

Achieving Sustainability

The Highways Agency's Sustainable Development Action Plan 2007-08

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Thursday 21st June 2007

Foreword by the Highways Agency Board

We know that the strategic road network that we manage can have a significant impact on future generations, in terms of both a contribution and a threat to ensuring sustainability. It is our role to ensure that the Government's principles and policies of sustainability are fully embedded into the way we do business. We will ensure that they underpin our corporate and business planning, the development of strategies and the actions in support of those plans.

In this, our first Sustainable Development Action Plan, we have drawn out those key actions during the coming year which will help us to deliver a more sustainable approach to the management and delivery of our business.

We are personally committed to this plan and will ensure that the Highways Agency delivers the actions contained within it with pride, passion and pace.

Archie Robertson
Chief Executive

Hilary Chipping
Network Strategy Director

Ginny Clarke
Procurement, Safety, Standards and Research Director

Jerry England
Interim Major Projects Director

Denise Plumpton
Information Director

Derek Turner
Traffic Operations Director

Steve Williams
Human Resources Director

Mel Zuydam
Finance Director

1. Sustainable Development: The Government's Approach

*Securing the Future*¹ (March 2005) sets out the UK Government's sustainable development strategy with the overarching aim 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".

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability are closely linked, with CSR representing the implementation of sustainable development principles in a business environment. The Government's vision for CSR is "to see UK businesses taking account of their economic, social and environmental impacts, and acting to address the key sustainable development challenges based on their core competences wherever they operate – locally, regionally and internationally."

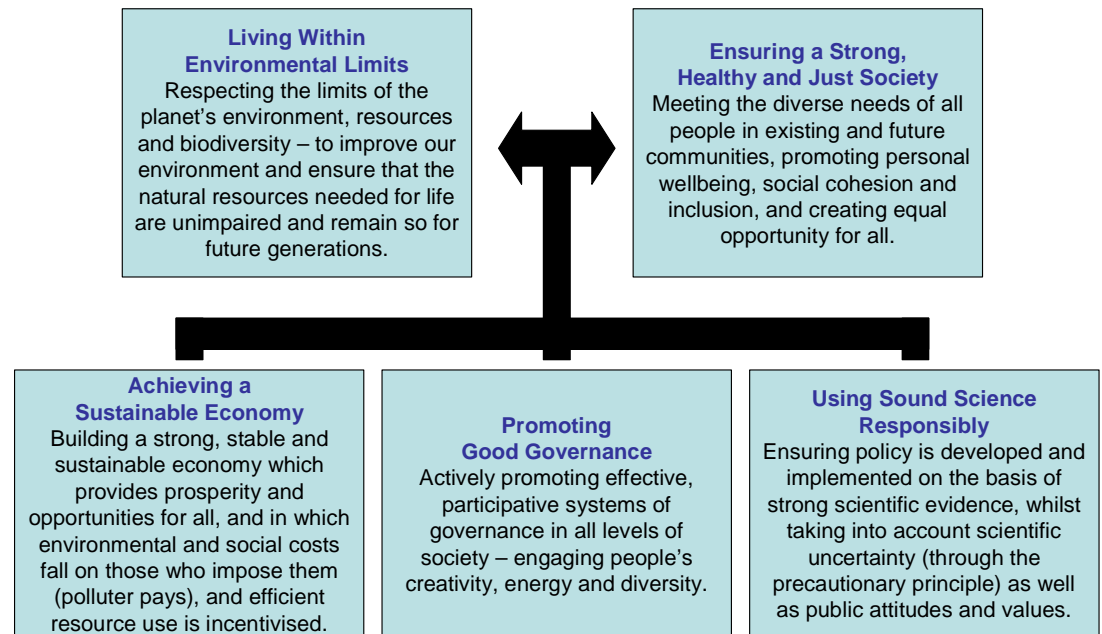
The lead government department, DEFRA, chairs a Programme Board to oversee delivery of the Strategy, but all UK departments share responsibility for making sustainable development a reality. The strategy was followed in 2006 by the publication of the Stern report on climate change which presented the global economic case for taking action on climate change – a key issue in the approach towards a more sustainable business.

The strategy aims to improve sustainable performance in the public sector so that departments and agencies become leading exponents of sustainable development. As a first step, the strategy commits all Government departments and their executive agencies to produce Sustainable Development Action Plans (SDAP). The DfT and its agencies have all produced individual plans,

building upon the Department's overarching December 2005 action plan. All of the DfT's action plans will be available at www.dft.gov.uk/about/how/sda.

