



Carrickfergus Borough

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKPLAN 2010/11

April 2010



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1.0 BOROUGH PROFILE

The Borough of Carrickfergus stretches along the northern shore of Belfast Lough from Greenisland in the southwest to Whitehead in the East. It forms a low lying coastal strip where the main settlements of Carrickfergus, Whitehead and Greenisland can be found.

The borough has an area of 31.67 square miles and a population of approximately 40,000. The average age of the population is 36.5 years.

The town boasts 3 main industrial centres, namely; Sloefield Industrial Estate, Carrickfergus Industrial Centre and Kilroot Business Park. The small Town Centre is made up of a number of small family-run businesses as well as several high street stores. The town has recently seen the arrival of a large Tesco's Direct and a Sainsbury's supermarket.





2.0 INTRODUCTION

Carrickfergus Borough Council is an important agency in the prevention of ill-health and the promotion of health and wellbeing. The Environmental Services Department within Carrickfergus Borough Council enforces a range of environmental health legislation and is involved in a range of exciting projects aimed at prolonging life and reducing the incidents of ill-health amongst the citizens of the Borough. Through its work, the Department seeks to maintain existing standards where appropriate, improve standards where necessary and to actively promote the health of people within its boundaries.

Good management arrangements are, therefore, essential to provide services which will contribute to these aims in an effective and efficient manner.

The setting of clear objectives has always been a characteristic of good management, it is important that objectives are consistent with each other, realistic and achievable.

Once objectives have been determined a strategy needs to be devised detailing how those objectives will be met. The strategy involves the identification of needs and the planning and programming of resources to meet those needs as cost effectively as possible.



3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

Carrickfergus Borough Council has defined strategic goals and core values to enable it to fulfil the ethos of its Mission Statement.

Our Council's mission is to *“improve the quality of life for all and make Carrickfergus an attractive place to live, work, invest and spend leisure time”*.

The four theme areas under which the plan will be progressed are:

1. Citizenship- enhancing our sense of civic pride and by communicating with our people, encouraging participation and valuing diversity.
2. Social progress- celebrating our past and creating a brighter future, by promoting education, heritage and culture.
3. Environment- caring for our environment and creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all.
4. Economy- supporting sustainable economic growth in the Borough and regenerating the town centre.

A number of objectives have been defined under each theme and these are outlined below. The themes and objectives are the starting point for Council's Departmental plan.

Citizenship

The strategic objectives for Citizenship are as follows;

- To enhance Council's Civic leadership role.
- To prioritise statutory services in the achievement of continuous improvement.
- To continually review Council's overall structure and systems to ensure best fit to task lists.
- To promote staff development and achievement.
- To mainstream the principles of equality.



Social Progress

The strategic objectives for Social Progress are as follows;

- To encourage a joined-up approach by the business, voluntary and statutory sectors in Borough initiatives.
- To promote awareness of Council responsibilities, business and activities amongst the population of the Borough.

Environment

The strategic objects for Environment are;

- To develop an ethos of environmental sustainability in all areas of Council business.
- To promote the use of the Borough's natural and recreational assets.

Economy

The strategic objective for Economy is;

- To promote the economic well being of the Borough through a coordinated approach to development.

The primary purpose of the every Department in Carrickfergus Borough Council is to assist the Council in fulfilling its mission. The Environmental Health Department, by the very nature of the services it provides, can and will have a direct influence on promoting wellbeing.

The objectives and targets set out in this Departmental Plan are integral to the success of the Corporate Plan.

As well as the Corporate Plan, annual Business Plans are developed in order to work towards the Council's Mission Statement. Under the Business Plan for 2010-2011 the Environmental Health Department has set the following targets;



Objective 2: To prioritise statutory services in the achievement of continuous improvement.

Target	SMART objective	Lead Department & target date
2.5 To customize existing software to facilitate corporate accident reporting	2.5.1 Customise Te-Care to ensure compliance with regard to Corporate H&S requirements relating to accident reporting and ensure appropriate training is delivered	Environmental Services September 2010

Objective 3: To continually review council's overall structure and systems to ensure best fit and task lists.

