

## Sustainable Development Action Plan – Progress Report Summary 2008

**Organisation:** Department for Children, Schools and Families

Department    
  Non-Ministerial Department    
  Executive Agency    
  NDPB    
  Other

**Report of progress against:** Brighter Futures – Greener Lives (April 2008 - March 2010)

### Progress Against Actions

Percentage of actions complete or on target: 93.5%  
 Average impact rating\* of all the actions which are complete or on target: 3

\*The Impact rating (1-4) is a self-assessment of the contribution to SD priority areas, and is not an indication of performance.

### Embedding Sustainability

Self assessment ratings against four themes: To what extent is sustainable development embedded?

Policies	People	Operations	Governance, Monitoring and Reporting
On Course	On Course	On Course	On Course

### Sustainable Procurement

Self assessment ratings against five themes of the Flexible Framework: What level has the organisation already reached? (Where an alternative sustainable procurement tool has been used, please provide an appropriate summary.)

People	Policy, Strategy & Communications	Procurement Process	Engaging Suppliers	Measurements and Results
Level 3 - Practice	Level 3 - Practice	Level 3 - Practice	Level 3 - Practice	Level 3 - Practice

### Taking Stock

What have been the **highlights** of your organisation's sustainable development progress over the past year?

- Establishing a programme that covers the whole of the Department's work, with an effective monitoring and reporting structure to support it;
- a perceptible change in how sustainable development is viewed due to the persistency of our approach and potency of our message. This change is partly due to clear leadership from our Permanent Secretary and Directors-General;
- the sending of the book Teach Your Granny to Text and Other Ways to Change the World to every maintained school in September 2008;
- development of a schools carbon management strategy, which will be publicly launched in summer 2009;
- the Young Activists Programme, which is working with 4 NGOs to educate young people about sustainable development and teach them to become advocates for SD at a local, national and international level;
- the Play Strategy has been published, accompanied by a sustainable development impact assessment. The strategy embeds sustainable development principles across a range of actions, including cross-Government activity on transport and built environment;
- the Child Health Strategy had a strong environmental health dimension, and a sustainable development impact assessment;
- Children and Young People's Plan guidance for 2009 has a strong focus on sustainable communities;
- Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) assessment of SOGE return showed improved performance for 2007-2008. Overall 3 stars, with 5 stars for mandated mechanisms and 4 stars for sustainable procurement;
- trajectories have been established with OGC to reach SOGE targets by 2011;
- an Environmental Policy Statement was published March 2009;
- achieving Level 3 of the Flexible Framework in February 2009;
- a question included on sustainable development for the first time in the staff survey;
- an internal departmental communications month devoted internally to sustainable development in October 08, with a range of activities to support it; and
- establishment of a Green Champions Network, to involve staff at all levels in promoting the sustainable operation of our buildings.

What are the key **challenges** for the future?

- Convincing all our colleagues that SD is a mainstream concern that cannot be sidelined due to increasing pressure on resources. In many areas, such as Building Schools for the Future, the community cohesion aspects of young people's policy and the importance of the natural environment in play, SD principles form a central plank of policy thinking that could not be discarded. In other areas, the synergies are less well defined and we must be more creative to draw the links;
- achieving good engagement with the Department's Communications Directorate so that references to sustainable development are included in mainstream speeches;
- travel: there are 5 Red-rated actions relating to travel which it is intended to address through the work of a new Travel Steering Group; and
- new work on carbon reduction across the wider public sector of children, schools and families, and developing a process to manage the Department's carbon budget.

What are the key things which have **helped and hindered** progress towards sustainable development?

Helps:

- strong support at Director-General or Director level in each Directorate;
- an objective in our Permanent Secretary's job plan in 2008-09;
- SDC advisers embedded in policy directorates which allow them to suggest practical ways of incorporating SD; and
- structured governance and monitoring

Hinders:

- a reluctance among some colleagues to consider SD as a priority;
- leadership from some of the Directors and Deputy Directors, which has not been as clear as necessary to give SD issues a high priority. This is beginning to change, and the position is more positive than it was two years ago

What **lessons have been learnt** from the progress report? How will these be taken forward in the next SDAP?

The mapping exercise against the four SD priorities has emphasised that sustainable development is a complex and broad concept. In order to make a realistic and measurable impact within the Department, it has been necessary to apply the parts of SD that enhance delivery of Every Child Matters. Although it has been an interesting exercise to rate the commitments against the four SD principles, we do not feel it has been particularly helpful. For example, it would not be realistic to state that because the second priority (Climate Change and Energy) consistently scored lower than the other three, that we should therefore make it a bigger focus of our next SDAP. It would be sensible to assume that this would be DECC's focus, and that DCSF should continue to work with policy teams to promote SD principles in the context of teams' own work on children's wellbeing.

Please summarise how the SDAP is aligned with and has helped your organisation to deliver its high level strategic objectives, including any Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs).

Sustainable Development Objective: Leading Change in the system

Linked to PSAs: Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.

Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Improve children and young people's safety.

Linked to the Children's Plan / Departmental Strategic Objective: Secure the wellbeing and health of children and young people.

Safeguard the young and vulnerable.

Achieve world class standards in education.

Close the gap in educational achievement for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ensure young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond.

Keep children and young people on the path to success.

Lead and manage the system.

Sustainable Development Objective: Leading by example

Linked to PSAs: Lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change.

Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future.

Improve children and young people's safety.

Linked to the Children's Plan / Departmental Strategic Objective: Secure the wellbeing and health of children and young people.

Safeguard the young and vulnerable.

Achieve world class standards in education.

Close the gap in educational achievement for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ensure young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond.

Keep children and young people on the path to success.

Lead and manage the system.

Sustainable Development Objective: Empowering and educating young people for life in a sustainable world  
Linked to PSAs: Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people.  
Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success.  
Improve children and young people's safety.  
Linked to the Children's Plan / Departmental Strategic Objective: Secure the wellbeing and health of children and young people.  
Safeguard the young and vulnerable.  
Achieve world class standards in education.  
Close the gap in educational achievement for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.  
Ensure young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond.  
Keep children and young people on the path to success.  
Lead and manage the system.

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**Authorised by:** David Bell, Permanent Secretary, DCSF

**Date:** 01/07/2009