The guiding principles of sustainable development, which the UK Government's Strategy proposes should underpin all of its policy, are shown pictorially below.

HM Government UK Sustainable Development: Guiding Principles



'Securing the Future': The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (Cm 6467), DEFRA March 2005

¹ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm

2. Making our business and operations more sustainable: Our Journey

What sustainability means for us

Customers First², our corporate plan, and our annually published Business Plans place our customers at the heart of our business. They explain our objectives to tackle congestion, improve safety, provide better information and respect the environment. They also highlight our responsibility to balance the need to travel with the need to contribute to a better quality of life for everyone – both now and in the future.

We recognise that, unless we plan carefully to ensure sustainability, our work could have quite a significant adverse impact on future generations.

Our construction and maintenance programmes use resources, aggregates, energy and water. We produce emissions to air and water as well as waste of which we need to dispose. Our network goes through towns, cities and rural areas where residents, fauna and flora are affected by noise and other emissions.

Our roads provide vital links between communities but they can also separate them and affect the quality of the local environment. We also employ many people directly, in our offices and on the network, and indirectly, through our contractors and suppliers. Last, but not least, we run a multi-billion pound business – good governance of which is essential.

Figure 1 on the following page details the main areas in which we impact against the UK priorities outlined in 'Securing the Future'. Improving our sustainable performance will help us deliver a better service to our customers.

² www.highways.gov.uk/aboutus/622.aspx

Our progress so far

In 2005, we made a commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting as part of our efforts to integrate sustainability into all aspects of our business. We produced our first CSR report as part of the 2005-06 Annual Report³.

The development and implementation of this sustainable development action plan is the next step in our journey to become a more sustainable organisation. Details on monitoring and reporting progress in future are contained in section 5 below.

