



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY SELECT COMMITTEE

**REDUCING TRAFFORD'S
CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Chairman's Introduction

Trafford's Sustainability Select Committee's review of Trafford's Carbon Footprint has considered emissions from the business sector, which contributes to a high percentage of total carbon emissions in Trafford. As Trafford Park is one of the largest industrial estates in Europe, the Select Committee has focused its efforts on understanding and addressing the issue within this area. Opportunities and activity are strengthened when Partners work collectively, and the work of the Select Committee has galvanised effort to achieve the common goal of reducing carbon emissions.

Councillor Linda Blackburn (Chairman, Sustainability Select Committee
2009/10

The Select Committee



Introduction

The consensus of opinion that human economic activity results in emissions of CO₂ that will impact on all our livelihoods demands a response. This is not only a global issue; it is important and relevant to Local Authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. To help reinforce this, the Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009 (CAA) included ‘Sustainability’ as one of its underpinning themes. Within the CAA framework, one of the ten key questions was how environmentally sustainable is the area?

This review works towards one of the ambitions contained within Trafford’s Sustainable Community Strategy that by 2021 Trafford will have a less carbon emissions from businesses. In addition, it supports Trafford’s commitment to playing its part in the Greater Manchester Region’s Manchester Climate Change Action Plan, which includes a commitment to deliver a reduction of at least one million tonnes of Greater Manchester’s annual CO₂ emissions by 2020.

Carbon Dioxide emissions from businesses in Trafford Park form a large portion of total CO₂ emissions in Trafford, and must therefore be considered in the Council’s and Partnership’s efforts to make Trafford more sustainable. However, in similarity to the rest of the country reducing CO₂ emissions from business has proved difficult in Trafford.

A typical scrutiny review might investigate issues where there is a concern or interest around established service provision and where there is plenty of good practice from which to learn. At the outset, Select Committee Members and scrutiny staff recognised that this review would be different.

Individual Partners and stakeholders within the Trafford Partnership share common goals, and this review aimed to facilitate Partners coming together to deliver a shared and co-ordinated approach to this challenging issue.

The Select Committee recognised that new ground had to be broken and relationships built in an area that is presenting other authorities across the country with major difficulties. Trafford Scrutiny also had no prior relationship with the key agencies involved in carbon reduction, and these would be the bodies to which recommendations would be made.

Because of this the Select Committee decided to take a steady and measured approach to the review, placing importance on the need to build relations with stakeholders and fully engage them through the review process. It was recognised that there would be two clear phases to the review that would span two municipal years, which is longer than a typical scrutiny review.

The Select Committee’s approach of building sustainable relationships based on understanding shared needs is already proving very beneficial and is bringing Partners together, fostering new relationships and raising the profile of key issues in the Council, Trafford Partnership and the Borough.

Initial Research

In July 2009 the Select Committee met with representatives from the AGMA Environment Commission and the Trafford Environment Partnership, one of whom is a representative of Groundwork - a group of charities helping people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, build skills and job prospects, and live and work in a greener way. These stakeholders met with the Select Committee on 21 July 2009 providing background information. In addition, the Select Committee received briefing papers from the Council staff relating to how CO₂ reduction impacts on the following areas:

- Air quality
- Asset Management
- Biodiversity
- Strategic Housing
- Planning and Building Control
- Recycling and Waste
- Strategic Planning
- Parks and Greenspace
- Transport
- Procurement

The Select Committee heard that The Trafford Partnership's efforts to reduce CO₂ focus on three main sources of emissions:

- Domestic;
- Transport; and
- Business.

The Environment Partnership informed the Select Committee that they were having most success addressing domestic emissions and the Council was having some success reducing its own emissions. However, reducing emissions from business was proving difficult, both nationally and locally. Trafford Park provides a high concentration of businesses and subsequent emissions.

