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# Joint environment agreement

(Bristol 2009)

## Summary

Bristol City Council and the recognised trade unions agree to work together through the structures and arrangements described in this agreement to secure improved environmental performance of the organisation.

Signed – on behalf of [the organisation]

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Name and position Mark Williams: HR Manager

Date 21/12/2009

Signed – on behalf of [the union(s)]

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Crawshaw', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Name and position Steve Crawshaw, Chair of Green Reps Committee, (UNISON)

Date 21/12/2009

# 1 JOINT STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The parties to this agreement recognise that climate change and environmental concerns are among the most pressing concerns facing us all. These concerns have risen up the agenda rapidly in recent years. Bristol City Council and the single status unions are committed to developing a shared approach to addressing energy and environmental issues through this agreement. The city council, as both an employer and public service provider commits itself to 'leading by example' among staff and other stakeholders. Bristol aspires to be a "Green Capital" and the city council is fully committed to playing its part in realising this ambition. The city council has a well – developed Environmental Management System and has signed up to an Environmental Policy (see Section 5)

The policy commits the council to:

- Compliance with all relevant environmental legislation
- Continuous improvement of environmental performance
- Preventing pollution
- Minimising waste
- Staff involvement
- Reporting progress

Although much progress has been made the city council recognises that further necessary changes will require a partnership between the council and the unions. Both parties are committed to working together on a programme of continuous improvement, backed by regular monitoring and reporting of environmental impacts and issues to the appropriate committee.

The council aims to be open and receptive to suggestions from staff and other stakeholders on how it can make better use of energy, reduce its environmental and carbon impact and improve its management of these areas. The council and the recognised trade unions will encourage managers, staff and trade union environmental representatives (Green Reps) to share responsibility for 'greening' the

workplace. As part of this ongoing work and commitment, the council and unions will put in place negotiating structures to engage in constructive dialogue between the employer and the union on how to achieve these goals. Directorate Green Champions at Second Tier Level will open a dialogue with their Green Reps and Environmental Performance Advisers to agree directorate priorities and initiatives. The council and trade unions will work together through the agreed structures to continuously improve the organisation's environmental performance, addressing environmental impacts primarily through EMAS and seeking to influence the behaviour of the workforce through the activities of Green Reps in the workplace. The proposals formed within this agreement are not an exhaustive list and this agreement will be developed further as our knowledge and experience grows. Such developments will be fed into the production of an annual joint environmental report.

## 2 ABOUT THIS AGREEMENT

This agreement between the management of the city council and trade union environmental representatives (green reps) covers all sites and applies to all full- and part-time employees and workers (including agency and temporary workers).

This agreement does not supersede or take precedence over any existing negotiating procedure or staff-management arrangements other than those specified in this agreement unless formally specified and agreed in full by the Joint Employee Relations Board (JERB) of the city council. The partners to this agreement agree that any individual grievance arising out of environmental matters shall be subject to the existing grievance procedures.

The agreement will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009.

