

INTRODUCTION

“I want all local authorities in the UK to adopt Local Agenda 21 strategies by the year 2000.”

Tony Blair
United Nations General Assembly
New York
23 June 1997

When the Prime Minister set this challenge to our Councils the Local Agenda 21 process was already five years old. Over the last seven years the guidance on the scope and content of our Local Agenda 21 strategies, from Government and from the local government associations, has been clear and consistent.

This Route Planner now builds on that guidance. It has been produced by the Scottish Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinators Network, with the invaluable assistance of COSLA and the Scottish Executive. It is intended to help the members of the Network and their colleagues to guide their Councils' work, and to meet our deadline for all of Scotland's Local Agenda 21 strategies to be adopted by 31 December 2000.

The task of developing, adopting and delivering local strategies for the sustainable development of all our communities through the 21st century is immense. Finding the balance between local quality of life and our wider national and global responsibilities will not always be easy. But much good work is already under way in our Councils, and new opportunities for engaging our partners and communities in the process have emerged in the last two years.

The Route Planner focuses on the core elements of Local Agenda 21. It recognises that not everything can be done by the end of next year. But everything should have been started. And everything should have been built into an action plan which clearly identifies the responsibilities, means and deadlines for the delivery of the local vision of a sustainable future.

However, Local Agenda 21 is a process. It is a means towards achieving a sustainable Scotland. And the means will change as our structures and processes of governance are changing. It therefore matters not what you call your strategy or any of its elements. What matters is the process, the content and the outcome. For Local Agenda 21, the 31st of December 2000 will be a beginning, not an end.

Kenny Boag
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CONTENTS

Core Elements of Local Agenda 21	1
How to Use this Route Planner	3
CORPORATE COMMITMENT	5
AWARENESS RAISING	11
Tackling the Core Elements	15
• IN-HOUSE ACTION	17
• POLICY INTEGRATION	19
• PARTNERSHIP WORKING	23
• COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	25
DELIVERY	29
For Further Help	33
And Finally ...	35
Insert - A Sustainable Community	37
Insert - The Model Scottish Council	39
Insert - SLACN Network Contact Details	47

CORE ELEMENTS OF LOCAL AGENDA 21

Local Agenda 21 is a process which will take us toward our goal of sustainability. Its first milestone will be the agreement, by the local partners and community in each area, and by 31 December 2000, of all the local action plans for sustainability. This raises three important points:-

- 1 **Sustainability covers everything**
- 2 **Local Agenda 21 should involve everyone**
- 3 **Some things will not get done by the deadline!**

The purpose of this Route Planner is therefore to ensure that the essential things will get done in time, and that we all know how, when and by whom the other important things will get done after 2000.

Both COSLA and the Scottish Executive have a standing commitment to promote sustainability and Local Agenda 21. This means that advice and support should still be available to Councils after 2000, and that each Council's delivery of its Local Agenda 21 will be monitored.

We expect that by 31 December 2000 your Local Agenda 21 should be, so far as possible:-

Owned

- * by the key organisations who determine the local quality of life
- * by interested sectors of the local community

Understood

- * by the organisations and sectors whose active involvement will be post-2000
- * by everyone within the Council

Your Local Agenda 21 strategy should include:-

A Vision Statement

- * showing how the area could look (perhaps in 50 years)
- * identifying the main issues for achieving the sustainable development of the area
- * setting out clear aims for improving sustainability and quality of life (perhaps over 20 years)

An Action Plan

- * establishing clear priorities for action by the partners (perhaps over 5 years)
- * saying who will do what, with what, when and with whom
- * showing how action will be delivered through other local strategies
- * showing how wider ownership and understanding will be secured
- * showing how success will be checked and how the process will be rolled forward

As Councils will normally lead the Local Agenda 21 process they should show how they are addressing these four core elements of Local Agenda 21:-

- **In-House Action**
- **Policy Integration**
- **Partnership Working**
- **Community Involvement**

This Route Planner now shows ways to tackle each of these core elements, and the three essential processes of securing **corporate commitment**, **raising awareness** and **ensuring delivery**.

