

Consistent Climate Change Approaches for Scottish Local Authorities Outcomes, Indicators and Methodologies

Sustainable Scotland Network

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Top Line Factors to Keep In Mind

- Latest climate change science and IPCC assessments indicate that global greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by 50% by 2050, and by at least 80% by 2050 in rich countries such as the UK, if we are to stand a 'reasonable' chance of avoiding a global 2C rise in temperatures and associated 'dangerous' climate change.
- The Scottish Climate Change Bill and the UK Climate Change Act have as their target an 80% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Scottish Bill also proposes a 50% cut by 2030, and the UK Climate Change Committee recently proposed to the UK Government a target of 34% by 2020.
- The ecological footprint of Scotland shows that we are living a 'three planet lifestyle', whereby we are consuming three times as many resources as can be supported sustainably by the planet, if everyone were to be given a fair share.
- Model predictions, and actual scientific readings, indicate that climate change is already with us, and that a certain amount of increased climate change is inevitable due to past and current emissions. Scotland therefore needs to understand climate change scenarios and take action to adapt appropriately, if we are to avoid or reduce the severe negative impacts of these changes.
- All of Scotland's local authorities are signatories to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration.

1. Introduction

This paper is informed by both the most recent national guidance on Single Outcome Agreements (issued by the Improvement Service on 31st October 2008¹) and by the growing clarity and convergence of approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation within local authorities, across the UK and internationally. It was developed by the Sustainable Scotland Network, working with members of the COSLA Climate Change Officer Support Group, notably COSLA, Scottish Government and Improvement Service officers. The paper received the support of the COSLA Climate Change Task Group at its meeting on 6th February 2009.

The objective of the paper is to set the climate change agenda for Scottish local authorities within the context of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs), with the aspiration of aligning both processes and orientating them towards consistent outcomes, indicators and methodologies.

2. Climate Change Priorities and Single Outcome Agreements

In summary, the priorities for local authorities on climate change are considered to be:

- Reducing emissions, from both the local authority activities and the local authority area.
- Adapting to the unavoidable impacts of a changing climate, whereby the impacts of climate change for local authorities and their communities are better understood and addressed.
- Communications and community leadership - improving partnership working, community understanding and community action.

This climate change agenda fits well with the outcomes focus of Single Outcome Agreements, as well as the cross-sector nature of Community Planning Partnerships. Reducing emissions and adapting

¹ 'Single Outcome Agreements: Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships', Improvement Service, 31st October 2008

well to climate change are both outcomes that could be adopted into SOA processes, and the communications/community leadership aspect fits well with the SOAs being regarded as a “partnership with the people and communities whose quality of life and opportunity²” SOA signatories aim to support.

3. SOA Structure and Key Principles

In summary, the national guidance on SOAs for Community Planning Partnerships outlines that:

- SOAs must: have a strategic focus; be about actual outcomes; be evidence-based; be capable of delivery; promote continuous improvement.
- A Single Outcome Agreement is the means by which Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) agree their strategic priorities for their local area and express those priorities as outcomes to be delivered by the partners, either individually or jointly, while showing how those outcomes should contribute to the Scottish Government’s relevant National Outcomes.
- SOAs should be informed by an ‘Area Profile’ which provides “an integrated profile of the social, economic and environmental conditions of the area”. This area profile should be the basis for identifying and agreeing the SOA local outcomes.
- Each local outcome should be capable of being linked to one or more of the National Outcomes, although they may also contain purely local priorities as well as issues that are more directly relevant to the Scottish Government’s Purpose Targets.
- The number of local outcomes should be meaningful and manageable, reflecting the strategic priorities drawn from the evidence in the Area Profile. They should be actual outcomes, focusing on people’s quality of life and opportunities, and on the supporting social, economic or environmental conditions. Each local outcome should be supported by one or more robust and measurable indicators.
- SOAs can also raise ‘asks’, which are requests made by a Council or CPP to the Scottish Government for it to take action to support the delivery of local outcomes.
- The SOA should be a strategic document, with more detailed performance management information lying ‘below the waterline’.

