

# LOCAL AGENDA 21 IN SOLIHULL

Many factors contribute to the quality of our lives - the environment in which we live and work, the quality of our social conditions, our health and our economic well-being to name but a few.

When attempting to achieve a better "**quality of life**" for all members of our community all these factors must be considered as well as the effect our actions may have on future generations.

Agenda 21 - the agenda for the 21st Century was agreed by 179 different nations at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. A crucial element of Agenda 21 is the production of Local Agenda 21 Plans by local communities.

To date much of the work towards the production of our Local Agenda 21 Plan has focused on work carried out by the Council on behalf of the local community. It is however equally, if not more important for individuals or communities to contribute directly to the aims of Local Agenda 21.

**LOCAL AGENDA 21** is about creating communities where local people work alongside local authorities, businesses and other organisations to raise the "quality of life" of those living in that community, in ways that won't deny future generations a decent quality of life too. This approach is known as Sustainable Development, or in other words:-

## Leaving the planet as you would wish to find it

This is Solihull's first ever Local Agenda 21 Plan, produced by members of local organisations, residents' groups, parish councils and the local authority.

It is just one step in the Agenda 21 process - a process that we hope will lead to a more sustainable community. A community in which:-

- ◆ resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised and recycled
- ◆ pollution is limited to levels that won't damage the environment
- ◆ wildlife and nature is valued and protected
- ◆ wherever possible local needs are met locally
- ◆ everyone has access to good food, water, shelter and fuel at reasonable cost
- ◆ opportunities exist for all to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy, recognising the value of unpaid work
- ◆ people live without fear of violence from crime or persecution
- ◆ people's good health is protected by providing a safe, clean, pleasant environment and health services that emphasise prevention as well as cure
- ◆ access for all - not just for those with cars - to facilities, services and goods
- ◆ everyone has access to the skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play a full part in society
- ◆ all sectors of the community are empowered to participate in decision making
- ◆ opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all
- ◆ places, spaces, settlements and objects are designed to value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness

Solihull's Local Agenda 21 is an opportunity for everyone to help create a cleaner, greener, brighter future for our communities.

### **YOUR CONTRIBUTION**

Individuals can help in many ways, such as:-

- ◆ commenting on the suggestion made in this document
- ◆ going green at home and at work
- ◆ getting involved in local projects and events that are aimed at making our communities more sustainable

### **WHERE NEXT?**

Over the next twelve months we will:-

- ◆ produce a document on indicators that will be used to measure our progress to a more sustainable community
- ◆ produce two Local Agenda 21 Newsletters giving information on progress, local projects and events
- ◆ organise a Community Event early in 1998 for interested organisations and individuals

### **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

For more information on Local Agenda 21 or to arrange a presentation for your community group, contact the Council's Green Scheme at:-

**Solihull Green Scheme, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, P O Box19, Council House, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3QT.**

**Telephone 0121 704 6874   Fax 0121 704 6575   or E-Mail us at [smbc.gscheme@dial.pipex.com](mailto:smbc.gscheme@dial.pipex.com)**

# THE COUNCIL'S CONTRIBUTION

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Solihull Council is one of the largest companies and employers in the Borough. Through its many and varied activities, the Council is a major consumer of resources - it is therefore essential that it sets its own house in good order.

The Council agreed an Environmental Charter in 1991 with one of the stated aims being 'to minimise as far as possible the impact of the Council's activities on the environment'. To achieve an excellent standard of environmental housekeeping it is important that the Council is doing all it can in relation to energy and water usage, purchasing, transport, wastes and pollution.

## 2. HOW THE ISSUE AFFECTS SOLIHULL RESIDENTS

Good environmental performance is important to residents of the Borough. Not only does Solihull Council have a duty to set a good example but efficient housekeeping may mean lower costs, which in turn could result in lower Council Tax levels or the savings being used to provide an improved level of service. The Council's internal activities may affect the local community in other ways; contracts with local companies could be quite different if they included environmental criteria. In some cases taking the best environmental option may mean additional costs to the Council.

## 3. MISSION STATEMENT

Solihull Council has set the following objective:  
'To achieve an excellent standard of environmental housekeeping'.

## 4. WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

In recent years Solihull Council has taken a number of initiatives to improve its internal environmental management.

### **Corporate Commitment**

The Council's Environmental Charter has been endorsed by local councillors and all committee reports must include a consideration of environmental issues, where applicable

- Individual Council departments have devised action plans detailing their contribution to the aims of the Environmental Charter, with progress reports being submitted to relevant committees
- An 'Environmental Management' guide has been published

The Council has sought to achieve high standards in the following areas:

## **Purchasing**

### \* **Stationery**

- all letter headed paper is recycled and recycled photocopier and laser copier paper is available
- All correction fluid is water based

### \* **Office Equipment**

- photocopiers have an energy saving 'standby' facility; larger machines can do double sided copying
- computer specifications refer to the 'Green Business Guide' and suppliers are asked about their compliance with it

### \* **Materials**

- the weedkiller used by the Council should not damage wildlife or the water course
- timber is only purchased from sustainable sources
- no lead based paint is used
- all batteries are mercury free
- all refuse sacks are from recycled plastic and other plastic products are from recycled material, wherever possible
- all new Council petrol fueled vehicles must have a catalytic converter

### \* **Plant and Equipment**

- the Council's engineers, architects and surveyors specify energy efficient plant and equipment as standard

## **Energy Consumption**

### \* **Street Lamps**

- more energy efficient street lamps have been introduced

### \* **Council Offices**

- the Council has an energy efficiency unit to monitor energy usage of Council buildings. Exceptional changes in usage are identified and data is sent to relevant officers who report annually to appropriate service committees
- \* A 'Good Housekeeping' guide has been issued to educate managers on energy issues in the workplace

## **Water Consumption**

- the Energy Efficiency Unit monitors water usage, investigates any sudden changes and provides advice
- public toilets are fitted with 'watermiser' devices, as are many Council and school toilets
- a new vehicle wash is to be installed at the Council's depot, which will use recycled water

## **Transport**

- Council vehicles and plant use diesel or lead free petrol; new petrol engined vehicles are fitted with catalytic converters
- car mileage payments to Council employees have been reduced to encourage the use of smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles
- a cycle allowance has been introduced for employees

## **Waste and Pollution**

### \* **Solid Waste**

- wherever possible materials are re-used or recycled
- the Council House has a waste paper collection scheme
- there is a recycling scheme for photocopier toner and toner cartridges

### \* **Air Emissions**

- the incinerator and power generation plant at the Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company meets European Community requirements
- the crematorium at Robin Hood Cemetery has been upgraded and emissions are better than those required by European Community standards
- the Council has a policy for the control of bonfires and large parts of the Borough are smoke free zones
- Solihull Council provides a free service for the disposal of freezers and refrigerators and arranges for the safe removal and disposal of CFC's

### \* **Discharges to Water Courses. The long term safeguarding of water supplies is a particular priority of the Council. To this end:**

- no residual weedkiller is used on hard surfaced areas
- non-toxic cleaning materials are used wherever practicable
- all chemicals used by Council employees are securely stored
- the vehicle washing plant at the Council's depot has traps to settle out silt
- the Council provides a responsive service to Severn-Trent in respect of emptying road gullies and septic tanks and removing emergency spillages from road accidents

## **5. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE**

Solihull Council has done much to achieve high standards of environmental housekeeping. We are not complacent however and there is more that we can do.

