



**Sustainable**  
Development Commission  
**Wales**

# **Sustainable Development in Government**

## **Wales 2009**

December 2009

## Introduction

The Sustainable Development Commission is the Welsh Assembly Government's independent adviser on sustainable development, reporting to the Prime Minister, the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and the First and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland. Through advocacy, advice and appraisal, we help put sustainable development at the heart of government policy.

This is the first Sustainable Development Commission assessment of the performance of the Welsh Assembly Government administrative estate operations against its Green Dragon targets; and realises a commitment given by the Welsh Assembly Government in its sustainable development scheme *One Wales One Planet*.

This assessment aims to inform and inspire continuous improvements across the Welsh Assembly Government and helps to enable it to act as an exemplar to other public, private and third sector bodies operating in Wales.

This first assessment, based on an analysis of the data given to us for the period of 2008/9 shows that while very good progress is being made in some areas such as waste, insufficient progress is being made in others such as emissions from road vehicles.

The Welsh Assembly Government is, on the whole, moving in the right direction, having reversed its increase in carbon emissions and demonstrated transparency by commissioning this independent assessment.

It is our strong recommendation that the Welsh Assembly Government continues this process of independent assessment. This electronic assessment will be complemented by a fuller report which analyses the drivers behind the data contained in this assessment, and makes recommendations on future performance improvement can be achieved.

## About the Welsh Assembly Government

The Welsh Assembly Government is the executive branch of devolved government in Wales, with a statutory duty to make a sustainable development scheme that sets out how it will exercise its functions and promote sustainable development. It is a stated aim of the Welsh Assembly Government to improve the lives of the people of Wales and make the nation a better place in which to live and work.

The Welsh Assembly Government has competency over twenty subjects including health, education, economic development, heritage and the Welsh language.

## Performance against Green Dragon Targets

	Carbon emissions from offices and business travel		Carbon emissions from road vehicles
	Recycling		Waste arisings
	Water consumption		Water consumption (new office builds or major refurbishment projects)
	Electricity sourced from renewables		

## Performance against mechanisms

	BREEAM		Sustainability Appraisals
	Environmental Management System		Carbon Trust commitment

### Key

	Excellent progress warranting recognition
	Good progress
	Some progress
	No progress or poor progress
	Not applicable

## Highlights

- The Welsh Assembly Government met its 2010 target to reduce waste arisings by 5% (relative to 2006/7) early, achieving a 5.4% reduction in this reporting year (2008/9)
- The Welsh Assembly Government is very likely to out-perform the pan-UK Government's performance on recycling. The Welsh Assembly Government has achieved a recycling rate of 59% of waste arisings (relative to 2006/7)
- 85% of electricity supply contracts are now green tariff providing 73% of electricity consumed in all offices.

## Lowlights

- While the increase in carbon dioxide emissions from buildings has been reversed, and overall carbon dioxide emissions from the Welsh Assembly Government's administrative estate are decreasing (down 4% in this reporting year, compared to the previous year), emissions from road vehicles used for Welsh Assembly Government business increased by 1.4% (2008/9 compared to 2007/8)
- The scale of the decrease in carbon dioxide emissions in this reporting year represents insufficient progress if the Welsh Assembly Government is to meet its target of a 30% reduction in emissions by December 2010 (based on a 2006/7 baseline)
- Water consumption on the Welsh Assembly Government's administrative estate is increasing overall despite a reduction in the

consumption of water in the largest building on the estate (Cathays Park).

## Caution about comparison

The Welsh Assembly Government operates an environmental management system (EMS) that is equivalent to ISO 14001, the internationally accepted specification for an EMS. While the standard of the Welsh Assembly Government's EMS is comparable with that used by the UK Government for its departments, like-for-like comparisons between individual targets on the whole cannot be made.

This is caused by a number of factors: the objective may be dissimilar, or a different baseline year or linear trajectory may have been used. Furthermore, the nature of the Welsh Assembly Government's administrative estate differs significantly from the UK Government's pan-departmental estate. The Welsh Assembly Government's administrative estate is almost exclusively office buildings, whereas the UK Government's pan-government core estate is much more varied with vast land estates, laboratories, military bases etc (some of which are in Wales and assessed by the Sustainable Development Commission in its UK Government SDiG Assessment).

The Sustainable Development Commission would, therefore, urge strong caution in any direct comparison with UK Government Departments. The Welsh Assembly Government's performance against its own targets (compared to the performance of the UK Government's against its own targets) can be determined and broad trends that can alert us to where the Welsh Assembly Government is either over-performing or

under-performing (direction of travel) can be detected.