HOW TO USE THIS ROUTE PLANNER

The “what”, the “why” and the “when” of Local Agenda 21 are now well known. This Route Planner is about the “how”. In it you will find tips on tackling each of the core elements of Local Agenda 21. At the back you will find *‘The Model Scottish Council’* which shows who has been doing what on each of these elements. Contact your colleagues in these Councils for further advice.

We recognise that local opportunities and successes reflect a multitude of specific local factors. We have therefore used this Route Planner to encourage a positive “mindset” for action, rather than the replication of specific approaches. There is no one right way or answer for tackling each part of the process. The important thing is to find out what works in your area, and then work with that.

It is helpful sometimes to stand back and remember what we are trying to achieve, before deciding on particular approaches. So we have also included a 12 point summary of *‘A Sustainable Community’*.

The format of the Route Planner will allow further guidance or reference material to be inserted as it becomes available. Like Local Agenda 21 itself, the Route Planner is a process which must evolve. We would welcome your comments on the directions which the Route Planner could take in the future.

The most important thing to remember about this Route Planner is that you do not need to do everything within a core element before moving on to another element. You should dip in and out of each area of activity, creating and responding to opportunities whenever they arise. You will find that there are important messages in one section of the Route Planner which are just as relevant to other sections. You will normally be promoting different parts of the process in parallel. This explains the occasional but necessary duplication between sections. It also explains why we have not attempted to show the Local Agenda 21 process as a diagram!

‘The Scottish Local Agenda 21 Route Planner’ will be updated both as a paper document and in the Publications section of the Scottish Executive Sustainability website: www.sustainable.scotland.gov.uk

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

Like any other strategic issue, sustainability requires a strong corporate commitment, so that its influence extends to all parts of your Council. Gaining this commitment is one thing, but mainstreaming and developing it is quite another. This section identifies issues which are crucial to the process, whether you are starting from scratch, reviewing your effectiveness, or now seeking commitment to the whole of the Local Agenda 21 process.

Why should the Council commit to sustainability and a Local Agenda 21 process?

You will face this question at every stage in securing and maintaining corporate commitment. You must be absolutely clear that you know the answer and you should be prepared to explain it in a variety of ways, depending upon who is asking the question.

You should also ask yourself this question constantly, both to ensure that Local Agenda 21 is continuing to add value to the organisation, and that it is responding to changing internal and external circumstances. Only when you are entirely convinced that sustainability and Local Agenda 21 have a fundamental role in the culture of your Council will you be ready to convince the decision makers.

The most convincing answers to the question will depend on factors which are specific to the culture, structure, priorities and personalities of your Council and area. So don't use arguments which might raise local hackles, don't mix your messages and don't risk your credibility. For example, avoid saying that the Council should promote sustainability because this will deliver overall financial savings, unless you are absolutely certain that this will be the case (and remember that in our economy resource savings and financial savings are not always synonymous). And try not to use messages which seem to promote a particular political line, unless that really is not a problem locally. Find the most effective message and stick to it, whilst varying the ways in which you present it.

Here are some "hooks" which you may find useful:-

- Sustainability increasingly shapes EU, UK and now Scottish legislation and funding criteria (think of the *'Agreement for the First Scottish Parliament'*, and its Standing Orders);
- Sustainability integrates the social, the economic and the environmental. It demonstrates joined-up thinking and then allows joined-up actions;
- Sustainability provides an organising principle (the bigger picture) and a common ground for Councils and the local partners with which they must work to deliver their Community Plan or Rural Development Strategy;
- Local Agenda 21 provides a way of engaging with and co-ordinating the work of local partners;
- Local Agenda 21 provides the community involvement/consultation and stakeholder dialogue required by Community Planning and Best Value;
- Your Local Agenda 21 can form a major part of your Community Plan and its subsequent delivery;
- The national commitment to Councils adopting their Local Agenda 21 strategies by December 2000.

