



SECTION 4

Towards sustainable services

Guide for services and paths
to improvement for:

LAND USE

PLANNING

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 planning 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: Land Use Planning

Scottish Ministers expect the planning system to link principles and actions to enable sustainable development (SPP1, 2002). This is being further strengthened in the current reform of planning in which there will be an explicit requirement for the revitalised development plans at the heart of the modernised planning system to be prepared with due regard to the principles of sustainable development. **Enabling sustainable development requires co-ordinated action, combining economic competitiveness, and social and environmental justice, with environmental quality.** Planning decisions should favour the most sustainable option, promoting development that safeguards and enhances the long-term needs of the economy, society and the environment.

Land use planning is a major instrument in delivering sustainable development. The extent, location and nature of development all have a major influence on **resource use, transport requirements,** and on **enabling economic development.** Planning has a major role in **tackling social, economic and**

environmental disadvantage. It is also one of the major tools, together with environmental legislation, in protecting and enhancing the environment. These aims will be strengthened the more it is made easier for **people to get involved in planning,** and help to shape the future of their communities

The key, in a plan led system, is to embed sustainable development as the focus of the Development Plan. This should be complemented by setting criteria based on the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development for development control and to guide the inevitable departures from the plan which arise. Potential criteria are suggested in the Paths to Improvement below. There are special opportunities for **planning to encourage innovative low impact developments,** and to demonstrate best practice. In terms of Best Value, plans should also clarify policy on developer contributions: this should encourage proposals to use existing infrastructure capacity, or otherwise contribute to public costs.

Paths to improvement include:	Policy	Being Implemented	Outcomes
Is sustainable development embedded as the focus of the Development Plan, with sustainable development criteria for master plans, development control and departures from the plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is guidance provided on sustainable development in the development plan or as supplementary planning guidance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there local guidance for developers and planning applicants to encourage or require sustainable design in master plans and planning applications?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an explicit and equitable policy for developer contributions, so that developers bear a reasonable share of the costs which developments impose?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is priority given to renewal in urban and rural areas, and supporting economic developments which are accessible to and will benefit disadvantaged communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there sequential tests to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support regeneration through a preference for the re-use of previously developed land and utilising existing infrastructure and services; ● Give preference to major retail development being in or adjacent to town centres; and ● Guide development with the greatest transport generation to the most accessible sites? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Paths to improvement include:	Policy	Being Implemented	Outcomes
Do planning policies achieve accessibility , by locating major development near to, or accessible to, fixed public transport and to related land uses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do planning policies and their implementation locate housing development near or accessible to school capacity, community facilities, public transport provision and shops?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is support being provided, including for regeneration where appropriate, to enable town and city centres to meet the needs of all sections of society ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is protection, enhancement and management for environmental resources (both the natural and built environment, including biodiversity) being provided, including support for green networks/corridors and greenspaces ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is support provided to enable developments to take place which feature innovative low impact, or low carbon and carbon neutral development ; renewable energy, micro-generation, energy efficiency, reducing waste; and support public transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do development plans adequately reflect 'green' policies , such as the National Waste Plan (and supporting Area Waste Plans)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
See also contributing to travel reduction (under transport)			
See also public participation (under environment)			
See also climate change (under climate change and energy)			

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