



*...without fear,
or favour...*

CASE STUDY THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

“The process of implementing ISO 14001 has helped staff to become more committed and focused on important environmental issues, and it will enable us to build success and deliver even better and more sustainable services.”

Peter Brooker, Director of Community & Environmental Services



Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) has its main office in the town of Rickmansworth and provides services to 83,000 residents. During 2010, TRDC implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS) and successfully achieved certification to the internationally recognised standard ISO 14001.

Peter Kerr, Sustainability Projects Manager, and his team have put together the following case study to record the process and achievements of putting this system in place.

WHY ISO CERTIFICATION?

Prior to implementing their Environmental Management System (EMS), an internal audit and review was undertaken by the Council to gain an objective overview of sustainability achievements and good practice to date. This internal audit revealed a great existing foundation for implementing the EMS:

- **Strong leadership and commitment from the top**
- **High level and strategic partnership working at national and local levels to promote, communicate and advocate for the climate change and wider sustainability agenda**
- **Innovative and high-tech energy saving initiatives, including an award-winning underground heat source pump system**
- **Numerous awards including Green Hero, Recycling Officer of the Year, and Four Star membership of the 'Green Organisation'**

From this review gaps and new opportunities were identified, with a need to:

- **Improve the strategic structure and framework of sustainability**
- **Join up good practice and environmental management across the Council, and create a sense of shared team and personal responsibility**
- **Review and respond to the wide range of stakeholder needs and targets including government regulators, Non-Governmental Organisations, employees and local residents**
- **Incorporate sustainability into overall risk management, policy and strategy**
- **Build on existing environmental policy and procedures**

“ *When we first looked at ISO 14001 it seemed complex and difficult to know where to get a footing. We are really proud of our achievements and are looking forward to furthering potential of our EMS in meeting our carbon reduction objectives.* ”

Nick Dimbleby – Head of Sustainability

After this extensive review, the Council set out to achieve certification to ISO 14001, and enlisted The British Assessment Bureau (BAB) to help achieve their aim. ISO 14001 offered the Council a coherent framework within which they could consistently monitor their performance in tackling the full range of issues associated with climate change and sustainability.

To meet the objectives that resulted from the internal review, a strategy was developed to implement the Council's EMS. This included a timed programme of activities to achieve certification to ISO 14001. From initial planning in November 2009, these objectives were fully achieved with certification by October 2010.

WHY BAB?

BAB has over 40 years experience in the assessment industry and is UKAS accredited. In 1997, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry approved the use of the word 'British' in its corporate title in recognition of their pre-eminent status. Peter tells us why TRDC chose BAB over and above the competition.

“ *We chose BAB, not only because they represent good value for money, but also because they really helped the Council focus on why we should go for ISO14001. Our choice has proven to be the right one. BAB has been extremely responsive to any queries and has enabled us to be very clear on our objectives and targets for delivering cleaner and greener services.* ”

Peter Kerr, Sustainability Projects Manager

SOLUTIONS AND OUTCOMES

An EMS working group, comprising of staff from across the range of council departments, planned and implemented the processes and procedures needed to build the EMS. The group's wealth of cross-range experiences and skills (including Environmental Health, Planning and Development, Sustainability, Energy, Risk and Waste Management) was key to the success of the programme. The group took account of the views of other internal and external stakeholders, including feedback from consultation on the Council's Sustainability Action Plan (SAP).



“ We couldn't have done it without this Group. Being a member made me realise how powerful working with colleagues from various disciplines was. It was great to get to know and understand more about the issues from different perspectives. It was empowering as we built the EMS and made decisions; and much more effective than having systems imposed on us. ”

Peter Kerr, Sustainability Projects Manager

A Communications Campaign was designed to promote the EMS and improve personal understanding, responsibility and practice of staff. This included a series of fun posters and photographs to raise awareness of the EMS and the EMS Working Group. This was highlighted as a “creative and inspiring initiative” in feedback from their BAB Lead Assessor.

An EMS/ISO 14001 training programme was put together including a revised core induction for all staff, as well as internal and external bespoke courses for functional staff. All training was evaluated and learning outcomes confirmed the practical effectiveness of training in putting staff, who can be easily mystified by ISO 14001, at ease and feeling enabled to manage environmental aspects of their jobs. The high quality of training also ensured that employees' delivery of processes (such as internal auditing) improved and was to the highest professional standard.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

TRDC was certified to ISO 14001 in October 2010, less than a year after initial planning. This was awarded with no non-conformances or partial non-conformances given by BAB.

They put their success down to:

- Sound planning and securing the right resources through the cross-team approach
- Drawing on the expertise of training and assessment organisations
- A seamless transition from point of planning through to management of the EMS

As a direct result of implementing their EMS, TRDC have recorded the following measured outcomes:

- Reduced impact on the environment through new innovations and technology
- Individual and team responsibility to manage the environmental impact they make in delivering the Council's operations. For example, energy efficient use of IT equipment has an estimated cost-saving of approximately £4,000 per year for the Council
- Improved risk management from internal audit outcomes including improved chemical storage, energy efficiency and office waste management
- Positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders

“ The Council can now build on its success. It helps us to know that we are a well-run authority, which understands the meaning of environmental sustainability. The process has helped staff to become more committed and focused on important environmental issues, and it will enable us to build success and deliver even better and more sustainable services. ”

Peter Brooker, Director of Community & Environmental Services

“ When we first looked at ISO 14001 it seemed complex and difficult to know where to get a footing. We are really proud of our achievements and are looking forward to furthering potential of our EMS in meeting our carbon reduction objectives. ”

Nick Dimpleby, Head of Sustainability

THE BRITISH ASSESSMENT BUREAU

Our reputation was established in 1969 as a specialist in certification scheme management. In 1997, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry approved the use of the word 'British' in our corporate title in recognition of our pre-eminent status.



Today, we certify organisations to recognised standards like ISO 9001 (quality management) and ISO 14001 (environmental management) and provide a range of associated training. Outside of ISO standards, we design and manage bespoke assessment schemes. Such schemes are based on the establishment of standards, which can be developed to be recognised company-wide, industry-wide, nationally or internationally.

We are active in the area of setting national standards and are expert contributors to the influential British Standards

QS/01 and AUS/01 committees. These committees have the responsibility for representing the UK in quality management and audit standards issues, as an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) member.

Above all else, we believe it essential to work with our clients as true partners. To this end we are committed to being recognised as the most customer focused certification body in our industry. In independent client satisfaction surveys, 99% of our clients said they would recommend us. We are also proud to be a customer service award winner and have been a recognised Investor in People since 1999.

UKAS

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is the sole National Accreditation Body recognised by Government to assess organisations that provide certification services to internationally agreed (ISO) standards.

Because we are UKAS accredited, our clients can be assured that they are receiving the most appropriate service for their needs. Engaging a UKAS accredited certification body is often a stipulation for public sector tenders and large-scale private sector supply chain work. It also facilitates access to international markets since the UKAS name is recognised throughout the world.

Our maxim 'without fear or favour' typifies our ethical approach. We will never allow the fear of consequences or the promise of favour to influence our professional judgement. In addition, as a UKAS accredited certification body, we are overseen by a powerful Impartiality Committee that ensures our objectivity and independence.



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CERTIFICATION AND HOW YOU COULD
BENEFIT CALL US ON **0800 404 7007**
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