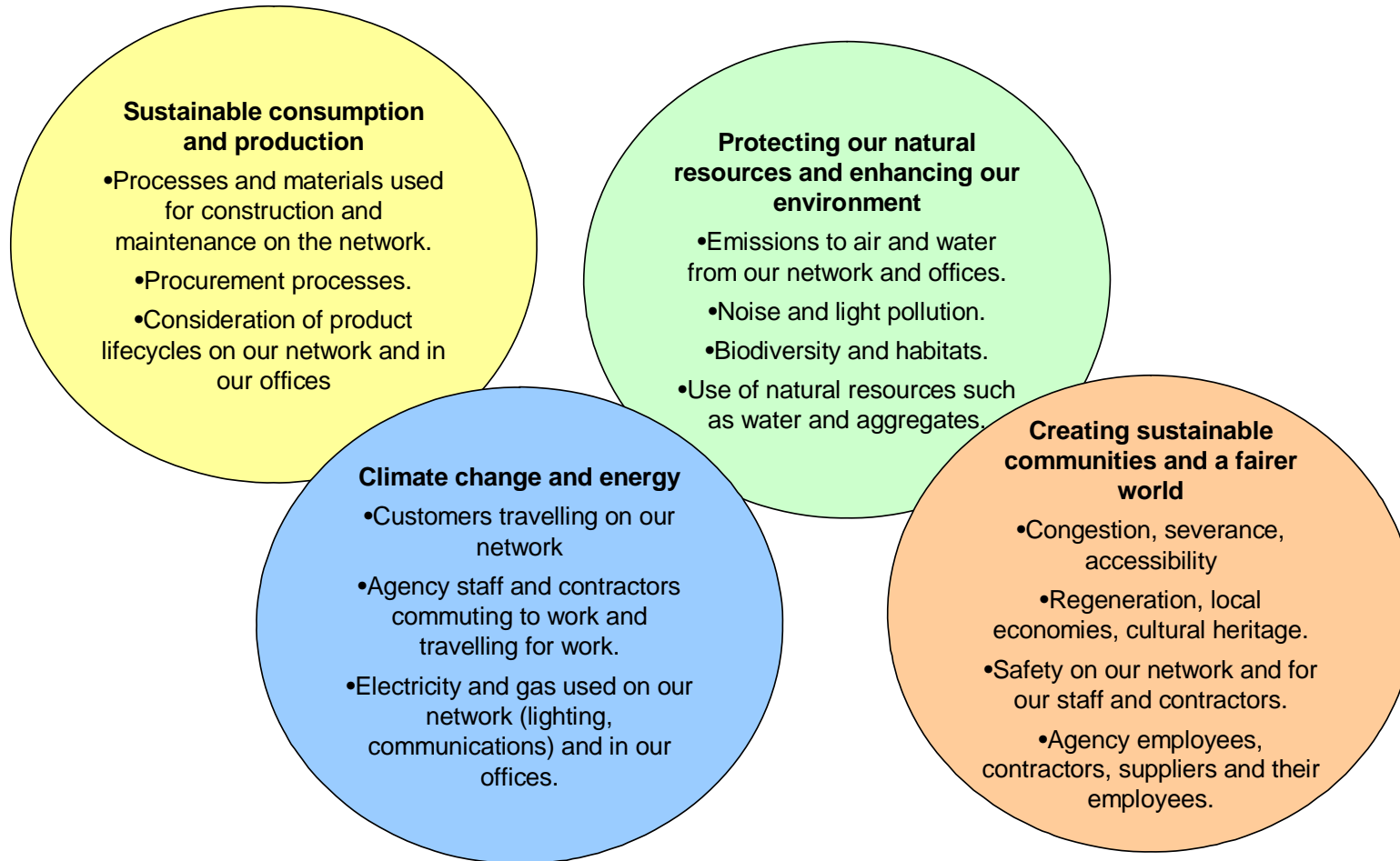
Our approach for the future

Our approach to making the impact of our works more sustainable is as follows:

- Developing our long term vision of what we will look like as an organisation with sustainability at the heart of our business (with input from key stakeholders).
- Developing our strategy to deliver our vision above.
- Taking forward our sustainable development action plan to implement the strategy.

³ www.highways.gov.uk/aboutus/11701.aspx

Figure 1 : Our main sustainability impacts against UK Priorities



3. Our Action Plan

A 'Living Document'

The development and implementation of our 2007-08 sustainable development action plan, shown on the following pages, is the next step in our journey to become a more sustainable organisation.

In the plan we have included activities that are already underway but, in this first year, our focus will also be on raising awareness of the importance of a more sustainable approach across the Agency. We will develop and implement a communication plan to help embed of the importance of a more sustainable approach and to encourage actions and behaviours to support the approach.

The plan is a living document which will be developed further in consultation with staff and stakeholders. It will be published and maintained through version control on our website www.highways.gov.uk. Progress on actions and any changes made will be reported on annually. This is explained in Section 5 below.

Our Priorities

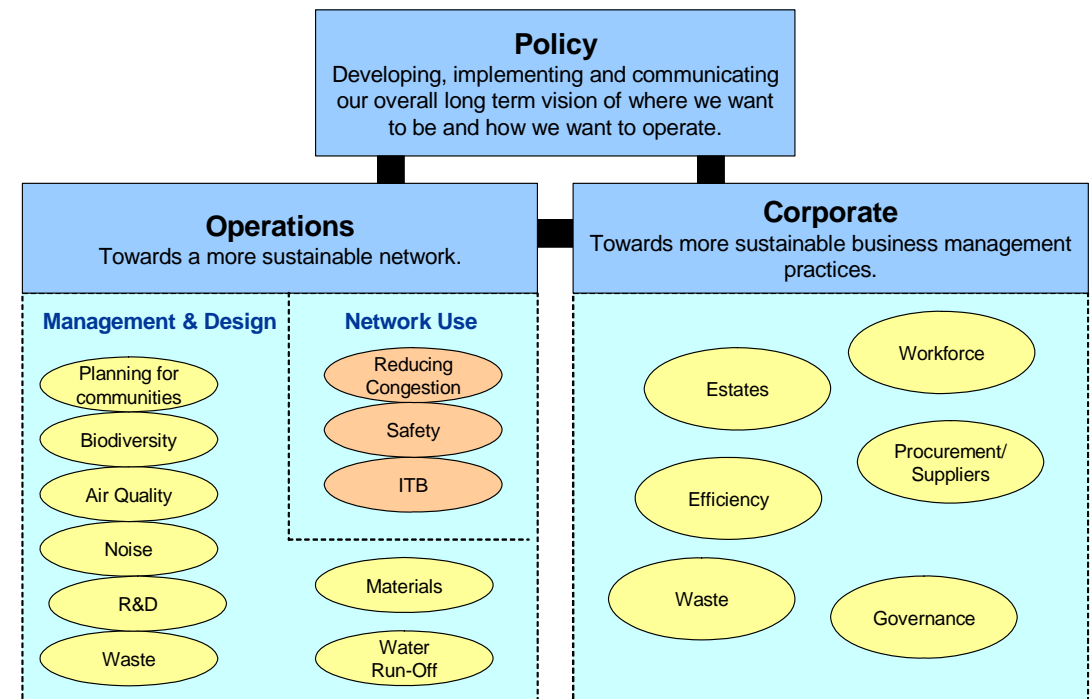
Our priorities necessarily lie with the delivery of Business Plan targets set by Ministers. All of our business plan targets support the underlying principles of sustainability. Our targets aim to reduce congestion on our network, improve safety and ensure that the effect of our work on the environment is mitigated.

