

DEFRA POSITION ON THE FUTURE OF THE EMS NETWORK

On 9th April Kirklees Metropolitan Council informed network members of its decision not to bid for further funding to co-ordinate the EMS network in 2010/11. In response, Defra considered a number of options, including whether other Local Authorities and arms length bodies would take up the coordinating function. Unfortunately none of these proved to be sustainable.

Following the Chancellor's Emergency Budget, Defra expects a total reduction of its 2011-2015 budget by around 30% when the Spending Review is announced in October. This will require the Department to focus its resources on high-level priorities and, in view of this, it is unlikely we could commit to funding the EMS network next year.

The lack of a network co-ordinator this year, and the likelihood that no funding will be available next year, leaves the following residual issues to be addressed by network members:

- **Whether a Coordinator is needed for the network** - the role of preparing and chairing network meetings could be arranged regionally.
- **Who to host the network email account** - currently maintained by Kirklees Council at their own cost, but will be closed down unless taken over by a regional group or member organisation of the network
- **Management of the EMS network website** currently hosted at the IEMA EMS portal free of charge. Volunteer needed (regional group or member organisation) to be responsible for providing periodic updates about the network to IEMA.

It has been suggested by DWP and Kirklees Council colleagues that EMS network members should consider joining the Public Sector Carbon Network. It is an online community funded by the Carbon Trust designed to promote carbon reduction within the public sector by facilitating the exchange of best practice and case studies. It is exclusively for public sector employees, currently has over 2,000 subscribers from across all sectors including local and central government, universities, NHS Trusts as well as the emergency services. Members may wish to decide whether this offers an alternative network for sharing best practice (see link below).

<http://lanetwork.carbontrust.co.uk/>

- **Annual Raising our Game event** - it has been decided not to sponsor the Raising our Game event this year, in view of budgetary cuts faced by sponsoring Departments.

If you have any comments or would like to take over any aspect of network management please contact Sackey Bennin at Defra directly: Sackey.Bennin@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you

Defra, July 2010