4. Relating the Climate Change Agenda to SOA Structures and Principles

4a. Area Profiles

Area profiles would benefit from including information both on greenhouse gas emissions and local climate impacts, as well as wider social, economic and environmental trends, in order to inform well-managed approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation. From a climate change perspective, area profiles would benefit from including:

On climate change emissions:

- The ‘production-based’ CO₂ emissions of the area, drawn from the AEA data produced for DEFRA. These data are available on a comparable basis for 2005 and 2006, with the 2007 figures expected to be published in autumn 2009. This data is disaggregated from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, which is used for UK reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/galocalghg.htm>.
- The Resources and Energy Analysis Programme (REAP) ‘consumption-based’ greenhouse gas (GHG/CO₂e) and carbon (CO₂) footprint assessments available from the Stockholm Environmental Institute in York (SEI-Y). This data³ shows the footprint associated with what people who live in a local authority area buy and use. REAP provides both overall ecological footprint calculations (which help link local authority ecological footprints to the National Indicator on ‘reducing Scotland’s ecological footprint’) and greenhouse gas/carbon footprints (as greenhouse gas emissions form a substantial part of an ecological footprint calculation). The ecological footprint and related greenhouse gas emissions are calculated from a consumption perspective. This means that the impact of any good or service is allocated to

² Point 10 of the SOA ‘Key Message’ guidance issued by the Improvement Service on 31st Oct 2008

³ The most recent results are based on 2004 data and new results based on 2006 data are expected to be released in May 2009. SEI plans to produce annual updates with no more than a three year time lag in data.

the person and place where it is consumed. REAP data provides total Greenhouse Gas and CO2 data, as well as wider ecological resource impacts. See: <http://resource-accounting.org.uk/downloads/scotland>.

- The bottom-up, organisation-focused, emissions inventory, baseline and trends of the local authority/CPP partners' 'own estate' emissions. Much of this is available from work undertaken through public sector Environmental Management Systems, work with The Carbon Trust (i.e. the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme). Local authorities and CPPs could also make use of the likes of the Triple Bottom Line methodology and tool available from the Centre for Sustainability Accounting (CenSA) which was profiled at the SSN Conference 2008 (see Dr. John Barrett's SSN Conference presentation, available at <http://www.sustainable-scotland.net/conference2008/documents/JohnBarrett.pdf>). (note: *Guidance on own-organisation inventory boundaries and reporting guidelines needs to be issued in order to ensure consistent and accountable approaches. Links to the CRC, the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and the draft ICLEI local authority GHG Inventory Guidance also needs to be made here*).

On climate change impacts:

- A Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP), which identifies past and current weather impacts, the effect of these on service provision and the local community, and expected impacts and vulnerabilities due to climate change predictions. LCLIPs are being developed by some Scottish local authorities, with support from the Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership and the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP). The roll-out of LCLIPs is expected to be supported by the Scottish Government in 2009, including the publication of LCLIPs Guidance and peer-learning processes. UKCIP tools (notably the forthcoming UK Climate Projections) will add quality to the LCLIPs and scenario planning. More information on LCLIPs is available on the UKCIP website at http://www.ukcip.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=278&Itemid=378.

Useful 'contributory information' in Area Profiles could include:

- Population trends
- Economic development trends
- Housing/household trends
- Transport/travel/mobility trends
- Energy supply and demand trends
- Business development trends, including manufacturing, retail, service sector etc.
- Biodiversity, habitat, green space and local environmental quality conditions and trends, etc

These trends could be used to inform scenario planning using both mitigation and adaptation planning methodologies and tools, primarily through the use of REAP for area-wide emissions, and LCLIPs and UKCIP tools for adaptation.

4b. Defining Local Area Climate Change Outcomes Within SOAs

In order to address the climate change agenda strategically within a Single Outcome Agreement it is proposed that two long-term climate change outcomes could be specified in SOAs. These address both the greenhouse gas emissions reduction agenda and the climate change adaptation agenda. The proposed outcomes are:

- **To reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the local authority area.**
 - *This Outcome links robustly to the Purpose Targets on Sustainability, the National Outcomes 14, 12 and 10, the national indicator 32 on ecological footprint and the proposed local indicator on ecological/carbon footprint identified by the Improvement Service.*
 - *This outcome should also incorporate and benefit from Community Planning Partners' work on measuring, stabilising and reducing their own organisation's 'direct' emissions – from estates and service provision.*

