

# Ethical Policy 2004

## INTRODUCTION

Stroud Town Council agrees with Stroud District Council:

*'That the state of the environment is a focus of wise concern throughout the world, and rightly so. The world faces an environmental crisis. The way humans are using energy and resources, altering ecosystems and producing pollution is putting at risk the future ability of the earth to support life.'*  
(Stroud District Council, Environment Strategy, 1995)

All life depends on the use of resources. To support life indefinitely these resources must be used in a sustainable way. Currently, resources tend to be used in a 'linear' fashion. Typically, this involves: Extract raw material – process – manufacture – use – dispose of waste. This is unsustainable, not only because the raw material will run out. The production of waste products (including those from energy use) through the cycle, in many cases pose a greater threat to natural cycles and processes that sustain life.

Local authorities have a duty to minimise their own environmental impact and to set a good example to others. Their ability to do so may sometimes be constrained by their other duties and responsibilities, but environmental protection should always have a high priority.

Agenda 21, signed by world leaders in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, requires local authorities to produce action plans to improve sustainability in their areas. Gloucestershire County Council has taken a lead in this process, by working with local people in Vision 21 (Gloucestershire's Local Agenda 21).

Town and parish councils have limited powers and resources in comparison with principal authorities. However, a large town council such as Stroud has a significant impact on the environment through its activities. Furthermore, like other local authorities, it is in a position to set a good (or bad) example in its approach to the environment.

This environmental policy is designed to ensure that all council activities are evaluated against a set of guiding principles. Wherever possible, the action that most meets the following criteria will be taken:

- The use of all resources shall be minimised, taking account of the whole-life environmental cost, both of the resource and of the intended use.
- As far as possible, resources used should be within a "closed-loop cycle" i.e. ideally they should be 100% recycled and 100% recyclable
- Resources whose production damages life supporting systems and natural cycles shall not be used

The activities of Stroud Town Council impact on the environment in six interlinked ways:

- purchasing
- land management
- energy use
- waste
- investment
- Conditions attached to grants given by the council to local organisations

Detailed policies are set out below. They are subject to annual review, which may be amended or the list expanded to take account of new activities. The Council will do its best to abide by these policies. When this is not possible, reasons for not doing so will be provided in writing to the Ethics Working Group. The Ethics Working Group will monitor the implementation of this policy and will report, at least annually, to Finance and Policy Committee.

## **SECTION A**

### **PURCHASING**

#### **Introduction**

All products have impacts on the environment. These may be due to the resources they use, the methods of manufacture, packaging, transportation, how they are used and/or how they degrade in the environment once they have been used.

Larger organisations also have the additional advantage of being able to influence suppliers towards more environmentally friendly products and services. Council purchases can adversely effect the environment during production, transport and packaging, use and disposal.

Stroud Town Council's main purchases are consumables such as paper, ink cartridges and bedding plants, as well as the occasional large capital item. Some large equipment is hired.

#### **POLICY 1:**

**The Council will take into account the likely effect of its purchases, and equipment that it hires, on the environment.**

#### **Paper, envelopes and card**

Paper and card products should always contain some recycled fibres, preferably 100%. Compared to virgin products, recycled manufacturing consumes up to 50% less energy, up to 50% less water and involves fewer chemicals. It also uses resources that would otherwise end up in landfill or incineration sites.

Recycled paper and card can be divided into four categories:

A. Woodfree Mill Waste

Paper made from damaged or faulty goods rejected at the mill. It is of the highest quality but is the least environmentally friendly of the four.

B. Woodfree Unprinted Waste

Waste generated by paper converters and printers, and returned to the mill. It is generally of high quality.

C. Woodfree Printed Waste

Post-consumer paper generated from offices, which needs de-inking. Using this waste reduces pollution from dumping and incineration.

D. Mechanical Printed/Unprinted Waste

Waste made from post-consumer newsprint and magazines that would otherwise be landfilled or incinerated.

Chlorine bleaching is an environmentally damaging process and should be avoided.

Stroud Town Council has had problems obtaining suitable recycled paper. Paper is purchased from Beswick, as they are willing to deliver small quantities, and if large quantities are purchased the paper gets damp and jams the photocopier. When last asked, Beswick did not supply white recycled paper that does not deposit chalk on the photocopier. Recycled envelopes are used.

