SDC Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) assessment

Organisation: Highways Agency
Title of SDAP: Sustainable Development: Vision & Action Plan: 2008-09

SDAP Publication date: July 2008
SDC Assessment date: October 2008

Please see "SDAP assessment methodology paper" for background to the assessment process, and for full details of how the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) has assessed, scored and rated this SDAP at the following webpage: http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/sdap-tracker.html.

SUMMARY

	Score	Rating
Coverage	1/4	🟥
Strategic planning	8/12	🟧
Actions	11/12	🟩
Ownership, engagement and delivery	4/6	🟧
Monitoring, review and reporting	4/6	🟧
OVERALL	28/40	🟧

ISSUES AND RISKS

It is evident from this SDAP that the Highways Agency is heading in the right direction in terms of embedding sustainability within its core business and structures. The clear and comprehensive actions set out within the plan are a real strength of the SDAP and should ensure that the Agency continues to consider and monitor its overall impact on sustainability.

While many of the strategies in place are in the development stages, the SDC looks forward to seeing how the HA continues to assess the impact of its strategies in the future. So far the focus of the HA's assessment is on minimising the Agency's impact on the environment. The SDC would encourage the HA to look beyond this and consider how it could work to *improve* the environments in which it operates.

HIGHWAYS AGENCY RESPONSE

"Our 2008-09 sustainable development vision and action plan focuses on the priorities set out in the Government's strategy for delivering a better quality of life. Sustainability is a cross cutting agenda which requires co-operation and involvement from all areas of the Highways Agency and our supply chain to be successful. We are pleased the SDC recognises we are moving in the right direction. Our customer promise includes a commitment to playing our part in protecting the environment. We have updated long standing and nationally respected environmental assessment advice in 2008. We publish the environmental appraisal of each major scheme and take pride in the environmental improvements these schemes deliver; often to noise, air and water quality, frequently to traveller ambience and non-motorised accessibility. The Highways Agency was credited with setting a benchmark for the rest of the public sector when our annual report was praised for openness, clarity and customer focus in the national Building Public Trust Awards. The coverage of environmental, corporate social responsibility performance was regarded as especially comprehensive. With monthly reporting on SDAP actions taking place, we are confident we can report on many more positive achievements at the end of this financial year." (Highways Agency, January 2009).

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COVERAGE

	Score	0	1	2
1. Does the SDAP state clearly the period of time that it covers?			X	
2. Is it clear how the SDAP relates to the wider departmental family, and is SDAP coverage of the departmental family adequate?		X		

STRATEGIC PLANNING

	Score	0	1	2
3. Does the SDAP set out the organisation's strategy for contributing to the aims, objectives and commitments of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy?				X
4. Does the SDAP articulate the relevance of the five sustainable development Principles to its core business, and set out how they are/will be mainstreamed and inform work?		X		
5. Is it clear how the SDAP will contribute to the organisation's high-level strategic objectives, including any Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs)?				X
6. Does the SDAP have clear objectives, and does it articulate clearly how these objectives were prioritised and provide a rationale for any gaps e.g. in the coverage of core business areas?				X
7. Does the SDAP link to other corporate plans or strategies?			X	
8. Does the SDAP include any commitment to work with other government bodies to deliver joint commitments, actions or initiatives?			X	

ACTIONS

	Score	0	1	2
9. Does the SDAP articulate how the sustainable development principles and priorities are/will be integrated into its policy and decision making, set out specific actions to achieve this, and explain how they have been prioritised?				X
10. Does the SDAP include explicit actions to improve the sustainability of the organisation's procurement activity (linking to SPAP commitments where relevant), and explain how they have been prioritised?				X
11. Does the SDAP contain specific actions which demonstrate how the organisation will drive forward the sustainability of its operations (linking to SOGE commitments where relevant), and explain how they have been prioritised?			X	

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		Score	0	1	2
12.	Does the SDAP contain actions relating to people, such as actions to engage staff in sustainable development, develop their skills and capability to support delivery of the SDAP, and to improve their general well-being in the work place?				X
13.	Are the actions outcome-focused?				X
14.	Are the actions SMART?				X

OWNERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

		Score	0	1	2
15.	Is it clear how the SDAP will be communicated to staff and stakeholders, and how the organisation will ensure they have the capability to put the SDAP's key messages to work?			X	
16.	Are the governance arrangements for supporting delivery of the SDAP clearly identified (e.g. boards, working groups), and is it clear who has overall responsibility for its delivery?			X	
17.	Has the SDAP been signed off by a Minister, Permanent Secretary or Chief Executive, and has s/he provided a foreword?				X

MONITORING, REVIEW AND REPORTING

		Score	0	1	2
18.	Does the SDAP present links to the previous SDAP (where relevant) or to the historical context of sustainable development in the organisation (if this is the first SDAP that the organisation has produced)?				X
19.	Are the methods and structures for monitoring and reviewing the SDAP clearly identified (e.g. boards, working groups, stakeholder engagement), and is it clear who the findings will be reported to?				X
20.	Is it clear how the outcomes of internal SDAP monitoring/review will feed back into the SDAP process, including a commitment to update the SDAP within its period of coverage, where required?		X		

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