

Operations

Our ambition is to be environmentally regenerative. We will investigate how we can become carbon positive – go beyond carbon neutral and positively affect climate change



Environmentally regenerative

Our commitment to improving GNM's environmental performance will test our ingenuity, but it is the only way to be sure of progress

Our ambition to be environmentally regenerative came out of a six-month partnership with sustainability charity Forum for the Future, which was framed around how sustainability could support the future success of GNM.

The commitment was made even though there was no way to be certain that becoming environmentally regenerative is possible. This is because we wanted to commit to a challenge that would test our ingenuity.

We didn't want to aim for carbon neutrality because we felt it had already been tainted by companies rushing to meet this target, sometimes for marketing advantage and often by the lazy route of offsetting, rather than looking for reductions or to avoid the emissions in the first place.

We also wanted to have a broader definition to ensure that our influence with our readers and suppliers could be brought into the equation, recognising that we can have an impact in those areas as well as at our own offices and print sites.

A recent report produced by Forum and the American NGO Clean Air Cool Planet called Getting to Zero echoed our approach, concluding that the "dynamic, fluid nature of the concept [carbon neutrality] also means that it may well be more intellectually honest to aspire to neutrality rather than to claim it.

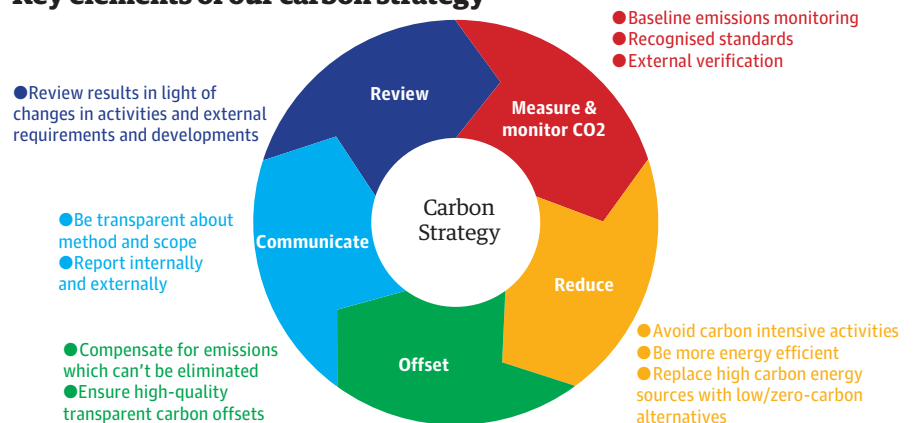
"Changing expectations over time will push the company in question to continually improve its performance and to engage with its suppliers and customers to help them reduce their emissions.

"If we accept that neutrality is a fluid target, then transparency about what is, and what is not, covered by a claim becomes absolutely essential. Companies should anticipate and be prepared for considerable scrutiny from stakeholders."

A year ago we realised while we were developing a strategy around our editorial and commercial operations, we had not been giving sufficient attention to our operational performance. In fact, areas such as waste management in our offices, would not have held up well to scrutiny by our stakeholders.

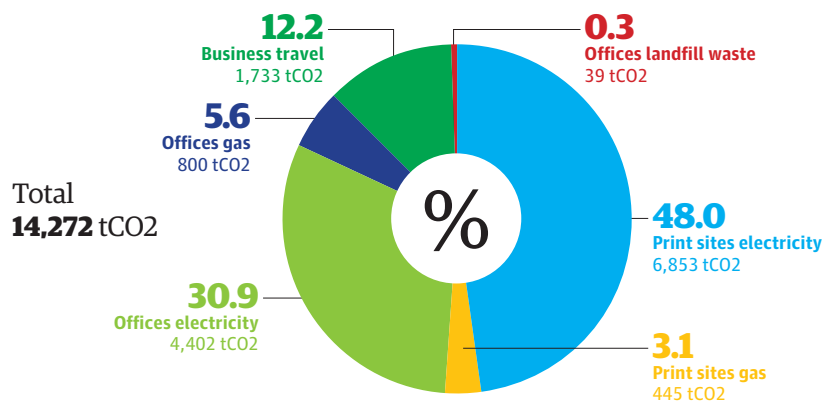
To rectify this, environmental manager Claire Buckley was appointed in summer 2008. She has been concentrating on reviewing GNM's environmental performance and establishing a process of continual improvement.