This action plan will provide a focus on how to achieve these targets in a more sustainable way in future. We will set internal targets for delivery of the action plan to ensure that it is given the required level of priority.

Themes

We have grouped our planned actions under three strands of Policy, Operational and Corporate delivery as shown in the diagram below. We have also shown how each relate to the Guiding Principles of 'Securing the Future'

07-08 Sustainability Action Plan Themes



HIGHWAYS AGENCY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Theme	Area	No.	Action description	Owner	Action timescale	Commentary
Policy	Vision/ Direction	1.	PRIORITY ACTION: Develop the overall vision, objectives and long term targets for the Agency's sustainability journey.	NS	Mar 08	Strategy being developed in Autumn/Winter 2007
		2.	Implement a Programme Management Board to steer the development and implementation of the vision described at Action 1 above.	NS	Jul 07	
		3.	Develop a tool for the analysis of sustainability for all Board papers.	NS/ SSR	Mar 08	To support the Board in considering sustainability issues in relation to Board discussions.
	Policy/ Process	4.	Develop climate adaptation strategy giving a consistent message across our business and identifying key risks to decision makers.	SSR	Mar 08	The strategy will assist the HA in reviewing standards taking consequences of climate change into account.
		5.	Develop waste, resource use and recycling strategy for maintenance and construction operations seeking to establish a benchmark for future target setting. Continue research and development in sustainable construction.	SSR	Mar 08	Guidance for the implementation of Site Waste Management Plans to HA projects, and a revised recycling performance indicator for maintenance operations; including through Environmental Information System (EnvIS).
		6.	Embed a review of sustainability as part of the 'Way we Work' business process review to ensure that all Agency processes support sustainable development principles.	FS	Mar 08	
		7.	Investigate HA's Procurement Strategy (and Review) for validity and alignment alongside DfT sustainable procurement objectives"	Proc	Mar 08	
	Comms & Education	8.	Undertake a review of 2006-07 process and implement lessons learned for preparation of new action plan for 2008-09.	NS/ SSR	Jul 07	
		9.	Develop a refreshed action plan to support the new vision and strategy for HA Board consideration.	NS	Jan 08	
		10.	Involve the Senior Management Team in developing the sustainability strategy to assist with engagement.	NS	Oct 07	
		11.	Develop training for all project leaders, in partnership with Major Projects and Traffic Operations, to assist them with improved consideration of sustainability issues.	NS	Mar 08	
		12.	Organise suppliers and project leaders workshops to discuss how and when more sustainable strategies could be included further: a. workshop with Maintenance Community b. workshop with Construction Community c. workshop with Research Framework Community	NS TOD MP SSR	Mar 08	Making use of existing HA Communities with Procurement's assistance.
	Operations	Sustainable Major Projects	13.	Develop project scope and brief for a sustainable project demonstration scheme.	NS	Mar 08