- *This outcome would be based on, and would allow reporting of, the AEA and SEI-Y/REAP local emissions profiles that all local authorities have free access to. Note also that there is scope to bring the REAP, AEA and GRIP (available from Tyndall Centre/Carbon Captured) approaches together into an integrated methodology distinct to the Scottish local government/CPP context (as a follow-through on the March workshop on consistent area wide emissions profiles⁴). Using REAP would also allow local authorities to include an outcome on 'reducing our ecological footprint'.*
- **To ensure that the local authority area and its Community Planning Partners are prepared for and adapt well to climate change scenarios and expected climate impacts.**
 - *This outcome relates closely to National Outcomes 10 and 12, and can also be shown to relate to National Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 15.*
 - *In England, with the development of National Indicator 188, this adaptation agenda has been structured into a 'process indicator' whereby local authorities and CPPs can report on progress in becoming well-adapting organisations and communities. In Scotland this could be taken forward through the use of qualitative outputs, indicators and targets.*

4c. Intermediate Outcomes

It would be feasible to develop near-term and/or sector/service specific 'intermediate targets' based on the aforementioned emissions and adaptation outcomes. These could include, for example, near term targets to reduce emissions by XX% by 2020/2030, or sector/service targets of, for example, reducing emissions by XX% by 20XX within the housing/transport/waste sector, or from parts of the local authority/CPP estate (i.e. schools emissions).

It would also be feasible to set process intermediate outcomes on adaptation, for example, 'to have developed an adaptation strategy and action plan by 20XX', or 'the organisation will reach X level on an adaptation preparedness scale (0-5) by 20XX' (with the potential to draw on the guidance on NI188 in England).

5. 'Below The Waterline' Information – Outputs, Indicators and Targets

Local authorities are advised not to include Outputs in their SOAs. However, there is potential to define outputs that would support the outcomes described above and enable local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships to focus on more specific climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

5a. Outputs

Emissions/Footprint Outputs

Area-wide emissions outputs could be listed in relation to component parts of the emissions profile or organisational inventories, whereby outputs could be actions/achievements in relation to housing/built environment, transport, energy supply, waste management, food consumption etc. These outputs could be informed by the scenarios planning available through use of the REAP. If the local authority or CPP has not yet undertaken scenario planning an interim approach would be to align strategies, plans and programmes to the component parts of the footprint analysis – i.e. integrating outputs on reducing the housing footprint with the local authority housing/land-use strategies and plans, linking output reductions in transport footprint to local or regional transport strategies – and illustrating how actions in these thematic strategies, plans and programmes contribute to the emissions/footprint outputs and outcome.

Own Estate/Service Emissions Outputs

Outputs in this area could be extracted from the EMS or Carbon Trust work which produced Carbon Reduction Strategies for local authorities and some CPP partners. SOA signatories could also start to make use of methodologies and tools such as the Triple Bottom Line from SEI-Y/CenSA to analyse, plan and report own-organisation emissions (as mentioned above). This could include things like action plans on travel related emissions reduction, energy efficiency measures, green procurement strategies, and actions and initiatives to encourage behaviour change amongst staff.

⁴ See report on SDC/IS hosted workshop, March 2008: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/scotland-consistent-emissions-reporting-workshop.html>

Adaptation Outputs

Outputs on adaptation could include such things as strategies, plans and projects on flooding, reducing risk in the built environment, risk management strategies and plans drawn from the LCLIP where vulnerability to extreme weather events should be detailed. Emergency/Contingency Planning arrangements could also be identified as adaptation outputs. Also, work by Planners to integrate climate change adaptation in to Development and Local Plans would be legitimate outputs.

5b. Indicators and Targets

Emissions Indicators and Targets

Area wide indicators and targets could be defined through scenario planning exercises, whereby indicators and targets could be developed relating to, for example, the local housing strategy, the structure plan, the local/regional transport strategy, local food strategies etc. The REAP tool allows local authorities and CPPs to investigate the current state of the area footprint and emissions, and to assess the impact of policy interventions through which robust, measurable and achievable indicators and targets could be identified and agreed.

