



SECTION 4

Towards sustainable services

Guide for services and paths
to improvement for:

**LEISURE, SPORT,
RECREATION AND
CULTURE**

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 leisure/sport/recreation/culture 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:

Policy	The Council has considered the topic, then adopted a policy to address it. There is a commitment and decision to seek change and improvement ; and outcomes are being set.
Being Implemented	The Council is implementing policy ; this is reflected in financial allocations ; revenue and/or capital allocations; plans and strategies for the topic; agreement with relevant partner agencies; staff responsibilities and job descriptions. Resources and procedures are in place to secure change and improvement.
Outcomes	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: Leisure, sport, recreation and culture

Sustainable development is ultimately about securing quality of life now and for the future. Local authorities play a key role in delivering opportunities for leisure, sport, recreation and culture which should be readily available to all. In all these activities there is potential for both passive and active roles. For some what may be critical is the quiet enjoyment of **locally accessible greenspace**; for others it may be being able to take part in much more energetic activities such as mountain biking; for yet others it may be taking part in, or watching, a festival or major event.

Why these activities are relevant to sustainable development is that the way in which they are provided

and undertaken can contribute in terms of economic, health, social and environmental benefits. They:

- Generate and **sustain jobs and economic activity** both directly and through the multiplier effect;
- Contribute to **physical and mental health**, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices;
- Encourage **participation** and strengthen communities of interest; and
- **Value environmental resources**, on which they depend, and should aim to be conducted in ways which reduce resource use and secure environmental enhancement and protection.

Paths to improvement include:	Policy	Being Implemented	Outcomes
Are places for formal and informal enjoyment and recreation provided, including investing in local parks and open spaces , and safeguarding and enhancing a network of greenspaces and other public places?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a strategy for the management and maintenance of school grounds, parks and open spaces, meeting the needs of users while having regard for reducing use of energy and chemicals , and safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a network of paths being developed and enhanced for walking and cycling, for recreation and journeys to schools, shops and work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are facilities provided and participation encouraged in sport and active leisure pursuits for both adults and children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are a range of leisure and recreation facilities provided, used and valued, which are accessible to all by public transport , compatible with their neighbourhoods, and meet the needs, aspirations and lifestyles of all sections of the community including toddlers, young people and the elderly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it ensured that tourism, sports facilities, visitor management, and major events and festivals contribute to the local economy , and do so in ways which respect local communities and protect, enhance and aid valuing the local and global environment? (i.e. a strategy for Sustainable Event Management)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is support provided for the protection, restoration, enhancement and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage , and promotion of the arts and crafts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is support provided for volunteering opportunities and community involvement , including in managing and shaping the future of the local area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
See also accessibility and location of major development (under land use planning)			
See also estate management (under resource management)			

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