

Case Study



Helping Public Service Fleets

Making public sector fleets more efficient isn't easy – with so many types of vehicles performing such diverse roles and with public budgets getting tighter – it's a totally different ball game to a conventional freight fleet. The challenge is to identify and make the changes that have the greatest potential impact. Find out how Gedling Borough Council has used ECO Stars to help shape its fleet strategy.



Located on the northern edge of Nottingham, Gedling Borough Council serves almost 112,000 people. The total Council fleet of 86 vehicles is based in Arnold, and made up of a wide variety of vehicle types including large goods vehicles, light commercial vehicles and small vans.

Together they cover a vast array of activities ranging from waste management, parks, street cleansing, car park checking and public protection. This mix is fairly typical of the public sector but the fragmented make-up of the fleet presents a challenge for effective fleet management.

Joining ECO Stars

Gedling Borough Council was one of the founder members of the ECO Stars Scheme in Nottingham, joining in February 2012. They supplied a full fleet listing to the ECO Stars team – this was followed with an on-site visit to discuss their fleet and fuel management practices to complete the application form. Each individual vehicle was assessed along with the overall fleet management operation – the result was a three star rating.

Transport Services Manager Mark Hurst said, "We didn't expect the top rating, but a three star award is really very good for a public sector fleet as our vehicles stay in service longer than typical commercial fleets as our annual mileage is far lower. We felt it was important to have an accurate assessment of our fleet so we could plan to make realistic changes."

ECO Stars - What is it?

The *free* ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme recognises and advises any business that operates a fleet of vehicles – from heavy goods, buses, coaches or vans to improve efficiency and reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Industry experts rate vehicles and overall fleet management performance - both operational and environmental – and award members an ECO Stars rating between 1 and 5.

Each member receives a tailored Road Map – an action plan designed to help members progress to higher rating levels by improving their fleet profile through key measures including fuel management, developing driver skills, vehicle specification and maintenance, performance monitoring and use of IT support systems.

The ECO Stars scheme is managed by transport consultants, Transport & Travel Research Ltd www.ttr-ltd.com

The Road Map

As part of Gedling Borough Council's Road Map, the ECO Stars team recommended key measures for the Council to concentrate their resources on:

- **Vehicle Replacement** - Consider replacing older vehicles within the fleet as budgets allow and look in particular at low / zero emission vehicles
- **Measure driver mpg** - the ECO Stars team encouraged the Council to capture the data to measure when appropriate
- **Driver training** - Continue to support drivers with the driver CPC periodic training

Mark Hurst said, "Our Road Map was spot on. Most of the recommendations matched initiatives we were already considering, and pointed us in the direction of choosing increasingly carbon neutral vehicles."

Fleet Replacement

Gedling Borough Council used the Road Map when forming their fleet strategy and developing a systematic vehicle replacement programme, when budgets allow, rather than retro-fitting existing vehicles. Several older vehicles in the fleet have already been replaced, and as a result of investigating the low and zero emission options, and as recommended by ECO Stars, the new vehicles include:

- 2 refuse vehicles with electric bin lifts - which improve mpg
- 1 electric van - with a recharging point on site

It is intended to continue replacing older vehicles - two further refuse vehicles with electric bin lifts are planned imminently and next on the replacement agenda are vehicles that have been in service for more than 5 years. Gedling Borough Council's ultimate target is to replace the entire refuse fleet over the next 3 - 4 years ensuring all vehicles have electric bin lifts.



Fuel Efficiency

One of the initiatives that has followed from ECO Stars is the purchase of a new 60,000 litre fuel tank to supply fuel to the fleet. This, in addition to the new vehicles, has led to an 8.5% cost saving on fuel in comparison to the first four months of the previous year.

The varied nature of the fleet composition has focused the Council's efforts on those vehicles where the greatest improvements could be achieved, and there are plans to collect data to further analyse cost savings at vehicle level, particularly their new electric van.

Another of the recommendations was to continue driver training – this has been maintained with all staff that drive Council vehicles undergoing "Smarter Driver Training". This type of training has been proven to save up to 15% on fuel costs.

Conclusions

The improvements recommended through the ECO Stars scheme have contributed to both financial and environmental improvements to the Council's fleet.

Mark Hurst said, "One of the key attractions has been the ability to tap into the expert knowledge of the ECO Stars assessors. But the single biggest benefit is that ECO Stars can help justify vehicle fleet improvements – and that is something every public sector fleet manager should be interested in!"

"The scheme helps to justify improvements and purchases of new vehicles"

Mark Hurst, Transport Services Manager

Interested?

It couldn't be easier!

To join ECO Stars

call: 01543 416 416

email: ecostars@ttr-ltd.com

Gedling Borough Council is a member of Nottingham ECO Stars which is being delivered as part of the Nottingham Urban Area's successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme helping to establish Nottingham as an exemplar for integrated sustainable transport. For further details visit: www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/lsfprojects.