### **5.1. Information and Partnerships**

- (a) we will identify good practice in other local authorities and adopt a pro-active stance through our representative organisations so that Solihull Council maximises its contribution to environmental issues both locally and globally
- (b) where appropriate we will seek partnerships with other organisations to enable the Council to be more effective in achieving good environmental management

### **5.2. We will establish a suitable mechanism for auditing the quality of our environmental management**

- (a) investigate the value of Environmental Management Systems such as EMAS, ISO 14001 and other accreditation systems
- (b) identify and develop an appropriate mechanism for Solihull Council
- (c) in the conduct of its own affairs the Council will implement recommendations on sustainability and develop an appropriate approach to environmental assessments

**5.3. We will raise levels of employee awareness and knowledge about using resources frugally**

- (a) alter employee induction sessions to reflect this
- (b) departmental training plans to reflect the need for training in this area

**5.4. We will assess the need for introducing environmental budgeting into the council's financial planning**

- (a) how the Council's Capital Programme gives departments an incentive to achieve environmental efficiency savings
- (b) develop a mechanism to allow 'upfront' investments to be funded and justified by anticipated future savings
- (c) determine how the Capital Programme decision making process can take account of incurring additional expenditure on environmental grounds

**5.5. We will seek further improvements in the following areas**

**5.5.1 Energy Consumption**

- assess the cost - benefit of improving the energy efficiency of Council office buildings
- give a greater emphasis to good housekeeping by encouraging all employees to turn off lights and electrical equipment where appropriate
- local energy management - managers of Council premises to monitor energy usage and assess the scope for improvements

**5.5.2 Transport**

- investigate the need for additional complementary measures to encourage more employees to cycle to work
- consider the case for 'pool cars' to prevent staff having to drive to work
- assess the contribution that information technology can make to reducing employee travel between Council offices
- investigate the potential for the Council operating electric or gas fuelled vehicles

**5.5.3 Water Consumption**

- review the water efficiency of Council equipment such as dish washers and washing machines
- investigate the value of rainwater collection
- prevent any action which adversely affects the water course either directly or through seepage

**5.5.4 Purchasing**

- review the contract specification for cleaning materials to ensure it takes full account of environmental issues
- review all contracts at their renewal to assess whether the products are the most environmentally friendly of those currently available
- ensure, where applicable, contracts include supplier commitments on product disposal at the end of their useful life

- ensure that environmental criteria are incorporated into specifications under compulsory competitive tendering and performance against these is assessed as part of the contract evaluation criteria
- ensure environmental considerations are assessed in the purchase of all electrical equipment

#### 5.5.5 Waste

- ensure that suitable waste recycling points are available at all Council work places
- carry out an audit of departmental performance on recycling
- investigate the possibility of giving some items (computers for example) to charities where the Council no longer has a use for them

#### 5.5.6 Council grounds and environment

- we will endeavour to achieve high standards of sustainability in respect of the Council's management of grounds and open spaces. Advice will be sought from ecologists and other specialists, where appropriate

#### 5.5.7 Planning Policies

- we will ensure that the planning process reflects considerations of environmental sustainability for all applications, including those submitted by Solihull Council

### **CHECKLIST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN WRITING STRATEGIES OR POLICIES FOR THE AUTHORITY**

The following are issues/questions that should be considered before writing or completing strategies or policies for SMBC. Some issues may not be relevant for the particular strategy or activity being written, however, all points should be considered.

1. How will the strategy affect the Authority's own environmental performance?
2. How will the strategy or related activity impact on the environment and what steps can be taken to minimise the detrimental effects? Will the minimisation be able to be sustained in the long term?
3. **Transport** What are the implications of vehicles/plant that may be used in executing the strategy/activity? What will be the implications for the transport infrastructure?
4. **Energy Conservation** What steps have been taken to help reduce energy consumption and how can this be sustained?
5. **Recycling** What are the waste disposal implications for the strategy/activity? Can recycled products be used instead of virgin products?
6. **Litter** What are the litter implications for the strategy/activity? How can these be minimised?
7. **Rural/Natural Environment** What are the short and longer term implications for forestry and woodlands, open spaces, wildlife, wetlands and grasslands?
8. **Pollution** What are the implications of the strategy/activity on air pollution, noise and water quality? How can the inhabitants of Solihull be protected from the detrimental effects of pollution caused by this strategy?
9. **Education and Awareness** How can the strategy/activity serve to educate those involved into the importance of protecting the environment?

10. Will the strategy have positive or detrimental affects on the quality of life, health, poverty and access to services in Solihull?
11. Do any contractors or suppliers used in the execution of this strategy/activity have similar environmental policies to those laid down in Solihull's Agenda 21? How can they be encouraged to improve if this is not the case?

**Promotion - positive action for the environment**

# AGENDA 21 - RECYCLING

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every year over 23 million tonnes of household and commercial waste are thrown away. The average family throws away around one tonne of waste each year.

Recycling means putting waste back into productive use. The more we use recycled products the less we need to use raw materials which are fast becoming depleted, and the less waste we have to dispose. Waste disposal by any means can cause global and local environmental problems, such as air and water pollution.

## 2. OUR MISSION IS:

To reduce the amount of waste produced in Solihull through reduction, re-use and recycling by:

- ◆ taking one step back from recycling and promoting minimisation of waste
- ◆ promoting re-use of as many materials as possible
- ◆ raising awareness of the need to recycle materials to be used in another format

## 3. WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

- ◆ Domestic refuse is collected from 80,000 homes each week
- ◆ 70,000 tonnes of waste disposed annually:

65.3%	Coventry Incinerator
4.2%	Waste recycled
30.5%	To landfill
- ◆ 24 mini waste recycling centres
- ◆ Pilot project for recycling road materials
- ◆ Pay recycling credits for private collection schemes
- ◆ Home composting trial
- ◆ Educational awareness/work with local schools
- ◆ Civic amenities site at Bickenhill for receipt of resident's waste
- ◆ Other similar sites also at Tyseley, Lifford Lane (Birmingham)
- ◆ Charitable foundations collect and recycle clothes, books and other items
- ◆ Encourage local recycling initiatives
- ◆ Private company kerbside collections

## 4. ACTION

### Education

- ◆ Eye catching double page spread in local newspapers and/or leaflets
- ◆ Regular publicity items in local papers
- ◆ Continue and extend environmental education in schools - children encouraged to take information home
- ◆ Publicise the cost of not recycling materials - cost to the individual, damage to environment etc
- ◆ Awareness raising events

### Short Term - What we would like to do now

- ◆ "Keep an eye on", mini recycling scheme
- ◆ Encourage setting up of group collection schemes
- ◆ Publicise Recycling Credit Scheme (payments for materials recycled by groups or businesses)
- ◆ Avoid purchasing over-packaged goods
- ◆ Use own shopping bags, reduce the usage of supermarket carrier bags, doorstep delivery of milk in glass bottles, returning bottles to manufacturers, use refilling bottles/containers
- ◆ Encourage the purchase of goods made from recycled materials or materials which are recyclable
- ◆ Promote home composting. Council could help by offering composters at discounted cost to residents and allotment societies
- ◆ Increase number of mini recycling centres where appropriate
- ◆ Produce map showing location of recycling centres
- ◆ Produce resource recycling directory
- ◆ Encourage the recycling of construction materials
- ◆ Find out what local businesses are doing
- ◆ Increase kerbside collections
- ◆ Council to review its own internal recycling policy - encourage Environmental Audit
- ◆ Local schools to undertake a public recycling analysis questionnaire
- ◆ Introduce a help line for environmental issues

