

Executive summary

Today, the Government defines sustainable development as

“To enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations”.

It is not just a case of how we should live our lives today but it also about future generations and their moral right to expect forbearers to protect the planet from lasting harm. Sustainable development aims to ensure that decision makers take into consideration the economy, people and the environment with equal parity

To achieve a sustainable economy, it will be necessary to have sustainable growth and employment. We need to move away from the disposable society and businesses need to support sustainable production and consumption of goods and services. To achieve social equity, everyone should share in the benefits of positive and transparent decision-making. Environmental sustainability means reducing the intensive use of energy and water, and the effective use of natural resources whilst preventing waste wherever possible. The key priorities for this strategy reflect the Government’s sustainable development priorities.

Since 1986, Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority has managed the disposal of household waste collected by the constituent District Councils of Merseyside. In the past, the simple answer was to dispose of waste in a hole in the ground. Today, the Authority is striving to find the best practicable solutions for the recovery and treatment of more than 800,000 tonnes of resources in a sustainable manner rather than sending them to landfill.

The Authority understands and respects the ethos of sustainable development and accepts it has a duty and a responsibility to its stakeholders including the residents of Merseyside and the global community to ensure that all its operations and activities are undertaken with due care and consideration of the balance between the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability.

In 2006, the Authority reviewed and amended its corporate plan to make the activities of the organisation more sustainable. The Authority’s new vision is

‘To improve people’s quality of life by ensuring that waste is sustainably managed to bring about the best combination of environmental, economic and social benefits’

The Authority ratified sustainable development, sustainable procurement and environmental policies in 2007. This new headline sustainability strategy provides the context for the delivery of these policies together with the existing corporate social responsibility policy.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

This document acts as a Headline Sustainability Strategy with a set of principles and key priorities for sustainable development.

The overarching aim of this strategy is to:

Guide the Authority in integrating and coordinating the principles and priorities of sustainable development across strategies, policies, projects, plans, budgets and activities in order to attain sustainable waste management and ultimately achieve sustainability in all that it does.

Our priorities will focus on four key areas each of which has a supporting Supplementary Strategy:

- **Climate Change;**
- **Sustainable Procurement;**
- **Corporate Social Responsibility; and**
- **Environmental Management.**

The understanding of MWDA employees and members has been improving over the last few years, but sustainability can be a complex subject and difficult to incorporate into everyday activities and decision making. An early element to the delivery of this strategy will be to raise awareness levels of staff and establish effective guidance and performance systems within the organisation.

Over the next 25 years, the Authority will be responsible for procuring contracts and projects worth in excess of 3.5 billion pounds. It is essential that public money contributes towards safeguarding the environment, supports local communities and creates local jobs and provides value for money on a whole life cost basis. A thorough understanding of the cross cutting nature of sustainability is required so that over time, the Authority will be able to define and quantify its actions as sustainable in a way that is transparent to its stakeholders. Although there are many quick wins, the road to delivering and demonstrating sustainable development is a long one with many opportunities for improvement along the way.

The action plan to deliver this strategy will be reviewed and reported on through the Authority's Annual Report.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientifically, there is little doubt that climate change is now the greatest challenge faced by society. Climate change has increased significantly in the last hundred years due to the burning of fossil fuels and human activities that have altered the chemical composition of the Earth's atmosphere through increased levels of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄). The Stern Report (2006) estimates that 3% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to waste and its management. The Authority will take steps to lessen the scale of its contributions to climate change in the future through the activities over which it has direct influence, particularly in its day to day operations and the impact of our contracts.

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

The Government aims to be the leading sustainable procurement nation in the EU by 2009 with the public sector seen as a key participant to achieve this stated aim. The Authority has begun the process of procuring contracts and projects to deliver the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Merseyside , which is worth in excess of 3.5 billion pounds.

Sustainable procurement is about making decisions to purchase products and services which take account of environmental and social factors. This includes considering where products come from, materials used, how they are made and by whom. It is even about whether a purchase or service is necessary!

The Authority will implement its sustainable procurement activities with the aid of the National Sustainable Procurement Flexible Framework and aims to be practising sustainable procurement across its activities by April 2009.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Organisations are coming under increasing pressure from stakeholders or shareholders to take responsibility for issues that have traditionally been considered outside their normal activities.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a process whereby businesses and organisations takes responsibility across their entire supply chain for the social, environmental and economic consequences of its activities. They then report on these consequences and constructively engage with stakeholders including its staff.

Corporate principles

The Authority has the following set of corporate principles:

- Human rights
- Shared responsibility

- Integrity
- Openness and accountability
- Sustainability
- Diversity
- Training and development
- Environment
- Community and
- Volunteering

The Authority will use its annual report as a vehicle to report on corporate social responsibility issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

MWDA will proactively manage and minimise its environmental impacts through the implementation of an environmental management system. It is our policy to ensure that we meet environmental and legal requirements as a minimum and demonstrate best practice in environmental management wherever practicable. We are committed to continually monitor environmental risks and to deliver continuous environmental improvements.

It is the intention of the Authority to convey the need for best practice in environmental management to others who provided services to or on our behalf. We will report on our environmental management through the Authority's annual report.