

1. SAVE CARBON SAVE MONEY

Resource efficiency is critical to achieving best value for money. Local authorities across the country are making significant cost savings through their carbon reduction projects. Your authority may have already invested in cost-effective energy saving measures such as improved heating, lighting and air conditioning controls, building improvements and computer power-down.

But in a time of budget cuts, it can be easy to forget the critical role of staff behaviour in achieving savings, and the importance of having an identified person with responsibility for energy management. More energy efficient products and innovative approaches to carbon reduction are developing all the time, so carbon management must be viewed as an ongoing priority – it is never “done”.

COST SAVINGS AT GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

GMFRS achieved its challenging target of reducing carbon emissions by 25% over 5 years, and has saved £3 million in utility bills in the process. Key to delivering this has been the retention of two full time sustainability employees and the commitment of all the workforce. Fire fighters have been encouraged to participate in the UK's first 'Greenest Fire Station' competition, resulting in more than 1,500 actions taken to improve efficiency and sustainability. This has been backed by cost-effective investment in voltage optimisation, LED lighting, high efficiency boilers, rainwater harvesting and solar panels. Savings have been found in simple measures, such as vehicle washing procedures, and world-leading innovations in fleet efficiency.

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Authorities that have been most successful in achieving savings have:

- A long-term strategy that sets out the importance of tackling carbon emissions and an action plan that is regularly reviewed
- Active support from senior officers and members
- An identified responsibility for carbon management
- A reporting mechanism to ensure progress on energy and carbon savings are regularly monitored and reported internally and externally (such as through the DECC scheme)
- Programmes to involve staff at all levels in acting on carbon emissions within their area of work

CARBON SAVINGS AT WIRRAL COUNCIL

Carbon Budgeting has been key to helping Wirral Council reduce CO₂ emissions from their own operations by 30% in four years, well on the way towards their corporate goal of achieving a 60% reduction by 2025. The Carbon Budget reinforces the aim of tackling climate change whilst also making cost savings. Annual targets are set for reducing emissions and presented every year at the Budget Cabinet as requested by Members. Savings have been made by improving energy controls, more efficient use of energy, staff training, building rationalisation and investment in PV and biomass.

In partnership with other public and third sector organisations, Wirral Council launched a new Climate Change Strategy in 2014, covering the whole borough.

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Photo: PV on Birkenhead Library



FURTHER READING & SUPPORT

Carbon Trust

The Carbon Trust now offers a paid-for service, but there's plenty of free information on carbon management on their website: www.carbontrust.com

CLASP

CLASP has produced an Eco-Champions Handbook to help with engaging staff: www.claspinfo.org/cheshire-and-warrington#handbook

COST-EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

Local authorities across the UK and abroad are proving that taking a sustainable approach to their operations and services delivers multiple benefits, such as improved performance, lower costs and better outcomes for their communities.

Climate change or sustainability themes are embedded in national policy and appear in different guises and services areas. Recent changes have threatened to push climate change, carbon reduction and sustainability off the priority list, as authorities handle the cuts agenda, tackle public sector reform and fight to deliver critical services with fewer resources. But actively addressing sustainability in corporate plans supports cost-effective service delivery – it is not just a “nice to have” that can be discarded when budgets are tight.

This series of briefings demonstrates how many local authorities are benefitting from actively considering sustainability in their operations and services:



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| 1. Save Carbon – Save Money | 6. Transport Infrastructure |
| 2. Generating Energy and Income | 7. Economic Development |
| 3. Decent Affordable Housing, Health & Fuel Poverty | 8. Supporting Communities |
| 4. Improving Public Health | 9. Reducing Risks |
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