### Long Term - What we would like to do in the future

- ◆ Continued monitoring of the progress of plastic recycling around the country
- ◆ Analyse success of recycling schemes in other authorities
- ◆ Research the practicability of an area composting project - in conjunction with other authorities if necessary

- ◆ Provide local moveable mini recycling facilities to minimise car usage. (The "bring" system makes it difficult for non-car owners to participate in the recycling programme).
- ◆ Progressively reduce the amount of waste taken to landfill - produce targets in relation to existing contracts
- ◆ Encourage local suppliers to accept old oil, batteries and toxic materials/liquids
- ◆ Encourage the private sector to participate in recycling materials
- ◆ Lobby for tax on packaging
- ◆ Investigate the possibility of licensing tatters at civic amenity sites, to encourage recycling of goods
- ◆ Appoint officer to coordinate waste recycling
- ◆ Investigate reward schemes for recycling - eg possible Council Tax reduction
- ◆ Develop target indicators

## 5 . CONSULTATION

It is essential that we obtain the view of the general public, for instance why don't people recycle? And what would encourage people to recycle? Without community support there will be little increase in recycling. Consultation should therefore cover the following areas:

Presentations and exhibitions - informal locations

Publicity - Newspaper, local radio stations, internal newsletters

Meetings with residents groups

Community groups encouraged to identify possible recycling sites

Hot line for the public to discuss recycling issues

Encourage feedback on the Agenda 21 document

Green pledges

Recycling credits for tenants associations

## 6 . MEASURING SUCCESS

Percentage of refuse recycled

Number of organisations earning recycling credits, and total value of credits

Number of school recycling projects

Number of new mini recycling centres

Average weight of waste produced per person

Percentage of waste to landfill

# AGENDA 21 - LITTER

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The existence of litter is an emotive and high profile issue. It can be seen as a visible indication of the level of pride that we have in the Borough.

Whether we are aware of it or not, litter affects the way we relate to our surroundings - and can have a strong effect on our morale and behaviour. An area that is clean will attract less litter than one with lots of rubbish in evidence.

Visible litter creates an impression of neglect, encourages more litter and is a danger to wildlife and domestic animals.

There is a general perception that the levels of tidiness, locally and nationally, have deteriorated gradually over the last few decades. There are various reasons for this:

- ◆ The enormous increase in the volume of packaging.
- ◆ The general attitude of society to handling its litter, exemplified by the view that it is not a personal responsibility for individuals to dispose of their litter in a responsible way. It is up to someone else.
- ◆ Increasing population.
- ◆ Increase in the number of takeaway food outlets and eating on the move.

While it is Solihull Council's duty to collect litter, there would be little to collect if it were not dropped in the first place. Our Agenda 21 efforts must therefore be directed to reducing litter production, improving litter collection and encouraging community action.

## 2. OUR AIM

Our overarching aim is:

*" A cleaner Solihull, through litter:*

- *Education*
- *Action*
- *Prevention"*

## 3. WHAT IS DONE AT PRESENT

**Solihull Council undertakes the following activities to fulfil its statutory duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990:**

### **Street cleansing**

By regular mechanical sweeping and manual litter picking to achieve the standards set out in the Environmental Protection Act.

### **One-off action**

To clear litter when there is a particular problem.

### **Litter Blitz**

Hotline for the public to ring in with information. This leads to immediate action.

### **Flytipping**

Removed within 2 days.

### **Bulky Refuse**

Collection by appointment (a free service to Senior Citizens and for the collection of fridges and freezers).

### **Litter Bins**

Provided at appropriate sites and emptied on a regular basis.

### **Recycling Projects**

"Bring" recycling sites, home composting experiment.

### **Dog Fouling**

Highways, parks and open spaces to be designated under the new 'Dog Fouling Act'. Fouling bin trial project to be extended.

## **Community and partnership activities directed at litter within the Borough include:**

### **Community Action against Litter**

Partnership project in Smith's Wood and Kingshurst to involve the community in litter matters.

### **National Spring Clean Week**

Co-ordinated locally by the Council's Green Scheme who also provide support and loan of equipment. The Council's Street Cleansing Division arrange removal of refuse collected.

### **School Education Projects**

Information, publicity and visits by members of the "Green Scheme". Encouragement to incorporate green issues in curriculum/projects.

### **Publicity Talks, presentations**

Given by request by members of the Environmental & Technical Services Department.

### **Bills Wood**

Regularly litter-picked by Light Hall School pupils.

### **Packhorse Bridge, Hampton-in-Arden**

Regularly litter-picked by The PROBUS Club of Hampton-in-Arden.

### **Colebank Park litter project, Chelmsley Wood**

An ongoing 'Adopt an Area' scheme, run by a church group from the South of the Borough.

## 4. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

By informal consultation and through group discussion, we have had many ideas brought to us for improving the Borough's litter problems. We have grouped them under the three interlinked headings of Education, Action and Prevention.

We intend to:

1. Produce a statement on each proposal with estimates of resources required, responsible bodies, timescales and measurement of success.
2. Conduct a round of further public consultation, as laid out in Section 6.
3. Turn the most favoured proposals emerging from that consultation into our Action Programme.

Ideas for incorporation in the Borough's Litter Action Programme have so far included:

### Education

- ◆ Create a teachers environment group to co-ordinate and own Borough school activities related to the environment.
- ◆ Encourage environmental education to be a vital part of every Borough school's development plan. Encourage increased numbers of school visits to Coventry and Bickenhill Sites.
- ◆ Investigate the merits of using the Healthy Eating Awards and Eco Schools Award Scheme as a vehicle for encouraging environmental education.
- ◆ Identify existing good practice on litter and 'spread the word.' Develop case studies on: a school; a business; a community; a society/residents group.
- ◆ Liaise with local colleges and sixth forms to investigate the feasibility of incorporating a 'Business and the Environment' module into business and commerce courses.
- ◆ Build a 'wave of momentum' in the Borough through the use of a structured media campaign, to encourage increasing numbers of the community to get involved in our fight against litter. Campaign aim: to encourage residents to appreciate their own moral responsibilities not to create litter.
- ◆ A commitment to the environment in the Council's published material.
- ◆ Make the community aware of the danger and distress caused by litter to wildlife and domestic pets and the general danger to public health.
- ◆ Encourage responsible dog ownership. Campaign and revise leaflet.
- ◆ Raise personal responsibility aspect of litter in National Spring Clean Week.

### Action

- ◆ Identify 'Grot Spots,' areas where littering occurs that is particularly intractable and produce action plan and monitor.
- ◆ Instigate action to tackle littering problems where responsibility is ambiguous and 'demarcation disputes' may occur.
- ◆ Look at the current partnerships between Solihull Council's Cleansing Management and the local parishes to see if there are lessons on littering that can be applied to the rest of the Borough.