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

These are only suggestions and some may not be appropriate or timeous for you. However, whichever hooks you use, you should try to show how sustainability and the Local Agenda 21 process will contribute to your Council's approach to the national agenda for modernising local government and adding value to existing service activity. In this way you should be able to convince even the most sceptical audience.

What tools do I have?

When you are confident of the case for corporate commitment, the next step is to examine how you are going to achieve it. Remember, both your own credibility and that of the Local Agenda 21 process will depend upon your ability to command and retain the attention and support of hard-headed and hard-pressed managers and Members. So, before going any further, ask yourself the following questions:-

- (i) Do I have a remit to lobby for corporate commitment?
- (ii) Do I have the personal commitment, confidence and skills to do so?
- (iii) Is my position in the organisation going to help or hinder me?
- (iv) What level of managerial/political support do I have?
- (v) How much time/resources/day-to-day support do I have?

The key here is to be realistic. If the answers to these questions are less than positive, don't panic - it doesn't mean that Local Agenda 21 is completely beyond you, but it may mean that the process takes longer to develop. If so, make this clear when you frame your bid for corporate commitment. There are many examples of isolated individuals whose personal commitment to Local Agenda 21 has eventually secured the solid support of their colleagues and Members and a track record of local achievement.

But don't just ask yourself what you have! Use these questions to identify what you need, or need more of. Then identify who can provide it – your line manager; an internal ally; a councillor; Personnel; SLACN; COSLA? Remember that COSLA and the Scottish Executive will happily meet with your managers and Members to discuss ways of progressing Local Agenda 21 in your area. So you may want to frame a bid for your tools before you enter the corporate arena. And you may want to plan your approach with the Local Agenda 21 Adviser.

Putting the message across

Now you should be clear about the need for corporate commitment, and about your own ability to support a Local Agenda 21 process. So it is time to consider how to present this message in a way which will secure that commitment.

Before looking at the presentation of the message, remind yourself of the “do's and don'ts” of dealing with decision makers. They do like clarity and they don't like surprises! You are trying to sell them on a principle and a process which appear to involve everything and everyone that the Council deals with. They will want to know exactly what is involved in terms of resources, timescales and the management of processes and expectations. (Look at the sections on ‘*Awareness Raising*’, ‘*Partnership Working*’ and ‘*Community Involvement*’, then discuss this with people who have experience of similar exercises in your Council, with SLACN colleagues and with COSLA). But if you still don't know the answers, say so, and identify a stage at which more detail can be provided.

There are several ways of presenting your case. A report to the corporate management team and/or to the appropriate committee has often been sufficient to get a Council started on Local Agenda 21. However, with the number of other corporate issues now competing for top level political and managerial attention, it will be prudent to consider a range of methods for presenting the issue:-

