

Your Environmental Checklist



Foreword

It has been a number of years since “Your Environmental Checklist” was originally produced by the Merseyside Environmental Trust in conjunction with the Liverpool Community Environmental Network.

But with the UN Conference of Parties 21st (COP 21) meeting taking place in Paris 30th November to 11th December 2015 and a greater public awareness of climate change, visible evidence of global warming, a rapidly rising global population and the increasing demands put upon the planet’s resources we at MET thought that the time was right for an update of the Checklist.

During the revision of the checklist we reflected on what has happened over the intervening years; changing attitudes, changing technologies, changing government policies, the rise in people’s awareness, 2009 Liverpool’s Year of the Environment, the call for a Low Carbon Liverpool and more recently the movement towards a more circular economy.

In this edition of the Checklist we have still focussed on what is practical but also celebrate and highlight the good practice examples to be found all across the Liverpool City region to provide inspiration for others.

We have updated the sources of help and contacts – sadly a reflection of changing times and funding demands, the wealth of environmental support organisations that once existed on Merseyside and the North West has thinned considerably.

The Merseyside Environmental Trust as it enters its 32nd year is still here to help support community groups, organisations and businesses to play their part and be more active in a more sustainable Merseyside.

Stephen Sykes (Chair)

Merseyside Environmental Trust

5th December 2015

Environmental Impact Checklist

Sustainable Development is defined in the 1987 paper Our Common Future (the Brundtland Report) as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ Almost thirty years later this definition still remains key to the principles expected from the process of Sustainable Development.

This checklist will help you to understand the main ways in which you can improve your environment performance and keep up with the current best practices within sustainable development circles. Environmental standards and expectations from customers are changing, with evidence showcasing that environmentally sustainable working practices are now seen as a key component of any successful organisation.

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Water Use

Water is often used with little thought given to its environmental impact, yet there are many ways in which water can be saved and used in a more sustainable way.

- How much water do you currently use? E.g. Do you have a water meter to measure this?
- Where does it come from? E.g. Mains water or collected rainwater?
- Where do you predominantly use it? E.g. Restrooms, Kitchen, Gardens?
- What products do you use that come into contact with water? E.g. for cleaning?
- Where is the water disposed of after use? E.g. Sewer or to local watercourse?

Environmental Aspects to be considered

Materials – Choose cleaning products which will have a low impact on the water environment

Equipment – Choose low water use appliances and keep them well maintained

Education – Make sure group members understand the benefits of saving water and reducing pollution

Measures to be taken

- Water Collection – Can you collect and use rainwater E.g. for watering plants?



At the newly refurbished **Liverpool Everyman Theatre**, rainwater is collected into a large tank on the roof, then filtered and used to flush toilets, reducing mains water consumption for flushing by up to 50% a year - www.everymanplayhouse.com/a-greener-theatre

- Reducing Waste – Fit ‘push’ taps on sinks and urinals to prevent unnecessary water waste; Buy ‘water efficient’ appliances; Use ‘low flush’ toilets or fit a ‘save-a-flush’ bag; Use the plug or a washing bowl when cleaning hands, plates or foodstuffs in the sink; Look regularly for leaks and repair any found immediately.
- Reducing Pollution – Make sure your drains go into a sewer and not the local watercourse; Use environmentally friendly cleaning products; Never put oil, methylated spirits, etc. down the sink/drain.

Sources of further help and information

Water Wise is an independent, not for profit organisation founded in 2005 that has since become the leading authority on water efficiency in the UK and Europe. They provide water saving advice and have a selection of downloadable resources such as infographics and posters available via their website - www.waterwise.org.uk/pages/save-water.html

United Utilities provide knowledge and insights about saving water in the workplace - www.unitedutilities.com/be-waterwise-in-the-workplace.aspx and they also supply ‘Save-a-flush’ bags - www.unitedutilities.com/SaveaFlush-orderform.aspx

Responsible Purchasing

Purchasing products which are produced in an environmentally sensitive way, and as such contributing towards sustainability across a life cycle perspective.

- Does your organisation buy locally where possible?
- Does your organisation favour environmentally sustainable products?
- Do you know where your suppliers source materials?
- Do you know how many miles those materials have travelled?
- Do you know what levels of energy consumption are involved in their production?
- Do you know if the materials are obtained from recycled or renewable sources?
- Does your organisation appraise the environmental performance of suppliers or contractors?

