

**Highland Council  
Waste Minimisation Policy**  
9<sup>th</sup> August 2009



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

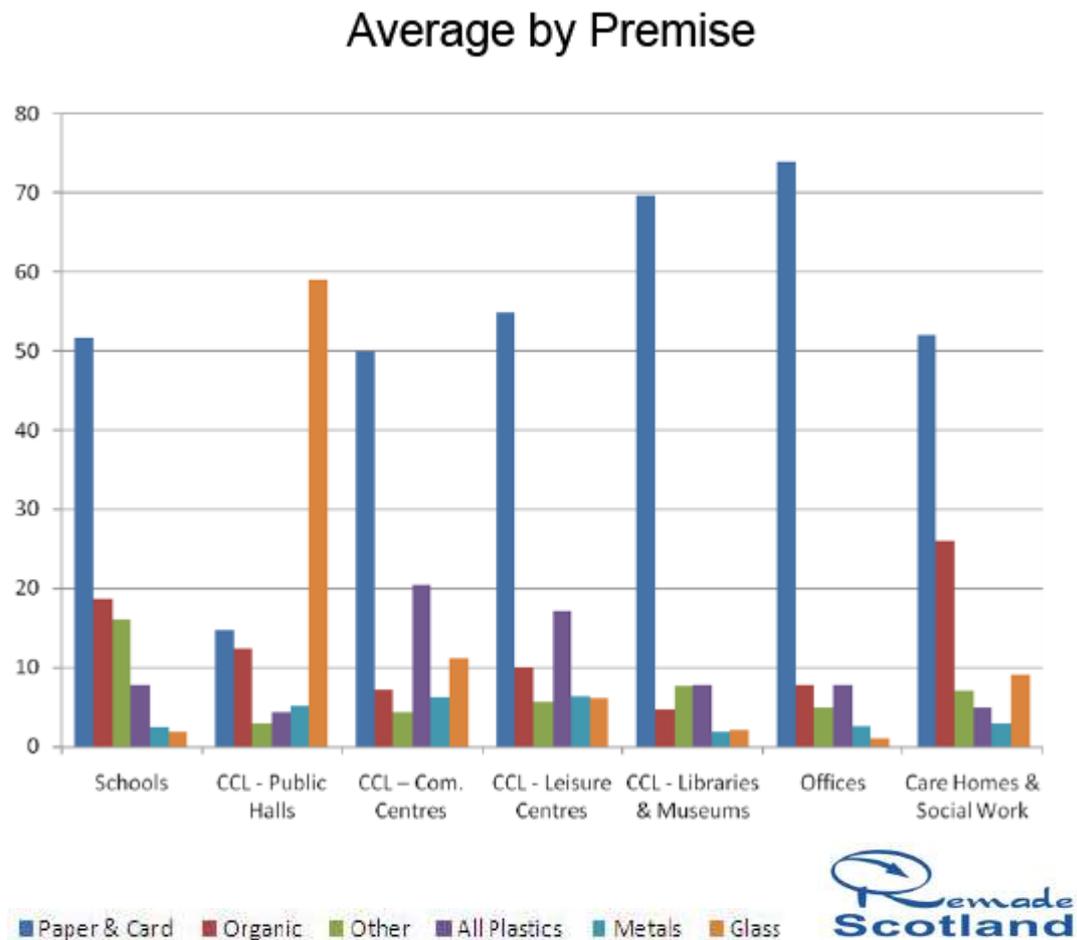
The Highland Council Programme 2009-2011 contains within it the commitment to:

*“Reduce paper use in our offices and recycle 50% by the end of 2009”.*

The following policy document has been developed to compliment the Highland Council Paper Recycling Policy by providing guidance for Highland Council staff on how to minimise the amount of paper, and other products used, to reduce the amount of waste being disposed of.

Figure 1 below, demonstrates that more than 70% of waste from Local Authority Offices is paper and card, much of which could be avoided as waste in the first place.

**Figure 1:**



## 2. THE WASTE HIERARCHY

The Highland Council waste hierarchy identifies three waste disposal options and ranks them in order of importance. The 3Rs of reduce, reuse and recycle, classify waste management strategies according to their desirability.

Figure 2:



Highland Council should aim to eliminate waste from the outset. If this isn't practicable, consideration should then be given to reducing and re-using our waste. Only if neither of these is possible should we then move to disposing of waste in a responsible manner by recycling.

## 3. WHY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF WASTE WE PRODUCE?

1. Minimising waste saves money. By re-using products we remove the need to purchase more goods. Reducing waste also reduces the costs associated with uplifting waste from premises.
2. Currently the Highland Council is charged for every tonne of waste going to landfill. In 2007/08 the council produced 11 574 tonnes of waste from internal operations.
3. When waste is disposed of in a landfill site it produces methane gas as it decomposes. Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is a greenhouse gas that is 20 times more powerful than carbon dioxide(CO<sub>2</sub>). Reducing the amount of waste going to landfill will cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and combat the causes of climate change.