- ◆ Encourage 'Adopt an Area' schemes where communities can look at their own litter problems and take action. Encourage individuals householders/traders to look after frontages.
- ◆ Tackle the very common problem of the 'dumping' of free newspapers by writing to local newspapers.
- ◆ Look at the possibilities of sponsored, local, part-time litter wardens, nominated by Parish and Town Councils.
- ◆ Liaise with other bodies to ensure that the Borough's rivers, canals, railway embankments, substations and bus shelters are kept litter free.
- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of involving those involved in Community Service in the litter picking of 'grot spots'.
- ◆ Investigate the graffiti problem and publicise the Council's Graffiti Team.
- ◆ Publicise the cost of street cleansing as part of a campaign.
- ◆ Ensure that current local authority practices are not actually increasing the potential for environmental degradation, e.g litter picking prior to grass/shrub bed maintenance.

### Prevention

- ◆ Review the bulky refuse service. Alternatives might include a monthly lorry round.
- ◆ Targeted use of existing legislation to better police littering associated with businesses.
- ◆ Provide a 'Most Improved Area in the Borough' award.
- ◆ A scheme for community groups and residents to nominate additional, or better sites for bins.
- ◆ Co-ordinate action over related issues e.g. recycling, grass cutting, maintenance of shrub beds and trees. Look at increased resources to allow co-ordination of grass cutting and litter collection, particularly at the beginning of the growing season.
- ◆ Support and extend "Community Action Against Litter" schemes.
- ◆ Develop a strategy or action plan for litter and the business community, encouraging business to take on board their responsibility as regards litter, ie litter at rear of premises, litter from fast food outlets and to consider packaging that has less potential for littering. Encourage small businesses to be environmentally friendly through a 'Business Pride' campaign that in particular provides incentives for shop parades in suburban areas to 'manage' their litter.
- ◆ Investigate the possibility of seeking sponsorship for litter bins in Solihull.
- ◆ Write to contractors, utilities and other businesses pointing out their responsibilities as regards clearing-up after carrying out work.
- ◆ Write to Post Office encouraging them to inform staff not to drop elastic bands on pavements.

## 5 . CONSULTATION

- ◆ The Agenda 21 process should be owned by the whole community. Tackling litter is only part of that process and consultation has to be co-ordinated. Therefore we suggest the following ways of consulting widely with the community:
- ◆ An 'Any Answers' road show. Presentation or exhibition taken round various locations for answers, questions and to take note of comments and suggestions (supermarkets, cinemas, youth clubs etc.).

- ◆ A carefully structured meeting with representatives from all the Borough's residents groups aimed at finding solutions to littering.
- ◆ A survey/questionnaire conducted jointly with other working groups with similar interests, targeted (perhaps) at young people.
- ◆ A Solihull 'Youth and the Environment' Conference, held during term time and constituted as a proper seminar or conference. The aim would be to get the Borough's youth to make their contribution to solving litter and other environmental problems.
- ◆ Provide a drop-in environment centre for people who want to discuss litter issues and other environmental matters.
- ◆ Take part in and support 'fun' events, in partnership with other organisations, eg National Spring Clean Week, National Environment Week and Solihull Environment Week.

## 6 . MEASURING SUCCESS

We need to measure whether our activities are improving the Borough's litter problems. We intend to develop indicators that mean something to the general public.

To give an example, one of our indications might be:

"The number of Borough schools who make environmental issues a prominent part of their school development plan."

# AGENDA 21 - ENERGY CONSERVATION

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND HOW IT AFFECTS RESIDENTS OF SOLIHULL

All buildings and property require sources of energy but individuals control the demand.

Failure to control demand will accelerate the reduction in energy sources and lead to restrictions in supply, higher energy costs and intensify harmful emissions.

Whilst energy saving leads to environmental and financial savings, in some areas the main benefit can be to health and the improvement of living conditions.

Some limited saving of energy can be achieved by "good housekeeping", however, bigger savings require initial capital investment.

The role of this specialist working group for Agenda 21 - Energy Conservation is to promote and facilitate change in individuals perceptions and behaviour to ensure a positive attitude to energy conservation.

## 2. OUR AIM

The aim of Energy Conservation - Agenda 21 is "to encourage energy conservation in buildings and properties in Solihull by:

- promoting the social and financial benefits of energy conservation
- facilitating access to sources of advice and assistance."

## 3. WHAT IS DONE AT PRESENT

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has undertaken energy conservation measures in many of its buildings and schools, such as:

- installation of additional thermal insulation
- use of energy efficient boiler plant
- PIR (Passive Infra Red) automatic lighting controls
- use of energy efficient street lighting
- assessment of Council houses with regard to energy efficiency
- SAP rating (an energy rating for property)
- energy use monitoring via the Fuel Efficiency Officer.

Private industry and commerce within the Borough have also taken measures to reduce energy use such as the installation of CHP (Combined Heat and Power) units and the Energy Efficiency Award Scheme run by the DTI.

## 4. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

### The Council

As the Council are responsible for preparing Agenda 21 proposals in partnership with the community, they must be seen to be the market leaders. It is essential, therefore, that the Council are seen to be putting their own house in order:

- Many measures already in place or in hand should be publicised.
- All Council Departments to have an Energy Plan.
- Schools who represent the majority of Council buildings to be targeted with publicity and incentives.

### Education and Publicity

Many householders and even the smaller businesses are ignorant of energy matters. Therefore, perhaps the major initial advantage in energy saving can be made by making all aware of the possible "all-round gains" that are there for the taking.

1. Circulate advisory leaflets:
  - Low Energy Lamp Bulbs
  - Insulating Your Home
  - Environmental Benefits
  - Save Energy
  - Save Money
  - Managing Heating
  - Advice to Businesses etc.
2. Publicise examples of good practice or individual achievement in the media etc.
3. Issue details of energy consumption in Solihull by postal area obtained from Gas/Electricity suppliers.
4. Encourage home owners to assess their energy usage and develop a simple method of home energy assessment based possibly upon SAP ratings or property design criteria. Possibly leading to the development of a software package to be available in the Library.
5. Publicise the gain from insulation, "a 1°C drop in temperature gives a 4 - 8% saving".
6. Encourage householders to keep records of energy usage for comparison year by year with "ideal" properties.
7. Bright Ideas encouragement scheme for the public with awards and publicity.

8. Energy saving districts. Target particular roads with intensive publicity and publicise results, reactions etc.

## Action

As well as publicity there are certain actions that the group should instigate or at least research further that might lead to more direct action.

1. Collect information upon available grants, advice and publicise list of bodies involved in understandable form.
2. Investigate the possibility of setting up bulk-purchase scheme for resale, i.e. low energy light bulbs, insulation and cavity filling etc.
3. Support the extension of energy labelling schemes by encouraging purchasers to compare energy consumption of their purchases and, if not displayed, ask.
4. Support the design of energy efficient housing construction and upgrading by encouraging purchasers to consider energy efficiency during purchase.
5. Undertake further research into infra red aerial surveys as a publicity tool and to assess the financial viability of such work.
6. Lobby for an energy advice centre to be set up in Solihull.
7. Research into and encourage "innovation" with regard to sustainable objectives.
8. Develop a guide from practical standards that can be achieved.
9. Set up individual pilot projects to assess results and publicise these results.
10. Liaise with the Chamber of Commerce and Business Link to disseminate information to local businesses.
11. Create incentives for schools, small businesses and householders to partake in energy conservation.

