

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO DECISION

March 2012

**REPORT AUTHOR: Heather Delonnette
Sustainable Development Co-ordinator**

SUBJECT: Sustainability Integration Tool

REPORT FOR: Portfolio Decision

Summary

The Council has committed to developing an Integration Toolkit to ensure sustainability issues are considered during the development of policies, strategies and service plans. This is in line with our commitment to making sustainable development our central organising principle as set out in the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter which the Council signed up to in 2010.

An update presentation on progress of the work and the anticipated outcomes was given to Cabinet and Management Team in November. Since then two pilot projects; the Families First Strategy and the Local Development Plan, have been undertaken, using different aspects of the toolkit. In both cases the officers leading on the work have been asked for their comments on the effectiveness and suitability of the tools and modifications have been undertaken light of those comments. The Review stage of the toolkit has also been developed allowing for appraisal of the tools and their benefits to be carried out and further modifications suggested ensuring that the tools remain relevant.

This work is fairly innovative and has been recognised as being so by Jonathan Porritt, author, commentator and founder of Forum for the Future, the largest UK based sustainability charity.

Proposal

It is proposed that the toolkit be adopted by the Council as part of the corporate planning process, as a way of embedding sustainability into policies, procedures and service strategies. The SWOT tool is already used by services when starting the service planning process and the Integration Toolkit's SWOT element would require only minimum extra consideration to ensure sustainability, as well as climate change and environmental, issues are considered at this early stage. The Options Appraisal element can be undertaken relatively quickly and again will enable the issues to be dealt with in a consistent and considered way.

Once the Toolkit has been adopted dissemination of information and support will be undertaken in the most appropriate way to ensure wide take up of the toolkit throughout the organisation. This will include opportunities to hear from officers involved in the pilots about their experiences in using the resources. Further workshops will be held to update Members and staff on forthcoming sustainability and climate change legislation and guidance. Further support will be available from the Sustainable Development Co-ordinator as services start to use the toolkit.

Corporate Improvement Plan

Sustainable development is one of the key principles of the Powys Change Plan. Implementation and use of the Sustainability Integration Tool will contribute to the overall aims of the Plan by aiming to support sustainable thinking from the beginning of programmes and projects.

Options Considered/Available

The need for an Integration Toolkit was instigated by Board as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy in October 2007 and further revised in April 2008. The development and use of the tool was an aim in subsequent Corporate Improvement Plans. At various stages during the development of the resources the advantages and drawbacks of such a resource have been discussed and challenged. Amendments have been made to the toolkit when it was felt to be appropriate to ensure that they were fit for purpose. In the short term it may require more time to develop projects however as staff and Members become more familiar with using the tools. Over time, the benefits for project development and scrutiny should be realised, providing efficiencies and more holistic project management.

Preferred Choice and Reasons

Sustainability and other issues need to be raised at the earliest possible stage, before decisions are taken as this ensures that decisions can be modified according to the needs of the project. Use of the toolkit will allow this to happen in a considered and consistent way with evidence being provided for decisions taken.

The toolkit will also help to ensure that the Council are ready for the requirements of the Sustainable Development Bill being introduced by the Welsh Government in 2013 which will '... make sustainable development the centre of all activities and decisions of the Welsh Government and public bodies in Wales.'

Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

The toolkit will enable all services using them to consider these issues in an integrated way. This will also contribute to the Council's stated aim of making sustainability central to its working practices and policy development. It will also enable more effective scrutiny of policies and plans. This should also raise awareness of equalities, Welsh language and other issues in the project development process as these are raised in the tools.

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

There will be no direct impact on safeguarding children and young people.

Local Member(s)

Not applicable

Other Front Line Services

Not applicable

Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

The Accountant for the Service commented that the cost of implementation will be met from within existing budgets.

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

In the first instance this proposal will have no impact on the Local Service Board, partnerships or stakeholders. However in our role as community leaders we may, in the future, assist our partners in undertaking similar work.

Communications

The toolkit is available on the intranet and details of the case studies will be posted as soon as they are completed. The proposed workshops will raise awareness and it has been arranged to run articles in the staff magazine at appropriate points to inform staff and Members of the work.

Statutory Officers

The Strategic Director, Finance and Infrastructure (Section 151 Officer) has commented, 'I note the proposal is within budget.'

The Strategic Director, Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) had no comment to make.

Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
That the Sustainability Integration Toolkit be adopted for use in the business planning process.	Use of the Integration Tool will enable services to integrate sustainability into projects development in line with the commitments in the Powys Change Plan and the SD Charter
That staff are informed about and supported in the use of the toolkit.	To enable staff to use the toolkit easily and in a consistent way.
That further workshops be held to inform Members and staff about forthcoming legislation and guidance.	To ensure that Powys County Council is prepared for any new legislative requirements or expectations.

Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Sustainable Development Co-ordinator
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	From 1st April 2012

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Board decision 16th October 2007
Corporate Improvement Plan 2009-12
Corporate Improvement Plan 2010-14