HIGHWAYS AGENCY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Theme	Area	No.	Action description	Owner	Action timescale	Commentary
	Traffic Officer Service	14.	Review the strategy for provision of Traffic Officer vehicles, along with usage and deployment of vehicles to determine if a reduction in CO2 against the 2007-08 baseline can be achieved in future years whilst operational capability and requirements are maintained.	TOD	Mar 08	07-08 will be the first year of operation of the full Traffic Officer Service (TOS) nationally. During the period we will establish the baseline for use and deployment of vehicles, including purchase of a suitable software system for this purpose and also review the procurement arrangements for renewal of the TOS fleet.
	Influencing Driver Behaviour	15.	Evaluate the benefits of the voluntary travel plans introduced in 2006-07 and introduce at least 18 travel plans	NS	Mar 08	This is an important part of building the evidence base to inform future decisions on resource allocations. Some of the 18 travel plans will be secured through the planning process
		16.	Roll out Driver Information Programmes (DIPs) for motorcyclists, young drivers, commercial vehicle drivers and those driving on business as well as new initiatives for vulnerable users and a study and DIP for hard shoulder incidents. Other DIPs to join the Toolkit once complete.	SSR	Mar 08	New toolkit launched in Jul 06. Rolling out through partnership meetings attended by Area Teams. These DIPs can now be offered to partners for no cost. Action linked to Area Safety Action Plan. Implemented with TOD.
		17.	Implement the new driver information services in line with the timetable agreed in the business cases approved by Ministers in 2006-07.	ID	Mar 08	The proposed new driver information services consist of Highways Agency Radio, broadcasting real-time CCTV images, and travel times on variable messages signs. The new services will provide better information to drivers enabling them to plan their journeys more effectively.
		18.	Implement the action plan to improve our existing information channels for drivers.	ID	Mar 08	The action plan focuses on improving the usefulness and accuracy of information displayed on our variable messages signs and on improving our Traffic England web service. The improvements will provide drivers with better information about their journeys enabling them to take more informed decisions.
		19.	Improve effectiveness of links between Traffic England and Transport Direct to provide better information for journey planning.	ID	Mar 08	There are links already between Traffic England and Transport Direct. This action will focus on possible improvements to provide better journey planning information.
	Helping to reduce emissions	20.	Investigate the Agency's GHG/carbon footprint from construction, maintenance and network operations and identify potential future actions for reduction.	SSR	Mar 08	SSR Directorate led research seeking to determine the benchmark for possible future target setting.
	Improving Planning Consultation	21.	Extend post opening project evaluation process to include feedback from statutory bodies consulted at planning stage	SSR	Process developed by Mar 08	

HIGHWAYS AGENCY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Theme	Area	No.	Action description	Owner	Action timescale	Commentary
	Reducing Network Energy Consumption	22.	Develop an energy efficiency strategy for road lighting that will identify ways to reduce carbon emissions and pollution of the night sky.	SSR	Sept 08	Evaluate the approach to road lighting to identify more efficient use such as variable lighting levels and the necessity for lit signage without impacting road safety.
		23.	Produce a new whole life cycle Code of Practice for road lighting, for improved overall lighting efficiency.	SSR	Sept 08	This Code will provide central advice on all lighting requirements including environmental issues.
		24.	Identify alternative safety measures to road lighting to reduce costs, carbon emissions and pollution of the night sky.	SSR	Sept 08	Advice identifying a suite of safety improvement options (tools) that can be used as value added alternatives to road lighting.
Corporate	Sustainable Procurement	25.	Investigate, in liaison with Customer Business Areas, how recognition of CEEQUAL (The Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment Award Scheme) could be included in contracts.	PD	March 08	Office of Government Commerce Common Minimum Standards for construction mandated in January 2006
	Influencing Staff Travel Behaviours	26.	Establish a programme to develop and implement travel plans for the Highways Agency estate. Promote sustainable commuting and business travel, through alternatives such as walking, cycling and use of public transport, HA Transport Manager, videoconferencing and home working. Develop targets and monitoring process (staff survey).	NS	Mar 08	Perceived as important for ITB programme as Agency requiring travel plans from organisations having an impact on the network and needs to lead by example. Responsibility split is – policy, survey and coordination - NS(ITB). Delivery and funding of site-based initiatives - HRS(PFM)
		a.	Develop and Publish a new HA Travel Policy for all offices and Regional Control Centres (RCCs)	NS	Sep 07	
		b.	Conduct a Staff Travel Survey	NS	Aug 07	
		c.	Implement Travel Plans in two Offices to include specific sustainable travel targets	Des Dirs/ NS	Mar 08	
		d.	Develop a review process for monitoring the effectiveness of Travel Plans	NS	Dec 08	
	27.	Implement the new car parking policy within the Lateral office in Leeds as a pilot site.	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08	Generic policy produced for HA car park management; roll out programme being agreed.	
	28.	Ready Reckoner to show carbon cost of air travel, rail (2007) and business car journeys (2008) and add carbon cost to retail price	FS	Mar 08	With SSR support for data on emissions. Linked to implementation of offsetting scheme (below), allowing each team to manage its carbon costs	
	29.	Implement offsetting scheme for administrative travel including air, rail and business car journeys (Not including HA Traffic Officers' journeys for 07-08)	FS	Mar 08	Linked to Ready Reckoner and DEFRA scheme for central Govt resulting from UK SD strategy commitment (last resort when video conferencing, etc exhausted and journey necessary)	
	Protecting Biodiversity - HA Estate	30.	Confirm the condition status of existing HA SSSI landholdings with Natural England. As appropriate, contribute to the development and implementation of management plans to further the conservation and enhancement of sites within sole or part ownership.	SSR	Mar 08	

