

SSN Presentation

Embedding sustainability in Falkirk Council and Use of the Best Value toolkit in that process

**Best Value & Sustainable Development in Falkirk:
Use of the Toolkit & Other Tools**



Presentation by Brenda Roddy, Sustainable Development Officer
Sustainable Scotland Network
Thursday 13th September 2007

Introduction & Summary

- Processes over last 2 years
- Embedding sustainability
- Fragmented to corporate & strategic approach
- Senior manager training
- Service sustainability teams
- Toolkit – adaptation & uses
- Using audit outputs
- The future



1. Introduction & Summary

- Presentation looks at process that we've gone through over last 2 years
- How we've tried to embed sustainability in ALL areas of Falkirk Council operations
- Move from fragmented to corporate and strategic approach
- Senior manager training generated service sustainability teams as delivery mechanisms
- Toolkit came along – provided an opportunity to spot strengths and weaknesses
- Using outputs of the audit to inform future sustainability works
- The 2 processes feed off each other



How Embedded was Sustainability to Begin with at Falkirk?

2 key mechanisms for delivering SD:

- 1997 - Corporate sustainability group established
Annual capital budget of £100K
- 1998 – Sustainability strategy
Environmental policy officer



2. How Embedded was Sustainability to Begin with at Falkirk?

2 key mechanisms for delivering sustainable development

- 1997 - **Corporate sustainability group** was established & has run continuously
Has annual capital budget of £100K
- 1998 - Produced first environmental strategy – onto our 4th
Had an **environmental policy officer** in post for all of that time



Role of Best Value

- Best Value audit focused council's attention
- Realised that SD was now a legal obligation
- Senior managers realised this & it opened many doors
- Audit as an opportunity to meet & exceed our obligations.



3. Role of BV Legislation in Embedding Sustainability

- Best Value audit focused council's attention on ensuring that it met its sustainability obligations
- Council realised that SD was now a legal obligation
- Senior managers realised this and it opened many doors
- Worked with officer leading on Best Value, Keith Allwood, to use run up to the audit as an opportunity to meet and exceed our obligations.



Senior Management Support

- Best Value & sustainability report to CMT
- Directors' support in policy implementation
- Corporate management sustainability training course
- Chief Officer Working Group for 1/2 day training.



4. Senior Management Support

- I gave a presentation to our DMT, updating them on sustainability, the BV duty etc.
- Director was very supportive and suggested we take this to CMT
- Explained the now legal duty of SD, explained that already had substantial corporate commitment to SD but still gaps
- If council wanted to breach the gaps I needed support:
 1. Their support over the next year as I developed policies
 2. Them to come on a sustainability training course.
- They agreed. Chief Exec offered the Chief Officer Working Group for half day training.
- I got together with Keith Allwood to work out how to make the most of the opportunity.

5. Impacts of BV legislation –

- council's attention on ensuring that it met its sustainability obligations
- Council realised that SD was now a legal obligation
- Senior managers realised this and it opened many doors
- Worked with officer leading on Best Value, Keith Allwood, to use run up to the audit as an opportunity to meet and exceed our obligations.



Making the Most of the Opportunity

- More than just a training exercise
- Work out what the services were already doing
- What they could aspire to
- What the limitations were
- What they could realistically achieve



6. Programme Development

- More than just a training exercise
- Needed to work out what the services were already doing
- What they could aspire to
- What the limitations were
- What they could realistically achieve

Starting at the Finishing Point

What do we want them to know by the end of the morning?

- Really understand SD & what it means to their work
- Take credit for what they're already doing
- Clear ideas on what they could do and how
- SMART objectives to deliver through their services



7. Started at finishing point:

- What do we want them to know by the end of the morning?
- Really understand SD and what it means to their work
- Take credit for what they're already doing
- Have clear ideas on what they could do and how they could do it
- Outputs – series of SMART objectives to sign up to and deliver through their services.