## 5. CONSULTATION

Good energy conservation can only occur with involvement of everyone within the Borough. Therefore, the wider community of the Borough need to be consulted. To do this we suggest the following.

- Contact all organisations within the Borough.
- Hold exhibitions of what schemes, materials and resources are available for use.
- Carry out "guinea pig" schemes and publicise the results.
- Divide the Borough into groups, e.g. schools, industry and retailers and target these individual groups.
- Any advice or information given must be in clear, concise language, not technical jargon.

## 6. MEASURING SUCCESS

To measure energy conservation we intend to use indicators that are easily measurable. However, as more people become involved in energy conservation these indicators may need to be modified or changed for new ones.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Information: Currently Available</b>
Energy Efficiency Office	Corporate commitment	Yes
AEE Scheme Contractor	Grant take-up	Yes
Schools	Energy Efficiency Scheme take-up	Yes
British Gas	Fuel usage across the Borough	No
MEB	Fuel usage across the Borough	No

# AGENDA 21 - TRANSPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Love it or loathe it, the private car has a major impact on our lives. As users, passengers or drivers, it gives us unparalleled freedom, yet its environmental costs are high and ever increasing. These costs include emissions, land take, noise, visual intrusion, severance and ecological damage.

In meeting Solihull's transport needs into the future, it is vital that we encourage measures which aim to minimise environmental impact. It is useful to note that most journeys are local. Although the number and average length of journeys has been increasing, almost a third are less than a mile (5 minutes cycling time), almost a half are less than 2 miles (10 minutes cycling time) and almost three quarters are of less than 5 miles<sup>1,2</sup> (30-40 minutes cycling time). In addressing this issue, Central Government policies require us to consider both 'sticks' and 'carrots'. The role of the Agenda 21 specialist working group on Transport is to propose an appropriate balance of measures to deal with the transport demands of Solihull in a responsible way.

## 2. AIM/MISSION STATEMENT

**"TO REDUCE THREATS TO THE ENVIRONMENT BY TRANSPORT IN SOLIHULL"**

by:

- ◆ Reducing the need to travel where possible
- ◆ Encouraging environmentally friendly means of travel by public transport, cycling and walking
- ◆ Encouraging reduction in car use
- ◆ Reducing accidents
- ◆ Improving health
- ◆ Raising awareness of transport and environmental issues

## 3. WE ARE ALREADY DOING

- ◆ Integrated transport planning in partnership with the other West Midlands districts (West Midlands Package Approach)
- ◆ Traffic Calming
- ◆ Cycleway Strategy - leisure and work
- ◆ Safe Cycle Parking facilities
- ◆ Supporting Midland Metro
- ◆ Pedestrianisation of Town Centre
- ◆ Local Park & Ride Schemes at Stations and Solihull Town Centre

- ◆ Roadside Emission Monitoring
- ◆ Improvements to Public Footpath networks
- ◆ "Walk to School" days
- ◆ "Cycle to Work/School" initiative
- ◆ Minimise the environmental and transport impacts of Birmingham International Airport including transport emissions and noise

<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution Transport and the Environment, Page 180, HMSO October 1994

<sup>2</sup> Local Agenda 21 and the National Cycle Network Routes to Local Sustainability, Page 4, Sustrans February 1996

## 4 . WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The categories in which actions are required can be divided into the following 4 areas:-

- ◆ Incentives (carrots)
- ◆ Penalties/Restraints (sticks)
- ◆ Lobbying for National Policy changes
- ◆ Further Research

### 4.1. What needs to be done

#### INCENTIVES WITHIN CURRENT LEGISLATION

##### 4.1.1 Public Transport Promotion

- ◆ Fare levels are a key issue but would require changes to law - see 4.3.

Integration of Bus, Rail and Metro serves to provide a real alternative to car. Measures required would include improvements to:-

- (i) Co-ordination of Bus, Rail and Metro services
- (ii) Quality of service
- (iii) Reliability
- (iv) Journey time
- (v) Bus priority
- (vi) Flexibility of ticketing arrangements
- (vii) Information provision
- (iii) Vehicles
- (ix) Facilities at bus and rail stations/stops
- (x) Secure parking facilities for car and cycle (local Park and Ride)
- (xi) Access for disabled
- (xii) Co-ordination with development eg Airport, NEC, Industry, Hospitals and Stations
- (xiii) Education
- (xiv) Environmentally friendly fuels
- (xv) National Lobbying (see 4.4)

##### 4.1.2 Cycling Promotion

Promotion of cycle usage by provision of good quality facilities and effective education and promotion aimed at both existing users and non-users by:-

- (i) Ensuring funding bids are robust
- (ii) Provision of cycle routes which are direct and safe, for both leisure and routine journeys
- (iii) Seeking improvements at existing points of conflict (roundabouts crossing major roads)
- (iv) Ensuring traffic calming is cycling friendly
- (v) Incorporating cycling needs into new developments
- (vi) Formal consultation with cycling groups regarding new developments
- (vii) Encouraging employer and school cycling schemes
- (viii) Training for adults and children
- (ix) Education of cyclists
- (x) Education of Motorists regarding cyclists and pedestrians vulnerability
- (xi) Endorsement of 'Travelwise'/cycling promotion
- (xii) Provision of secure cycle parking facilities at public buildings (Stations, Town Centres, Hospitals, Schools and Offices)
- (xiii) Promoting health benefits of cycling
- (xiv) Lobbying nationally (see 4.3)

#### **4.1.3 Walking**

Promotion of walking as a mode of travel by:-

- Pedestrianisation schemes
- Provision of safe and direct routes on recognised desire lines in urban and rural areas
- Reviewing traffic signals with respect to pedestrian needs
- Providing drop kerbs in appropriate locations
- Providing appropriate street furniture in correct locations
- Ensuring adequate standards of maintenance of surfaces
- Promoting health benefits and environmental benefits of walking

#### **4.1.4 Other Positive Measures**

- Raise awareness of large organisations regarding the impact of their operations on generation of traffic movements.
- Encourage commuter plans for industry
- Establishment of a community forum on transport
- Promote the transfer of freight to rail
- Define the role of taxis in an integrated transport system and provide adequate facilities to include accessibility for the disabled
- encourage greater use of canals, both for access and freight movement

## **4.2. What needs to be done**

### **PENALTIES/RESTRICTIONS WITHIN CURRENT LEGISLATION**

#### **4.2.1 Road Schemes**

The group recognises that major road schemes intended to meet car based demand are environmentally damaging. As a result the group would wish to see no more schemes of this nature in Solihull.

#### **4.2.2 Traffic Management**

The constructive results which can be achieved by appropriate traffic management are recognised and the following measures would assist in the restrictive approach:-

- (i) Traffic calming
- (ii) Speed cameras
- (iii) Speed restrictions
- (iv) Weight restrictions
- (v) Parking restrictions
- (vi) Cycle priority
- (vii) Bus priority
- (viii) Direction signing (to least damaging routes)

#### **4.2.3 Car Parking**

The provision of car parking spaces and the charges applied to them will have an impact on travel habits. The group would like to see parking policies which encourage less car use but still retain Solihull's economic prosperity. It is felt that policies which are too restrictive might encourage travel to more distant, less restrictive venues, which would increase overall travel distance as well as threaten the local economy. In view of these complex interactions, it is felt more research is needed into these relationships (see section 4.4) before appropriate proposals can be made.