The Select Committee learned that the focus and most persuasive reasons for reducing CO₂ emissions have shifted in recent years. There is now mainstream acknowledgement and support for both the 'green' and, significantly, also for the financial benefits for both the Borough and business. Challenges and drivers for this review exist at both these levels:

- At a Borough level, there is opportunity and risk from the emerging New Economy for Greater Manchester, its impact on the Economic Development Plan and, in particular, on the Trafford Park Masterplan.
- At a business level – engaging medium-sized businesses has been proven to be challenging; past, present and future. The review has shown this is somewhere Scrutiny can add value.

Groundwork also showed the Select Committee some excellent examples of how they can save businesses money, whilst also reducing their carbon emissions.

Objectives of the review

Following the initial meeting on 21 July 2009 it was agreed that the main area chosen as a focal point would be:

Raising awareness and ensuring that the Council and its Partners have effective working relationships and structures in place to deliver key sustainability commitments within the sustainable community strategy, with a key focus on The Partnership's approach to tackling the carbon footprint of local businesses (i.e. Trafford Park).

The Trafford Park business area was chosen as a focus for this review because as large, concentrated location for many businesses there is the potential to have a major impact. Within Trafford Park, Members considered that there are already initiatives such as the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (formerly the Carbon Reduction Commitment) to support large businesses to reduce CO₂ emissions. This is the UK's mandatory climate change and energy saving scheme. It provides a financial incentive to reduce energy use by putting a price on carbon emissions and gives the opportunity to make savings on energy bills through improved energy efficiency. Within the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme, organisations buy allowances equal to their annual emissions. There is emissions 'cap' on the total allowances available to CRC participants. Within the overall limit, individual organisations can determine the most cost-effective way to reduce their emissions. This could be through buying extra allowances or investing in ways to decrease the number of allowances they need to buy.

The mandatory CRC scheme does not apply to small and medium sized enterprises. However, there are still good reasons why SMEs should be engaging in the larger effort to reduce CO₂ emissions: not only will it help reduce the Borough's carbon footprint, but the businesses would benefit from lower energy costs and find it easier to compete for contracts from larger organisations that require suppliers to have good environmental credentials. Within Trafford Park there is a large number of SMEs.

Groundwork and other Partners told the Select Committee how there had been attempts locally and beyond to engage with SMEs, but that is very difficult for a number of reasons. For example they may have limited time, staff or financial resource available to invest in environmental activity, or they perceive that the benefits of undertaking such work will not provide sufficient return. However, the Select Committee heard that support is available to businesses for reducing CO₂ emissions and financial benefits can be realised.

The Select Committee considered it worthwhile to investigate the barriers Partners faced when attempting to engage with SMEs, with the findings being used to shape future activity.

Sub Objectives

- For councillors to hear what barriers and challenges small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have faced when trying to reduce carbon emissions, which will feed in to the final recommendations of the review
- For Scrutiny to facilitate engagement and activity between Partners, such as Groundwork, in offering their services to assist SMEs to reduce carbon emissions
- For the Trafford Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) and its Environment Partnership (Thematic Partnership) to raise their profile amongst the business community
- To facilitate the Chamber of Commerce to raise their profile within the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities of the potential within Trafford Park for piloting environment improvement schemes, supportive of a broader approach to a more environmentally-friendly economy and industrial sector.

Approach / Method of Research

Past attempts had been made in engaging with businesses, with varying success. It was recognised that careful thought, planning and cooperation from all Partners would be required to make any attempt both successful and sustainable. It was therefore essential that the Select Committee did not rush in to developing recommendations that were not supported by all relevant stakeholders, with poor uptake or uptake from businesses outside the target group. There was the risk of failing to meet expectations or achieve the required outcomes. As stated in the introduction, this was a review of two parts.

Phase One

It was agreed that in the review's first phase, the Select Committee would receive information on past attempts to engage with businesses, the current support and guidance offered to SMEs by organisations such as GM Chamber of Commerce and Groundwork, and the future plans for this important industrial park. It would look at this in comparison to local, regional and national experiences and good practice and also in relation to developments in the new 'green' economy. It was to gather this information by:

- Inviting people with experience and knowledge of carbon reduction to participate in the review and offer their perspectives.
- Councillors attending visits and relevant events.
- Interviews and meetings with key stakeholders.
- Desk-based research.

