

Inland Revenue - Unwrapping the Environment on the Newcastle Estate – Awards for Excellence 2004 - Big Tick winner – The Shields Environmental Award

Sector: National and international government

Tools and techniques: performance

Organisation: Inland Revenue

The Inland Revenue's Newcastle Estate is made up of seven sites the largest of which is Benton Park View, home to the National Insurance Contributions Office, and has a hospital and school as neighbours.

Processes: in 1998, the estate occupants embarked upon extensive redevelopment on three sites while continuing to conduct their business and minimise the impact on the local community.

At this time, the absence of a detailed, structured approach to environmental management was identified and a general environmental policy was published with a five-year environmental management plan, underpinned by plans for waste minimisation and sustainable travel.

One of the estate's prime objectives is to integrate sustainable development into its day-to-day business decision making. Its environmental report accounts for its performance in managing environmental and sustainable development issues, and illustrates aspects of its social and economic performance.

The minimisation plan targeted energy, utilities and waste, and featured an innovative recycling scheme involving the staff separating the white and mixed waste paper before collection by a recycling contractor. The plan also included measures to prevent waste going to landfill, including donating surplus office requisites to the local community and recycling aluminium cans, glass, newspapers and plastic bottles.

The travel plan gave staff the opportunity to make more sustainable travel choices through improved facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and better public transport. It also led to reduced business travel and environmental improvements to the pool car fleet.

In June 2002, the estate achieved ISO 14001 certification. The following June saw the publication of Unwrapping the Environment on the Newcastle Estate - the Estate's first, annual, sustainable development report.

Impact:

- The estate has reduced its water consumption by 29.6 per cent, electricity by 31.6 per cent, and gas by 29.5 per cent.
- Business travel costs have dropped by 10.4 per cent as a result of various initiatives. The car fleet now stands at 38 vehicles, of which 37 are dual fuel and one is diesel.
- Wherever possible, staff are persuaded to share cars and videoconferencing is strongly advocated as an alternative to travelling to remote locations for meetings.
- The Estate recycles 67 per cent of its office waste, exceeding the Green Ministers' waste recovery target by 27 per cent.
- Newcastle Cityworks and a recycling contractor collect plastic and glass bottles and aluminium cans for recycling.

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