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

- (i) **The Personal Touch** – top level attention is best obtained by championing from top level people. Try to find any leading Members or senior officers who may be intellectually or emotionally supportive of sustainability, or who are concerned by a local issue which you can demonstrate is an example of “unsustainability”. Make contact with your new Councillors before they get too bogged down in the constant flow of committee papers and constituency work. But remember that having no ally is better than being associated with a liability. Find out how your potential allies are perceived by the local decision makers. You need strong allies – and they don’t have to be within the Council. In the new world of partnership working you may find some of the support you need from key individuals in your Health Board or LEC – or even your new MSP’s!
- (ii) **Time Out** - a great deal can be achieved by a half day or evening seminar or working lunch, where the issues can be presented and debated in a less formal manner. The ideal audience would be the “movers and shakers” who can get Local Agenda 21 established as a corporate issue. Try to design your sessions so that you act as a facilitator, with the key messages presented by a senior management and/or political figure. Whatever type of session you choose, ensure that you design an agenda which will provide you with a clear mandate afterwards - either to assume that there is corporate commitment, or to proceed to prepare a committee report which will secure it.
- (iii) **Think Ahead** – it is essential that you do your homework, to determine where potential problems may arise. These will range from overloaded strategic agendas and professional jealousies, to internal reorganisation and external pressures. It may be necessary to cultivate and seek the help of an internal ally who is at a more senior level or more directly involved with corporate issues. Always try to show how Local Agenda 21 will add value to other priorities and to existing work – particularly the Community Planning process. Try to keep your message positive but, again, don’t attempt to hide or fudge potential problems, as this will give out the wrong message about your credibility. If you use the right “hooks” and underline the importance and value of the Local Agenda 21 process to your Council, you should find success.
- (iv) **Timing, Timing, Timing** – you can design the most convincing message and present it with flair and passion, but if you choose to present it at the wrong time then all your work will be wasted. Choose a time when you are likely to avoid competing distractions such as budget-setting, school holidays, staffing disputes or local crises. And remember that formal political support has to be sought within the long and inflexible cycles of committee meetings.
- (v) **Ask and Ye Shall Receive** – this process has been undertaken many times now and there are a number of “battle scarred veterans” with successes and failures to learn from. SLACN exists to help develop and promote best practice, so look to your colleagues and to COSLA for help. Who knows, the ideal report, presentation or even guest speaker may be out there waiting to be your key to securing the corporate commitment of your Council! COSLA, the Scottish Executive, SLACN and Forward Scotland have all made joint presentations to Councils on their need to mainstream Local Agenda 21.

When you have got your Council’s corporate commitment you should shout about it. Make sure that everyone knows that Local Agenda 21 is part of the mainstream. Build up a momentum and profile which will help to maintain the commitment later. And strengthen the commitment through awareness raising.

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

Understanding Your Council

If securing corporate commitment is the essential foundation for your Local Agenda 21, then understanding your Council is the key to that commitment. This means knowing:-

- * who the leading Members and officers are
- * what their interests are, i.e. their politics/wards/committees/services/known likes and dislikes
- * how the Council works, i.e. departmental and committee structures, reporting and budgeting processes and timetables, who does what
- * what the main policies, programmes and services of the Council are
- * what has gone on beforehand
- * subjects and approaches to avoid – generally, or with particular individuals

Keep well informed. Know what the Government and Members are saying, and fit your work within it. Try to understand the latest initiatives as soon as they become clear, so that you have time to think how they can fit with your work. Don't let yourself be marginalised by ignorance.

Go and see people. Use the excuse that your remit is cross-cutting to find out what people really think and do, and don't be put off by the professional and departmental barriers which some individuals like to hide behind. Make the effort to know the names, know the faces and know their business. Make one-to-one contact and don't just rely on formal meetings. You can't expect to get your ideas approved in a meeting if you haven't bothered to sound out and win over the key players beforehand.

Try to meet all the Heads of Service at least once. Go and speak to the corporate and departmental management teams, once you know exactly what you want to say and what you want from them. If you have a supportive manager or senior ally, do a double act. Present yourself as someone who can see the bigger picture and identifies solutions, not problems. Above all, don't be the sort of officer who only knows the people who sit nearby, and would rather be isolated in the Portakabin than moving in the corridors of power.

First impressions count. Make sure, when you are going to introduce yourself to a new contact, that you have taken the trouble to find and read the available background material on their area of interest, particularly their own work done for service planning or Best Value. Show that you have made an effort to understand their perspective. Listen to them.

And Then?

You need a **plan!** If your bid for commitment did not identify the "who does what" then do so now. The Council's commitment to your work should be set out and agreed in a timetabled plan which clearly shows all the stages and resources which will be necessary in order for you and your colleagues to deliver the promised benefits which secured the commitment. This is particularly important if your delivery of a Local Agenda 21 process is to drive and/or be integrated with other corporate initiatives – as it should be. Without an agreed workplan you can be distracted or redirected away from the focus of the Local Agenda 21 strategy - and you only have 16 months now before it should be adopted.