## Performance Tables

### CARBON DIOXIDE REDUCTIONS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE ESTATE & BUSINESS TRAVEL

#### TARGET

30% reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by December 2010 from core estate and business travel from 2006/7 baseline.

#### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

#### COMMENTARY

This target covers emissions from buildings on the Welsh Assembly Government administrative estate and travel undertaken by those on Welsh Assembly Government business

In 2008/9, emissions covered by this target were down 4% compared to 2007/8. However, this decrease is insufficient and based on this level of performance, the Welsh Assembly Government will miss its December 2010 target

On a linear trajectory, the Welsh Assembly Government would be required to achieve emission reductions of 16.4% per annum. The rise in emissions in a previous year (2006/7) will mean that the linear trajectory needed to hit the target will now be steeper

The Sustainable Development Commission recognises that the Welsh Assembly Government has rightly set a more ambitious target than the UK Government. Based on a linear trajectory, the UK Government would require emission reductions of 10.2% per annum (compared to the Welsh Assembly Government's 16.4%)

The Sustainable Development Commission welcomes the overall reduction in emissions, but cautions that a renewed emphasis on tackling carbon dioxide emissions is needed if this target is to be met. The support the Welsh Assembly Government has given to the *10:10 campaign* is a welcome display of leadership which needs to be reinforced with further practical measures that deliver emission reductions.

## **CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS FROM ROAD VEHICLES**

### **TARGET**

Reduce carbon emissions from road vehicles used for WAG business travel by 30% by December 2010 relative to 2006/7 levels.

### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

### **COMMENTARY**

This target specifically covers carbon emissions from road vehicles used for Welsh Assembly Government business travel

Carbon emissions from road vehicles used for Welsh Assembly Government business (hire cars, private cars, shuttle buses, Welsh Assembly Government-owned vehicles, post room vans, motorcycles) increased by 2% in 2008-9 compared to 2007-8. Emissions from all business travel (not just road vehicles) increased by 1.4% (compared to 2007-8)

On a linear trajectory, the Welsh Assembly Government would be required to achieve emission reductions of 16.4% per annum. The continued rise in emissions in this and previous years will mean that the linear trajectory needed to hit the target will now be significantly steeper if this target is to be met

Demand reduction and modal shift activities have included the extension of conference technology to 39 sites across Wales, and Travel Plans to encourage modal shift are under development in Aberystwyth and Llandudno Junction

This target compares against a UK Government target of reducing emissions from road vehicles used for UK Government administrative operations by 15% by 2010/11 relative to 2005/06. The baseline, percentage reduction and deadline differs from the Welsh Assembly Government's target

The Sustainable Development Commission is concerned about performance in this area and will assess the Welsh Assembly Government's forthcoming Green Travel Policy & Action Plan, aimed at reducing the environmental impact of travel on Welsh Assembly Government business, in a future SDiG report.

## **ELECTRICITY FROM RENEWABLES**

### **TARGET**

Procure 100% renewable electricity across the estate by 2010 in buildings which the Welsh Assembly Government have responsibility for supply.

### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

### **COMMENTARY**

The Welsh Assembly Government has delivered a very good performance against its target of achieving 100% renewable electricity across its estate by 2010

85% of electricity supply contracts are now green tariff providing 73% of electricity consumed in all offices

The Welsh target is a significantly more ambitious target than that set by the UK Government, which requires its departments to source at least 10% of electricity from renewables by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008

The Sustainable Development Commission welcomes the progress the Welsh Assembly Government is making on the procurement of renewable energy.



## WASTE ARISING

### TARGET

Reduce waste arisings by 5% by 2010 relative to 2006-7

### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

### COMMENTARY

The Welsh Assembly Government has performed very well and met its 2010 target in the 2008/9 reporting year

On a linear trajectory, it would be expected that the Welsh Assembly Government would have reduced waste arisings by at least 2.7% relative to 2006/7. In 2008/9 the Welsh Assembly Government achieved a reduction of 5.4% relative to 2006/7

Its target of reducing waste arisings by 5% by 2010 relative to 2006/7 compares to the UK Government's target for departments to reduce their waste arisings by 5% by 2010, relative to 2004/5 levels

The Sustainable Development Commission welcomes the Welsh Assembly Government's progress in this area.