Key elements of our carbon strategy



Carbon footprint of GNM offices and print sites

April 2007 - March 2008



GNM'S CARBON FOOTPRINT HAS BEEN CALCULATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GREENHOUSE GAS PROTOCOL'S CORPORATE ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING STANDARD AND DEFRA 2008 GUIDELINES. IT COVERS THE FOLLOWING:
OFFICES: our three main offices **PRINT SITES:** Guardian Print Centre and 50% of emissions from Trafford Park Printers (TPP). TPP was under joint GMG-Telegraph ownership during the reporting period, but from October 2008 it moved to 100% GNM ownership.
BUSINESS TRAVEL: approximately 65% of GNM staff air travel emissions have been calculated from data provided by our main supplier. We have added 35% to this to estimate the carbon for total air travel. The footprint also includes company car fuel use, but not trains or taxis. **WASTE:** landfill from our offices **GAS:** from our offices and print sites **ELECTRICITY:** for 2006-7 we calculated zero carbon emissions for our renewable electricity, according to DEFRA reporting guidelines. DEFRA have since changed the rules and we now calculate CO2 for our renewable electricity based on the electricity grid average.

Her initial review has resulted in a more complete carbon footprint for our offices and print sites (see graphic), as well as in the identification of the key steps we need to take to develop a comprehensive carbon strategy which will put us on the road to being carbon positive. We are aiming for external verification of our direct carbon footprint in 2009. Work has also begun on our indirect carbon footprint, focusing on our paper supply and newspaper distribution network (see page 31).

A number of other changes have taken

place over the past year that will have an impact on our operations. These include a change in the management structure of our two newspaper print sites. Trafford Park Printers in Manchester, which had been a 50% joint venture between Guardian Media Group (GMG) and the Telegraph Group, came under our full ownership in October 2008 and we had earlier taken over the management of the Guardian Print Centre in East London. Bringing together the different environmental approaches of these two operations will be a priority.



DAVID LEVENE

Carbon reduction

We concentrated in 2008 on various actions to reduce emissions through energy-efficiency and replace high-carbon energy sources with sustainable alternatives.

We are confident that our new headquarters building in King's Cross will be significantly more energy efficient than the old 1960s office we move out of at the end of 2008 and will measure the changes in order to get the full benefits from the new site.

The building uses renewable energy as does our other office in Clerkenwell. Our energy intensive London print site GPC also switched to a renewable energy contract in October 2008.

Our Manchester print site (TPP) is currently locked into a brown energy contract, which does not come up for renewal for two years, but it has created an energy policy and embarked on a comprehensive reduction plan (see page 32 for details of energy efficiency plans).

The GNM technology department has improved the energy efficiency of our IT infrastructure, reducing the number of servers in our data centres from 150 to just five, as well as installing intelligent power units. This has resulted in a 2% reduction in overall server energy consumption.

Acknowledging there are carbon emissions we cannot avoid, from 2009 we will be mitigating them through partnerships with three organisations:

- Sandbag campaigns to remove carbon permits that allow big business to carry on polluting as well buying permits to retire them from the system (sandbag.org.uk).
- The C-Change Trust runs the Carbon Busters programme where pupils create ways to reduce their schools' carbon footprint. We will be working with C-Change to invest in schools around our King's Cross office (thec-change.org).
- The Converging World invests in clean energy in India. Profits go directly into creating sustainable communities there (theconvergingworld.org).

The various projects across GNM are taking place within the framework of a Carbon Management Project across all divisions of our parent company Guardian Media Group (GMG), with the support of the Carbon Trust. Its aim is to measure the carbon footprint of the six divisions and then seek significant reductions.



Sustainability is at the heart of procurement Photo: Natalie Behring/Panos Pictures

This year's targets

1. Strengthen our process of continual environmental improvement, including environmental objectives, indicators and management reporting
2. Develop our carbon reduction strategy and road map towards being carbon positive
3. Measure the carbon footprint of the paper we purchase (by end of 2009)
4. Increase the certified content of virgin magazine paper to 90% by 2012
5. Support our two print sites in jointly developing new environmental improvement programmes
6. Establish sustainability measures within procurement and business travel
7. Raise staff engagement and awareness levels of GNM's sustainability commitments and performance.