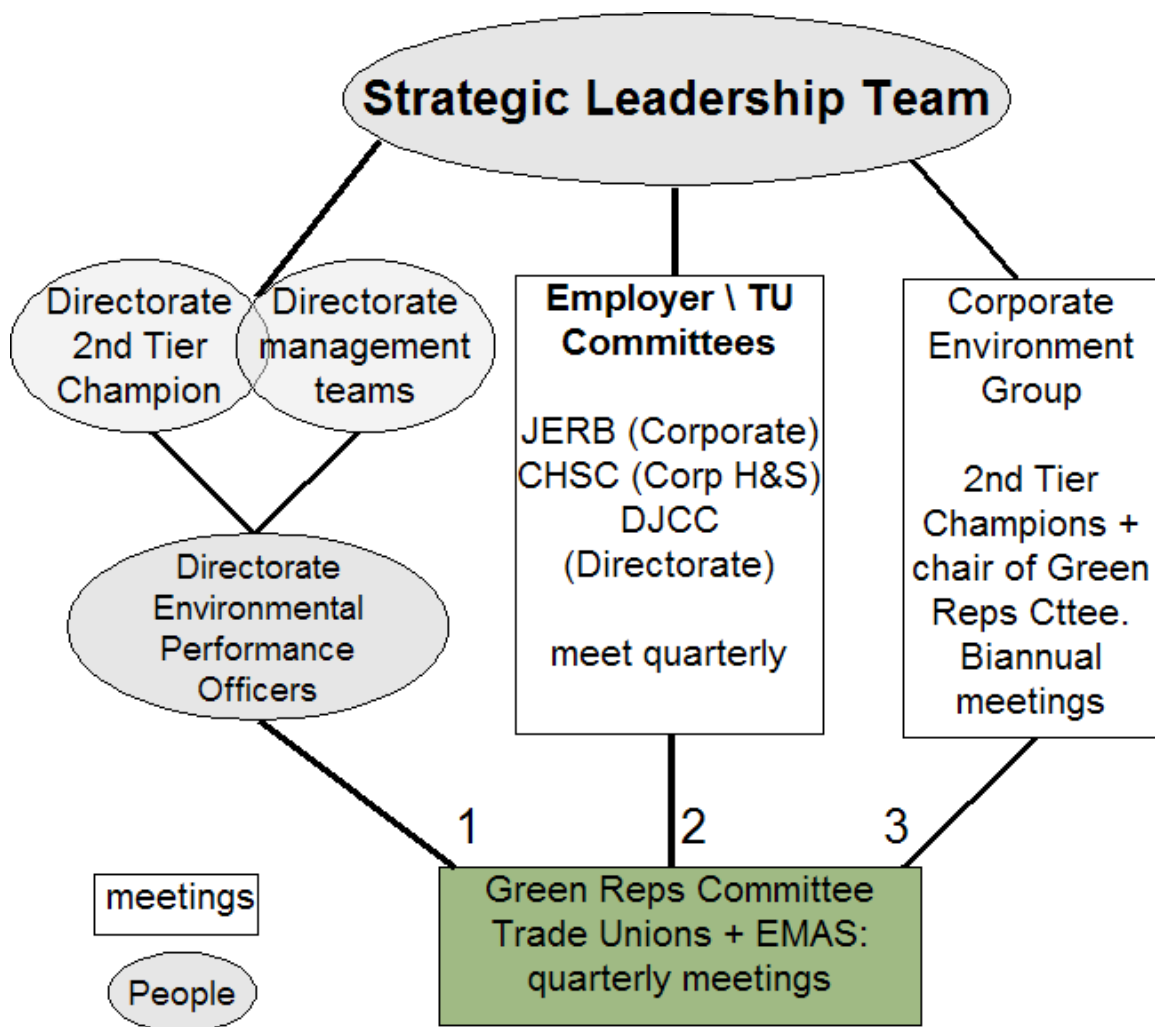
### 3 PROPOSED STRUCTURES AND ARRANGEMENTS

#### 3.1 Structures

The proposal is to make use of existing consultative structures, which will be slightly amended to accommodate environmental issues, rather than add another Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). The trade union Green Reps Committee (GRC) will feed into the decision making process through three possible main routes:

1. Through the departmental “Green Champion” officer (typically 2nd Tier) and via the directorate Environmental Performance Officers where possible. This is the preferred route and will be used for minor and non – contentious decisions.
2. Through the existing JCC \ JERB structure. The matter being raised must be appropriate to the remit of the committee. Environmental issues will be part of the normal business of the JCC. This route will be used where more oversight is required of the decision making process.
3. The chair of the GRC will also attend a Corporate Environment Group (CEG), composed of the second tier champions, which will meet biannually. This will be a high level, strategic group, which will set objectives for the forthcoming year to feed into a work plan for both the CEG and the GRC.

Any one of these three routes can lead to a decision by the Strategic Leadership Team if appropriate



• FIGURE 1 STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

### 3.1.1 Corporate Environment Group

All directorates will be represented on the CEG and members of the CEG will be provided with all relevant information concerning the environmental issues within the workplace and their duties / responsibilities as members of the group.

The city council will ensure that nominated Green Champions represent their Department on the CEG, in order that the committee is able to take effective decisions. The city council will ensure that other management-side representatives attend the CEG on a regular or *ad hoc* basis as may be required by the partners.

The Corporate Environment Group will meet twice a year to carry out the tasks outlined in this agreement, and will annually agree a chair and secretary, to be

alternated between the management side and the union side. Standing items at these meetings will include appropriate EMAS reports, the Action Plan and the Council's Environmental Policy.

#### **3.1.1.1 Corporate Environment Group – terms of reference**

The Corporate Environment Group will comprise second tier champions from each directorate and the chair of the Green Reps Committee. The group will take a strategic overview of progress in meeting environmental targets and will review environmental performance against policy, targets and action plans. They will lead and champion good environmental performance in their own directorates and ensure compliance with the corporate environmental policy and the requirements of EMAS, ensuring that financial and staff resources are available to deliver this.

Where necessary, they will be able to refer decisions to the Strategic Leadership Team. They will also be able to review the structures and arrangements for staff and employer consultation on environmental matters and make recommendations to the appropriate committee or board for decisions.

#### **3.1.2 Employer \ Trade Union Committees**

The Joint Consultative Committee system is well established and currently exists to provide a forum for the staff and employer to agree policies and arrangements for conditions of service and Health and Safety. Committee structures exist at Corporate level (JERB and CHSC) and at departmental level (DJCC). Under this agreement, the structures will remain essentially the same except for the attendance of Green Reps at the relevant JCC or JERB as and when either party requires this.

##### **3.1.2.1 Joint consultative committees – terms of reference**

The existing JCCs will embrace the environmental and sustainability agendas by making decisions on environmental matters that are brought to the committees by green reps and management. This may require amendment of the terms of reference of the JCCs to explicitly include environmental matters within their remit. In practice it is anticipated that the extra environmental component of each committees work should only be a small additional proportion of its existing workload.