## RECYCLING

### TARGET

Increase recycling to 80% of waste arisings by 2010

### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

### COMMENTARY

Without a baseline year, the Sustainable Development Commission has judged overall performance of the Welsh Assembly Government against its own target and relative to the UK Government's target

The Sustainable Development Commission has rated the Welsh Assembly Government's performance as very good, with a recycling rate of 59% of waste arisings in the 2008/9

The Welsh Assembly Government's aim to increase recycling of waste arisings with a target of 80% by 2010, exceeds the UK Government's target of 40% by 2010 and 75% by 2020

While continued good performance will be needed to meet the challenging Welsh 2010 target, the Welsh Assembly Government's performance has met the UK Government's own 2010 target early

The Sustainable Development Commission welcomes the Welsh Assembly Government's progress in this area.

## **WATER CONSUMPTION**

### **TARGET**

Reduce water consumption by 25% on the core administrative estate by 2020, relative to 2006/7 levels.

### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

### **COMMENTARY**

Water consumption increased by 11.8% in 2008/9 compared to 2007/8.

The Welsh Assembly Government's target of a 25% reduction in water consumption by 2020 applies only to the administrative estate (the UK target includes office and non-office estate); and is set to be achieved over a shorter period of time (the Welsh baseline year is 2006/7, whereas the baseline year used for the UK target is 2004/5).

Given the difference in baseline years, and the inclusion within the UK Government's target of its non-office estate, caution should be drawn against like-for-like comparisons between the performance of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the performance of the UK Government

While the Sustainable Development Commission is concerned about performance in this area, the Welsh Assembly Government is alert to its lack of progress and is advancing water audits, investment programmes, and drawing in advice from Environment Agency Wales. While there was a reduction in water consumption in Cathays Park, further savings have been identified

The Sustainable Development Commission will monitor and support the Welsh Assembly Government to reduce its water consumption in future years.

## **WATER EFFICIENCY IN NEW BUILDS**

### **TARGET**

Reduce water consumption to an average 3m<sup>3</sup> per person/year for all new office builds and major office refurbishments.

### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

### **COMMENTARY**

As there were no new buildings opening this year, this target is not applicable for the reporting year covered in this assessment.

The Merthyr Tydfil building, opened in November 2006, has not met the target to consume water at or below an average of 3m<sup>3</sup> per person per year, in its first full reporting year in operation.

While the current target for water consumption is an average of 3m<sup>3</sup> per person per year, when plans for the Merthyr Tydfil building were being developed the Welsh Assembly Government's target for water consumption was 7m<sup>3</sup>. However, even against this lower target, the Merthyr Tydfil building has under-performed in its first full year of operation, consuming 10.9m<sup>3</sup> per person per year in 2008/9

While the UK Government has set the same target for its departmental operations, like for like comparisons should be withheld given the enormous difference in economies of scale between the two estates

New build offices in Aberystwyth opened in 2009, and the Llandudno Junction site will open in the summer of 2010. The Welsh Assembly Government reports that both buildings will have incorporated features to reduce water consumption

The Sustainable Development Commission will report on the performance of the Aberystwyth and Llandudno Junction offices in future reports

The Sustainable Development Commission recommends that a renewed emphasis is placed on reducing water consumption.

## Mechanisms

<b>BREEAM</b>	
<b>MECHANISM</b>	BREEAM 'excellent' for all new builds and 'very good', aspiring to 'excellent' for all major refurbishments.
<b>OVERALL PERFORMANCE</b>	
<b>COMMENTARY</b> <p>While no new builds or major refurbishments were completed in this reporting year (2008/9), the Sustainable Development Commission is satisfied that the Welsh Assembly Government is continuing to make good progress against this target. The Merthyr Tydfil building has achieved excellent and the indication is that both the Aberystwyth building (opened in 2009) and the Llandudno Junction building (due to open in 2010) are on target to achieve a Building Research Establishment's Environmental Appraisal Method (BREEAM) rating of 'excellent' for sustainable development</p> <p>The Sustainable Development Commission welcomes the Welsh Assembly Government's progress in this area.</p>	

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

### **MECHANISM**

Green Dragon Level 5 across the Welsh Assembly Government core administrative estate by July 2009

### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

### **COMMENTARY**

Of the 81 sites within the administrative estate during the reporting year 2008/9, 17 had a Level 5 system in 2008-9 (against 16 in 2007-8) representing 21% of the administrative sites. Of those 17, the Welsh Assembly Government owns eight including the largest site, Cathays Park. This compares against four in 2007-8

An additional seven sites are at Level 2 or Level 3

While some progress is being made to certify sites, the Sustainable Development Commission recommends a renewed emphasis is placed on the delivery of stage 3 of the Green Dragon Roll-Out Project, which aims to extend the Level 5 certificate all 81 estate offices in 2009-10

The Sustainable Development Commission has concluded that some progress has been made against this target.

