

**GROWING AWARENESS – A PLAN FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL
REVIEW 2011/12
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 10th July 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) considered the annual report by the Head of Environmental Management on the Council's Environment Strategy – Growing Awareness – A Plan for Our Environment. The following paragraphs contain a summary of the Panel's discussions on the report.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has questioned whether there are any plans to increase the types of materials that can be recycled. In response, Members have been pleased to note that the Council is hoping to expand the range of items that can be recycled, and that work is ongoing with other authorities in order to determine the cost effectiveness of offering an enhanced service.
- 2.2 Having questioned whether it is still worth installing PV Panels and other energy savings measures given the reduction in the Government Feed-in-Tariff, Members have been advised that as there has also been a decline in the capital cost of their installation, they still offer a favourable rate of return and as such should still be encouraged.
- 2.3 The Panel has discussed the Green Deal, which is due to be launched in the coming months. Having been advised that Councils will be best placed to promote this scheme, Members have stressed the importance of ensuring that the Council provides the best value options for householders. It is also recommended that, as far as possible, local traders should be used to deliver installations. A procurement exercise will be undertaken and a report will be delivered back to the Panel in due course on the precise details of the scheme.
- 2.4 The Panel has highlighted the fact that the Council has not achieved its target of a 5% reduction in the cubic metres of water consumed by Council buildings, noting a 5.7% increase on 2008/09. Members have been assured that this will become a priority of the Environment Team and it will continue to be carefully monitored. They have also drawn attention to the increase in the percentage of Council employees travelling to work by car and the slow progress in reducing the amount of waste recycled from the Council's headquarters. The key lesson to learn from these results is that continual efforts need to be made to reinforce the activities that are designed to achieve targets. In particular, reference has been made to the need to promote the Council's home-working policy and its travel Plan.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) as set out above when considering this item.

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Background Documents - Reports and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 10th July 2012.