Phase One was to result in recommendations to Council and other relevant stakeholders arising from the Select Committee's findings.

Phase Two

Making Sustainable Profits in Trafford

The second phase of the review entailed the Committee hosting an event to raise awareness amongst small and medium sizes enterprises, on Trafford Park, and engage them with the carbon reduction agenda. A project group, consisting of representatives from the council, Groundwork and Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, was set up to deliver the event, again demonstrating the positive steps Scrutiny can take in bringing partners together to achieve joint outcomes.

The event invited small and medium-sizes businesses to hear from high-profile speakers, including a company that had undertaken energy-efficiency activity with amazing financial success, an overview of the regional programme for sustainable business, and the practical advice and assistance Groundwork can provide to companies who want to save money and reduce carbon-emissions.

In order to ensure maximum attendance, the event was marketed as a opportunity to save money, with only subtle references to carbon emissions and the environment, as it was felt by the project group that this had been a “turn-off” for businesses in the past.

However, in hosting the event, the Select Committee had to overcome two key barriers:

Key issue 1 – Contacting the right people

The initial principal challenge faced by the Select Committee was the lack of central database of information relating to businesses in Trafford.

Trading Standards, Community Safety and Business Rates, Groundwork and the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce supported the project by supplying their business databases to the Scrutiny team in order to canvass businesses from. Whilst the data we received was valuable to the project, in that it identified businesses in Trafford, it sometimes lacked information such as telephone numbers or type/size of business. As a result, time was spent searching for telephone numbers on the internet.

Whilst undertaking this review, feedback was received from officers undertaking other projects, such as travel planning and the Citizens Debate, that they found it difficult to engage businesses, so it would appear to be a challenge regardless of the subject matter.

The council and partnership may wish to review its approach to engaging with businesses in Trafford, particularly small and medium-sized companies.

Key issue 2 – Encouraging businesses to attend

The Select Committee acknowledged that such an event would be a challenge as, over the course of the review, Members had heard that Groundwork had ongoing difficulties in getting the message of carbon reduction out to businesses. The principal reasons for this are that small and medium sizes enterprises suffer from a lack of human, Financial and time resources.

During the promotion and telemarketing of the event, this proved to still be the case. As these companies only have a limited workforce, this type of event was only suitable for one or two people in the company. In addition, energy usage or sustainability was never their only role within the company. So, firstly contact had to be with specific individual, and they had to be persuaded that it would be beneficial to them, and their company, to attend.

Of those that did not accept the invitation, the responses can be summarised:

- The person was not available as they had other work commitments
- The event was not suitable as they rent their business premises from a large property organisation, and therefore they do not feel that they have direct control over energy usage and costs.
- The company already believed they were doing all they could or that it would not be financially viable (but only a few had received external support).
- The event was being held outside office hours (although others said they would be too busy to attend during office hours).

The council and Partnership may wish to consider this feedback if they are to undertake any future activity with businesses.

Due to the difficulties in engaging SME's in the carbon reduction agenda the Select Committee agreed to open up the event to all businesses in Trafford, not just those on Trafford Park, who were the original focus of the review. Even then, attracting businesses was difficult. In total, the electronic-flyer was emailed to over 500 companies, and over 300 telephone calls were made to businesses. Total attendance at the event was 15 (not including council officers and members of the committee).

Event outcomes

The event itself was very well received. The speakers on the evening were inspirational. In addition, information was provided by a range of organisations during the networking that occurred before the event commenced, including information on the Trafford Park Travel Plan and the council's Tidy Business Award.

Feedback from attendees has been very positive. The post event flyer, which has been sent to all businesses on the initial mailing lists to hopefully prompt future interest, is attached to this report (see Appendix A).

Two attendees have already received support from Groundwork following the event, and Groundwork is following the other attendees up.

Detailed Findings

Carbon Pledge

Groundwork informed the Select Committee that it has successfully worked with Local Authorities in other areas to implement Carbon Pledges. The Carbon Pledge is intended to encourage sustainable practice across a wide range of services from big business to local neighbourhoods and supports the wider commitment to cut UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 in a bid to tackle climate change.