Your plan should cover not just your own work process. It should also clearly identify how the Council is going to ensure that its other processes will help deliver the commitment to sustainability and the deadline for your Local Agenda 21's adoption. For example, you will want to look ahead and see when key strategies come up for review, so that their review and consultations can support and be informed by your Local Agenda 21 process.

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

You will also need a **corporate officer group**, because there is no way that you are going to be able to handle all the work on your own – and you need some (official) allies. Try to get middle managers onto your team, since juniors can't commit their seniors and most seniors will be too busy to attend. Enlist their support on a one-to-one basis and don't rely on meetings to win their hearts and minds. Emphasise what's in it for them and exploit the virtuous circle in which corporate commitment and their personal commitment reinforce each other. Try to find early "wins" as rewards for their efforts. But don't forget that it is their job to find ways of delivering the Council's policy, not blocking it. So you may want to persuade a senior manager with the appropriate authority to chair the group (with you doing all the back-up work).

Your corporate officer group will work best if it has:-

- a clear remit to deliver the Council's part in the Local Agenda 21 process
- a focus on actions rather than discussions
- a direct reporting line to the Council's management team and/or to senior Members
- and an agreed format and frequency for its meetings.

The work of the group should be genuinely corporate, and not just of interest to one or two departments. Where complex issues, service-specific work or laborious in-house actions have to be addressed, delegate them to time-limited task groups and let the main group get on with its business. Your success will depend on the time and thought that you put in to planning and preparing for the group's meetings.

If you can, and if your Council's culture permits it, have regular meetings where Members and officers jointly review progress. The benefits of this should be obvious.

Maintaining Commitment

Gaining corporate commitment is one thing, but maintaining it over time - in the face of the 101 other corporate pressures and service crises - is quite another! The only way that you will be able to maintain people's commitment is by being able to demonstrate constant progress (so don't put all your effort into one initiative) and by providing "wins" for your supporters and sponsors.

The processes of partnership working and community involvement will show up increasing numbers of opportunities for quick, effective action. For Members, the "wins" may be visible, local improvements, financial savings or awards to your Council – things which will look good to their voters. For officers, the "wins" could be the merging of processes (e.g. consultations, policy appraisals, communications) – things which reduce their workloads and budget pressures. For chief officers both types of "win" are very welcome.

When you cultivate your champions try to find out what sort of wins would make them happy. Always try to keep in mind their need for wins, and try to time wins so that they will be fresh in your champions'minds at the times when you most need their support.

And remember, there is nothing wrong with badging existing initiatives, so long as they genuinely contribute to Local Agenda 21 and their "owners" are happy to co-operate – and provided that new and original wins are in the pipeline.

A useful way of broadening corporate commitment is by stealth. Gradually, sustainability creeps into policy statements and service plans, whether prompted by national guidance or by your own influence. Gradually you manage to persuade Members to launch events and put their names to press releases and documents. Eventually sustainability becomes an accepted part of what the Council does, and your big names are prepared to promote or defend it in public, in the papers and at meetings. Increasingly it becomes an issue which has to be considered in decision-making – so make sure that the common understanding of it hasn't become diluted or distorted with the passage of time!

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

The corporate commitment will need to be constantly renewed and re-expressed so that it does not fall into neglect. It will need to be backed up by specific commitments to deliver it through each corporate and service strategy of the Council. Every time a new initiative kicks off you should be asking how it will help deliver sustainability.

The best way of maintaining commitment in the Council is to make that the business of your Members. When the time is right you should try to find some way of involving Members in the process of turning commitment in principle into change in practice. This could come about through work on policy integration, partnership working or delivery. It may best be done by giving the responsibility to an existing or proposed corporate performance review or scrutiny committee, rather than to a “special interest” group. Members should have, and be seen to have, a strong role in ensuring that words become actions. It is something that many of them like doing.