Target	SMART objective	Lead Department & target date
3.3 To improve council's internal H & S performance	3.3.1 To implement a new accident policy and reporting system for council	Environmental Services June 2010



Objective 6: To encourage a joined up approach by the business, voluntary and statutory sectors in Borough Initiatives

Target	SMART objective	Lead Department & target date
6.2 To participate in joint working arrangements with the Public Health Agency	6.2.1 Deliver the action plan as applicable to Carrickfergus Borough Council in relation to tackling major identified risks to health and social wellbeing including poverty – food, fuel and income	Environmental Services March 2011
6.3 To work with voluntary and statutory bodies to improve home safety	6.3.1 To explore options for setting up a Home Accident Prevention Group	Environmental Services March 2011
	6.3.2 To provide home safety equipment to 100 Homes in the Borough	Environmental Services March 2011

Objective 9: To promote the use of the Borough's natural and recreational assets

Target	SMART objective	Lead Department & target date
9.5 To extend the council's dog pound facility	9.5.1 Complete extension works	Environmental Services December 2010

Work towards these targets is included as activities in the various section work plans which are included later.



4.0 KEY OBJECTIVES

4.1 The objectives outlined in the Corporate Business Plan for 2010- 2011 include details of many of the ‘added-value’ services that we provide as a Department. However, the Environmental Health Department is responsible for a wide range of services (most of which are bound by statute) which can be divided into a number of core areas of work - food control, health and safety, consumer protection, pollution control, general environmental health, health and wellbeing, emergency planning, licensing and regulatory services, administration, information and management support.

The following paragraphs define the key service objective of each core area.

- a) **FOOD CONTROL:** to protect public health, maintain and improve standards by effective implementation of legislative requirements and to promote a healthy diet.
- b) **HEALTH AND SAFETY:** to secure the health, safety and welfare of persons at work and the health and safety of other persons visiting workplaces or affected by work activities.
- c) **CONSUMER PROTECTION:** to protect consumers by monitoring consumer goods supplied to ensure that they are safe.
- d) **POLLUTION CONTROL:** to ensure that the levels of pollution in water, on land and in the air, including noise pollution, are such that they do not adversely affect the public health. This function also encompasses the core ethos of environmental health which is to protect the public from statutory public health nuisances, risk of infectious disease and unsatisfactory housing conditions.



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- e) **HEALTH AND WELLBEING:** to identify key areas of need under the Investing for Health Strategy and planning and delivering initiatives to tackle those areas of greatest need.

 - e) **EMERGENCY PLANNING:** involves planning what to do in an emergency and helping the community to recover from major incidents.

 - f) **LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES:** to secure public safety in premises and protect the public from infringements of legislation in relation to specified activities and sale of goods.

 - g) **ADMINISTRATION, INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT:** to enable the Department to operate effectively, efficiently and economically in delivering high quality services.

4.2 ***Enforcement Policy***

As stated earlier, much of the work undertaken by the Department is statutory in nature. In order to secure efficient compliance with legislation whilst minimizing the burden on the Council, individuals and businesses the Department has developed an Enforcement Policy. The policy is based on five guiding principles.

1. **Consistency**

Meaning taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends. The Council aims to ensure consistency in, advice tendered, the response to incidents and complaints; the use of powers and decisions on whether to prosecute.

The Council recognises that consistency does not mean simple uniformity. Officers need to take account of the many variables, the scale of environmental impact etc, the attitude and actions of offenders and the



history of previous incidents or breaches. Decisions on enforcement action are a matter of professional judgement and the council, through its officers, needs to exercise discretion. The council will continue to develop arrangements to promote consistency including effective arrangements for liaison with other enforcing authorities.

2. **Fairness**

The Council has procedures and guidelines to help ensure a fair and even handed approach to enforcement.

3. **Proportionality**

Meaning relating enforcement action to the risks and costs.

The Council will minimise the costs of compliance by ensuring that any action it requires is proportionate to the risks. As far as the law allows, the Council will take account of the circumstances of the case and the attitude of the offender (operator or member of the public) when considering action.

Some incidents or breaches of regulatory requirements cause or have the potential to cause serious injury/illness and/or environmental damage.

Others may have a lesser effect e.g. interference with people's property or rights. When Officers are deciding on the most appropriate enforcement action, they will take account of:

- The degree of any risks posed.
- The seriousness of any breach of the law.
- The burden which would be placed on the business in taking action, compared with the benefit of risk reduction.
- The attitude and intent of the offender, individually or corporately.



