



## SECTION 4

### Towards sustainable services

Guide for services and paths  
to improvement for:

**ECONOMIC**

**DEVELOPMENT**

# 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 economic development/business 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: Economic Development

Economic development activity by councils, often in conjunction with the Enterprise networks and, for much of Scotland, with European Structural Funds, has underpinned economic renewal in Scotland. The business case for support being conducted on a basis which **combines securing economic, social and environmental benefits** includes:

- Assisting compliance with regulations on **avoiding discrimination** and damage to the environment;
- Direct benefits through **resource efficiency** savings and supporting the local labour market;
- Improving the quality, image and **marketing potential** of businesses and of their products and services; and
- Developing the potential of **environmental goods and services** (themselves a growth sector).

Paths to improvement include:	Policy	Being Implemented	Outcomes
Is <b>major economic development being located near to public transport</b> and accessible to disadvantaged communities, using where practicable previously developed land and existing infrastructure capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is new and expanding economic development linked to <b>training provision and capacity building in local communities</b> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are <b>social economy organisations</b> supported, particularly in work with excluded groups, and in developing the intermediate labour market; and is the council looking for these organisations to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it ensured that <b>environmental improvements also contribute economic benefits</b> (jobs and training opportunities) and are socially relevant (with the support or involvement of local communities) and accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there, in conjunction with the Enterprise networks, action in support of the Scottish Government's <b>Green Jobs Strategy</b> , encouraging the growth of environmental goods and services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the potential identified, and the development assisted, for <b>renewable energy resources</b> , including planning policies, business development assistance and purchasing 'green' electricity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are proposals for ' <b>industrial ecology/symbiosis</b> ' supported, where the 'waste' – i.e. unwanted outcome – from one enterprise can be used as a resource for a neighbouring one?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is support to <b>businesses in waste minimisation</b> , resource efficiency (including use of recycled or reused materials), and improving access (including equal opportunities) provided or made accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the economic opportunities for employment and provision of <b>specialist services arising from climate change mitigation and adaptation</b> being identified and supported?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
See also support for town and city centres (under land use planning)			
See also support for market in reuse and recycling (under waste)			
See also sustainable construction (under procurement)			



## Case Study: Business Environment Partnership

Working with SMEs **to tackle resource efficiency has been championed by the Business Environment Partnership (BEP)**. It has grown from an initiative started within Midlothian Enterprise Trust to cover first the Lothian Councils and now from **North-East Scotland to the Borders**. It is supported by many Councils, and partners include Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Water, SEPA and the East of Scotland European Partnership. For example, in West Lothian, BEP employs a dedicated Business Environmental Adviser who works closely with Economic Development staff. A key role for the Adviser is to manage the West Lothian Waste Minimisation and Environmental Management Initiative that assists small companies to become more competitive and realise the **commercial benefits of improved environmental management**. Since 1998 the BEP has:

- Assisted 887 companies and carried out 1233 projects for them covering a wide variety of topics and enabling them to make **cost savings, reduce risks, and improve competitive advantage**;
- Identified £12.25m cost savings per annum and over £42m of new sales opportunities through the **development of products and services with associated environmental benefits** and additional employment;
- Created 40 '**green**' jobs, with many more safeguarded;
- Diverted 40,600 t/yr **waste from landfill**; and reduced **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** by 15,100 t/yr;
- Helped 70 companies gain accreditation to **ISO14001** Energy Management Systems
- Provided an Environmental Placement Programme for 411 students to work with host companies to assist with the implementation of environmental recommendations; and
- Promoted the Initiative at many levels locally and nationally, so that the scheme has a wider geographic coverage, and encouraged other agencies to support similar and complementary services.

*[Sources: Audit Scotland; ESEP; BEP (data January 2006)]*



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)