Own estate indicators and targets could be defined, and in many cases have been defined, in the Environmental Management Systems or the Carbon Reduction Implementation Plans developed with The Carbon Trust. These could include indicators and targets relating to different parts of the local authority/CPP estate and services, for example an indicator and targets in relation to corporate buildings, schools, waste services, commuting, fleet, procurement, specific departments etc. Indicators and targets could also be set for such things as renewable energy supply, use of low carbon technologies, increased active travel, etc. It would be up to the individual local authority or CPP partner to develop their own indicators and targets as appropriate to their circumstances and aspirations. Through time, it could be possible to compare indicators and targets and have this better informed by national targets and indicators.

(Note – obviously, more work will be needed at national and local level to link indicators and targets to the overall outcome specified in the SOA and incorporated in national policy and legislation. Many SSN members are keen to learn how this can be done, so that action on local ‘sub-targets’ - say on housing, transport, procurement etc - can be related to overall carbon/footprint reduction outcomes.)

Adaptation Indicators and Targets

Currently, the adoption of the English NI188 five-step process indicator and ‘targets’ could be the most effective approach. This is a process-orientated, management-systems approach which guides local authorities and CPPs through a process from ‘getting started’ to ‘implementation, monitoring and continuous review’. See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localgovindicators/documents/ni188-guidance-2008.pdf> for more information. Targets and indicators could be set in line with progress through the five-step process.

6. Additional ‘Below the Waterline’ Activities to Support Local Outcomes

Local authorities and CPPs will still need to maintain work on some or all of the following, as legitimate ‘contributory’ activities to their SOAs:

- Scotland’s Climate Change Declaration. In many respects, the Declaration can be viewed as a framework which brings together a wide selection of climate change relevant activities relating to both mitigation and adaptation. Reporting on the Declaration would be consistent with, and of direct benefit to reporting on the ‘top-line’ outcomes, indicators and targets in the SOA.
- Own estate emissions and service related emissions – in line with Carbon Trust programmes, public sector environmental management systems and CRC requirements.
- Engagement in scenario planning, policy analysis and implementation of footprint reduction plans using REAP as part of the Local Footprints Project.
- LCLIPs development and associated impact risk management and climate change adaptation strategy development.

- Effective communications, local leadership and partnership working on climate change.
- SEA applied to all strategies, plans and programmes.

7. SOA 'Asks'

As part of the phase one SOAs in 2008, councils made a 'strategic ask' requesting that the Scottish Government 'work with local government in developing the capacity of councils' Community Planning partners to address the challenges of climate change'. CPPs will be expecting follow up on this strategic ask.

To help support the use of consistent local climate change outcomes, local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships could include the following asks within their SOAs in 2009:

- To continue and enhance political, technical and financial support and investment in the REAP-based footprint methodology, and the national support service to help local authorities and CPPs to make full use of the REAP scenario planning facility.
- To ensure that DEFRA continues to commission consistent, yearly Regional and Local CO2 Estimates, in order to allow Scottish local authorities to report and make use of these data-sets.
- To continue and enhance political, technical and financial support for the SCCIP and the UKCIP, in order to support the development and use of 32 Local Climate Impacts Profiles.

8. Development Priorities to Support the Approach Outlined in This Briefing

Both the Single Outcome Agreements process and the methodologies for measuring and managing climate change emissions and impacts are evolving. Therefore, it is clear that not everything is fully understood or achievable, and there are many developments that require attention over the next year or so. These developments include, amongst others:

- Own Estate Emissions – on-going work on boundaries, conversion factors, support services, interface with CRC and EMS, training and capacity building
- Area-wide Emissions – bringing AEA, REAP and GRIP methodologies and tools together into one user-friendly tool or toolkit, provision of an enhanced scenario and policy analysis support service, enhanced training/capacity building. SSN is well placed with tool providers to take this work forward, in partnership with key national stakeholders.
- Adaptation – Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) roll-out and support, and adaptation strategy/action plan development, as part of the Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SCCIP) forward plan.
- Communications/Leadership – reporting of climate change within SOA reports, linked to information gathered as part of Scotland's Climate Change Declaration processes/commitments, reported effectively to the community.
- Improved climate change, data management and scenario planning capacity and training within local authorities and CPPs.

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