

## **SLCC Reporting on the Scottish Biodiversity Duty: 2011 to 2014**

### **Biodiversity and the SLCC**

The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (SLCC) is a Non Departmental Public Body employing 47 staff at our office in central Edinburgh. As an office based organisation, our main contribution to the conservation of biodiversity is in the use of sustainable suppliers and resource efficiency.

The Board and Senior Management Team are committed to improving efficiency in how we function as an organisation, and in how the office is managed. This commitment extends to a corporate responsibility to minimise wasted resources, and so we invest in more efficient equipment, we re-use materials wherever possible, and we are open to changing procedures in order to improve sustainability.

From its creation in October 2008, the SLCC has encouraged staff to utilise public transport. A straw poll of 51 staff and Board Members in December 2014 showed that 10% drive, 23% walk or cycle and 67% use public transport to get to the office. Our move to tele/video conferencing where possible is an example of how, six years on, we are continuing to look for ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

This report aims to illustrate how the SLCC has tried to operate responsibly with regards to biodiversity over the 2011 to 2014 period.

### **Actions Taken and Change Monitoring**

The SLCC has taken many different actions as an organisation to improve our sustainability and to reduce our carbon footprint since 2011.

The introduction of more resource efficient equipment has enabled us to reduce waste. We replaced the hot water heater in our staff kitchen with a newer, more energy efficient model in April 2013. This new model has light sensors, so it only operates when the lights are on and the office is in use; in comparison, the old model heated water constantly, even at night and over weekends. Similarly, when we had to replace our photocopier in December 2011, we chose a model that was designed to reduce our environmental impact. The machine is energy star qualified, it takes fewer consumable parts, and its use of solid ink sticks produces around 90% less waste than a similar laser device with traditional toner cartridges.

Not only has there been an increase in the range of recyclables collected over the period, but the uptake of recycling has risen substantially in the past three years. Comparison of the total weight of recyclables collected in 2013 and 2014 shows that recycling of plastic bottles has increased by 47%, paper recycling (both confidential and non-confidential) has increased by 25% and glass recycling is up by 20%.

In August 2012 we changed our way of working from using paper based files to electronic files for Determination Committee meetings – this has saved staff time and resources, and reams of paper over the subsequent years. In 2014, we saved 103,950 pages of paper in this way. Changes to the annual meeting schedule and inviting Board members to participate in meetings via telephone or videoconferencing, has markedly reduced the need for corporate travel. Less corporate travel saves time for the individual, money for the organisation and has numerous environmental benefits.

The introduction of cotton hand towels in the staff kitchen in January 2014 was a relatively small project, but has had a great effect on waste reduction. By giving staff the option of using cotton towels, the use of paper hand towels has fallen in the past year, saving the organisation £2 a week and preventing two rolls of paper towels a month from going straight to landfill.

### **Mainstreaming**

Making sustainable choices has gradually become a norm within the SLCC. For example, our office paper is responsibly sourced, we operate a switch off policy for all electronic equipment, whiteboards are preferred over flip charts and we re-use our artificial Christmas trees.

Our office plants use a peat free planting system which is very important in reducing peat extraction. By helping to conserve peatlands, we protect the ecosystems living there, and we also help to preserve carbon stores (therefore preventing them from contributing to global warming).

### **Working in Partnership**

The SLCC works with our recycling contractor to ensure that all feasible waste streams are suitably covered. With the skills and knowledge gained from training with Resource Efficient Scotland, we are aware of new areas to focus on and of the need to monitor changes so that we can evaluate past initiatives and better plan for future sustainability projects.

In order to actively lower our carbon footprint, we try to use local suppliers where possible. Our milk supplier is a locally sourcing dairy which makes

deliveries at a fair price, and we order our catering from a local café - meaning that packaging is re-used and all deliveries are made on foot. Our stationery supplier is ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 accredited and we minimise deliveries by carefully monitoring stock and buying in bulk where appropriate.

## Communication

We have used various modes of communication to help keep resource efficiency on the agenda. We have undertaken annual surveys of staff views on recycling, we have distributed links to organisations such as Greener Scotland and Love Food Hate Waste and have issued updated posters on resource efficiency. Statistics on recycling and on average waste to landfill are monitored on a monthly basis and the results are shared on a staff noticeboard.

By informing each individual of the part that they play in helping the organisation become more resource efficient, we have been able to change behaviours and use our resources in a more efficient manner. We try to use different ways of reporting (posters, emails, surveys and the like) and this helps to keep everyone engaged in the drive towards zero waste.

## Highlights and Aims for the Future

Switching from paper to electronic files for meetings has been a huge success. We now save over 40 boxes of paper a year, our postage and photocopying costs are reduced, and staff have more time for other tasks. The second highlight has been the adoption of telephone/video conferencing by Board Members. Our Board Members are based across Scotland, therefore corporate travel is a very serious consideration for the SLCC with regards to sustainability. A reduction in face to face meetings and careful scheduling of appointments to optimise time spent in the office, has really had an impact on our travel related carbon footprint.

Our aim for the future is to keep improving on our resource efficiency year on year. One of our most important tasks will be to formalise our way of working in a Sustainability policy. The policy will set out our desire as an organisation to continue to work in a more efficient manner and our commitment to minimising wasted resources. We also have future goals centred on schemes to simultaneously benefit the environment and improve staff health and wellbeing, such as the cycle to work scheme and encouraging greater use of green spaces near to the office. We look forward to embracing the challenges of the next three years, and will remain committed to striving towards greater resource efficiency within the organisation.

Publication Date: 09/02/2015