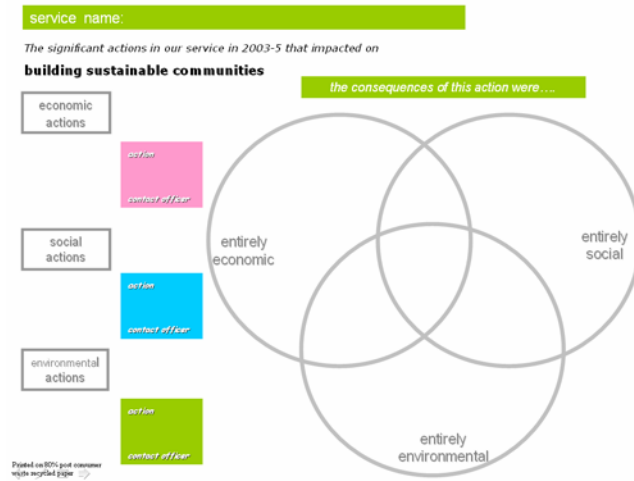
COW Group Training Event

- Presentation – explaining what SD is
- Environmental sense = business sense
- Burst the illusion of tree hugging
- Worked in service teams



8. COW Group Event – ½ day event

- Presentation – explaining what SD is
- Giving examples in other councils, esp. demonstrating that environmental sense = business sense
- Burst the illusion of tree hugging
- Worked in service teams – use photos
- Over course of morning gave them 3 tasks:



9. First – basic audit of existing action

- Based on SOLACE guidance on BV for councils – insert copy of template
- 9 main topics
 - i. building sustainable communities
 - ii. buildings, plans and land use
 - iii. managing the environment and resources
 - iv. sending the right signals about sustainability
- Got them to identify actions that their service was already doing
- Then divided them into social, economic and environmental (to break this idea of only environmental)

Creative ideas for improving our sustainability

Our Service name: _____

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

10. Second – aspirational/ creative list


- Now they realised that significant areas of their work fell into SD anyway and understood how wide ranging it was, they got a creative task.
- Quantity not quality.
- No idea too daft

S M A R T

Service: Financial Services		
1. Objective no. 1	Achieved by (date)	Responsible Officer
Reduce electricity use by 10%	Dec 07	Dougie McGregor
2. Benefits to Falkirk Council, Council Area and Residents:		
Demonstrate commitment to Scottish Climate Change Declaration		
Financial savings etc		
3. Actions to achieve objective 1:		
Establish baseline of Finance's energy use per year		
Establish energy used when building empty		
What help do you need?		

11. Third – distil ideas into SMART objectives

- Got them to pick around 6 ideas that they could develop into action on the ground.
- This was key out put for the day.



Outputs

- 40 senior managers understood SD
- 361 existing sustainable development related actions
- 210 potential sustainable development actions
- 6+ SMART sustainable development objectives



12. Outputs

- By the end of the day we had 40 **senior managers who understood SD** and how it applied to their work
- Identified **361 Sustainable Development related actions** already being carried out by the Council
- Identified **210 potential Sustainable Development actions** that the Council could consider for the future
- Each service produced at least **6 SMART Sustainable Development objectives** for implementation over the next 12 months

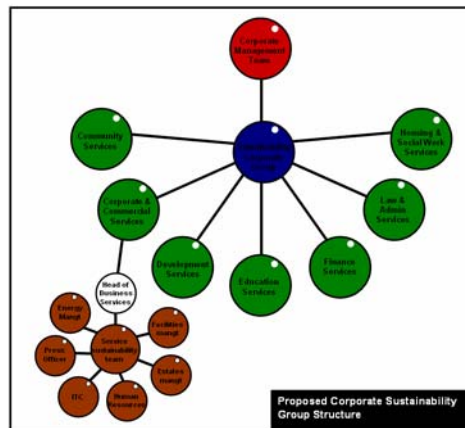
Service Sustainability Teams

- CMT report on COW Group outputs
- Recommended sustainability team in each service
- Lot of ground work refining actions
- Actions went into Sustainable Falkirk Action Plan
- Teams varied greatly
- Team must be led by a head of service



13. The Hard Bit

- That was the easy bit
- As a follow up, I had to do a lot of ground work honing the actions into SMART ones
- The hard bit was developing the ideas into actions that would work on the ground and finding a mechanism for delivering them