The Pledge calculates your carbon footprint and demonstrates how making small changes to your behaviour can help the environment and save money.

There are three stages to the Carbon Pledge:

- Measuring your personal carbon footprint (measure of the amount of CO₂ that is created by your actions across the year)
- Selecting a number of pledges that will help reduce your carbon footprint
- Seeing how the pledges you've made reduce your carbon footprint

Carbon Pledges have been adopted by a number of businesses in the Trafford area. For example, Trafford based food manufacturing company Kellogg's is amongst 40 food and drink companies to sign an industry pledge to make 'fewer and friendlier food transport miles', in a move towards a cut in the impact of domestic food transport on the environment.

The Programme Co-ordinator for Environmental Business Services at Groundwork informed the Select Committee that many smaller businesses now need to show the larger companies they supply that they have 'green' credentials. Groundwork went on to explain that Manchester City Council provides such a 'kite-marked' function, and the Select Committee considered that there was scope for Trafford Council to provide similar.

Manchester City Council in partnership with Groundwork and the Environment Agency has developed an *Environmental Business Pledge*. This is broader than a carbon pledge, encompassing other key environmental issues such as waste minimisation and water efficiency. Carbon reduction however remains central to the scheme. Through this scheme businesses gain access to advice, training and assistance in improving their environmental performance. The scheme provides recognition to those businesses who have improved their performance.

By the end of 2008 the scheme had engaged with over 1,300 businesses of varying sizes across Manchester and had saved 2,042 tonnes in CO₂ emissions as well as saving businesses nearly £500,000 in cost savings via environmental improvements and generating £5.8 million worth of increased sales. The Select Committee considers this clearly demonstrates the potential benefit that could result, improving businesses' environmental and financial performance.

Recommendation 1

The Select Committee considers that the benefits available from a Carbon Pledge would help Trafford Council and Partnership to meet their Sustainability goals. It recommends the Council and Partnership investigate (possibly through further Scrutiny work) a 'Trafford Carbon Pledge Scheme', similar to other Councils' schemes.

Leadership Role

The Select Committee's review has enabled a number of people from different organisations to inform the evidence-gathering process.

Representatives from Groundwork and Quantum Strategy & Technology - management consultants whose aim is to help clients to address the issues associated with the movement towards sustainable development, informed the Select Committee of their difficulties in accessing the right individuals in SMEs when marketing carbon-reduction projects and services. They believe the support of Trafford Council and Trafford Partnership, including permission to use their emblems in promotional material would add gravitas and authenticity, encouraging more businesses and particularly SMEs to engage and take up assistance to reduce CO₂ emissions. This in turn would further demonstrate Trafford Council's leadership in both working with Partners and its commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

Recommendation 2

In light of the difficulties faced by stakeholder organisations such as Groundwork and Quantum promoting their services, the Select Committee considers that Trafford Council and Partnership should endorse and assist the work of the review Stakeholder Group in their drive to engage businesses in Trafford Park and the wider Borough in reducing carbon emissions. The Council and Partnership should demonstrate leadership in this by being associated with appropriate publicity, campaigns and targeted communications.

The Select Committee heard from Council staff of the improvements made by the Council in reducing its carbon emissions, for example through effective energy and asset management. The Council is meeting National Indicator 185 (CO₂ emissions from the council's estate) and last year, a cut in emissions of 10% was recorded. Whilst figures are still being recorded for this year, a reduction of 15% is projected. Staff from the Council were supported by Partner staff in stating that this must continue, as it will drive improvement across all sectors. The Select Committee acknowledges the Council's leadership role in reducing CO₂ emissions across the whole Borough.

Recommendation 3

The Select Committee considers that there is scope within its mainstream operations and in particular through the service transformation programme including the long term accommodation project to demonstrate good practice in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The Select Committee recommends that the Council leads the way by continuing to reduce its carbon emissions, publicising its good practice and demonstrating to others its commitment to tackling CO₂ emissions.