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- Foreseeability of offence or circumstances leading to it.
 - Relevant good practices as obtained in codes of practice and published guidance.

4. **Transparency**

Transparency is important in maintaining public confidence in the Council's ability to regulate. It means helping those regulated and others to understand what is expected of them and what they should expect from the council. It also means making clear why an officer intends to take, or has taken, enforcement action.

Transparency is an integral part of the role of council officers and the council continues to train its staff and to develop its procedures to ensure that:-

- Where remedial action is required, it is clearly explained (in writing, if requested) why the action is necessary and when it must be carried out; a distinction being made between legal requirements and advice on best practice.
- Opportunity is provided to discuss what is required to comply with the law before formal enforcement action is taken, unless urgent action is required, for example, to prevent serious illness/injury or to prevent evidence being destroyed.
- Where urgent action is required, a written explanation of the reasons is provided as soon as practicable after the event.



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- Written explanation is given of all rights of appeal against formal enforcement action at the time the action is taken.
 - Having due regard to legal constraints and requirements, keeping all other relevant parties informed during investigations and with respect to enforcement decisions.

5. **Objectivity**

Council has put in place measures to ensure that the decision to take enforcement action taken is not unduly influenced by the personal attributes of the offender.

3.3 In order to achieve these key objectives of the Department carries out a vast range of activities from advisory visits, inspections, training and promotional events. This document sets out each objective and the activities which will contribute to their attainment.



5.0 CURRENT STAFF RESOURCES

5.1 The Department currently has the following staffing arrangements.

Director of Environmental Services

Deputy Director of Environmental Services

Lead Environmental Health Officer (Commercial Premises)

Lead Environmental Health Officer (Pollution)

District Environmental Health Officer (3)

Temporary Environmental Health Officer (contracted until Summer 2010)

Technical Assistant

Dog Warden

Environmental Warden

Energy Efficiency Officer (P/T)

Office Manager

Clerical Officer (2)

Dog Pound:

Supervisor

Assistants (2)

12.1 In addition, Carrickfergus Borough Council avails of the skill, expertise and services of a number of staff who are shared with other Councils in the Northern Group area.

Shared Staff Resources

Health Inequalities Officer (Based at NGS, Ballymena & shared with Larne Borough Council)

Tobacco Control Officer (1 week in 4)



5.2 Officer Time Available per function

FUNCTION	NUMBER OF STAFF (FTE)	OFFICER
Food Control	1.5	Owen Fulton (Lead) Colin Bell Barry Mullin (Temp)
Health and Safety at Work	1	Owen Fulton (Lead) Colin Bell
Consumer Protection	0.2	Alison Marsh
Pollution Control	3.1	Graeme Evans (Lead) James Martin Bertie Boyd Claire Duddy
Health & Wellbeing (including Energy Efficiency)	1	Alison Marsh Paul Miles
Emergency Planning	0.3	Alison Marsh Alan Barkley Claire Duddy
Planning	0.4	Claire Duddy Graeme Evans (Lead)
Licensing and Regulatory Service	2	Harold Bradley Stewart Clawson
Admin., Information and Management Support	1	Claire Duddy Helen McClean
General management	1.5	Alan Barkley Claire Duddy
General admin	2	Janine Black Emma Castles
TOTAL	14	



5.3 Financial resources

The Environmental Health Department is largely funded through local rates. Additional funding is generated through the provision of dog kennelling services for Belfast City Council. Further funding is generated through licensing/regulatory functions.

Funding

The department receives both recurrent funding and specific funding for one-off projects. Project related grants are applied for throughout the year as and when funding becomes available.

Recurrent Public Health Agency funding for part time Energy Efficiency Advisor
 Food Standards Agency funding for Food Safety function
 Contribution to Emergency Planning costs

Non recurrent Elder Persons Home Safety Equipment Scheme costs
 Under 5s Home Safety Equipment costs
 Home Accident Prevention Group support costs
 Healthy Takeaways initiative

Income

Income is received across the department's core functions from various sources, the main ones being;

- Licensing
- Industrial Pollution Control fees
- Dog licensing
- Dog charges
- Fines/fixed penalties



6.0 FOOD CONTROL

6.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To promote public health, maintain and improve standards by effective implementation of legislative requirements and to promote a healthy diet.

6.2 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Complaints responded to within 2 working days of receipt.