Corporate means corporate

This is a self-evident but crucial point. The remainder of this Route Planner sets out any number of ways in which Local Agenda 21 can be taken forward in your Council. It should be your job to get these activities under way, **but not to do them all yourself**. The scope and content of the Local Agenda 21 process are so mainstream and extensive that they can only be successfully delivered by the Council as a whole. It is your Council, not you, which has been challenged to develop and adopt a Local Agenda 21 strategy by 31 December next year. Your job is to support the process – and you can't do that if you burn out and go on long-term sick leave.

AWARENESS RAISING

Effective awareness raising will underpin every part of your Local Agenda 21 process. Without it, colleagues will not be motivated to change their working practices, managers and members will not be persuaded to review their policies, partners will not be convinced of the need to work together for sustainability, and citizens will be indifferent to your pleas for understanding.

For your message to be heard and understood people will have to know what the issues are, how they are personally affected, and what they should do. They need to know what impact Local Agenda 21 will have on their interests and aspirations. And to ensure that your message is effective you will need to know your audiences and the tools at your disposal.

Audiences

Before you start, identify who you want to reach. People have different interests in the different spheres of their lives and they will respond accordingly. Your message will be more effective if it is targetted at your audience's interests.

Your audiences will include Members, managers, staff, partner bodies, the community at large and particular groups, such as youth, the elderly, business people and women. It is important to know the interests of each of these audiences, so that you can use their language and tailor your message for greater effect.

Raising awareness is normally the prerequisite for gaining the essential corporate commitment which will trigger change. But sometimes a Council may first make a commitment to a major theme like sustainability, and then quickly require a back-up programme of awareness raising or training to unpack the theme in terms of specific service interests.

In Councils where the corporate commitment is weak you should try to push the agenda along by working with your external audience. For example, the local media always needs stories and local amenity groups need publicity for their work. You can provide the link by supplying the stories - with a sustainability spin. This in turn raises the profile of the initiatives and lets Members know that there is interest in the community. Members are sensitive to the subjects which interest the local media. In addition, your colleagues read the papers and they may become more attuned to what you are doing.

Amenity and community groups have often been around a long time. They have good networks and links to the local movers and shakers, including your Members. Many groups are part of national networks which are supportive of Local Agenda 21.

Whatever your audience, you must be sensitive to their experience and view of the world. Elderly people can better appreciate sustainability if you unpack the accumulation of **unsustainable** changes in our lives over the past 40 years. Younger people (and their parents) may be better motivated by thinking about the alternative futures which await them and which they could start to influence now.

It may take a bit longer, but you should really try to involve each of the different groups (particularly teenagers) through working with someone who knows them and is accepted by them. Whoever your audience, you need to make sure that you will be able to keep their attention – so try to make your presentations and events both relevant and fun (and fun means very different things to your different audiences).

Another very important audience is the business community. Again, you should identify who that sector takes notice of, and then bring in partners (perhaps the LEC) who can speak their language. Key messages for businesses may be the inexorable pressures from Europe, Government, lenders, insurers and customers to improve environmental performance and avoid liability. Environmental audits of businesses can go a long way to demonstrate the potential for resource efficiencies and savings. Several of the water and energy utilities and SEPA actively encourage business customers to look for resource savings. You could use these audits as an introduction to the wider agenda of sustainability.

AWARENESS RAISING

Tools

It is very useful to have a written **plan** for your marketing and communications work. Try to develop it with the expertise of your public relations officer if possible. Your plan should identify your audiences, your messages and events, opportunities for consultation and participation, and your resources and timetables.

The main reason for having a communications plan is that, under the pressure of delivering the core elements of your Local Agenda 21, it is your communications activity which is likely to be first onto the backburner. Yet, from your Members' perspective, this is the part of the process with which they can most readily identify. They may be grateful for the weekends you worked on policy or service planning, but what they **really** want and value is good publicity for "their" Local Agenda 21, and an electorate which feels more comfortable with the idea of sustainability.

Another useful tool for awareness raising is to have an **identity** – logos, house styles and slogans can all help you capture and keep the public interest, so long as you can keep up a constant programme of news, events, displays and talks. This can be hugely absorbing of your time. It is why badging existing initiatives and forming a good relationship with your public relations people are so important.