Last year's targets

1. Produce an independently verified carbon footprint for our direct carbon emissions, and provide more accurate information on GNM's indirect emissions resulting from newspaper production and distribution ★★☆☆
2. Monitor the progress and environmental performance at our newspaper and magazine printsites based on recommendations produced by the Carbon Trust and CSRnetwork. ★☆☆
3. Undertake a comparative lifecycle analysis of bioplastic versus regular polythene, to give clarity around the environmental impacts of polybagging weekend newspapers. ★★★
4. Appoint an environmental manager ★★★
5. Research the issues surrounding carbon emissions associated with paper manufacture ★★☆☆
6. Improve the percentage of recycled paper in our magazine supplies subject to issues of quality and availability ★☆☆
7. Progressively increase certified fibre content of virgin paper to 70% over five years ★☆☆
8. Carry out a feasibility study looking at full chain-of-custody certification for individual publications by end of 2008 ★☆☆

- Key**
- ☆☆☆☆ = no progress
 - ★★☆☆ = modest progress
 - ★★★☆☆ = good progress
 - ★★★★ = target completed



Printing process

The efforts GNM has made so far is helping to make our newspaper and magazine printing and distribution ever more sustainable

As part of restructuring for the digital age, GNM has embarked on a strategic review of all aspects of our newspapers, with sustainability being one of five key workstreams.

A senior member of the strategy and corporate development department is heading up the review, looking at the issues of paper, printing and distribution.

As part of a much longer-term visioning exercise, GNM has formed a partnership with HP Labs, the research arm of Hewlett Packard, to do research into the future of sustainable newspaper and magazine printing.

This will concentrate on developing print-on-demand technologies that will allow more localised publishing rather than relying on our current large-scale print sites and road-based distribution system.

Paper

Our vision states that “sustainability will be at the heart of our procurement processes,” in recognition that our suppliers are integral to our operational impact.

Nowhere is this more important than in the near 200,000 tonnes of paper purchased annually for our parent company GMG’s publications. Over half of this is used for the Guardian and Observer.

The production of paper is by far our biggest contributor to emissions, with research by the Carbon Trust estimating that it accounted for around three-quarters of the total carbon footprint of the Daily Mirror – a figure that would be roughly comparable for our papers.

The thinking around responsible paper purchasing is rapidly evolving. From an initial focus on increasing the percentage of recycled paper and ensuring virgin newsprint comes from certified sources, the boundaries have broadened to include establishing the carbon footprint of newsprint manufacture.

GMG’s paper purchaser now has sustainability targets within his annual personal objectives, and in the coming year is looking to measure the footprint of the paper we buy, in order to see how to reduce it. This is a difficult exercise as there is no single agreed measurement tool being used by

the industry and the paper chain is complex, given that individual mills often buy pulp from several different countries.

Independent consultancy CSRnetwork has for the past three years been auditing our paper supplies. In its latest report, the consultancy asked our suppliers if they have taken steps to measure the carbon footprint of their paper.

Six of the 16 said they had, and a number referred to an industry-wide initiative being undertaken by CEPI (Confederation of European paper Industries), which is intended to provide consistent guidelines for reporting the carbon profile of pulp and paper making. This is the system we are planning to use in our analysis and will be encouraging all suppliers to use the same methodology.

CSRnetwork reports that progress was made during 2007 in increasing both the proportion of recycled fibre and the certified virgin fibre content of paper, in line with our paper policy.

Recycled content for newsprint increased to 86% for GMG and 94% for GNM (87%, 2006), while recycled fibre in magazines rose in GMG publications to 13% and those produced by GNM to 18%.

The main use of virgin paper occurs in our magazines. The proportion that was certified increased during 2007 to 64% for GMG and 62% for GNM magazines. This is in line with our 2007 target, although this has now been made more ambitious with a commitment to increase the certified content of virgin magazine paper to 90% by 2012.

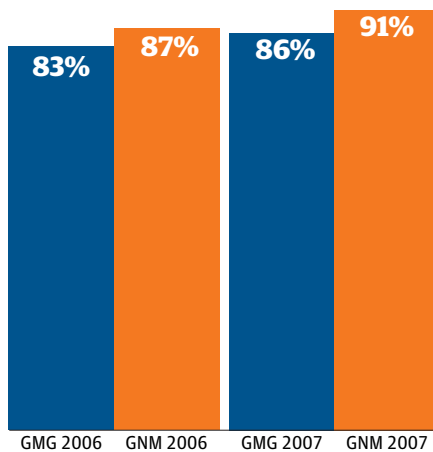
In newsprint, the percentage of certified virgin fibre dropped slightly in 2007, but given this is such a small portion of the total, CSRnetwork concluded that “the fall in the certification rate may therefore not be significant in terms of the overall sustainability of supply, set against the imperative to use as much recycled fibre as possible in this grade.”

CSRnetwork also gathers data on the paper mills themselves and found that the great majority of mills that supplied GMG in 2007 operate environmental management systems independently certified to the international standards ISO 14001 or EMAS. All mills are also using chlorine-free technologies for bleaching.