### **4.3. What needs to be done**

#### **LOBBYING FOR NATIONAL POLICY OR LEGAL CHANGE**

There are issues which have been identified as barriers or obstacles along the route to a sustainable transport position. It is felt that these should be noted within this Agenda 21 document, and that lobbying at national levels should be pursued by Local Authorities and pressure/interest groups, both individually and in partnership. Issues requiring changes to national policies are needed in the following areas:-

##### **4.3.1 Financial**

- (i) Capital Investment criteria for transport should recognise true cost (including environmental) of all modes.
- (ii) Funding should be targeted towards projects which reduce the use of cars, and are least damaging to the environment.
- (iii) Make it legally possible for funding to be diverted to reduce fares where appropriate (i.e. revenue).
- (iv) Taxation should be used favourably in the public transport/alternative transport areas, while adopting a more punitive approach with respect to cars in order to make the hidden costs of motoring accountable. This would include Road Tax, taxes on fuel, company car usage and private parking spaces, and possibly road space.
- (v) Strategic Investment in West Coast Main Line should be given higher priority.
- (vi) Strategic Investment in Solihull-London Line should be given higher priority.
- (vii) Strategic Investment in Metro Line should be given higher priority.

### 4.3.2 Regulation

The effect of deregulation of transport concerns the group. Bus deregulation has led to increased mileage, fewer passengers and an older vehicle fleet, all of which is contradictory to sustainable principles. This has led to major transport problems which may be compounded by rail privatisation. Problems associated with deregulation include:-

- (i) Lack of co-ordination between competing modes of public transport
- (ii) Lack of information on timetables for co-ordinated service
- (iii) Frequent changing of timetables
- (iv) Duplication of popular routes
- (v) Inadequate service on less popular routes
- (vi) No common quality standards in vehicles
- (vii) Safety concerns
- (viii) Emissions increase in total
- (ix) Emissions per vehicle worse in ageing fleet
- (x) Restrictions preventing carriage of cycles on trains
- (xi) Inefficient use of energy (fuel)
- (xii) Greater use of car

### 4.3.3 Legal measures

Many of the areas referred to above require changes in legislation. In addition there are activities of a criminal nature which may require greater penalty from the law. These would include:-

- (i) Penalties for dangerous and reckless driving should be more severe where actions have led, or could have led, to serious consequences
- (ii) Strengthening of legislation relating to vehicle emissions for all modes of transport
- (iii) Strengthening of legislation relating to noise for all modes of transport.
- (iv) Greater discretionary powers to allow local authority to introduce lower speed limits where appropriate
- (v) Road Pricing legislation to allow Highway Authorities, including Solihull, to use this method where appropriate
- (vi) Lobby Government to reduce tax on environmentally friendly goods, e.g. cycles

## 4.4. What needs to be done

### FURTHER RESEARCH

Some ideas which could make a contribution to sustainable transport may also have significant problems associated with them. In other cases there may be insufficient information or experience to make decisions on future policy. In both cases it is felt that further research is needed to see if, on balance, there is a net gain. Such subjects would include:-

- (i) Car parking policies What is the effect of restriction on economic prosperity of centres?
- (ii) Strategic Park and Ride Do the benefits of provision outweigh the environmental impact associated with a site?

- (iii) Traffic restraint How would this work and what would be the effect on surrounding areas and restrained areas? The council may be required to address this issue if legislation is passed by Parliament.
- (iv) Bus Franchising What is the potential?
- (v) Audit, Indicators and Targets Solihull has not been subjected to a 'State of the Environment (SOE) Audit', which is a formal checking of its activities to assess if they are sustainable. This would form the benchmark against which progress of any future initiatives can be measured. It would also assist in the formulation of indicators for measuring progress and be helpful in the setting of Targets. Such an audit is seen as essential.
- (vi) Resources If the processes outlined above are followed, there are implications for human resources and financial resources. These areas would need to be quantified and potential sources would need to be identified (in particular, undertaking of an SOE would involve significant resources).
- (vii) Partnerships The role of Partnerships is twofold. Firstly, it creates common ownership so that problems and solutions are worked on in agreement with the community rather than imposed on it. Secondly, Partnerships offer a wider base to produce resources, both in cash terms and human resources. The Agenda 21 group needs to identify suitable partnerships for many of the initiatives listed.
- (viii) Co-ordination of the activities of the Traffic Commissioners with all statutory Transport bodies.
- (ix) Cost of Transport What would be the most economically acceptable and effective cost structure to encourage the transfer of travel from the car to public transport, cycling and walking?
- (x) Review progress on alternative fuels and electric power for vehicles.
- (xi) Promote research into quieter road surfaces.

## 5. FURTHER CONSULTATION - POSSIBILITIES

- ◆ Publicity - Newspaper, TV, Radio, Mailshot
- ◆ Exhibitions
- ◆ Road Show
- ◆ Formal consultation
- ◆ Journey to work surveys

## 6. MEASURING SUCCESS - POSSIBILITIES

Type	Source	Existing
Road Accident data	Police/Solihull Council	Yes
Car ownership levels	Census	Yes
Public Transport usage	Centro	Yes
Ring and Ride and Easy Rider Usage	Centro	Yes
Traffic Counts and Queue Length Surveys	Solihull Council	Yes

Journey to work/school survey	Solihull Council	Yes
Air Quality	Solihull Council	Limited
Length of cycleway	Solihull Council	Yes
Number and usage of cycle parking spaces	Solihull Council	Yes
Number and usage of local Park & Ride spaces	Solihull Council	Yes
No. & usage of Town Centre parking spaces (Public)	Solihull Council	Yes
No. & usage of Town Centre parking spaces (Private)		No
Number of traffic calmed roads	Solihull Council	Yes
Number and type of traffic offences	Clerk of Court	
Number of walking trips	?	No
An appropriate health indicator	?	No

## Attendance

During the preparation of this framework, meetings were attended by the following:-

R Balmer	Public
L Edwards OBE, JP	The Knowle Society
P Ellen	Rover
D Emlyn Jones	Solihull Residents Association
R Fennell	Transport 2000
Cllr G Gibbons	Solihull MBC
K Guard	Cyclists Touring Club
D Hall/A Harrison	Centro
Cllr K Llewellyn	Solihull MBC
Cllr F Nash	Chelmsley Wood Town Council
G Smith	Hampton-in-Arden Society
D Strang	Environmental & Technical Services Department, Solihull MBC
J Vowels	Friends of the Earth
Cllr J Windmill	Solihull MBC
G Jinks (Facilitator)	Finance Department, Solihull MBC

# AGENDA 21 - POLLUTION

## 1. AIM

To improve air quality, protect the inhabitants of Solihull from noise pollution and protect and enhance water quality in Solihull.

