

**REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMITTEE  
20 FEBRUARY 2006**

**REPORT ON: SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

**REPORT BY: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY PLANNING)  
HEAD OF WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT No.: 110-2006**

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To gain committee approval for the formal adoption of the Council's Sustainability Policy.
- 1.2 Copies of the Appendices (1 – 3) have been passed to each of the Group Secretaries and are available for inspection in the member's lounges

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the committee

- 2.1 Formally adopts the Sustainability Policy for Dundee City Council as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Agree the Corporate Priorities and Sustainability Policy Action Plan as outlined in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.
- 2.3 Requires that the 'Local Agenda 21 Implications' statement present in all Committee Reports be replaced by a 'Sustainability Policy Implications' statement and include any applicability to the Council's duties under Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 2.4 Agree that the Sustainability Policy Implementation Group continue to drive forward relevant aspects of the Council's Sustainability Policy as set out in this report.
- 2.5 Remit the Sustainability Policy Review Group to report back annually to the Environmental Services and Sustainability Committee with progress on implementing the Policy, Corporate Priorities and Action Plan.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Sustainability Policy Action Plan has been assessed by all Chief Officers to ensure that the actions included are contained within their respective Departmental Service Plans or have the necessary resources attributed to them in order that they can be delivered.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Please refer to paragraph 9

## **5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Since the sustainability agenda subsumes the Agenda 21 obligations, there is an obligation under that international agreement to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all, regardless of gender, race or religion and that this is part of the definition of sustainability.

## **6. BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 The Scottish Executive's priorities for sustainable development recognise the need for greater community involvement and participation and an approach that involves 'joined-up thinking' between partners to decision-making processes. In Dundee, this work is being led via the Community Planning process with the sustainability element being led by the Dundee Partnership for the Environment (DPE).
- 6.2 The Council is a key partner of the DPE and given the Council's community leadership role, it is vital that, in terms of its sustainable development responsibilities, the Council works to lead by example, seeking to achieve best practice in its own undertakings and achieve continuous improvement. Such an approach not only provides benefits to Dundee's environment but produces financial savings to the Council through the reduction of waste, energy usage, transport costs and through sustainable purchasing and effective resource management.
- 6.3 Since the launch of the Councils Local Agenda 21 LA21 in 1996 there have been many changes in Local Government and in the way the City Council has been asked to develop its service delivery. Several of these key duties, including the opportunities afforded by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 through Community Planning and Best Value, as well as the power to advance well being, have set out to fundamentally change the way the Council performs and communicates with its stakeholders.
- 6.4 These duties, taken together with other key internal and external influences such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Nature Conservation duty and most recently the Scottish Sustainable Development Strategy, are challenging the way in which the Council manages its own environmental performance and how it contributes to sustainable development
- 6.5 As a result, these drivers for change stimulated a review of the Council's sustainability progress in an effort to build on its previous Local Agenda 21 work.
- 6.6 Subsequently, the Council's Environmental Services and Sustainability Committee agreed at its December 2004 meeting to:
- (a) approve the restructuring of the Local Agenda 21 Core Officer Group and renaming of the group to become the Sustainability Policy Implementation Group
  - (b) remit the Sustainability Policy Implementation Group to draft a Sustainability Policy for Dundee City Council.
  - (c) restructure the Local Agenda 21 'Dundee 21' Working Group (Elected Member led) and renaming of the group to become the Sustainability Policy Review Group.
  - (d) remit the Sustainability Policy Review Group to meet annually and review the sustainability policy and actions.