Staff are careful about wasting paper and use both sides wherever possible.

**POLICY 1a:**

**The Council will take into account the above considerations and will purchase the most environmentally friendly paper obtainable that is consistent with its needs.**

**POLICY 1b:**

**The Council will use as little paper as is consistent with its smooth operation and the need to keep Councillors and others informed in accordance with democratic principles.**

Ink cartridges

Recycled toner cartridges for laser printers, faxes and photocopiers are now widely available. However, they are not available for all makes of equipment.

**POLICY 1c:**

**The Council will use recycled toner cartridges whenever this is possible and of suitable quality. When purchasing new equipment, care will be taken that good quality recycled cartridges are available.**

Bedding plants

Bedding plants are expected in formal beds in parks and gardens. However, there is scope for more permanent planting to reduce the use of bedding plants.

**POLICY 1d:**

**Where it is acceptable and possible, permanent planting will be used in preference to bedding plants.**

Paints and varnishes

Paints and varnishes often contain unpleasant solvents that can be environmentally damaging and, when used indoors, can have unpleasant and dangerous health effects.

**POLICY 1e:**

**As far as possible, paints and varnishes will be chosen to have minimal detrimental impact on the environment. Only water-based paints will be used indoors.**

Cleaning products

**POLICY 1f:**

**Cleaning materials, indoor and outdoor, will be chosen as far as can be ascertained, to cause minimum damage to the environment.**

Aerosols

**POLICY 1g:**

**Aerosols containing CFCs and HCFCs will not be purchased or used.**

### Wood

The destruction of old-growth forests – both tropical and temperate – is causing a rapid and severe depletion of the world's tree cover and contributing to global warming by decreasing carbon dioxide absorption. The destruction of fragile ecosystems causes a decrease in biodiversity. The planting of trees for wood production increases carbon dioxide absorption but cannot replace lost species.

#### **POLICY 1h:**

The council will purchase wood products made from British wood or from local outlets which sell Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) products as this supports sustainable forest management globally. If the purchase is less than £10 or if the product is not obtainable through a FSC supporting outlet then the council may purchase the wood product from another source.

### Compost

It is now recognised that the extraction of peat for compost is causing environmental damage.

#### **POLICY 1i:**

**The Council will not purchase or use peat-based compost.**

### Re-usable items

Many items can be bought in either disposable or reusable forms.

#### **POLICY 1j:**

**Wherever practicable, reusable or refillable items will be used in place of throw-disposable items.**

### Transport

Transport is a major user of energy and cause of pollution. Buying locally produced and marketed goods and services both reduces transport and keeps the Council's money in the local economy.

#### **POLICY 1k:**

**The Council will buy and hire locally produced and marketed goods whenever possible and when this is consistent with quality criteria.**

### Packaging

Resource use can be significantly reduced by avoiding products that are excessively packaged. Plastic packaging, in particular, should be avoided as it remains difficult to recycle and is a major polluter in its manufacturing process.

#### **POLICY 1l:**

**The Council will attempt to avoid buying goods with excessive packaging. When this cannot be avoided, the Council will register a complaint with the supplier.**

## **SECTION B**

### **WASTE**

### Introduction

Waste results in air, water and land pollution. The emphasis should be to reduce use, then to reuse and finally to recycle.

Waste produced by Stroud Town Council consists mainly of paper (from the office) and prunings etc. (from the grounds). In addition, groundstaff have to dispose of the contents of the rubbish bins in the parks and oasis and plastic flower wrappings from graves.

### Reduction and Reuse

#### **POLICY 2a:**

**As far as is possible, the Council will try to avoid waste and re-use items (or pass them to others for reuse).**

### Recycling

Stroud Town Council produces a large amount of paper waste, which is not at present recycled. The recycling facilities provided by Stroud District Council are for the use of private households, not businesses. There is a need for recycling facilities for businesses in Stroud, which could also be used by the Town Council.

#### **POLICY 2b:**

**As far as is possible, items that cannot be reused will be recycled. The Council will attempt to obtain funding to set up a recycling service for business waste in Stroud. Prunings will be shredded rather than burnt.**

## SECTION C

### ENERGY USE

#### Introduction

The burning of fossil fuels, directly or to generate electricity, releases carbon dioxide, a gas recognised to be a major contributor to global warming. Burning fossil fuels also releases sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which contribute to acid rain. Additionally, these fuels are not renewable, so their depletion needs to be reduced.

