



## ISO 14001 – Environmental Management Systems

# CASE STUDY CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

## Summary

### Needs

- To demonstrate compliance with environmental legislation
- To become more efficient and offer value for money services
- To “lead from the front” and show best practice in environmental management

### Benefits

- Cost benefits
- Reduction in fuel use and public noise from the introduction of new electric bin lifts that were hydraulic
- Reduction in landfill costs due to improved recycling rates
- Better staff awareness about the environment, positively impacting activities both at work and at home

## Background

In a bid to reduce the environmental impact of its activities and drive out inefficiencies, City Services, the operational directorate of Cambridge City Council has achieved and continues to maintain an impressive trio of certifications to three key management system standards: ISO 14001 (environmental management), ISO 9001 (quality management) and BS OHSAS 18001 (occupational health and safety management). Achieving and maintaining ISO 14001 recognises the Council’s commitment to: identifying activities that impact on the environment; understanding relevant environmental laws; and setting objectives for continual improvement.



## Benefits

ISO 14001 gives Cambridge City Council a framework within which it can identify financial efficiencies, in conjunction with its aim of minimising the effects of its activities on the environment. It has also enabled the Council to focus on key environmental issues, thereby allowing it to target resources directly into areas which will achieve the greatest effect.

With the setting up of a "climate change fund" the Council hopes to further encourage good environmental practice.

As part of Cambridge City Council's commitment to "continual improvement" a number of initiatives have been undertaken:

**Environmental management system** - the management system has evolved over a number of years. Not only has it become more efficient but also it has become more visible, through a dedicated intranet site. The intranet is now the "home" of environmental management, this is where staff can see policies, procedures, as well as new initiatives and a raft of useful information all in a graphical and interactive way.

**Supply and purchasing** - in November 2007 a solar photovoltaic array was installed at the Council's Mill Road Depot on the roof of the supplies building. Consisting of 26 Sharp 162W PV modules, the array covers a total area of 34m<sup>2</sup> and is capable of producing a total peak DC power of 4.212 kilowatts. The estimated annual energy yield for the array is 3500 kilowatt hours.

**Electric Mega Van vehicles** – the Council has decided to replace a number of older vehicles with Electric Mega Van vehicles. These provide an electric powered alternative enabling the Council to reduce emissions and save on fuel.

**New recycling facilities** – the transformation from a bulk waste site into recycling facility has meant that recycling rates have increased from about 5% up to 100% in some cases. One notable success involves general builders' waste which is notoriously difficult to recycle, however thanks to staff education, the Council has seen landfill rates drop and the recycling rate grow having both an environmental and financial impact.

**Waste and fleet management** – the Council is piloting a new type of refuse bin lift with the aim of reducing carbon emissions and fuel costs as much as 13% on refuse collection vehicles. The Council hopes that by introducing more efficient kerbside recycling techniques, more efficient vehicles and by using non-hydraulic rear bin lifts it will not only reduce fuel use, but also lower crew and ambient public noise levels.

## BSI's Role

"Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important issue in our daily lives, with the pressure to become more environmentally and socially responsible coming from a number of sources," says Paul Parry, HSQE Manager for Cambridge City Council.

"Today we are faced with a challenge. We need to be a commercially viable entity, yet at the same time show responsible leadership. Our job is to make a positive contribution to society whilst minimising any negative effect it might have on the environment. We knew certification to ISO 14001 would help us demonstrate this.

Working with BSI we have been able to put an internationally recognised "stamp" of excellence on our achievement. We wanted more than a simple certificate and BSI's global reputation is something we are proud to be aligned with."

Implementation of the management system however, was not without challenges. "Embedding the strategy within the organisation is vital to making it work," continues Paul. "Our mission was to get staff at all levels to buy in to the concept and understand that everything they do can potentially affect our environment, therefore we all need to modify our behaviours. Convincing our leadership team that good environmental management was self funding was also crucial to the success of the project." Having seen the evident benefits from the management systems already in place, Cambridge City Council is currently implementing BS OHSAS 18001 across the rest of the Council, and will hopefully be able to implement ISO 14001 more widely across the organisation at a later date.

## BSI

Beech House,  
Breckland,  
Linford Wood,  
Milton Keynes,  
MK14 6ES  
United Kingdom  
T: +44 (0)845 080 9000  
F: +44 (0)1908 228 180  
E: [certification.sales@bsigroup.com](mailto:certification.sales@bsigroup.com)  
[www.bsigroup.co.uk/improve](http://www.bsigroup.co.uk/improve)