## 2. WHAT WE ARE DOING

### Environment Agency

- ◆ Water quality issues such as algal activity, sewage treatment, pesticides, contaminated discharges from surface water sewers
- ◆ Production of catchment management plans for Rivers Blythe, Cole and Bourne
- ◆ Waste regulation including Licensing of Landfill Sites/Transfer Stations

### Local Authority Control

- ◆ Prior authorisation of potentially polluting processes under the Environmental Protection Act 1990
- ◆ Investigation of a variety of complaints in respect of air pollution and noise
- ◆ Participation with other West Midland Authorities in respect of air quality
- ◆ Prevent or minimise pollution in relation to highway drainage, correct operation of storm overflows and pumping stations, lakes and watercourses in the Local Authority's ownership, fly tipping and street cleansing

## 3. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

### EDUCATION

- ◆ Publicise pollution issues affecting the authority
- ◆ Maintain close links between the Environment Agency and Local Authority

### ACTION

- ◆ Further improvements to Barston Sewage Treatment Works
- ◆ Further investigations re: wrong sewer connections
- ◆ Investigate any changes in the ecology and amenity value of the River Blythe in respect of new housing developments
- ◆ Assessing levels of lead around industrial processes

- ◆ Validation of modelling techniques in respect of air quality assessment
- ◆ Commitment to reduce air pollution by a number of means
- ◆ Progress the national waste strategy for the minimisation, recovery and recycling of waste
- ◆ Consider problems caused by light pollution
- ◆ Identify and assess areas of contaminated land in the Borough once appropriate legislation is in force
- ◆ To plan and commence a review and assessment of air quality in the Borough, together with the necessary consultation, once appropriate legislation is in force

# AGENDA 21 - EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

## 1. AIM

To give people the information needed to enable them to play a full and active part in the decision making process and to raise awareness of the impact our lifestyle has upon our environment.

## 2. WHAT WE ARE DOING

- ◆ **Support for environmental education** through the Council's "Green Scheme" which works closely with local schools, colleges, businesses and community groups giving talks and supporting environmental improvement initiatives
- ◆ **Support for environmental education in schools** via the Local Education Authority through visits, guidance material, training and inspection
- ◆ **Project Kingfisher Ranger Service** which cares for 7 miles of the Cole Valley for the benefit of people and wildlife with walks, talks and events
- ◆ **Awareness raising events** such as Solihull Environment Week organised by Solihull environmental organisations and the Council
- ◆ **Information** leaflets/booklets on a range of topics such as the location of recycling centres and cycle routes. Information Technology Point at Chelmsley Wood Library with access to word processing, Internet, CD Rom, Open Learning etc
- ◆ **Advice** from the Local Authority on a range of issues such as pollution, energy conservation, wildlife and recycling

## 3. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- ◆ Investigate possibilities of using new technologies (Internet, electronic public information services, etc) to get the message across to the wider community. Information such as quality of life data, sites of wildlife importance, location of recycling centres, progress towards sustainability
- ◆ Encourage schools and colleges to carry out "green audits" of their operations, buildings and grounds and seek the views of pupils and staff regarding environmental and quality of life issues
- ◆ Develop mechanisms which will encourage all members of the community to become involved in the Local Agenda 21 process

# AGENDA 21 - NATURAL AND RURAL ENVIRONMENT

## 1. AIM

To highlight the value of Solihull's natural and rural environment by:-

- (a) recognising and promoting the need to manage and protect the important features of the urban and rural landscape i.e. the natural habitats, characteristic Arden landscape and green corridors
- (b) protecting wildlife habitats and promoting diversity
- (c) promoting formal and informal recreation uses of a sustainable nature and enhancing opportunities for access to wildlife and the countryside
- (d) encouraging sympathetic land use, including development, agricultural and forestry practices of a sustainable nature, to promote sound management of the land
- (e) encouraging local pride and responsibility by raising awareness, education and active involvement of individuals

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Solihull's countryside and wildlife form a vital part of our local heritage. The countryside can be seen in terms of its landscape and visual quality, its natural resources and the pattern of land use and settlement. There is an established balance of these elements which shapes our perception of the countryside. Much of the countryside is managed by and for the farming industry, but it also includes significant areas of natural landscape as well as villages and hamlets, many of which are important historically.

The natural environment comprises a wide range of habitat types from woodland and meadow to rivers and wetlands. It has been shaped by man in the form of farming, forestry, settlement, transport and the exploitation of minerals. It contains areas of national and regional importance, such as the River Blythe, as well as a widely dispersed range of habitat types supporting a rich diversity of plants and animals. Solihull's built-up areas also support valuable communities of plants and animals in the variety of open spaces which exist. Urban wildlife often owes its survival to the links between these open spaces and the countryside beyond. However, as much of our wildlife remains unrecorded, a regularly updated survey of habitats in Solihull based on the current Habitat Biodiversity Audit is urgently required.

The countryside is under great pressure from new housing, business and leisure development, whilst farming is undergoing changes which can drastically affect the appearance of the landscape and its wildlife. There is a need for more positive management of the countryside, based on partnerships between the various organisations involved, to compensate for changes in farming practices, and to ensure that the needs of wildlife are taken into account in all activities. The importance of preserving the links between urban open spaces and the countryside also needs to be recognised. Above all, it is essential that all who live in or visit Solihull become aware of the benefits that a well-protected and managed countryside and thriving local wildlife will bring to our lives.

### 3. TOPIC AREAS

- (a) **Open Countryside**
  - the open space surrounding and between settlements and the links to Warwickshire and beyond
- (b) **Landscape**
  - an assessment of its origin, form and visual quality
  - characteristic Arden landscape; hedgerow trees, small irregular fields, belts of trees, characteristic local buildings, sunken lanes with thick hedges, traditional parkland, "Landmark" features, archaeological features
- (c) **Wildlife and Habitats**
  - ponds and other water bodies, species-rich grasslands, marshy grasslands and wetlands, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, scrub, heathland remnants, parks and gardens, and geological sites
- (d) **Land Use**
  - agriculture, forestry and other commercial uses
- (e) **Rivers, Canals and Lakes**
- (f) **Rural Settlements**
  - their origin, extent and future
- (g) **Access to the Countryside**
  - the nature of the demand and the means to provide and control access
- (h) **Urban Open Space**
  - their extent and importance for recreation and the environment and links to open countryside
- (i) **Green Corridors**
  - canals, railways, hedges/verges, green "wedges" in urban areas
- (j) **Historic Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeological Sites**
- (k) **Awareness, Education and Information**
  - about the extent of loss and damage, the threats posed and the opportunities and initiatives

### 4. HOW DOES THE NATURAL AND RURAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOU?

- (a)
  - (i) What is distinctive about your part of Solihull?
  - (ii) Do you regard closeness to the natural environment as important?
- (b) What is the most important role for the countryside: Is it food production, habitats for wildlife, space of recreation, a gap between Solihull and Coventry, an attractive place to live?
- (c) Which do you think should receive most protection, urban green space or the countryside? Or are they equally important?

- (d) Do you feel that Solihull's natural environment is under threat? If so, is it from development, agriculture, people visiting, pollution, neglect, road building, or some other threat?
- (e)
  - (i) Do local open spaces meet your needs ... and those of wildlife?
  - (ii) Are there enough places to visit in the countryside?
  - (iii) Do you find them easy to get to?
- (f)
  - (i) Do you have any active involvement in protecting your local environment?
  - (ii) Would you like to be more involved?

