



lancashireenvironment forum

essence

essence news from lancashire environment forum
protecting and enhancing the environment of Lancashire

www.environmentforum.lancspartners.org

Spring 2008

Lancashire's Local Area Agreement

A new Lancashire Local Area Agreement (for 2008 to 2011) is currently emerging. Each LAA area is required to select up to 35 of the 198 new improvement indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships to form the basis of their LAA.

Six environment indicators have been selected by partners for inclusion in the 35.

The 6 indicators are;

- **NI 186** Per capita CO₂ emissions in the Local Authority area;
- **NI 187** Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating;
- **NI 188** Adapting to climate change;
- **NI 192** Household waste recycled and composted;
- **NI 195** Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting);
- **NI 197** Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites.

The six indicators include 2 climate change indicators, one looking at reducing our emissions (mitigation) and one looking at how we cope with the impacts of a changing climate (adaptation).

The indicator on Per capita CO₂ emissions in the LA area will measure emissions in the local area from business and the public sector, domestic housing and road transport.

The indicator on adapting to climate change measures local authority and partner's preparedness to manage risks to service delivery, the public, local communities, local infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment from a changing climate.

Development work on setting targets for these indicators has been taking place during April and May, with the LAA expected to be signed off in June.

For more information on Local Area Agreements please see: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships>

Welcome... to the Spring edition of 'essence', the newsletter for the Lancashire Environment Forum.

Over the last few months, the Lancashire Environment Forum (and the organisations represented on the Forum) have had a key input into the environmental indicators selected for the LAA. The article opposite outlines the indicators selected.

The LAA will become a regular item on future Environment Forum meetings, and the Forum will have the role of overseeing the progress made on these environmental indicators.

Anne Selby, Chair of the Lancashire Environment Forum

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National Updates

'Good progress' on Environmental Stewardship

Over 5 million hectares of land in England (an area roughly twice the size of Wales) are now covered by schemes which aim to conserve our valuable landscape and its wildlife, according to a report published by Defra and Natural England this May.

Secretary of State for the Environment, Hilary Benn said: *"Environmental Stewardship is our flagship scheme for farming and the environment. It is open to all farmers in England and has introduced a wealth of improvements to our countryside"*.



<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news>

Supermarket trails carbon labels



Tesco has announced that a range of its own-brand products will carry labels showing the size of the goods' carbon footprints. 20 items are to be labelled from 4 categories (detergents, orange juice, potatoes and light bulbs) during a 2 year trail, which is operated by the Carbon Trust. Shoppers will be able to see how much carbon is emitted over the life of a product – from manufacture to disposal.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Regional News

The Environment Agency warns Anglers about the dangers of Crayfish Plague



The Environment Agency sent over 20,000 leaflets to rod licence holders across Cumbria and Lancashire during March. The leaflets warned anglers about the risk of introducing non-native Signal Crayfish and crayfish plague into our rivers. Both Signal Crayfish and crayfish plague have a major impact on the native White Clawed Crayfish, which is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species.

The leaflets explain the impact that the Signal Crayfish have through out competing native species for food, and also highlight how anglers can help.

£17.3 million to create new green spaces in Cheshire

The NWDA is to invest £17.3 million to create 170 hectares of new green spaces in Cheshire. The grant will be managed by Cheshire County Council under the REVIVE programme, which aims to transform brownfield land into community resources with improved public access.

The programme, which will run for 22 years, aims to improve the region's living and working environments, and make England's North West a more viable place for investment opportunities.

www.nwda.co.uk/news--events/press-releases.aspx

Lancashire Updates

Lancashire County Council exports green expertise to Gulu, Uganda

Lancashire County Council has launched a new 'Carbon Compensation Scheme' to help the people of Gulu district in Northern Uganda develop their region in an environmentally sustainable way. Six projects have been agreed including tree plantations, wetlands conservation and waste management.

Three members of the Gulu community visited Lancashire this May and spent a fortnight visiting a variety of Lancashire based environmental projects.

For more information on the project see: <http://gulucarbonscheme.blogspot.com>

Rossendale Council's Environmental Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

In March 2008, Rossendale adopted a new Environmental Policy, Strategy and Action Plan. These confirmed the Council's leadership role and responsibilities in relation to protection and improvement of the environment, and thereby the health of the community.

The Strategy and Action Plan have been developed and adopted with representatives from all Departments within Rossendale Council as members of a "Green Team".