Environmental Aspects to be considered

Materials

- Plastics – Are they made from recycled content? Are they biodegradable?
- Wood – What is their country of origin? Are the forests sustainably managed? Avoid tropical hardwoods.
- Paper – Use recycled paper or from sustainably managed forests
- Textiles – What is their country of origin? Are there acceptable working conditions and fair wages paid?

Equipment – Country of manufacture (local equals less transport emissions), how materials are sourced, fair wages, energy efficiency rating?

Products in General

- Is the product certified and labelled according to British, European and Global environmental or industry accepted standards?
- Will the product result in savings from occupational health and safety benefits or a reduction in maintenance costs?
- What is the life expectancy of the product? Is it easy and cost effective to maintain?
- Can the product be re-used or recycled at the end of its useful life?

Packaging

- Does the product have packaging? If so is it recyclable or reusable?
- Can the packaging be recycled locally?
- Has your organisation adopted a policy on packaging waste reduction?
- Will your organisation accept the packaging back for recycling or re-use?

Measures to be taken

- Always source locally if possible
- Source recycled goods if possible
- Look to recycle or re-use packaging
- Set environmental requirements for suppliers and contractors to ensure a more environmentally sustainable supply chain

Sources of further help and information

Green Choices aims to empower with simple, direct information on green alternatives which make a real, lasting difference - www.greenchoices.org

Action Sustainability provides advice and services enabling you to embed sustainable supply chain management principles across your business into your supply chain, allowing benefits from improved sustainability performance and brand value together with reduced risks and costs - www.actionsustainability.com

Energy Efficiency

With energy use being a major contributor to carbon emissions, even small improvements in this sector can have a big impact on increasing your energy efficiency levels and cutting your bills.

- Is your electricity supplied on a conventional or renewable energy tariff?
- Do you know how much energy your organisation uses? E.g. Gas, electricity?
- Where do you use energy E.g. Lighting, water or space heating, appliances?
- Can you generate any renewable energy yourselves?
- How do you currently look to be energy efficient in your organisation?

Environmental Aspects to be considered

Equipment – Choose appliances that have a high energy efficiency rating

Education – Make sure employees understand energy efficiency and the ways to save energy. This is critical as existing bad habits can be hard to change making communication key



The Southport Eco Centre demonstrates energy saving and renewable energy technologies. It offers a practical demonstration of sustainability, inspiring visitors of all ages to consider their impact on the environment through stimulating information and interactive displays about energy, transport, waste management and climate change -

www.southportecocentre.com

Measures to be taken

Heating

- Ensure thorough insulation of walls, doors, roof spaces and hot water pipes to prevent heat loss
- Use high efficiency 'condensing' boilers – consider replacing boilers older than 10-15 years and ensure they are regularly serviced
- Maximise the amount of 'passive' heating, e.g. through direct sunlight
- Turning down the heating by one degree will go unnoticed and reduce bills
- If your heating system has an automatic timer, use it. Set the heater to come on when needed and to turn off when no longer required (heating will not be required at weekends or on Bank Holidays if the premises are empty)

Lighting

- Maximise the use of natural light during day time hours to avoid the need for artificial lighting
- Use energy efficient lightbulbs
- Switch lights off when you leave a room, try putting up posters and stickers up to remind group members to do this

Appliances

- Buy energy efficient appliances
- Switch off equipment at the mains rather than leaving on standby when not in use or overnight
- Consider using laptops instead of desktop PCs as they use a lot less energy

Sources of further help and information

Energy Projects Plus is an independent social enterprise and environmental charity that aims to empower members of the community to take action on

reducing their own energy bills by providing information and support on energy efficiency - www.epplus.org.uk

Energy Saving Trust is an organisation that is devoted to promoting energy efficiency and sustainability more widely. It provides impartial advice to consumers and conducts research whilst working with businesses and governments. From this they have become influential in driving behaviour change and a key stakeholder in inspiring new energy efficiency programmes and policies - www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

UK Power is an Ofgem accredited energy comparison site. It compares gas and electricity suppliers to help consumers find the cheapest energy prices, switch to a better deal and cut the cost of their bills - www.ukpower.co.uk

Transport

Whether looking to change your employees commuting habits or improve your organisations working practices in line with efficiency thinking, there are many ways in which sustainable transport can lessen your environmental impact.