14. Service Sustainability Teams

- Put a paper to CMT reporting outputs of the COW event with series of recommendations
- Key one was establishment of sustainability team in each service – supported
- Got Rhona Geisler to write to each director asking them to nominate a team leader and team to deliver
- All 7 services took different approaches but all did respond and were interested
- Each team was shown the list of actions its managers had come up with.
- Did a lot of ground work refining them to ensure they were deliverable
- Team leader took finalized actions to DMT for approval
- Actions went into Sustainable Falkirk Action Plan – approved by CMT and committee
- Teams varied greatly in terms of format, size, ambition of targets, seniority, recruitment etc.
- 18 months on, they have settled into a general format
- Found it essential that team is led by a head of service
- Must be made up of willing volunteers
- Must reflect diversity of the service's remit

15. Corporate Working Group

- Service sust teams is mechanism to embedding and delivering SD throughout the council at operational level.
- Still have corporate working group to act at strategic & corporate level
- Establishment of SSTs called for revision of corporate group
- Potential model as follows: - **insert model**
- Offers communication lines from top of organization to bottom and vice versa
- Forum to allow services to share best practice
- Need to ensure that they still deal with corporate issues like SEA.



Sustainability & Best Value Toolkit

The toolkit has 3 main values to us:

- Helped us to carry out comprehensive review
- Provided actions to feed the service sustainability teams.
- Helped us to prepare for BV audit - self awareness



16. Sustainability & Best Value Toolkit

The toolkit has 3 main values to us:

1. Helped us to carry out **comprehensive review** of how embedded SD was in council activities
I found it hard to get my head about SD opportunities in some areas of council work
Had been looking for an SD audit tool as it seemed logical way to assess strengths & weaknesses
Would've loved the results of such an audit when I started this job!
Always felt that we took a piece meal approach – not overarching one that enabled us to prioritise and see links
2. Provided a list of areas for improvement that could be used to feed the **service sust teams**. First year the actions came from senior managers and needed a way of identifying key service and corporate issues.
3. Helped us to **prepare for BV audit** through self awareness

Example of Best Value & Sustainable Development Audit Tool

1. Waste

Paths to Improvement include:	Notes	Evidence	Contact
H1 Are measures in place to encourage the reduction of waste from all sources, including from the local authority's own operations?	Yes – internal recycling systems are in place in all council properties. Waste Minimisation Officer is in place and is working with building maintenance section to reduce their waste. Planning development advice note was produced in partnership with Clacks and Stirling councils . All service sustainability teams are tackling waste and council wide targets have been set	Planning Advice Note Forth Valley Area Waste Plan Sustainable Falkirk Strategy Sustainable Falkirk Action Plan 2006 Copy of CMT report on recycling levels Recycling procedures and posters. Composting week promotional info BIG in Falkirk promotional information	Marion Robertson

Self awareness: procedures must be developed and implemented to cover volume waste production operations such as roads & housing maintenance



17. How We Adapted It

- Always viewed it as a starting point
- Separated out some complicated questions


- Moved away from tick boxes
- Audit is snap shot – wanted to use it as a development tool so built in self awareness section
- Concentrated on evidence, relevant strategies as I came across lots that I hadn't been aware of
- Noted key contacts – brilliant exercise for establishing contacts across an organization and identifying key documents
- Column on further work – just listed & not prioritised

18. How We Carried It Out

- Identified key folk to interview and did it face to fact where possible
- Phoned or emailed others



19. What Will We Do With It

- I'll present the findings on Monday to CMT along with progress report on service sust teams
- Same report will go to P&R and E&H committees
- Next step is to develop it into a prioritized action plan to turn it from retrospective into developmental document
- Actions form the basis of the next year's actions for the service sustainability teams



What Will We Do With the Results?

- Present findings to CMT
- Report will go to P&R and E&H committees
- Develop it into a prioritized action plan
- Actions form the basis of the next year's actions

20. Future

- Working with community planning partners
- Continue to develop sustainability auditing process
- Work on more service based and corporate initiatives in response to audit