The New Economy

Over the last two years the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) has focussed on engaging with key individuals and organisations to understand and articulate low carbon solutions to issues that are critical to the economic prosperity of the city region. In doing this they have undertaken a number of key pieces of work, which has enabled Greater Manchester to position itself in the front line of world cities developing strategies for moving towards low carbon economies.

In December 2009 the Manchester City Region was designated the UK's first Low Carbon Economic Area for the Built Environment. AGMA's *New Economy* Commission, the strategic leadership body that promotes economic growth and prosperity in Greater Manchester, is developing a programme of work with Partners that aims over five years to:

- Add £650 million to the economy
- Support 34,000 jobs, including 18,000 in the supply chain; and
- Save six million tonnes of carbon

It will do this through:

- Deploying existing technologies and accelerating investment in science, technology and innovation to bring new products to the market;
- Raising employment and productivity levels by investing in the provision of appropriate low carbon high and low level skills; and
- Increasing investment in Manchester and the UK in low carbon industries and their supply chains.

The Select Committee heard from AGMA that, as one of the largest industrial areas in Europe, Trafford Park offers significant potential for the Borough to benefit from the New Economy; the shift to sustainable industry using new and renewable energy and materials. However, it also potentially faces the biggest risk, were it not to adapt to the changing economic environment.

The Trafford Economic Development Plan provides a single point of reference for Partners on matters relating to the development of the local economy. The Trafford Partnership in November 2009 endorsed the Trafford Economic Development Plan, commenting that "The cross cutting Environmental and Economic priority of reducing carbon emissions from business needs to be integrated into the Plan and discussions need to take place between the Economic Alliance and Environment Partnership on how to progress this priority."

Recommendation 4

Regarding the increased focus on the New Economy on a Greater Manchester-wide level, and the comments of the Partnership board on the Economic Development Plan, the Select Committee recommends that Trafford Council and Partnership review the Economic Development Plan to ensure it maximises the opportunities for Trafford Park, and the wider Borough, provided by the emerging New Economy in Greater Manchester.

Keeping Momentum

The importance of climate change is such that it requires solutions to it from a number of different stakeholders. Moreover, it requires constant liaison between Partners to maintain the momentum towards solving such problems.

All Partner organisations who have taken part in this review, including a range of services within the Council, have shown they have similar carbon-reduction goals. The group of stakeholder staff and officers which has formed as a result of this Review acknowledge that opportunities and activity are strengthened when they work together. Further to this, they agreed that the Review has brought officers and Partners together who had not previously worked together, and raised the profile of carbon emissions in business.

Recommendation 5

Having invested the Council's and Partner's time into developing an effective task group, the Select Committee recommends that the collaborative working of the stakeholder staff and officer group is maintained and strengthened, through inclusion and mainstreaming into the Trafford Partnership and Council working arrangements.

Sustainability Event

The main aim of the review was to raise awareness and ensure that Trafford Council and its Partners have effective working relationships with respect to tackling the carbon footprint of businesses in Trafford Park.

The Select Committee believes that organising an event in conjunction with Partners to raise awareness would be a key tool to sell to businesses the benefits that can be gained as a result of reducing their carbon footprint.

Groundwork believes that Council and Trafford Partnership endorsement of this event will improve their access into business, achieving our common goals (link to Recommendation 2).

This Review, in bringing together established Partners and facilitating new relationships between Partners, has demonstrated how well cross-cutting projects such as tackling climate change may be addressed through partnership working. The Select Committee considers that by facilitating an engagement event it would further support this (link to Recommendation 5).

Recommendation 6

The council and partners maintain momentum by hosting a similar event, potentially with Sale and Altrincham Chamber of Commerce who expressed interest during the organisation of the Trafford Park event. The lessons-learnt by the Select Committee will provide officers with an invaluable framework to organise a future event, and by hosting one soon, it will benefit from the positive feedback and communication associated with the Trafford Park event.

Acknowledgements

The Select Committee offers its sincere thanks to the following agencies and services, without whom this review would not have been possible:



Groundwork



Greater Manchester
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Commerce

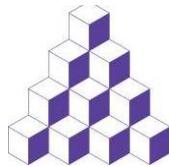


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