For more information please contact Philip Mephram (Environmental Health Manager, Rossendale BC) 01706 252566

In this article Donald McQueen of Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan describes the process, and importance of Ecological Footprinting

Every day we hear national news items warning us of the impending catastrophes due to climate destabilisation and global warming. Though the seriousness of these measures cannot be underestimated, some organisations are unsurprisingly confused about where to start when it comes to responding to calls for action, like wasting less raw materials and energy.

Some organisations have decided that the first and obvious step to take is to determine and describe precisely what impact their activities have on the environment. Having established that information, it then becomes clearer about what can be done to reduce impacts and, more importantly, how effects can be monitored and measured (often saving considerable costs).

Ecological Footprinting is becoming an increasingly popular method to calculate what environmental effects an organisation has on the planet.

Ecological Footprinting can be described as:

“It is a non-monetised indicator of human pressure on the biosphere. For any organisation, its ecological footprint represents the biologically productive area required to produce the crops, meat, fish and wood consumed, to absorb its wastes and carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuels burnt, and to give room for infrastructure used by that population.”

Ecological Footprints enable people to take personal and collective actions in support of a world where humanity lives within the means of one planet”.

It might be more simply framed by asking how much of nature do we *have* compared with how much do we *use*?



Sustainability

Though not a measure of sustainability per se, this method of determining an organisations ‘demand’ on the planet can be very effective in highlighting the best opportunities for changes to their operational procedures and processes that will create the reduction in impacts, i.e. ‘land area’. Whilst the science behind the technique is complex and still developing, Ecological Footprinting is being more and more accepted as a *good enough* indicator of measuring environmental impacts. It also offers a benchmark from which to measure against into the future.

Applications

On a global scale, we are currently harvesting ecosystem derived resources at a scale way beyond the limits of the planets’ capability to replenish them – a sure **un-sustainable** situation.

At a local level, those organisations that engage with Ecological Footprinting present themselves an opportunity to engage with **sustainability** in ways that will relate their own activities to the wider world and allow them to ‘see’ their true impact on the planet and provide a baseline from which to measure against in the future. Schools, hospitals, public organisations and businesses can all benefit from Ecological Footprinting techniques. In simple terms, Ecological Footprinting ‘converts’ an organisations resource demand and wastes produced to a ‘pressure’ on a finite environment in terms of land area.

The ecological footprint is an unrivalled educational tool through its easily understood metaphor – the human footprint cannot exceed the area able to support it. It can be used to show the effects of our impacts on the planet in a visual way that no other tool can (WWF, 2002).



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The Lancashire Locals Climate Change Fund was launched 6 months ago. In this article, Sarah Whitney (Lancashire County Council) describes aims of the fund, and its progress to date.



Lancashire County Council has set up a Climate Change Fund, with £250,000 each year (for 3 years) available to support sustainable community projects on climate change.

Lancashire currently accounts for one fifth of the total CO₂ emissions in the North West. Whilst Lancashire County Council recognises the negative impact that climate change will have in the region, it also acknowledges Lancashire's own contribution to carbon emissions.

The fund has been set up to support community level schemes and is aimed at projects that will either reduce emissions, or help local communities to cope with the impacts of climate change.

The fund is divided between each of the 12 districts in Lancashire. To ensure its effective distribution, the amount each district receives is determined by its per capita carbon dioxide emissions.

The fund is open to voluntary organisations, community groups and town/parish councils. Grants of between £500 and £15,000 are available.

It is hoped that by focussing on grass roots level projects, the fund will engage local communities, raise awareness of how our actions, even at the local level, can contribute to climate change, and change perceptions that individual action does not make any difference.

To be considered for funding, the project must demonstrate that it reduces greenhouse gas emissions or helps communities to cope with the impacts of climate change.

The first round of funding has recently been completed and a total of £154,000 has been awarded to 23 different groups across Lancashire.



A wide range of different projects were successful in receiving funding, some examples include:

- Carbon capture projects such as tree planting and re-wetting of moorland
- Installation of micro-renewable energy in community buildings, including a ground source heat pump and a wind turbine

- Energy efficiency projects such as roof and wall insulation and replacing inefficient boilers in a range of community buildings.
- Awareness raising through events and publicity material



Work has begun to deliver these projects, and in the next couple of months we will start to see the real impact the fund has made to local community groups in Lancashire.

The deadline for applications for the next funding round is 30th May, with a further funding round later in the year - 31st October deadline.

For more information on the fund, including details of how to apply, please visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/climatechangefund Or contact Sarah Whitney Phone: 01772 531257 Email: climatechangefund@lancashire.gov.uk

Editorial

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Essence is distributed electronically to conserve resources.

If you have any project news or forthcoming events you would like to publicise in *essence* then please contact us by telephone on: 01772 531257 or by email on: environmentalpolicy@lancashire.gov.uk