

**Report To South Ayrshire Sustainability Forum  
Of 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

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**SUBJECT: Annual Report**

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**1. Purpose.**

To summarise the work and achievements of the Sustainability Forum over the past year .

**2. Recommendations.**

**Members of the Sustainability Forum are invited to comment on and approve the Report**

**3. Background.**

As part of the review of the governance of the Sustainability Forum it was agreed that a review of the year's activities and achievements should be carried out and reported annually. This report is the first such formal submission.

**4. Considerations.**

The work of the Forum during the past year has been primarily focussed on two aspects: Development of the South Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement, and engagement with the Community Plan Improvement Framework. Six meetings have been held since October 2008, one of which was entirely devoted to developing the detail of the SOA from the Sustainable Forum perspective. 5 Council Services and 14 external partners have participated in the meetings. The Forum has been represented at a number of external Community Planning workshops, conferences and other groups by the Chair, lead officer, and other key partners.

**Delivery of SOA**

Delivery of the 2008/09 Single Outcome Agreement, which was solely the responsibility of the Council has been reported to SAC. It was a particular challenge because of the tight timescale, and delivery was restricted to actions deliverable by the Council. It was a one year programme put in place as an interim step to the development of the CPP – led SOA for 2009/10 and beyond.

Annex 1 presents a summarised commentary on progress against the key outcomes assigned to the Sustainability Forum with information on indicators

One of the key lessons learned from the first year SOA has been the need to ensure outcomes are embedded in the commitments and activities.

In this respect much effort has been directed by the Forum and other Theme Groups to ensure local outcomes and performance indicators are integrated with the plans and activities of the partnership

## Delivery on Objectives

The Forum's key objectives of Climate Change, Sustainable Design and Construction, Biodiversity and Sustainable Travel have all been reflected within the Single Outcome Agreement, with varying degrees of engagement. Some anticipated progress has been limited by the difficulty of identifying appropriate indicators and targets. In addition some significant advances have been made outwith the specific context of the SOA. Activities of note are detailed below.

### Climate Change

Work on the Climate change objective has been focussed on carbon management. The Council is a signatory to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, and a report was submitted on progress to the Sustainable Scotland Network in September 09. There follows a summary of the 2008/09 annual report on Carbon Management for South Ayrshire Council:

- The Council's carbon emissions relating to energy use, streetlighting, travel and transport and waste amounted to 52,500 tonnes for 2008/09. This was a decrease (2%) compared to the baseline year of 2005/06 against which progress is being measured. The Council has a target to reduce its carbon emissions by 20% by 2013 compared to the 2005/06 baseline.
- The areas of energy and travel are on target to meet their respective targets of 22% and 10% although there are a number of energy projects at risk including the reduction in emissions from behavioural changes.
- Emissions from waste to landfill have increased slightly (3%) against the target of 25% reduction however the emissions are expected to continue around the same level until a new energy from waste plant is expected to be commissioned by 2013 when there should be a sharp fall.
- Streetlighting has continued its long term trend of increased emissions year on year which has not been reversed. Emissions have increased by 5% against the baseline whereas there is a target to reduce them by 12%.
- Some £2.2 million was invested in Council properties on measures that would assist with reducing carbon emissions. This was in measures such as improved fabric and replacement heating plant.
- Surveys were completed and Energy Performance Certificates were produced by January 2009 for the largest 60 council operated properties over 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> including the new PPP schools. South Ayrshire Council was one of only four Scottish local authorities known to have had all their EPCs in place by the legal deadline.
- Barrhill Development Association have been successful in attracting Climate Challenge Funding support for their Climate Champions Project

### Sustainable Design and Construction

- A Sustainable Design and Construction Guide has been produced and is being used by the Council's property department for capital projects relating to the refurbishment or procurement of new buildings. The council currently has a contract to build a new primary school in Colmonell with the aim of achieving a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) excellent score. The pre-assessment has taken place which indicates that this can be achieved.
- The work on PPP schools has now shifted from focussing on the construction (although there are some issues to be completed here) to the management of the facilities by Mitie. The early figures for the energy consumption within these buildings are a lot higher than we would expect and we are working with the consortium to reduce them.

- The CPD programme is ongoing and a new one for 2010 is being worked on. This will include a site visit to the new Colmonell PS.
- A 6KW wind turbine was installed at Dundonald PS in April and is performing well.