## **7. BEST VALUE AUDIT**

7.1 The Audit Scotland findings report (Oct 2005) on the Councils Best Value and Community Planning Audit confirmed the approach to sustainable development the Council were already developing:

*“The council is currently reviewing its approach to environmental sustainability by developing an environmental strategy and a sustainability policy. While there are some examples of good practice, the council needs to better articulate its corporate approach to sustainable development, and provide a comprehensive picture of its activity.” (Audit Scotland, 2005).*

7.2 Resultantly, the Councils Best Value Improvement Plan identified sustainable development as an area for improvement:

*“Take steps to ensure that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities in its service delivery and show progress with its overall approach to sustainable development”.*

7.3 This is to be achieved through the following measures contained in the plan:

- ? Sustainability performance to be specifically monitored via the Chief Executive’s Management Team, and Service Plan and Council Plan reporting procedures.
- ? Sustainability Policy in place following approval by Committee.
- ? A comprehensive environmental policy framework to be developed and approved by Committee.
- ? Sustainability criteria incorporated into Council’s procurement strategy.

## **8. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE**

8.1 Since December 2004 the Sustainability Policy Implementation Group have been tasked with taking forward the three stages as set out below:

### **Stage1 (short term):**

- Refocusing the role of the LA21 Officer Group into a Sustainability Policy Implementation Group.
- Drafting a Sustainability Policy for the Council

### **Stage2 (medium term):**

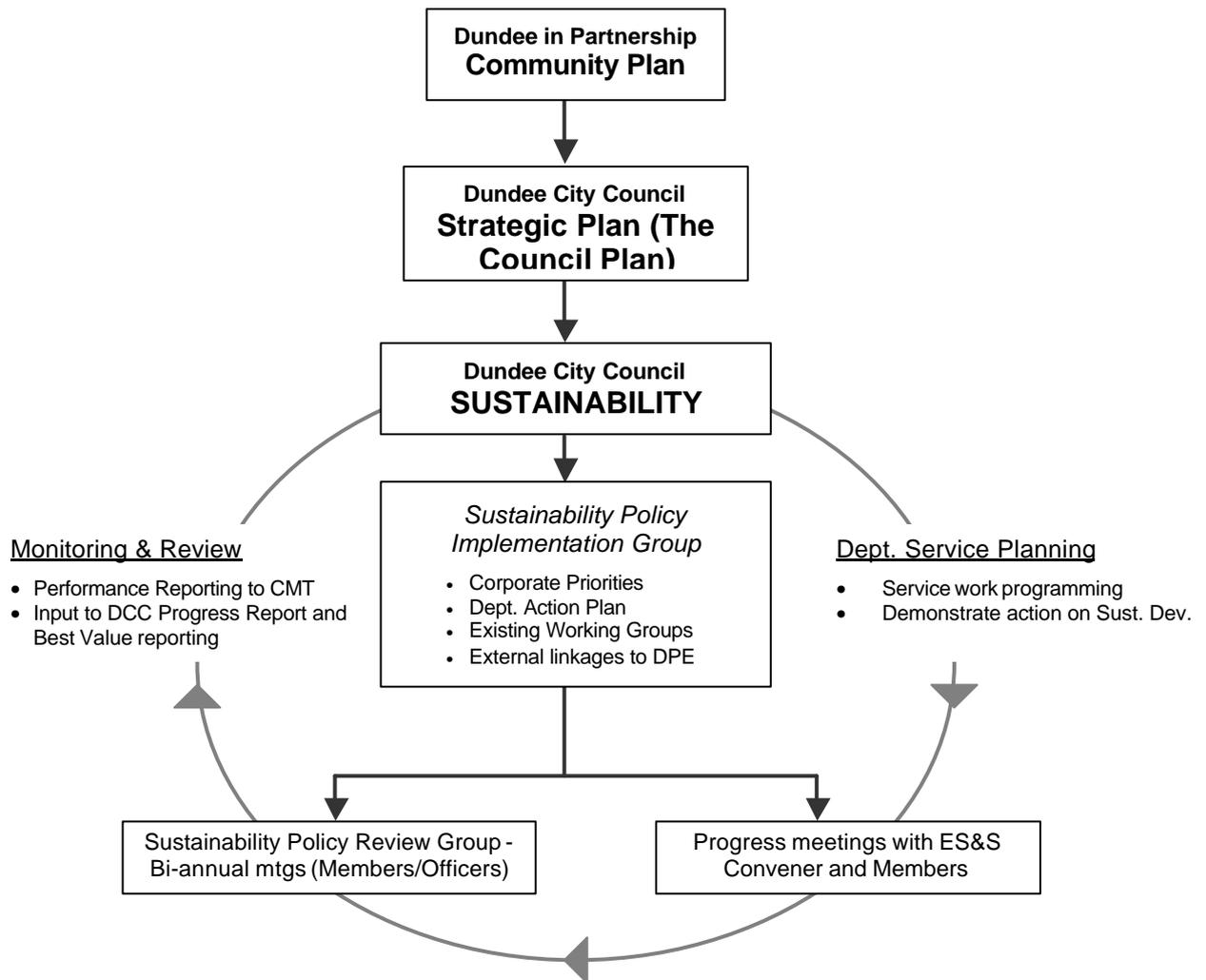
- Individual Departments taking ownership of certain elements of the policy to drive forward progress with regard to specific principles.