Premises to be inspected at frequencies laid down in Codes of Practice.

Food poisoning/infectious disease/hazard warnings/voluntary surrenders/notifications to be responded to within 1 day of receipt.

Premises notified of bacteriological/chemical sampling results within 1 week of receipt of results.

6.3 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 1 – Food Service Plan**



7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

7.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To secure the health, safety and welfare of persons at work and the health and safety of other persons resorting to workplaces or affected by work activities.

7.2 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Complaints responded to within 2 working days of receipt.

Attainment of level of inspection specified according to Risk in planned programme.

Accident notifications responded to within 2 working days if deemed appropriate.

7.3 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 2 – Health & Safety work plan.**



8.0 CONSUMER PROTECTION

8.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To protect consumers by monitoring consumer goods supplied to ensure that they are safe.

8.2 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Complaints responded to within 2 working days of receipt.

Hazard Warnings responded to within 2 working days of receipt.

Enforcement procedures commenced within 1 month of contravention in relation to Protection from Tobacco legislation.

8.3 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 3 – Consumer Protection work plan**



9.0 POLLUTION CONTROL

9.1 KEY OBJECTIVES

To ensure that the levels of pollution in water, on land and in the air, including noise pollution, are such that they do not adversely affect public health.

Also considered under this heading are; public health nuisances, planning, housing, pest control and Antisocial Behaviour

9.2 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Complaints responded to within 2 working days of receipt.

Enforcement action concerning Litter Order contraventions commenced within 1 month of contravention.

Rent Order requests responded to within 5 working days of receipt

Illegal eviction complaints responded to within 1 working day of receipt

Property Certificates returned after 3 days of receipt

Planning consultations responded to within 15 days of receipt

Specialist consultations responded to within 2 months.

9.3 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 5 – Pollution Team work plan**



10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

10.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To improve the health and wellbeing of the people living in the Borough of Carrickfergus by helping deliver the Northern Investing For Health Partnership's current Action Plan through identifying those areas of greatest need and developing programmes and initiatives to address those needs

10.2 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 6 – Health and Wellbeing work plan (also includes a brief work plan for Energy Efficiency Advisor)**



11.0 EMERGENCY PLANNING

11.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To perform a role as a co-ordinator in the planning of what to do in the event of an emergency situation and to help the local community to recover following a major incident

11.2 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 7 – Emergency Planning work plan.**



12.0 LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

12.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To secure public safety in premises and protect the public and infringements of legislation in relation to specified activities and sale of goods.

12.2 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Illegal Trading complaints responded to within 5 working days.

Betting, Gaming and Lotteries notification responded to within 3 working days.

Abandoned Vehicles notification responded to within 3 working days.

Stray Dog complaints responded to within 3 hours.

Dog Fouling complaints responded to within 2 working days.

Dog Attack notifications responded to within 1 working day.

12.3 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 8 – Licensing and Regulatory Services Work Plan**



13.0 ADMINISTRATION, INFORMATION & MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

13.1 KEY OBJECTIVE

To enable the Department to operate effectively, efficiently and economically in delivering high quality services.

13.2 WORK PLAN

For a detailed work plan for the year 2010/11 see **Appendix 9 – Administration, Information and Management Work Plan**



14.0 CONCLUSION

14.1 This document provides an overview of the objectives for each programme area and details the activities to be carried out in the financial year. The Plan also recognises that we must work within a budget and that financial and staffing resources are limited. Therefore in some programme areas only statutory functions and priority activities have been able to be included. Of course, demands for service are constantly changing and the Plan must to some degree remain flexible to cope with these changes. Notwithstanding this, at the present time it represents the best use of resources to contribute to the achievement of our objectives.

14.2 This Work Plan has been further broken down into individual work programmes so that each member of the team is clear about their role and the challenges they must meet. It is a useful management tool and will assist in the regular review of our performance, enabling achievements to be compared with targets. Such a process is essential if we are to meet our primary objective.

14.3 It is anticipated that Lead Officers for the core functions will conduct monthly meetings with their teams to monitor progress towards those targets set in the individual work plans. Minutes of these meetings will be minuted. Copies of minutes shall be forwarded to the Director and Deputy Director. Further meetings will take place between the Lead Officers and the Deputy Director to ensure satisfactory progress is being achieved.