Securing **media** coverage is invaluable, but it needs to be sustained and informative. Early on you should speak to your Council's public relations officer and, with them, the local or regional editors, reporters and programme managers. Introduce them to the aims and objectives of Local Agenda 21 and encourage them to become involved. They will appreciate it if you ask their advice on the best way to create stories out of your work. Promote each story yourself if possible, and continue to cultivate your media contacts. And don't rely on press releases to do the work for you – they are the junk mail of journalism.

You need to be **pro-active** if you want to raise awareness, and this means being accessible and alert to opportunities and sometimes just inviting yourself along to meet groups. But you must always choose the right time and do your homework. Going out and talking "cold" to people is as wasteful of your time as always waiting to be asked. A good way to maximise your audiences is to offer yourself as a guest speaker at groups' AGMs.

Publications such as **information packs** are another important way of spreading the word and letting people know what they can do for themselves. Information packs can cover issues such as energy efficiency, food safety, recycling and car use. They should hold tips and contact details and be both informative and user-friendly. But everyone complains about the mass of leaflets being pushed through their doors, and many people just bin the lot as a matter of course. So think about how you are going to get your material read. Where can you put it so that people will find it just at the time when that issue is at the front of their minds?

Projects are valuable ways of demonstrating what sustainability looks like on the ground. They can be about energy, transport, recycling, food or health, but they can all help you to demystify the concept.

Safer Routes to School is a good example of an opportunity for awareness raising. Managing projects is usually best done by the people who manage the staff or service involved, it is time-consuming and should not automatically be your responsibility. There is already a huge amount of good practice in different types of projects all around the country. Many of them were highlighted in *'Changed Days'*. So look around and adapt – there is no need to reinvent this wheel.

AWARENESS RAISING

Encouraging **community initiatives** and demonstration projects, through sweeteners such as grant aiding, prize giving, or publicity for best practice, can be a useful way of engaging with the public through practical action. Talk to Forward Scotland about accessing Landfill Tax money for sustainability projects in your area. And keep an eye out for the funding criteria for the Lottery's New Opportunities Fund.

Food is, perhaps surprisingly, often a good way of getting people to think about sustainability. In many deprived communities local food growing provides healthy, affordable and accessible eating, with the benefits of exercise, employment and SVQ opportunities. And changing patterns of food retailing have raised concerns about the decline of local shops, the impact of distant big stores and even the huge distances which many foods travel before we buy them. Meanwhile, constant food scares around chemicals, hormones, genetically modified organisms and antibiotics are making people start to think about the environmental and health impacts of unsustainable practices.

Health is often another excellent way into sustainability. The three big global environmental actions of the 1990's were prompted by the threats to human health. Depletion of the ozone layer means eye cataracts and skin cancers. Climate change means disease, drought, flooding and famine. Loss of biodiversity means famine, disease and the loss of Nature's pharmacy. At a local level, air quality, waste disposal and road safety can be very effective ways of introducing communities to wider sustainability issues.

Sustainability reports (aka state of the environment reports or environmental audits) and sustainability indicators can be a powerful way of getting local people to think about **local conditions** and their quality of life. Even partial pictures of the local area, painted by the planning or Local Biodiversity Action Plan processes, can spark an awareness of sustainability issues.

Encourage a **vision** for the area. Get local groups and young people thinking about what sort of place they want to be living in. This may be useful to kick-start the wider process. It should provide something which can be fed into area committees or the Community Planning process for wider discussion and development. But be very careful not to raise unrealistic expectations of change in the minds of the participants, and do ensure that the people who have to deliver the services which would deliver the vision are fully involved in the process. Because if you freeze them out now, they will freeze you out later.

Remember that you are trying to raise awareness about issues affecting the local quality of life in the 21st century. And you are aiming to get a vision and action plan agreed by local players and people by the end of 2000. This could be an excellent **Millennium** project, giving you access to high profile publicity and marketing resources. Celebration is a good tool for awareness raising.