“Sustainability will be at the heart of our procurement processes”

Paper supply

Proportion of fibre that is either recycled or certified (all paper grades) %



SOURCE: CSR NETWORK REPORT 2008

A small number of high risks were flagged in the last report, in particular concerning the environmental practices and certification levels of our two Russian paper suppliers that provide small quantities of newsprint to GMG.

Both suppliers have, however, now recognised the importance of having procedures in place to ensure their virgin fibre is sourced legally and responsibly. They have also embarked on certification initiatives, although currently achieve a combined certification rate of less than 20%.

Another target we set ourselves last year was to see whether we could achieve chain-of-custody (c-o-c) certification on any of our individual products.

C-o-c certification gives an extra level of confidence because it assures that products from certified forests are not mixed with products from uncertified forests at any point in the supply chain.

For both the Guardian and Observer magazines, we now have c-o-c certification from the moment the tree is felled to the point where the paper arrives at the print site. The final step, which we are currently working towards, is for our print sites to assure that they are using that same paper in our magazines.

Beyond sustainable purchasing, we can also reduce the environmental impact on paper by reducing its weight and the amount we use. Following changes to our presses in 2008, we were able to reduce the weight of our newspapers, from 49 gsm to 45 gsm without a noticeable reduction in quality.

GNM print sites

The largest contributors to GNM's direct operational carbon footprint, accounting for half of our emissions, are our two newspaper print sites.

Therefore energy reduction at these plants can have a significant effect on our direct emissions.

Trafford Park Printers (TPP) has laid strong foundations for reducing energy consumption and increasing efficiency.

Notable actions include a switch-off campaign to help staff identify which lighting and machinery can be switched off when not in use and the replacement of old lighting with more efficient motion-sensitive lighting in parts of the site.

TPP plans to apply for certification to the new Carbon Trust Standard by the end of 2008, for which evidence of carbon management performance and emissions reduction will be independently audited.

Our London print site GPC has implemented energy-efficiency measures, but not yet on the same scale as TPP. It is developing its energy monitoring system and planning to initiate a switch-off campaign similar to that at the Manchester site.

In last year's audit, we reported data from a Carbon Trust report showing that gas usage at GPC was 4.6 million kWh for 2006/07. A new monitoring system has shown that this figure was wrongly recorded. The usage for



Reducing the weight of our newspapers, but maintaining the quality Photo: Sarah Lee

2007/08 was 108,000 kWh.

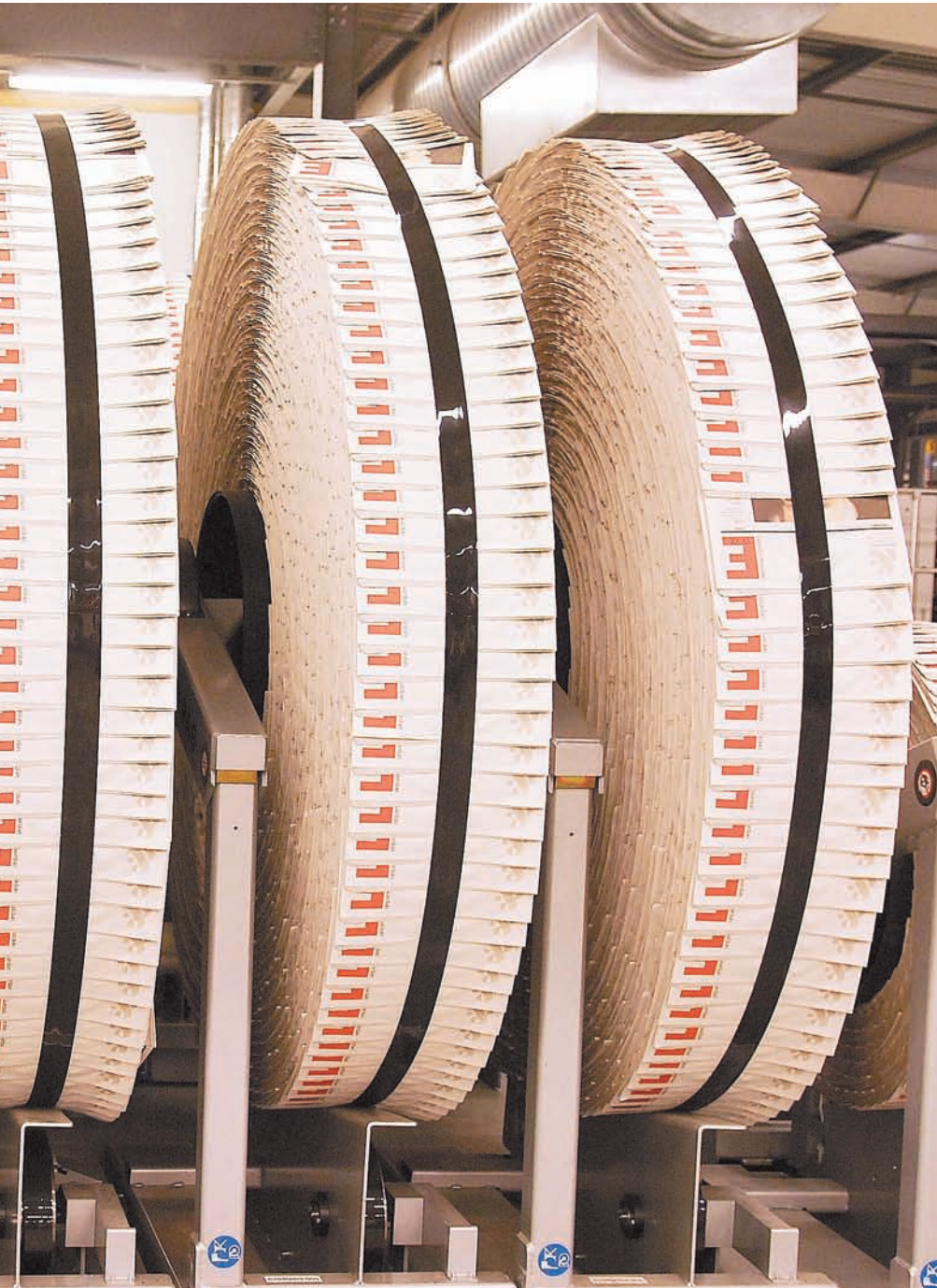
Of course it's not all just about carbon. GPC achieved certification to ISO 14001 in January 2008. This certification means that GPC has an environmental management system (EMS) in place which will help it to improve its environmental performance on an on-going basis.

