



## ISO 14001 – Environmental Management Systems

# CASE STUDY - NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

### Summary

#### Needs

- To improve environmental performance
- To ensure legal compliance
- To encourage corporate buy-in to improve environmental performance
- To maintain continual improvement

#### Benefits

- Ability to demonstrate and ensure legal compliance
- Better organisational efficiency and continued improvement
- Reduction in energy consumption
- Cost savings of nearly £1 million through better management of construction waste
- Organisational credibility from third party auditing and certification

### Background

Norfolk County Council's Planning and Transportation Partnership strives to put environmental performance at the top of its agenda. The department successfully achieved certification to ISO 14001 in 2003. The scope of this certification covers the following areas: environmental and waste management, strategic land use, transport planning, minerals and waste planning, passenger transport and highways services.

With the addition of ISO 14001 to its certification portfolio, the department soon recognised that by integrating its three management systems it could reduce duplication of auditing and enhance efficiency.



## Customer Needs

Roger Greengrass, Systems Manager for the Norfolk County Council's Planning and Transportation Department has been a driving force behind the management system. He explains the Council's need for the management system. "As a local government authority we need to be legally compliant; using public money to pay for prosecutions is not an option. Third party certification from a reputable partner was an obvious way to address this concern," he says.

"Implementation was made easier due to the commitment and support we received from our senior management team," says Greengrass. "From the start, our leadership team understood the benefits of certification and therefore securing resource for the project was made easier. To achieve this we put a business case together to implement the environmental management system, ISO 14001, across our Planning and Transportation Department."

"Since implementation the standard has provided us with a framework to ensure that we not only meet the entry-level requirements, but it also gives us a system to assist us to go beyond the basics and realise our potential."

## Benefits

Greengrass goes on to explain that through the implementation of ISO 14001, Norfolk County Council's Planning and Transportation Department has achieved cost savings of nearly £1 million just by managing construction waste better. Although the Council generates well in excess of 80,000 tonnes of waste from highways works each year, virtually all of that has the potential to be reused or

recycled. Until recently 40,000 to 45,000 tonnes went to landfill."

"If a material can be reused without being processed it is not classed as waste at all, which makes it possible to reuse, which equates to a better environmental policy and substantial cost savings," he says.

"ISO 14001 provided a structured best practice approach that enabled us to pull together current good practice activities such as Climate Change Management and Travel Planning amongst others. It integrates neatly with our existing quality management and health and safety management systems and the external auditing and certification gives our operation added credibility."

One of the environmental initiatives includes a £750,000 junction improvement on the A149 at Lavendar Corner, Heacham, in west Norfolk, carried out using a 'waste neutral' approach. Designed and constructed by the Norfolk partnership of County Council, Mott MacDonald and May Gurney, this approach has significantly reduced the scheme's carbon footprint, and has brought about cost savings of around £5,000. The initiative enabled the removal of an accident site that had seen nine personal injury accidents over five years.

Another environmental initiative includes the launch of "Footprint" magazine, a publication for school staff which discusses the County's environmental activities including waste, energy saving and carbon reduction, and travel planning, with the aim of promoting healthy schools and sustainable development. It is produced by a small team of planning and transportation and children's services staff and aims to keep readers up to date with the very latest in support, news and activities ideas.

In terms of lessons learnt along the way, Greengrass and team highlight the need to plan for the integration of the management system and to allow adequate budget for hardware and staff training. Greengrass notes that with the support and commitment of senior management benefits were soon seen and any initial disruption to routine was worthwhile.

## BSI's Role

The authority's decision to work with BSI was driven by the desire to have its environmental systems challenged by a respected third party. Furthermore working with BSI provided additional credibility to the Council's sustainable objectives and assistance with continual improvement.

### 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)