## **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISALS**

### **MECHANISM**

The Welsh Assembly Government has now specific commitment to consider the adoption of sustainability appraisals of office relocations.

### **OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

### **COMMENTARY**

The Welsh Assembly Government has made a commitment to consider the adoption of Defra's approach to sustainability appraisal of office relocations, and in its Environment Report 2008-9 states that it is 'exploring policy development with UK Government and lessons learned from their progress'

In 2007-8, 76% of UK Government departments undertook sustainability appraisals of office relocations, falling short of the commitment for 100%

Having considered whether to adopt such an approach, the Welsh Assembly Government should work with the Sustainable Development Commission in its final deliberations on how such an approach may be introduced in Wales.

**CARBON TRUST COMMITMENT****MECHANISM**

Welsh Assembly Government to adopt the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme.

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE****COMMENTARY**

While the Welsh Assembly Government has now begun the implementation phase following the allocation of £2.1million funding in 2008/9, sufficient progress on its planned Carbon Management Strategy and the implementation of the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Standard has not been made

The Sustainable Development Commission has therefore concluded that some progress has been made against this target.



## Performance not directly included in this assessment

Given the differing set of objectives contained within the Welsh Assembly Government's Green Dragon scheme when compared to the UK Government's set of objectives within its SOGE framework, there are a number of areas where the Welsh Assembly Government has set an objective, but the UK has not. In other areas the Welsh Assembly Government's objective is dissimilar from the UK Government's, to the degree that an assessment using the UK methodology would return an 'not applicable' rating. This is not to say that the Welsh Assembly Government is failing to take action in these areas; but that the Welsh Assembly Government has chosen to organise activities differently. These areas are:

- Energy efficiency
- Biodiversity
- Electricity from Combined Heat & Power
- Carbon neutrality.

The Sustainable Development Commission has removed such objectives from the main section of the assessment, but provides a commentary below on those areas as they form part of the Sustainable Development Commission's assessment of the UK Government estate.

### Energy efficiency

The Welsh Assembly Government's Green Dragon Standard Environmental Report 2008-9 details the activities and outcomes undertaken within the area of energy efficiency. Historically, the UK Government

has set an objective based energy use against floor space.

The Welsh Assembly Government decided it inappropriate to include within its Environmental Management System a target on energy efficiency, although it is making progress on energy efficiency. The Sustainable Development Commission concurs that while a target on energy efficiency can determine progress and trends, it is essential when assessing performance that an analysis of the wider context (like whether floor space has increased, potentially skewing figures) is included. The Sustainable Development Commission will assess how energy efficiency might be best brought into this reporting process.

### Biodiversity

UK Government Departments' target is to meet or exceed the aim of having 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in sole ownership or control in target condition by 2010. Only seven UK Government departments own or part-own SSSIs. As none of the Welsh Assembly Government's administrative estate is in a Site of Special Scientific Interest, this target is not applicable.

### Electricity from Combined Heat & Power

The UK Government has set its departments a target to source at least 15% of electricity from Combined Heat and Power (CHP) by 31 March 2010 (this target is not applicable if more than 85% of electricity is sourced from renewables). However, as the Welsh Assembly Government has set a target to procure 100% of electricity from renewable

sources, this target is not applicable in this instance.

### **Carbon neutrality**

The Welsh Assembly Government has set itself an ambitious target of achieving carbon neutrality on its own estate by 2012. The Welsh Assembly Government intends to achieve carbon neutrality by reducing energy use and waste, using onsite renewables and micro generation, and offsetting any shortfall. The Sustainable Development Commission has not assessed performance against this target this year. On current performance, carbon neutrality is likely to only be achieved by carbon offsetting any shortfall when the target date of 2012 is reached. The Welsh Assembly Government's Environmental Report 2008-9 states that in addition to carbon management and energy efficiency measures, work is in progress to developing a policy on offsetting. The Welsh Assembly Government needs to supply definitive guidance regarding carbon neutrality for its administrative estate. This target will be assessed in future SDiG reports when appropriate.

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