### **Stage3 (longer-term):**

- Incorporating the policy into the Council’s Service Planning, Performance and Best Value frameworks.

8.2 As part of progressing stage 1, Officers from the Implementation Group met in 2005 to develop the Sustainability Policy and establish a structure for monitoring, reporting and review. Please see structure on following page.

## Sustainability Policy Implementation structure



## **9. CHANGE OF IMPLICATIONS TITLE**

9.1 The Sustainability Policy will replace the Councils Local Agenda 21 principles and it is recommended that the present title be updated to "Sustainability Policy Implications" to reflect this change.

9.2 A briefing memo will be issued to all Chief Officers once the Sustainability Policy is approved, notifying Departments that when submitting a Committee Report they should include how the subject of the report impacts upon the Councils Sustainability Policy. In particular, they should state what implications the subject of the report has on the Policy's relevant principles.

## **10. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Council has new statutory duties under the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004' and the forthcoming 'Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Bill' will place further requirements on Scottish Local Authorities once introduced. At its February 2005 meeting, the Environmental Services and Sustainability Committee approved an implementation structure for the Council to deal with its duties under SEA, and this framework has been put in place with training for relevant Officers. As part of this framework, Committee agreed that all future

Committee Reports include a statement on SEA under the (at present) Local Agenda 21 Implications heading.

- 10.2 It is therefore recommended that Officers compiling Committee Reports, in addition to identifying the sustainability implications also include reference to SEA, specifically whether the subject of the report:
- a) expressly requires SEA.
  - b) has been screened to determine if significant environmental effects are likely.
  - c) falls outwith the scope of SEA.

**11. NEXT STEPS - IMPLEMENTING STAGES TWO AND THREE**

11.1 There is a commitment in the Best Value Improvement Plan to review the overall service planning process and produce new comprehensive guidance and training on producing service plans. As part of this, service specific guidance on reporting sustainable development progress will be developed. At the same time the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) in conjunction with CoSLA and the Scottish Executive are drawing up Supplementary Best Value Guidance for Sustainable Development. Both these pieces of work will enable Stage 3 of the Sustainability Policy implementation framework to move forward more quickly than expected and the task of incorporating the policy into the Council's Service Planning will be assisted by the SSN guidance.

11.2 The Council will also be able to use the guidance to help departments, and the Council as a whole, meet the requirements set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 that in making arrangements which secure Best Value, *"shall discharge its duties under this section in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development"*. It is expected that the Council's submission of a case study for this national guidance will also be included in the final publication.

**12. CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive  
Depute Chief Executive (Finance)  
Depute Chief Executive (Support Services)

**13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Environmental Services & Sustainability Committee Report, 798/2004, 20th Dec 2004, "Restructuring of the Local Agenda 21 Working Groups".

Environmental Services & Sustainability Committee Report, 6/2005, 21st Feb 2005, "Implementing the Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation".

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Chris Ward  
Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) 31 January 2006

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Jim Laing  
Head of Waste Management..... 31 January 2006