

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

15 DECEMBER 2016

8

Report Title	ECO-MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME (EMAS)
Purpose of Report	To consider the future of an environmental management accreditation.
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES: To continue with the current EMAS environmental management system and delegate authority to the Strategic Head of Development Services to choose the most appropriate accreditation system once the details of leaving the EU have been clarified.
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation with other local authorities with the EMAS accreditation and discussion with IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment).
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Ian Purcell, Senior Accounting Technician Tel: 01453 754141 Email: ian.purcell@stroud.gov.uk EMS accreditations are discretionary activities however the verification process helps the Council maintain its good environmental reputation. Several of our contracts specify having an EMS. The environmental standards could slip as there would be no systematic approach of holding services to account.
Legal Implications	No significant legal implications to record on this report. Karen Trickey, Legal Services Manager Email: karen.trickey@stroud.gov.uk
Report Author	Petula Davis, Senior Policy Officer Tel: 01453 754289 Email: Petula.Davis@stroud.gov.uk
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Continue with EMAS until the Brexit implications are known; iii. Apply to transfer the EMS to ISO 14001:2015; iiii. Stop EMS accreditations.
Performance Management Follow Up	As set out in the body of the report

Introduction and Background

1. The Environment has long been a focus for the District Council. It recognises the impact it has on the environment through the services it provides and that it has direct powers and responsibilities to comply, encourage and where necessary enforce. There is a significant amount of environmental legislation that the District Council must comply with, but it is not compulsory to have an EMS.
2. The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), verification process has been a key delivery and reporting mechanism for the Environment priority. SDC first achieved EMAS in 1999, it is annually verified and we have consistently maintained the required standard.
3. The rigor of the audit that the EMAS framework accreditation has provided, not only to ensures the Council's activities show compliance with legislation but it has given the District Council the opportunity to enhance its environmental reputation. In addition to reputation, most of our contracts have environmental considerations and EMAS has allowed us to lead by example.
4. Each year it is necessary to review our EMS to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This year additional considerations are needed namely
 - EMAS and the revised ISO 14001 standard
 - Implications of Brexit
5. EMAS is a voluntary European initiative designed to recognise and reward organisations that go beyond minimum legal compliance and continually improve their environmental performance. Since 2001 EMAS has incorporated the requirements of an environmental management system according to ISO 14001:2004 (International Standards Organisation).
6. EMAS however goes beyond the ISO 14001:2004 standard by requiring organisations to involve employees at all levels, demonstrate continued compliance to environmental legislation and provide regular information about their environmental performance to the public in the form of an annual Environmental Statement.

Why change?

7. In September 2015, ISO 14001:2015 was published replacing ISO 14001:2004. The European Commission is now planning to integrate the revised ISO 14001 into EMAS and details of the amended EMAS are expected to be published in early 2017.
8. Depending on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, the UK might i) leave the EU completely, or ii) remain a member of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) with access to the European Economic Area (EEA). If the UK negotiates a position to remain a member of EFTA with access to

the EEA, then the EMAS regulation may be adopted by the UK and our EMAS registration could continue.

9. If the UK leaves the EU then our EMAS registration can continue as the EMAS regulation allows registration from organisations outside the EU – however, our registration would need to be handled by another competent body in the EU as IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) would no longer be able to register organisations.
10. Having a recognised EMS accreditation demonstrates a continued environment commitment to residents, contractors, suppliers, the wider business community and voluntary & community groups. This has been reflected in the 2016 Budget consultation with 84% of businesses and 74% of residents ‘overall satisfied that SDC is working to improve the environment’.
11. EMAS has been the best environment management option for SDC, though it is poised to change following the refreshed and subsequent new ISO 14001 standard. The costs for auditing the new ISO 14001:2015 standard are yet to be established but it is anticipated that it could incur more audit days.

Recommendations

12. Continue with EMAS accreditation until the implications of the referendum are known. To investigate fully the costs of the transition to ISO 14001:2015 and ensure that these can be accommodated within the existing budget.