## **Biodiversity**

- There has been closer liaison with the planning service both in terms of local plan and development management with respect to biodiversity. Detailed discussion took place with developers regarding mitigation of adverse biodiversity impact of the University of West of Scotland Craigie Campus development. With the new Development Plan there is ongoing dialogue to incorporate environmental and biodiversity issues. One of the key strands that has to be incorporated into the Main Issues Report is the development of the green network as indicated in the National Planning Framework 2 National Developments – Central Scotland Green Network. In relation to Development Management there are increasing approaches to consider the ecological and biodiversity impacts of applications. This relationship may further develop if SNH further restricts its consultation responses. With this relationship it is easier to ensure protection or mitigation of protected species and sites and to enhance the developments to maximise the potential for biod. e.g. good quality buffer strips, protection and enhancement of watercourses use of SUDS ponds, to work with landscape to use plants that will enhance biod and or native to the area.
- There has been improved working with Parks and Golf Course services to increase Biodiversity – e.g. habitat improvement the installation of bird boxes in Rozelle, looking at pond & burn improvements in that estate. Working with golf to ensure protection of areas and to ensure that good practice is undertaken e.g. no watercourse work undertaken without contacting the Environment Strategy Officer to ensure no damage to habitat or that there is a requirement for a Controlled Activities Regulations licence. One valuable project is still at the development stage around working with Ayrshire Rivers Trust on Water Vole release and breeding programme to be centred in Belleisle golf course.
- Working with Neighbourhood Services on a dune restoration project in Girvan Involving recycled Xmas Trees. Depending on Community Consultations will progress this Xmas season and monitor. If successful will expand project.
- With regard to the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the majority of progress has been made in the identification and quality assessment of lowland raised bogs in Ayrshire. For coastal habitats, developing baseline data in relation to existing flora and fauna is being supported by SAC directly with funding the development of baseline data in relation to flora in partnership with Natural Resource Consultancy and it is hoped that this work will continue in 2010. Water Voles – the project in Belleisle will go a long way to assisting in the delivery of this action plan especially in the development of lowland water vole colonies e.g. release into. Darley Golf Course, Powmill burn area, Slaphouse and Annfield burns. We need to increase publicity of public awareness and the difference between rats and water voles. On farmland birds, little progress has been made here due to lack of resources, however one of the actions is to look at hedgerow maintenance by trunk road contractor and local authority. Meetings have already been held and now know areas of ownership and length of hedgerow in question. In general ensuring cutting at correct times does not seem to be a major difficulty. East and North do this already. South not as good but we are optimistic that we can achieve good practice. With the cutting of verges we only cut areas where the traffic police inform us that there are sight line issues.
- LBAP Network – Ayrshire LBAP hosted the 2 day autumn meeting of the LBAP network group - full day conference based in Culzean overnight stay in Dolphin House with second day site visits to lowland raised bog in East Ayrshire and then to

isle of Cumrae to the marine centre and a presentation by the community of Arran seabed trust.

- Working with ART to eradicate non native invasive plants i.e. Hogweed, H. Balsum and Jap. Knotweed. ART obtained funding from SAWET and SCORE for the survey and spraying of Hogweed along River Ayr. SAC working to ensure that we spray our own areas and continue to monitor. A meeting held with key operatives to highlight issue and how we contribute to eradication. To aid identification for 2010 will be issuing flashcards for roads maintenance and parks staff along with forms so that they can plot where plants are when they are out doing their normal work and we will be able to build up a picture of distribution and where to send people for spraying plants. Also hope to develop a leaflet for general public on issue and potentially a web page reporting form.
- We continue to support local RSPB group who undertake approx 6 walks per annum in Rozelle Estate. In 2008 undertook one bat walk in Rozelle estate and due to the level of interest in 2009 provided 2 bat walks which proved phenomenally popular planning to increase the no of walks for 2010.
- Worked with the PPP team to improve biodiversity of schools which formed part of the programme. All schools now have either classroom or wildlife Gardens in addition the surrounding landscape has been significantly improved from species poor grassland in majority of schools to areas which incorporate a variety of trees, shrubs and in some cases meadowgrass. All of which has the potential to be used for outdoor education.
- Eco-Schools – We now have 95% of our schools as registered Eco Schools; 78% with Bronze awards; 60% with Silver and 22% having gained a green Flag. Of our schools approx 22 have developed school grounds gardens

## **Sustainable Travel**

### South Ayrshire Council's Sustainable Travel Plan

- Date of launch: May 2008, using a brand (up&go) to embed the sustainable travel ethos into employee awareness. The Little Book of Green Travel issued to every employee.

Achievements so far:

#### Cycling to work

- Supported and augmented the Council's cycle to work scheme
- Supported bike clinic events
- Developed a bicycle user group electronic forum for employees
- Develop a programme of installation of bike facilities for employees (lockers, racks, showers)
- Offer cycling training and cycling maintenance classes to employees
- Offer the use of a bike workshop

#### Walking to work

- Implemented a walk to work scheme

#### Car sharing to work

- Launched a car sharing scheme for employees

#### Business Travel

- Review various options to encourage less car use when attending business meetings on behalf of the Council

#### Partnership

- Set up a joint partnership with East and North Ayrshire, and NHS Ayrshire & Arran to augment sustainable travel in each organisation by efficient use of resources (objectives for 2009/10: develop a core travel survey; work jointly on European Mobility Week; jointly support Liftshare; develop ways to encourage survey responses; centralise all trip information for Ayrshire
- Work in partnership with SPT to further develop sustainable travel

#### Awareness raising

- Use of the brand to regularly inform employees of events, annual celebration days (eg Bike Week, European Mobility Week)
- Use staff travel surveys to elicit travel data, also to raise awareness
- Inform new employees of the opportunities for sustainable travel

#### Themes and topics

The Forum has received presentations on a variety of topics over the past year, including

Carrick Forum Development Strategy  
 Fairtrade  
 Invasive Weeds  
 Business Environment partnership

#### Partnership development

The Forum has continued to attract and develop relationships with a variety of organisations and interest groups

Business Environment Partnership  
 Stranraer Ayr Line Support Association  
 Barrhill Community Development Association  
 Fairtrade Association

#### Publicity and awareness

The Forum has been represented at a range of meetings and events, principally around developing the SOA as mentioned above, but also through

Community Planning Conference  
 Business Forum  
 Sustainable Energy Fair

Publicity has been delivered through leaflets, display material and web updates

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