Both print sites have made progress in preventing and recycling waste, in particular packaging waste and printing waste (paper, plates, chemicals). TPP aims to achieve zero waste to landfill over the next few years, with a small part of the waste being incinerated with energy recovery. TPP has already halved its overall waste disposal costs and reduced press waste by 50% in 2007, saving 1,600 tonnes of paper.

Together with the print sites, we are working on identifying future improvement measures, focusing on areas where the print sites can work together and developing common key performance indicators. The results of this work will be fed into the newspaper sustainability strategy group (see page 31).

Magazine print sites

Since our last report, Trader Media Group's Apple Web plant, which is majority controlled by our parent company, GMG, and prints our Saturday Guide magazine, has achieved the ISO 14001 certified environmental management system. This has involved Apple Web putting in place measures and targets for monitoring



Polybagging

Case study



GETTY IMAGES

The science of sustainability can be incredibly complex, as we found out when we investigated how to create a more environmentally-friendly wrapping to our weekend papers.

We have become increasingly ill at ease about the use of see-through polybags, even though commercially they are essential given the need to hold together our multi-sectioned weekend papers and the insistence of some of our supermarket clients to have our publications ready bundled.

The current polywrap is made from 100% polythene and as such is a type 2 recyclable material, but it is difficult finding recycling places, other than supermarkets that offer plastic bag recycling.

Our readers too have consistently been unhappy with the current practice with 92% saying in our reader survey that it is important the plastic is made of recycled material or is biodegradable.

Prince Charles joined the debate, writing to the chief executive of our parent company GMG in April 2008, to ask if we "have any cunning ideas about how this practice could be altered. Otherwise the Pacific Ocean will become even more clogged up!"

We had already been working on switching to alternative bio-plastics made from potato or corn starch, commissioning a lifecycle analysis of the environmental impact of polybagging in 2007.

Following an inconclusive initial report, a secondary study was commissioned which suggested that unless disposed of in the correct way through composting, bio-plastics would be more harmful to the environment than regular plastic wrapping due to the emission of harmful greenhouse gasses, including methane, when disposed of through landfill.

This information led to our environment editor writing a front page splash on the dangers of these plastics, which are used by many supermarkets for wrapping food products.

While continuing to investigate an alternative, we have in the meantime taken action on our existing plastic wrap, by reducing its thickness by 20%. We have also successfully tested the use of 25% recycled polythene and hope to roll this out in 2009.

continued improvement in its environmental performance.

With the closure of Quebecor, which was highlighted in last year's report as being the least efficient of our contract printing sites, the contract has now moved to Polestar, which now accounts for three-quarters of our magazine products. Its site in Sheffield, which prints Guardian Weekend magazine, opened in 2006 with modern, efficient presses and state-of-the-art environmental controls and has been awarded ISO 1400.