Stroud Town Council has adopted a 'Declaration on Climate Change' (Appendix 1)

#### **POLICY 3a:**

**The Council will purchase energy that comes from renewable sources. Where this is not possible, the Council will purchase through a scheme that makes a contribution to renewable energy production.**

#### Heating

Space heating is one of the largest contributors to carbon dioxide emissions. Thanet House is heated by a gas condensing boiler but the structure of the building makes heating difficult to regulate. The Chapel is also heated by gas.

#### **POLICY 3b:**

**The Council will ensure that all its heating systems are in good working order and will do its best to provide a comfortable, but not excessively hot, working environment.**

### Equipment

Both Council vehicles run on diesel and the machinery used by the groundstaff runs on unleaded 2-stroke petrol. Vehicle use is minimised by combining journeys and using radios.

**POLICY 3c:**

**When buying or hiring electrical or other energy-using devices, including vehicles, the Council will take into account the energy consumption. Equipment, including vehicles will be used as economically as possible. As far as practicable, devices, including vehicle engines, will be switched off when not in use.**

**SECTION D**

**LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Introduction**

There is limited scope for imagination in the management of formal parks and playing fields. However, the cemetery, in particular the old cemetery, is managed to create and maintain a variety of interesting habitats. It has consequently been designated as a local nature reserve.

Stroud Town Council has adopted a policy on the use of herbicides (Appendix 2).

**POLICY 4**

**As far as is possible taking into account their use, the grounds maintained by the Council will be managed to maximise the opportunities for a variety habitats suitable for native flora and fauna.**

## **SECTION E**

### **INVESTMENT**

Stroud town Council has a responsibility to ensure that its money is not used for environmentally damaging activity, consistent with its duty to manage its finances efficiently.

#### **POLICY 5**

**As far as is possible, the Council's money will be invested with, and financial services will be obtained from, institutions with sound environmental policies.**

## **SECTION F:**

### **CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO GRANTS**

Stroud Town Council makes a large number of small grants and a few large grants to local organisations that contribute to the community. The way in which this money is spent should be covered by the council's Environment Policy.

#### **POLICY 6:**

**When grants are made to local organisations, the receiving organisation will be asked to have regard to the Council's Environment Policy in the spending of the money. Where necessary, the council will provide information, help, and advice to enable the receiving organisation to do this.**

## **SECTION G:**

### **FAIR TRADE**

Stroud Town Council fully supports the concept of Fairtrade Towns. The Council will:

**POLICY 7a: Serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings and in its office.**

**POLICY 7b: Work towards registering Stroud as a Fairtrade town by meeting the Fairtrade Foundation's 5 goals (Approved in Motion 2002)**

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**Approved at Finance and Policy Committee  
8<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

With thanks to Stroud Valleys Project, on whose Environmental Statement (1995) this document was based

## *APPENDIX:*

### *Contents:*

#### *1. Stroud Declaration on Climate Change*

### *STROUD DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE*

*Stroud Town Council recognises that Climate Change is likely to be one of the key drivers of change within our community this century.*

*We acknowledge that: -*

- evidence continues to mount that climate change is occurring*
- climate change will have far reaching effects on the UK's economy, society and environment.*

*We welcome the-*

- social, economic and environmental benefits, which will come from combating climate change*
- recognition by many sectors, especially government and business, of the need for change*
- emissions targets agreed by central government and the programme for delivering change as set out in the Climate Change – UK Programme*
- opportunity for local government to lead the response at a local level and thereby play a major role in helping to deliver the national programme*
- opportunity for us to encourage and help local residents and local businesses – to reduce their energy costs, to reduce congestion to improve the local environment and to deal with fuel poverty in our communities*
- additional powers to address the social, economic and environmental well being of our communities contained within the local government Act 2000, which will assist in the process*

*We commit our council to: -*

- Achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from our own operations including energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal and the purchasing of goods and services, and make public our commitment to action.*
- Encourage all sectors of the local community to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions.*
- Work with other levels of government to contribute, at a local level to the delivery of the UK climate change programme*

*(signed on original by Kambites, Belcher, Marjoram & 2 others on 21.4.2001)*