



## **Negative Environmental Impacts**

The activities, products and/or services that both Planning Services and the Executive Suite are responsible for will have a negative effect on the environment. In February 2010, the top five major negative environmental impacts were defined across these two services as follows:

### **1. Travel to, and travel for work.**

The top major negative environmental impact for Planning Services and the Executive Suite is members of staff travelling to work by car alone, and/or travelling to conferences and meetings which could be by hired car, chauffeured car, train, or even aeroplane.

Within the last three months, alternative options for travelling to work have been actively promoted to staff, such as the cycle and car-share schemes, and discounts offered by Stagecoach, by newsletters, emails and at team meetings.

Planning Services is aiming to reduce travel to meetings and conferences, and so far the Director has attended one such meeting by video-conference rather than in person.

### **2. Printing and paper waste, together with consumables such as toner cartridges**

Due to the number of Committee meetings the departments service and members of staff attend, there is a vast amount of paper printed and subsequently wasted.

Planning Services has changed the practice of one Committee meeting, by providing all papers electronically, and spare copies of papers are no longer printed for some other Committee meetings. Given the level and confidentiality of some of the Committee meetings, it would not be practical at this stage to stop printing papers altogether, although staff are being actively encouraged to carry laptops to meetings rather than print sets of meeting papers off.

### **3. Energy consumption/waste**

Although relatively small departments, one of the major negative environmental impacts is the amount of energy used, and more importantly, wasted. In particular with regard leaving lights on unnecessarily, and leaving equipment on standby overnight (i.e. the photocopier).

Staff in departments have been reminded in team meetings, and by emails and newsletters to turn equipment off when it's not in use, and to put PCs on standby if not using for longer than half an hour. Stickers and posters have been displayed around the departments giving food for thought and serving as a reminder to keep things turned off. The lighting and equipment responsibility plan is being embedded to ensure energy consumption and waste is reduced.

#### **4. Heating**

One of the main problems within both departments is lack of control with the heating. The Executive Suite has underfloor heating, which extends round into room 110, but is controlled centrally. Within Planning Services, rooms 111, 2 and 3 are all controlled with a thermostat in room 116 which is impractical, and often means the offices end up very cold/very hot. These problems have been reported to Campus Services.

#### **5. Poor recycling practices**

Northcote House in general has very poor recycling practices in place due to lack of good facilities.

Paul O'Callaghan, the new Waste and Recycling Assistant visited the departments on 26 February and gave some enlightening information, and good advice. Not only can the departments now recycle magazines, catalogues, waxed paper, telephone directories and more in the paper recycling bins, along with cardboard by flat-packing and placing behind those bins, but the departments have now teamed up with other areas along the same floor to put in place a bin for cans and plastics.

It is hoped that both departments can cut down on waste in general, but where things have to be thrown away, recycling will increase.