Polestar recently launched a website, with support from the Carbon Trust, which allows customers to calculate the carbon footprint of their products to enable them to make more informed decisions about their product format and design.

Polestar is also making this software available to competitors in the hope that this will help the industry in agreeing a common standard.

Distribution

Our distribution company CEVA Logistics is another large contributor to our indirect carbon emissions, given that its lorries travel up and down the country delivering our newspapers and most of our magazines.

CEVA is measuring its carbon emissions using a web-based data capture tool, which will allow us from January 2009 to understand our distribution footprint and set reduction targets through fuel-efficiency drives and use of new transport technologies.

The new building

GNM will introduce a host of environmental measures to further boost Kings Place's sustainability credentials

Our decision to move to Kings Place, a brand new office and public arts development in King's Cross was inspired by the building's sustainability credentials. These included its environmental quality and location near the capital's principal public transport hub.

The building itself has several energy-efficient features. The facade helps to keep the building cool in summer, while in the winter it retains the heat, reducing the need for air conditioning and heating. It also has a displacement ventilation system that uses fresh air to cool the building, largely reducing the need for refrigerant cooling. It is currently awaiting confirmation of its rating under the Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method (Bream), a well-regarded environmental rating system for buildings. It is expected to achieve a "very good" rating. (There are four possible ratings: pass, good, very good and excellent.) The building is also due to be issued its Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) by the end of the year. All new homes and commercial buildings must have an EPC. The A-G rating, similar to the energy labels for fridges, is awarded depending on the level of energy efficiency.

Recycling and waste

The move to our new Kings Place offices has resulted in getting rid of large amounts of furniture, IT equipment and other materials, we have accumulated over our 32 years occupancy in Farringdon Road. To ensure the majority was reused or recycled rather than sent to landfill, we teamed up with various charities and social businesses who collected different components.

Most of our IT equipment is leased so will be returned to the supplier, with the rest being donated, either to our local community partners (see Communities, page 41) or to Digital Links which refurbish kit for reuse in developing countries. For smaller miscellaneous items, staff were encouraged to use a range of recycling and charity donation options.

While the recent move has been generating unusually large quantities of waste, figures for the 2007/08 financial year (which do not include the move) have shown a 12% reduction in waste to landfill over the past two years and a similar reduction in the total waste we produce. Currently one-third of all our waste is recycled (see graphic).

There is considerable scope to improve

our waste systems. A number of waste streams which are separated and recycled or reused are not regularly reported on, such as batteries and fluorescent lighting, and we have not been composting food waste or degradable packaging, which is more damaging than ordinary plastic if it goes to landfill. (see polybagging case study page 33)

Despite providing separate recycling bins for cans and plastic bottles in our offices, we discovered during 2008 that these had actually been going to landfill.

We are currently working on a new waste management and monitoring system for our offices to ensure this does not happen again.

We aim to increase the recycling rate and achieve zero to landfill by 2010. We are also committed to ensuring that all waste is recycled and treated in the UK rather than being exported.

At Kings Place, waste separation hubs are being provided on all floors for paper, cans, plastic bottles and general waste. In addition there will be recycling facilities for glass, CDs, DVDs and batteries. We also hope to introduce food waste and biodegradable packaging composting. A new waste management system will also be introduced at our other existing London office.

Transport

Travel makes up 12% of GNM's operational carbon footprint, of which the vast majority results from air travel.

This is not surprising given that we have hundreds of journalists covering news across the globe. While the quality of our reporting is paramount, we will be looking at how best to reduce travel impacts right across the business in the coming year. Our plans to increase the number of writers overseas should also help us to reduce reduce the number of flights.

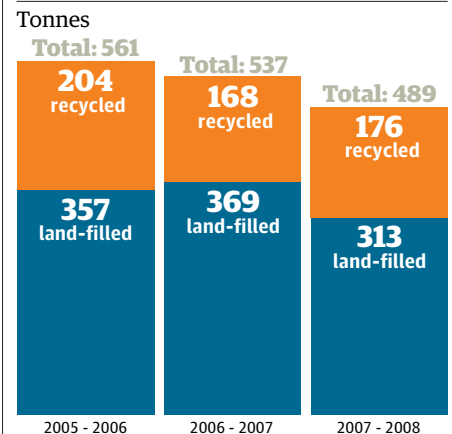
We hope to make the most of the excellent travel links to King's Cross by encouraging staff to take greener transport decisions for their journeys and to use the state of the art video-conferencing.