HIGHWAYS AGENCY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Theme	Area	No.	Action description	Owner	Action timescale	Commentary
	Managing our Estate	31.	When relocating, choose new buildings with very good or excellent Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating only. Buildings classified as 'good' will only be chosen when there is no appropriate 'excellent' option.	HRS (PFM)	When relocating	
		32.	Carbon Trust energy audits to be carried out in all offices and Regional Control Centres (RCCs).	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08	DfT requirement, UK Climate Change Policy 2006
		33.	Evaluate potential to conduct a SD flagship project at Federated House, Dorking, and Ash House, Exeter, (reducing carbon, energy, waste and water and improving temperature control)	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08	Federated and Ash House earmarked as having inefficient temperature control.
		34.	Investigate the carbon offset contribution towards Government targets through the use of the soft estate (forestry projects).	SSR	Mar 08	Existing knowledge suggests limited potential, but we need confidence/evidence from research
	Reducing Office Energy Consumption	35.	Re-launch communication campaign in offices to reduce energy use and carbon emissions.	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08	Some campaigns are already running and HA Property & Facility Management (PFM) is looking at ways to improve comms, working with suppliers.
		36.	Source at least 10% of electricity used in offices and RCCs from renewable sources by 2008 and source at least 15% of electricity used in offices and RCCs from Combined Heat & Power by 2010 (June 06 Framework).	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08/ Mar 10	Agency already buys 10% of its network electricity from renewable sources, action rolling it out to offices and RCCs
		37.	Investigate options to reduce the energy consumption of our IT equipment and develop plans for future improvements.	ID	Mar 08	
	Office Waste/ Recycling	38.	Staff communication campaign to ensure existing waste and recycling policies understood by all staff.	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08	
		39.	Removal of all individual bins from all offices and RCCs, replaced by central bins to segregate different types of waste (as in Bedford).	HRS (PFM)	Mar 08	

4. Involving our stakeholders and staff

Our first action plan

This first sustainable development action plan is aimed at engaging and involving all Highways Agency staff and partners in the supply chain in improving the sustainable performance of the Agency, and building relationships that are strong, transparent and accountable.

Preparation

During preparation of this action plan, we engaged with staff at various levels within the organisation through:

- An Agency briefing in July 2006.
- An ideas e-mail box.
- Workshops with key staff.

The team also consulted:

- Representation from all Directorates.
- Sustainable Development Commission.
- Our National Environment Committee.

Maintaining the momentum

To support the implementation of the plan and ensure that all staff offices are involved, we will implement a communications strategy which includes:

- A dedicated portal/intranet site for staff.
- Using existing internal publications to launch the plan publish updates on progress and gather feedback.
- Further workshops to inform and consult staff at all levels across the Agency during the implementation of the plan and to feed its monitoring and annual review.
- The promotion of the new 'Sustainable Development' award at the "You make it happen" annual staff awards event.

Reaching outside the Agency

We will influence our contractors and suppliers through our procurement process and through our employees' increased awareness of sustainability issues.

We also recognise that we should share our experience with other partners and organisations in other sectors. We will endeavour to share information through media coverage, conferences and presentations to other professional groups where relevant.

5. Monitoring, reviewing, reporting

Making it 'business as usual'

This section explains how we are incorporating the management of these actions in our normal business management procedures.

Ownership

In delivering the integration of sustainability into all aspects of our business there is a role for everyone in the Highways Agency. Each action within our plan has been assigned an owner within the Agency.

Monitoring

Actions have been incorporated into our normal performance management processes for monthly monitoring via our balanced scorecard approach. Progress in terms of the overall action plan will be monitored by a programme board – details of which are shown in the diagram opposite.

The actions described in this section all contribute to ensuring that we have an effective framework of accountability and transparency in the delivery of sustainable objectives.

Annual Report

A full report on progress, including a review of the action plan, will be produced each year. The findings will be summarised in the results in the Agency's Annual Report, under our 'Corporate Social Responsibility' section, which is targeted at customers and stakeholders as well as the general public. Our commitment to such reporting was made in 2005 as part of our efforts to integrate sustainability into all aspects of our business.

Highways Agency Sustainable Development: Programme Management Structure