<p>5. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SOLIHULL</p>
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- A survey of wildlife habitats in Solihull (Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Habitat Biodiversity Audit).
- Providing greater protection for both important wildlife habitats and natural areas generally (Modifications to the Solihull Unitary Development Plan (UDP), Environment policies).
- Developing a nature conservation strategy for Solihull.
- Developing a countryside strategy for Solihull.
- Developing a parks strategy for Solihull.
- New tree planting under the Forest of Arden initiative (2,800 trees on 2.6 hectares in 1995-96).
- Warwickshire Rural Action schemes; Hampton Spinney, Temple Balsall Conservation Appraisal, Berkswell Society MAP.
- Caring for the River Cole through Project Kingfisher.
- Management of woodlands and local nature reserves, including Elmdon Manor, (Warwickshire Wildlife Trust), Knowle (Knowle Society), Yorkswood (Solihull MBC).
- Providing new habitats in school grounds.
- Management strategy for Earlswood Lakes area, in partnership with British Waterways, Warwickshire CC and Stratford-on-Avon D.C.
- Creating a new woodland, wetland and meadow nature park adjacent to Elmdon Park.
- Improving canal towpaths and access to them, in partnership with British Waterways.
- Promoting circular walks and leisure cycle rides based on Solihull.
- Protecting the countryside through the Solihull UDP Green Belt policies.
- A survey of street trees in Solihull.
- Creation of a wetland in Cheswick Green.
- Maintenance of historic/archaeological records (Sites and Monuments Record) for Solihull.

## 6. ACTION PLANS

Letter in brackets indicates Aim to which proposal relates

PROPOSAL	HOW	WHEN	WHOM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular updating of habitat survey (b)</li> </ul>	Lobbying of Habitat Biodiversity Audit partnership by partner organisations	Future Steering Group meetings	SMBC, WWT, Conservation. Volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and enhance links between urban wildlife and the countryside/green wedges. (b + c)</li> </ul>	Implementing nature conservation strategy and identifying green wedges locally		SMBC, SWG, Local communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish/develop partnerships with organisations interested in countryside management, e.g. National Farmers Union, Countryside Commission, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Council for British Archaeology (a + d)</li> </ul>	Theme meetings of SWG with representative invited	After publication	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of the benefits of wildlife and the countryside. (e)</li> </ul>	Publicise work of SWG.	On going/appropriate events throughout year	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure greater emphasis given to environmental implications of new development. (a + d)</li> </ul>	Monitor environmental implications input on planning application reports.	On going.	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the sustainability of forest industries. (d)</li> </ul>	Develop partnership with Forestry Authority.	After publication	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage more tree planting. (b)</li> </ul>	Promoting benefits to landowners/developers/ local communities.	After publication	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage maintenance of long grass during Summer for benefit of birds and insects. (b)</li> </ul>	Lobbying SMBC to alter mowing regimes. Promote benefits of wildflower-friendly maintenance	On-going/appropriate events throughout year	SMBC, SWG

SWG = Natural and Rural Environment Specialist Working Group, SMBC = Solihull MBC, WWT - Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>HOW</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHOM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage growth of wildflowers. (b)</li> </ul>	Lobbying SMBC to alter mowing regimes and promoting new wildflower planting.	On-going/appropriate events throughout year.	SMBC, SWG Conservation Volunteers, Local Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage survey of location and accessibility of open space and enhance existing and develop new open spaces. (c + e)</li> </ul>	Lobbying SMBC to implement UDP proposal, promote local surveys and benefits of enhanced open space provision.	After publication	SMBC, SWG, Local Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect flora when new public access provided. (b + c)</li> </ul>	Promote benefits of preserving existing vegetation for wildlife.	On going/appropriate events throughout year.	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage conservation of water. (d + e)</li> </ul>	Pilot project in Knowle.		Knowle Society.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage survey of historic hedgerows and their protection. (a + e)</li> </ul>	Promote local surveys, incorporate in Sites and Monuments Record and lobbying SMBC to enhance protection.	After publication but await Department of the Environment regulations.	SWG, SMBC, Local Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and promote historical sites in Solihull</li> </ul>	Prepare Management Plan for Hobs Moat Ancient Monument.	1997	SMBC, Local Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance archaeological sites in Solihull. (a, c + e)</li> </ul>	Promote benefit of archaeological strategy and local audit of the historic environment.	After publication.	SWG, SMBC, Local Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop indicators for measuring environmental progress. (e)</li> </ul>	Research existing work, attend Summer workshop and other training opportunities and encourage public involvement.	Summer 1997.	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage preparation of local Biodiversity Action Plans. (b)</li> </ul>	Lobbying of Habitat Biodiversity Audit partnership by partner organisations. Survey of existing Action Plans and establish priorities for plans with local communities.	Future Steering Group meetings. After publication	SMBC, WWT, SWG Conservation Volunteers, Local Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise public awareness of planning issues and Green Belt policy (e)</li> </ul>	Promote benefits and limitations of Green Belt policy.	On-going/appropriate events throughout year	SWG

SWG = Natural and Rural Environment Specialist Working Group, SMBC = Solihull MBC, WWT - Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>HOW</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHOM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise public awareness of benefits of woodland management and Tree Preservation Order system. (e)</li> </ul>	Promote benefits of woodland management and Tree Preservation Order system and encourage public involvement.	On-going/appropriate events throughout year	SWG Local Communities SMBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage replacement planting programme for old street trees (a, d + e)</li> </ul>	Lobbying SMBC and promote benefits of replacements.	After publication/appropriate events throughout year.	SWG, SMBC, Local Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an integrated strategy for habitat, recreation and management of all public open spaces (b, c + d)</li> </ul>	Contribute towards the developing Parks strategy.	During forthcoming consultation period.	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a rural strategy for the protection and management of important habitats. (b)</li> </ul>	Contribute towards the developing nature conservation and countryside strategies.	During forthcoming consultation period.	SWG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage people to help look after all aspects of the natural environment</li> </ul>	Encourage and promote new and existing local conservation groups.	On-going/through appropriate events and in response to public.	SWG, SMBC, Local Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure animals do not suffer cruelty as a result of development or land management. (b + e).</li> </ul>	Produce and promote Good Practice Guidelines for developers and land-owners as part of nature conservation strategy. Increase public awareness.	After publication.	SMBC, SWG, Local Communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and encourage the control of light pollution in the countryside.</li> </ul>	Identify sources of information and monitor changes. Contribute towards developing countryside strategy. Lobby SMBC to monitor changes and recognise issue in UDP review and development control.	Ongoing/during forthcoming consultation periods.	SWG, SMBC, Local Communities.

## 7. MEASURING SUCCESS

We will continue to work on developing a mix of technical and popular indicators and will:

- research existing work, including National and Regional standards
- make use of appropriate indicators, such as those proposed by CPRE.

Suggestions that have been made during consultation:

- monitor the reduction of Green Belt
- monitor the number, or length, of verges managed for the benefit of wildlife
- monitor wildlife in parks, natural areas and gardens
- undertake regular photographic monitoring
- monitor savings from the Knowle water conservation project
- use volunteers to monitor indicators
- monitor and report indicators by area.

## 8. INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

- Articles in local press, e.g. Your Solihull
- Wide circulation of final document, including schools, nursing homes, libraries etc.
- Explore potential for advertising on local buses and Council vehicles
- Approach local groups and encourage involvement
- Publish regular newsletter for Solihull
- Monitoring of popular indicators by local communities
- Lobbying central Government to raise awareness of Agenda 21 nationally and introduce "green" taxation