While we had hoped to have comprehensive travel data on staff air and rail travel via our new travel supplier in time for this report, major delays in finalising the contract have stalled this. The contract is now in place and we are working with the supplier to monitor all air and rail travel in 2009. For offsetting purposes, we are therefore using the data we do have for air travel which accounts for approximately two-thirds of our estimated total emissions,



The atrium of Kings Place Photo: David Levene

Office recycling and waste*



*THESE FIGURES COVER LANDFILL WASTE FROM 2 OF GNM'S 3 MAIN OFFICE BUILDINGS IN LONDON AS WELL AS PAPER, CARDBOARD AND GLASS RECYCLED.



and adding one-third to this to get a final total estimate.

We continue to monitor and offset fuel used by our 63 company cars, as well as that claimed on expenses. The past year has seen a 16% reduction on the previous reporting period in resulting emissions from business car travel.

GNM also uses the sustainable taxi firm, Green Tomato Cars as one of two centralised taxi services. They use only hybrid cars and offset all their emissions. We will work with our other taxi provider in 2009 to obtain data on the related carbon emissions.



There is secured covered parking space for 190 bicycles

GNM's cycling group has been consulted on provision for cyclists at our new offices, which will be a marked improvement on existing facilities. There will be secure covered space for 190 bicycles and 20 motorbikes, as well as showers and lockers nearby. Only three car spaces have been allocated in order to maximise the space available for bicycles.

In addition, GNM is paying Camden council to install bike racks on York Way right next to Kings Place, and our landlord is looking at proposals to site more cycle parking around the building's perimeter.

We have also signed up to the government's Cycle to Work initiative that gives employees the chance to buy a tax-free bike through their payroll, cutting the cost by up to half. Eighty employees took part last year, and more are expected to sign up when it is offered to staff again.

Staff engagement

One area where we have consistently been weak has been in communicating and engaging our staff on sustainability issues. This is reflected by poor scores in the recent employee survey (see graphic below left).

This has partly been due to the lack of coherent environmental information to communicate, as well as the environmentally unfriendly infrastructure of our old offices.

The appointment of a new environment manager means GNM is now able to commit to developing a more systematic and transparent process of continual improvement, and the move to more efficient offices provides staff with a setting more conducive to good environmental practice.

Motivating and engaging our staff has been made a priority for the year ahead, with several actions already identified. These include bringing to life our internal sustainability brand, "TomorrowToday", raising awareness of our sustainability vision, and organising a sustainability week.

Tomorrowtoday
Acting now for a sustainable future

Office procurement

GNM's long-term goal is to deal not only with our direct environmental and social impacts, but also those from the products and services we consume. While newsprint and magazine paper has by far the biggest carbon footprint in our supply chain (see page 31), we are also making sure that sustainability is considered by all our centralised office suppliers.

Our first key priority has been to ensure that sustainability has been fully considered in the multi-million pound fit-out of Kings Place.

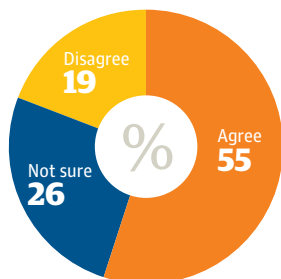
The fit-out has been managed by Overbury, which has an ISO 14001 certified environmental management system (EMS). It managed to achieve a waste recycling rate by August 2008, in the midst of the fit-out, of an impressive 92%, well above the initial target of 55%. The use of certified timber has also been maximised guaranteeing that the wood comes from responsibly managed forests and is not from endangered species nor illegally felled.

The fit-out was registered with Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS), an initiative which monitors projects against criteria designed to encourage best practice for the environment, the workforce and the general public. It achieved 37 out of 40 after the final CCS inspection and was endorsed as "an exceptionally good site".

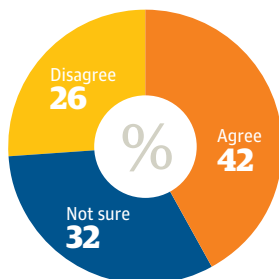
Managing director Tim Brooks says Overbury was just one example of the way tenders were negotiated for Kings Place: "What has been interesting about some of

What our staff think

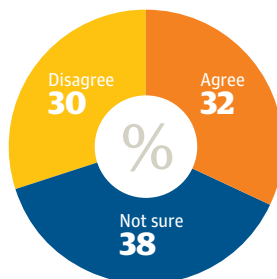
GNM as an organisation has effective environmental practices (eg recycling, energy saving etc)



GNM encourages me to take an active part in reducing my own environmental impact at work



I understand the implications of GNM's sustainability vision for my area of responsibility



SOURCE: GNM EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2008

our tendering processes is the companies say they have learned more from us than any other. The catering contract is a good example. Not only did we involve our own experts, such as investigations writer Felicity Lawrence, but on an issue like pay, we made it clear right from the beginning that we were not interested in the minimum wage but in the London working wage (see Catering contract below).