- Do you actively avoid and prevent unnecessary travel?
- Do you encourage walking or cycling as a healthy option for short journeys?
- Do you offer facilities (showers, changing rooms, bike store) to encourage cycling?
- Do you promote public transport by having timetables, fares and discount ticket information available?
- Do you encourage employees to car share?

Environmental Aspects to be considered

Accessibility

- Locate your offices close to public transport links
- Ensure that venues for meetings, conferences and training events are fully accessible by public transport
- Remove the need for transport at all by promoting working remotely from home if possible

Travel

- Encourage travel by train rather than flying
- Utilise Videoconferencing (E.g. Skype) or conference calls rather than travel where possible
- Short journeys (perhaps in the same town/city) should always be walked, with cycling an option for slightly longer distances

Cars

- Set up a car share scheme to reduce journeys made by staff
- When renting vehicles for company use, hire the most efficient
- Introduce new, more fuel efficient company/fleet vehicles

Measures to be taken

- Produce a Green Travel Plan to advise employees on more environmentally friendly methods of transport
- Appoint an Environmental Transport Officer
- Encourage people to walk or cycle whenever possible
- Provide a secure bike shelter for staff members, as well as facilities to shower in work
- Reduce the number of parking spaces available to promote car sharing, public transport and cycling
- Use video/teleconferencing (E.g. Skype) to reduce unnecessary travel

Sources of further help and information

Travelwise Merseyside promotes public transport, cycling, walking and subsequent traffic alleviation. It also offers advice and guidance for those unsure of which options are most appropriate for them -

www.letstravelwise.org

Bike 2 Work Scheme are a provider of the Governments Green Transport Plan which aims to reduce environmental pollution, promote healthier lifestyles and make cycling to work cost-effective, by offering tax savings on bikes and cycling equipment. Their scheme makes it simple for employers and employees to take full advantage of the Governments Cycle to Work scheme -

www.bike2workscheme.co.uk

Living Streets is an organisation which supports the rights and interests of pedestrians and aims to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk - www.livingstreets.org.uk

The Campaign for Better Transport is an independent charity who provide practical solutions to transport problems, pressuring national and local government to adopt them, and empowering ordinary people up and down the country. For 40 years the Campaign for Better Transport has fought for better public transport, walking and cycling, for the sake of communities and the environment - www.bettertransport.org.uk

Resource Use, Recycling and Waste Management

The time when any product could be simply thrown away and forgotten about has passed. Reducing waste, re-using waste and recycling waste are no longer seen as optional extras by the mainstream. There is now an expectation and requirement for organisations to take responsibility of their waste and manage it in an environmentally sustainable way.

- Are you following reduce, re-use and recycle principles?
- Are you using more resources than necessary?
- Are all materials re-used or recycled where possible?
- Are you using suppliers or service providers who have re-use and recycling policies?

Environmental Aspects to be considered

Supply

- Avoid heavily packaged products
- Purchase re-used, recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible

Reduction

- Minimise the amount of resources you use, don't over purchase. Monitor usage and set reduction targets to prevent this
- Use double sided paper for writing and print double sided also
- Use email rather than paper and envelopes for posting
- Store your documents on a USB or The Cloud that can be easily accessed on computers or mobile devices instead of relying on paper copies

Re-usage

- Re-use unwanted items and prevent the need to recycle. This may involve finding other companies or individuals who can make use of said items



The Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA) and Veolia have recently opened a Community Re-use Shop at South Sefton Recycling Centre. The shop, which will be operated by the YMCA (with its charitable projects benefitting from any profit), is the first of its kind in the whole of Merseyside and accepts used and ‘pre-loved’ items from householders which have been dropped off at the Recycling Centre. Instead of being landfilled or recycled, the donations are cleaned and put up for sale. They include furniture, children’s’ toys and tools/bric-a-brac - www.merseysidewda.gov.uk/2015/06/drop-off-then-drop-in-to-new-merseyside-community-re-use-shop

- Get rid of paper/plastic cups for water dispensers and encourage the use of refillable water bottles
- Use reusable not disposable products such as refillable pens and rechargeable batteries...

