;
- o every Department obtaining a benefit (eg. reduced energy costs);
- o demonstrating the business case for investing in carbon management;
- o securing funding from a range of external funders;
- o recruiting additional enthusiastic staff.

Key barrier: charging staff for parking at County Hall as part of our travel plan. Overcome by:

- o ensuring all staff knew what was happening, when and why;
- o working with UNISON to ensure equitable charging;
- o ring-fencing parking income to pay for improvements to commuting to work by means other than private car (eg. subsidised public transport).

Reaping the benefits

Environmental benefits:

- reduced our CO₂ by over 14% (or 5,534 tonnes).
- embedding an environmental ethos and knowledge of environmental technologies across our Property teams.

Economic benefits:

- our 1MW biomass boiler supports the rural economy by employing approximately 24 people to coppice 1,000+ tonnes of local woodchip p.a.
- contracting local renewable energy technology businesses.

Social benefits:

- a saving of over £115,000 p.a. on our energy bill frees resources for service delivery;
- renewable energy projects in schools provide a hands-on educational resource;
- improved energy efficiency in residential care homes has raised comfort levels for residents and staff.

Lessons to share with others:

- senior management and Member support are essential;
- develop a systematic and realistic Action Plan;
- provide the training to ensure carbon management is embedded within service delivery teams ; celebrate your successes.

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