“For the fit-out we talked to three of the biggest companies in the UK. For us it was not a price-driven decision, but was all about the way they would manage the site and the materials being used. Overbury was head and shoulders above the rest. It was very noticeable the difference between a true environmental bid and the ones that had had a environmentally friendly sticking plaster put on. You learn quickly about whether companies genuinely care about the environment,” explains Brooks.

In next year’s Living our values we will publish final volumes of certified timber used in the fit-out, as well as total waste and recycling. Some of this data will contribute to the carbon footprint of the fit-out being collated by Overbury. Overbury also worked with Islington council to source

“
Sustainability was also important in the procurement of new furniture for Kings Place
”

potential local suppliers and resources.

Sustainability was also important in the procurement of new furniture for Kings Place. Wherever possible, it uses recycled and recyclable materials and the manufacturers have their own initiatives in place to minimise the environmental impact of their operations, transport and packaging.

Our technology and procurement teams have done a great deal of work on choosing new computing and other IT kit which is both energy efficient and also promotes more sustainable office behaviours.

The energy consumption of our existing desktop computers was monitored to serve as a benchmark for evaluating the energy consumption of new equipment.

While Apple is not reputed for its environmental performance, our publishing system requires Macs for 60% of staff. The remainder use PCs, which were supplied by Hewlett Packard, a manufacturer that is considered to be progressive on environmental issues.

The technology department also commissioned a print audit to determine the specifications for new printing and copying equipment. The audit showed that, while we have a lower than average use of paper overall (315 pages per month per employee versus a benchmark of 1,000 in similar industries), only 7% of our printing is double-sided and we have a higher than average level of printing from email and internet. The audit results provided an important basis for choosing the new printing equipment.

From 2009 we will have an improved system to monitor all printing and copying by department. The new equipment will be set automatically to double-sided.

The procurement department has also been working on tenders for cleaning and postal services supported by our new environmental manager, to ensure sustainability criteria and performance have been integrated into the process.

Catering contract

Felicity Lawrence

Investigations writer specialising in food, the Guardian

I was initially reluctant to be drawn into the GNM catering contract negotiations, partly because of something that the deputy governor of one of Britain’s largest prisons said during an interview which has always stuck in my mind. “You can change quite a lot and not have trouble, but get the food wrong and you’ll have a riot”.

But with the move to Kings Place, GNM wanted to make the tendering process as democratic as possible. Representatives from several departments formed a sub-committee to choose the new supplier, supported by procurement consultants appointed by our facilities team.

We all wanted food that tasted better and was affordable from a contractor who would treat catering staff fairly as they transferred under employment regulations.

As well as the usual tender requirements, we decided to add a detailed specification to ensure that bidders cooked fresh real food. The specification built on work done by the NGO Sustain on what a really sustainable food supply would look like as well as criteria developed for school meals to ensure contractors don’t use short cuts to save money. These projects had shown that companies can tick the boxes on paper around environmental standards and nutritional standards and still produce lousy food that’s not sustainable in the true sense.

To give a flavour of the specification we came up with – the vast majority of food should be prepared on site using fresh



ingredients each day (before sandwiches were for example coming from a large sandwich factory), it should be sourced locally or regionally and directly where possible.

A certain percentage of fair trade and organic produce should be provided, which we would aim to increase steadily. Packaging and waste should be recyclable and actually recycled.

We also specified in some detail about food sourcing: meat should be sourced from farms



rearing their livestock on grass, and chicken and pork should be free range and not contain added water or polyphosphates.

There would be no fish on the menu from the Fish to Avoid list of endangered species drawn up by the Marine Stewardship Council.

No food should contain trans fats; all bread should be made without chemical improvers; cakes, sauces and soups should be made from scratch not from pre-mixes and so on. We also wanted catering staff to be put on the London living wage as opposed to the national minimum wage.

The staff team then spent an intense two days visiting all those shortlisted at sites where they were already doing catering. We ate our way through a heroic amount of food, some of it very good, some of it less so.

As a vegan diabetic one of the team was able to test them out on their ability to cater for special dietary needs. Once each company had gone through its sales patter, I asked to look inside their fridges, which proved very revealing.

The company we finally chose, Jill Bartlett, is a small but growing independent, and was the favoured supplier at every stage of the process by unanimous agreement. It was already paying all its staff at all its sites the London living wage, it had clear plans for staff development, and it seemed to have the best understanding of what sustainable food really means. It was already meeting many of the points on our specification; other companies said they were willing to meet them if clients requested them but didn’t seem to have the same commitment.