#### 4. HOW TO REDUCE WASTE?

- Ensure that everyone knows to photocopy on both sides.
- Set printers up to print double sided as a default setting.
- If producing drafts, print two pages to a sheet.
- Have a box of one-sided scrap paper available by printers and photocopiers.
- Encourage everyone to print e-mails only when absolutely necessary.
- Only use one paper towel at a time.
- Use the smallest available envelope for your purposes (this will also reduce postage costs).
- Avoid disposable, single use products, such as cleaning wipes.
- Purchase goods with less packaging.
- Encourage the use of glasses instead of plastic water cups.
- Avoid Junk Mail. Contact the companies to request they stop sending you mail or register online at the Mailing preference Service:

<http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/mpsr/>

#### 5. WHY RE-USE?

Everything we consume, from the paper in our printers to the plastic cups we use at the water cooler, require energy and resources to produce, package and transport to us. Many of the world's resources are non-renewable and rapidly depleting. Much of the energy generated to create the goods we buy, produces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Re-using products helps to preserve valuable natural resources and cut carbon emissions by reducing the demand for new product to be made and minimising the amount of waste going to landfill. It also saves money!

#### 6. HOW TO RE-USE?

- Have a well labelled scrap paper tray in every room.
- Use refillable food containers and bottles and avoiding over-packaged foods.
- Reuse envelopes – envelope reuse labels can help to cover up the previous address and reseal the envelope. You can make your own or download from the [Green Council Resources](#) page.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Collect Ink cartridges and return to suppliers for re-use.
- Set up a collection for spectacles to donate to [Vision Aid](#), an organisation that sends unwanted spectacles to developing countries to be reused.
- Encourage staff to take a re-usable bag with them when heading out for lunch. Keep one in the staff room.
- Avoid using plastic cups for your water, use a glass instead.
- Take your own plastic plates, bowls and cutlery to the canteen and avoid using the disposable ones offered. Alternatively eat in instead of taking out.

- Keep old wrapping paper from birthdays and Christmas gifts and re-use for secret Santa!

## **7. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING:**

An effective communication strategy and programme of education and awareness raising will be central to minimising the amount of waste we produce through Highland Council operations. The Carbon Management Plan contains within it a Communication Strategy outlining the various mechanisms for raising staff awareness. It is recommended that the waste minimisation policy be included amongst the key messages promoted through this communication plan.

Resources are available for all Council staff to download online at [www.highland.gov.uk/greencouncil](http://www.highland.gov.uk/greencouncil). Hard copies are available on request. In addition the Highland Council Green Ambassadors will play an important role in encouraging and informing staff

The Waste Awareness Team, based at Ross House, Dingwall, will be available to provide expert advice to staff and building managers on waste minimisation issues and have a dedicated page on the Highland Council Intranet.

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/wastemanagement/wasteawareness/>

General Enquires    Tel: 01349 868 439  
Email Address        [recycle@highland.gov.uk](mailto:recycle@highland.gov.uk)

It should be noted that the onus for ensuring waste minimisation rests with the individual Service and the role of the waste awareness team is to provide advice and information to enable this.

## **8. MONITORING AND REPORTING OF PROGRESS:**

Systems are in place to monitor the amount of waste generated at Highland Council sites through the Carbon Management Plan. It is anticipated that as the waste minimisation policy is implemented and enforced, the volume of general waste will decrease.

It is more difficult however to measure the total amount of paper we use and dispose of at Highland Council. It is important to note that the Highland Council has little control over the volume of unsolicited mail it receives and that much of this will go on to be recycled by Highland Council despite being generated out-with the organisation. Such paper will result in increased recycling figures.

It is possible to monitor the total amount of paper and other goods purchased through our office supply contract with Lyreco and this data can be obtained through the procurement unit of Finance service. This should give an

indicative measure of how we are progressing but it is important to note that many schools and individual offices may have alternative purchasing arrangements and it will not be possible to capture all paper use in this way. It is therefore recommended that individual premises managers continue to monitor their consumption of products to gain an appreciation of their progress towards reducing and re-using items, in addition to the disposal of waste products through recycling.

## CASE STUDIES

### ***Case Study 1 – Highland Council Business Improvement Team Offices, Castle Street.***

As part of the Service Improvement Project a mobile and flexible working pilot is being undertaken at Castle Street Offices. Staff are encouraged to work in a paper free environment through the use of e-mail, internet and electronic documents. Desk side bins have been removed and replaced with central recycling points. All desks are to be kept free from clutter and waste as a hot desk system is in place where by each member of staff is allowed to sit wherever a free space is available on any given day. All staff have laptops to enable them to take their files to meetings in electronic format removing the need to print.

### ***Case Study 2 – Chief Executives Office, Support Services***

Members of the support Services team have been collecting empty toner cartridges and sending to be recycled. They receive a cheque for £22.50 for every 39 toner cartridges that are recycled. This generates an income of approximately £100 per annum and the Support Services team contribute the funds towards Sustainable Development projects within HQ.

### ***Case Study 3 – Lochaber House Printer Rationalisation Project.***

The Business Improvement Team carried out a business case analysis for the removal of surplus printers at the site. In total it was recommended that nine printers/copiers be removed from the premises as were deemed to be surplus to needs. The savings from this Printer Rationalisation Project based upon the annual service charge is £1,365 per annum.

The added benefit from the printer rationalisation project is that each user is allocated user name and login for the purpose of using the remaining printers on site. This means that each time a copier is used by an individual, a record is kept of the number of sheets used. Management concerned with the continued waste of paper can then highlight the worst offenders.