



## SECTION 4

### Towards sustainable services

Guide for services and paths  
to improvement for:

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

# Sustainable Development at the service level

**The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) established Sustainable Development as a statutory duty within the Best Value regime.** The Best Value regime requires all local authorities to continuously improve their performance and secure services of the highest quality at a cost that is acceptable to their local communities. **Sustainable development is an integral part of local authorities' efforts to deliver Best Value.**

*'A local authority which secures Best Value will be able to demonstrate a contribution to sustainable development — consideration of the social, economic and environmental impacts of activities and decisions both in the shorter and longer term.'*

As well as being a corporate aim, sustainable development should be part of every service's plans and operations. This chapter aims to answer the question **"what would a sustainable development approach to climate change and energy look like?"**

*As Chapter 7 of the Best Value guidance states, "2. Contributing to the achievement of sustainable development (should be) reflected in the authority's objectives and highlighted in all strategies and plans at corporate and service level"*

This chapter provides a **self-assessment questionnaire** outlining **Paths to Improvement**. This is designed to enable you to **assess your current position**. It also sets a framework within which you may, step by step, progressively engage more fully with sustainable development.

On the right hand side of each 'Paths to Improvement' table are three columns headed **'Policy'**, **'Being Implemented'**, and **'Outcomes'**. These stages enable the authority to assess whether they have reached the stage of policy; or progressed to implementation; or have moved on to reach outcomes.

The stages are defined below:

<b>Policy</b>	The Council has considered the topic, then adopted a policy to address it. There is a <b>commitment and decision to seek change and improvement</b> ; and outcomes are being set.
<b>Being Implemented</b>	The Council is <b>implementing policy</b> ; this is <b>reflected in financial allocations</b> ; revenue and/or capital allocations; plans and strategies for the topic; agreement with relevant partner agencies; staff responsibilities and job descriptions. <b>Resources and procedures are in place</b> to secure change and improvement.
<b>Outcomes</b>	The outcomes of the policy are being measured, and there are measurable deliverables. Change and improvement is being achieved, and is being monitored and reported.

**It must be stressed that the process of continuous improvement is not prescriptive:**

- **If this chapter does not pose the right questions for you please adapt the questionnaire accordingly.** Many local authorities have done this, to great effect.
- **It is also not intended that the questionnaire should be used solely as a checklist with 'yes' or 'no' answers.** Please add detail, such as – what evidence do you have to show that policy is being implemented? Who is responsible for this?



# Towards sustainable services: Climate Change and Energy

**Climate change and energy are priorities for sustainable development.** They have significant impacts on, and can be influenced by, local government. A direct role in energy matters may seem novel for local authorities in Scotland, though they played a major part in initiating municipal gas and electricity production prior to nationalisation.

Most energy is used in the **construction and use of buildings**, and in **transport**. Local authorities influence energy production through their **planning and purchasing** policies; and they influence its use through the choice of fuels, and energy management and efficiency. There may be potential for renewable energy, combined heat and power, and district heating, in urban areas; if so, experience from

elsewhere in Northern Europe is that local authority involvement will be crucial. **Councils are the key agency in tackling fuel poverty.**

In seeking to mitigate climate change, councils should set out to manage and reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions; they also influence energy use (and therefore emissions) throughout their areas through transport and planning policies, and building control. It is also important to acknowledge that climate change is taking place, increasing the probability of extreme weather events. This **requires a programme of adaptation**, and strengthens the need, amongst other matters, for flood prevention and emergency planning measures.

Paths to improvement include:	Policy	Being Implemented	Outcomes
Is there an <b>climate change and energy strategy and action plan</b> , setting the framework for improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation), and taking steps to respond to likely future climate change impacts (adaptation)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a <b>Greenhouse Gas or Carbon Management Programme</b> in place to manage and implement cost-effective measures to reduce greenhouse gas / CO2 emissions produced directly by the Council's buildings and transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are improvements in the housing stock being secured through implementation of the <b>Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)</b> or other energy saving initiatives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a <b>strategy to eliminate fuel poverty</b> , with available resources targeted on vulnerable households?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is progress being made on the Warm Deal and Central Heating Programmes, and reflected in <b>improved NHERs</b> (National Home Energy Ratings)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do <b>planning policies and decisions</b> take explicit account of the need to address climate change mitigation and adaptation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there <b>planning policies to reduce energy use</b> , through the location, massing, form, orientation and landscaping of development?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are <b>policies for transport</b> also directed to reduce energy use and emissions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do planning policies and economic development encourage development and implementation of <b>community energy projects, micro-generation and low carbon or carbon neutral, projects</b> ? Does monitoring aim to ensure success can be replicated and lessons learned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Do flood risk assessment and emergency planning</b> take full account of climate change; and are resources allocated, and hard and soft engineering works implemented, to prepare for the risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Paths to improvement include:	Policy	Being Implemented	Outcomes
Is action being taken to raise <b>awareness of climate change</b> and the need for mitigation and adaptation, within the Council, with community plan partners and the wider public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there ' <b>citizen support</b> ' <b>systems</b> in place, in conjunction with community planning partners including the NHS and emergency services, to minimise the adverse effects of severe weather events, including flooding, storms and land-slips?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
See also Green Jobs, Renewables and opportunities from climate change adaptation (under economic development)			

## Case Study: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar & Taigh Blath TEAS

The **Council assisted the formation of a local community energy enterprise** (Taigh Blath, which is Gaelic for “warm house”) to deliver the Central Heating Programme and the Warm Deal package. **It also established The Energy Advice Service** (TEAS, which is Gaelic for “hot”) to deliver energy advice to households in the Western Isles. The Council also financially supports Taigh Blath to undertake energy efficiency works to houses. These projects work together with Scottish and Southern Energy plc and other energy companies to assist as many households as possible. Taigh Blath has recently secured the contract with EAGA to be local agents for the new Central Heating scheme for the 80+ funded by the Scottish Government. The total number of houses benefiting from this arms length or partnership working over the two years which are the subject of this report is 850 for Warm Deal and 98 under the Central Heating programme, with a further 600 expressions of interest being received.

*[Source: Scottish Government — HECA Progress Report to Scottish Parliament]*



This chapter is part of the **Sustainable Scotland Network's Best Value & Sustainable Development Toolkit**. To view the complete toolkit, go to [www.sustainable-scotland.net/bestvalue](http://www.sustainable-scotland.net/bestvalue)