Recycling

- Separate waste to facilitate recycling by having separate ‘bins’ for plastics, paper/cardboard, metal cans and garden waste

Measures to be taken

- Cut down on overall usage by eliminating unnecessary purchasing
- Ensure your ‘rubbish’ collection includes all the recycling collections available to your address and type of organisation
- Appoint a Waste Representative who can encourage better practices and introduce a waste diary or waste audits

- Commit to computer and electronic goods recycling schemes

Sources of further help and information

Keep Britain Tidy are an independent environmental charity, which campaign for people's right to live and work in a place of which they can be proud. As well as having a commitment to ending litter, they encourage people, businesses, organisations and public bodies to 'waste less and live more', helping local people to change their lifestyles, creating less waste and making better use of resources - www.keeptidytidy.org/Endingwaste/1325

Recycle-more acts as a one-stop recycling information centre. You will find help and advice on all aspects of recycling including where to do it and how whether it be at home, at school or in the workplace - www.recycle-more.co.uk

Buildings

When planning a new building, environmental factors must be taken into consideration. In terms of the materials used, where they are sourced from, the contractors' sustainable credentials, the efficiency levels of the building and whether regardless of cost, the 'green' route is taken. The planning stage is the time to look at how to make an environmentally friendly building. This is a check list of questions to ask yourself before you begin your project.

Environmental Aspects to be considered

Design

- Aim for high quality design that is capable of a long life
- Aim for design that can adapt to changing circumstances
- Think about relating your building sympathetically to its immediate surroundings in terms of existing greenery and landscape
- Aim to design an environmentally friendly building to cut emissions

The Specification

- Choose materials carefully. Use sustainable and/or recycled materials where possible
- Take account of your suppliers' environmental ethics and practices
- Build in good practice clauses for your building contractors

The Build

- Recycle any waste or aim to reuse by-products, disposing of waste matter responsibly
- Minimise transport demands, both by individual use and by distances from which your products are sourced

Measures to be taken

- Look to build an energy efficient home, making use of low energy standards such as PassivHaus to achieve significant energy savings
- Utilise specialist contractors with sustainable credentials and certification
- Source local sustainable materials where possible to reduce transport emissions

Sources of further help and information

GreenSpec promotes the use of sustainable building products, materials and construction techniques. It is edited by practising architects and specifiers and in doing so ensures that the content and communication style is responsive to the needs of both design professionals and the self-build audience -

www.greenspec.co.uk/

PassivHaus is the world's leading fabric first approach to low energy buildings. The standard promotes simplicity in its approach, with a particular focus on building a house that has excellent thermal performance and airtightness with mechanical ventilation. The benefit of such installations are up to an 80% reduction in energy usage, making this a very environmentally friendly and financially attractive proposition in the long term -

www.passivhaus.org.uk/standard.jsp?id=122

Other Useful Contacts

The Green Man's Guide to Green Living and Working is a book by Matthias Gelber 'The Greenest Man on the Planet', with practical ideas and tips on green living and working. It's an action-based guide for adopting a green lifestyle for your life, home, family, work, business and community. You can purchase a copy at - www.greenmanspeaks.com/book/#new-page-1

Liverpool's Little Green Book is a directory of information that helps businesses adapt and grow within a low carbon economy. It particularly highlights key business support, environmental legislation, funding access, environmental companies and services along with skills and training for comprehensive coverage within and across the city region - www.issuu.com/designfoundry/docs/lcoc_lgb_12/77

Feel free to contact MET if you would like to discuss any of the points within the Environmental Checklist and we will be happy to discuss and provide guidance on how best you can resolve your issues (See back cover for contact information).

Merseyside Environmental Trust (MET)

MET is a politically neutral charitable body that exists to raise awareness of environmental issues through promoting open discussion of global and local concerns, stimulating scientific enquiry and debate. The Trust is in its 31st year of existence and houses a wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts across the environmental and sustainability fields.

MET also provides a programme of small grants to local voluntary organisations carrying out practical work on the Merseyside environment, and acts as a signposting body for environmental events and activities across the region.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the MET, please visit our website at www.met-net.org.uk or email us at merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com for more information.

Your Environmental Checklist – By Graeme Moore August 2015

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'Merseyside Environmental Trust – Promoting Sustainable Development on
Merseyside for over 30 years'

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