### 3.1.3 Green Reps Committee

The Green Reps Committee will comprise all registered Green Reps from recognised trade unions with a representative from the Environmental Performance function of the council. This will usually be the Environmental Performance co – ordinator, but may also be one of the Environmental Performance Advisers. The committee will meet quarterly after the first year of operation. Initial meetings may be more frequent to allow for increased workload at the beginning of the process of formation.

#### **3.1.3.1 Green Reps Committee – terms of reference**

The green reps committee (GRC) is a cross union committee which will consider and advise on environmental matters affecting and influenced by the policies and actions of the city council. It will communicate with the workforce through a trade union approach with the aim of improving the council's environmental performance. It will also negotiate within existing structures to bring positive environmental change to the organisation. The members of the committee will elect the chair and secretary annually.

#### **3.1.3.2 Trade union environmental representatives (Green Reps)**

The city council recognises that union green reps play a key role in encouraging employee engagement in energy and environmental initiatives, and so help develop good practice in energy and resource use at work, in line with this agreement. They will also assist more broadly in supporting the implementation of the council's environmental policies.

The city council agrees the appointment by the Trades Unions of 12 green reps, 2 per department each spending up to 2 days per month on environmental issues. This may include attending meetings with management and unions on green issues, consulting with colleagues, attending training and preparing paperwork and materials. There may be variation of this facility time from month to month so accounting for facility time should be done annually.

It is agreed that 2 additional reps might be required in Neighbourhoods due to the very wide range and scale of impacts.



### **3.1.3.3 Employee engagement**

The GRC will work with the Environmental Performance team to communicate environmental issues to staff particularly where the influence of Green reps can secure improved environmental performance. The relevant decision-making JCC also has an important role in receiving recommendations from the staff through the GRC and communicating decisions to staff in a timely and accurate way.

The partners agree that any analysis of environmental issues and impacts (for example, audits) will be undertaken with the full co-operation of all partners, and that such analysis will be solely for the purposes of environmental improvement. Any analysis will not be used in relation to other issues such as pay, performance appraisal, disciplinary procedures, etc.

### **3.1.4 Working with EMAS**

The Environmental Management System (EMS) used in the Council is accredited to EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme). This is co-ordinated by the Environmental Performance co – ordinator in the Environment Team of the Sustainable City Group in City Development. It is therefore appropriate that the Environmental Performance co – ordinator sits on the GRC to provide expert advice to members. The issues to be addressed by the GRC will be guided by, but not limited to the requirements of EMAS.

Environmental Performance Advisers exist in each directorate and address environmental impacts relevant to their department through EMAS. When a directorate – specific issue is identified for action by the GRC, the relevant officer will be consulted and involved where appropriate in the work of the committee.

## 4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

Environmental issues to be considered will include any issue covered by the Environmental Statement or highlighted by any EMAS or Carbon audit and in particular the following workplace issues:

### 4.1 Environmental plans and strategies

The GRC will consider and comment on the council's environmental policies and plans as they relate to the organisations environmental performance. The GRC will also, where appropriate and possible, consider and comment on Eco Impact Assessments for individual and specific policies and projects relating to the Environmental Policy. This is likely to be appropriate where the policy or development could have a significant effect on the workforce, or where the workforce could significantly influence the environmental impact of the policy or development. The GRC may also be invited to comment on any externally facing sustainability action plans and policies that are aimed at contractors and partners.

### 4.2 Environmental impacts

Significant environmental impacts of the organisation include, but are not limited to:

- Emissions arising from staff travel to and from work and for work
- Waste arisings
- Emissions from energy use in buildings
- Impacts from purchasing and procurement
- Impacts on water resources – use and disposal

A full list of detailed environmental aspects (impacts) is kept on the Entropy system under EMAS for all registered departments. All of these fall within the remit of the Green Reps Committee and the structures and terms of reference stated in this agreement.

## 5 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Environmental Policy commits Bristol City Council to the following:

- Providing leadership and support for environmental management within the Council through elected representatives and senior managers
- Providing for identification and compliance with all environmental legislation, policies and codes of practice relevant to our activities and services
- Continually improving our overall environmental performance through the implementation and review of objectives and targets
- Identifying and managing significant environmental aspects relevant to Council activities and services
- Ensuring that the environmental consequences of all new policies and practices are assessed
- Prevention of pollution\*
- Minimising the effects of resource use by conserving water
- Reducing the consumption of fossil fuels by conserving energy and promoting the use of renewable sources
- Minimising the disposal of waste through reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery
- Evaluating and monitoring air, noise, water and land pollution, and influencing others to reduce such pollution
- Monitoring and protecting biodiversity
- Encouraging suppliers and contractors to improve their environmental performance in order to reduce any detrimental environmental impact of the goods and services used by the Council. This will be achieved through the Council procurement strategy and by controlling the on-site activities of contractors
- Actively involving our staff through training and awareness programmes to ensure that they improve their environmental performance
- Regularly reviewing and reporting on progress which will include producing an annual Environmental Statement for departments that have been verified.
- Communicating with interested parties, and making this policy publicly available