One of the most important ways of raising awareness, within the Council, is through **staff training**. This works best when it is a two-way process working towards an outcome, and when you have done your homework. Plan the training with someone who understands the interests of that group of staff. Check whether talk of Rio and global issues is going to be helpful or counter-productive. Make sure that you understand their service, and make sure that all services are included. Then get the staff to think about what sustainability means to them in their lives, as well as at work. Ask them what it means to their customers. Ask them how the different aspects of their service affect sustainability. Then ask them how their service could be improved through being more sustainable. You should get a quality and originality of feedback which simply could not be achieved by talking at them. And you will have some powerful insights into how you can then influence the service planning process! This could even be the explicit purpose and outcome of the training programme. It also offers material for any Member training which you propose, and is better done first.

AWARENESS RAISING

However, you will not get round all your Council's staff to secure their understanding of your work by December 2000. So, ensure that your training programme focuses on the managers in each service and that it equips them to cascade the training within their sections. Ask them to outline what happened in the training sessions in their internal newsletters or briefings. Ensure that the training which you have initiated is taken up and delivered through each section's training programme.

Some ways of matching messages to audiences within the Council:-

WHO?	HOW?
Members	Members' seminar – with inspiring keynote speaker Presentation to main policy committee Members' training sessions Sustainability impact assessments in Committee reports In-house newsletter/Intranet
Managers	Presentation to Management Team(s) Managers' training sessions Sustainability impact assessments in Committee reports In-house newsletter/Intranet
Staff	Presentation to staff representatives/housekeeping groups Sustainability impact assessments in Committee reports Induction procedure In-house newsletter/Intranet

Some things to bear in mind when trying to raise awareness:-

- Find out what interests people, then gain their support for Local Agenda 21 by keying into the things that are important for them.
- Try to involve as many people as possible, so as to build up a critical mass of support.
- Ensure that every service is included, so that Local Agenda 21 becomes a Council-wide activity.
- Make the connections with high profile local issues like jobs, transport, food or health.
- Raising awareness is as much about working with people as working on them.

TACKLING THE CORE ELEMENTS

Gaining corporate commitment and raising awareness will underpin the development of your Local Agenda 21 strategy, and they are evolving processes. You may only need to secure a small amount of awareness and commitment to have the opportunity to start to influence policy and practice. Take whatever opportunities are open to you to make progress on any of the elements of Local Agenda 21. Success in any area will increase your chances of raising the level of commitment and awareness, and of being able to further influence these core elements :-

- **IN-HOUSE ACTION**
- **POLICY INTEGRATION**
- **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

In the next sections we have compiled advice on good practice from members of the Network. In reviewing our experiences we have identified a number of key messages which we believe are worth setting down at this point, before looking at the individual elements :-

KEY MESSAGES –

- Working on Local Agenda 21 need not be a step by step process.
- You do not have to have “done” in-house action before you can move on to policy integration.
- Arrangements for partnership working and community involvement will take time to put in place and so will need early attention.
- Local opportunities to progress each core element can arise at any time and should be seized at once.
- Some parts of the Local Agenda 21 process will be easier, or more difficult, in different areas.
- Don’t use up all your time and energies trying to crack one part of the process.
- Remind yourself of all that you are trying to achieve, and consider moving on to other work which will bring quicker results.
- You can always come back to the difficult bits in your action plan. But you will only ever be able to tackle those difficult bits if your Council has made a clear and public commitment to do so, based upon effective awareness raising and backed up by its delivery systems.

IN-HOUSE ACTION

This is the core element of Local Agenda 21 which has had the most attention since the formation of our new Councils in 1996. Putting your Council's own house in order is an important part of the Local Agenda 21 process and is a signal of the Council's good faith. After all, your Council is probably the biggest local employer and generator of traffic, the biggest consumer of energy and purchaser of goods and services in the local economy, and a major generator of waste in its own right. As a regulator, enforcer, provider, investor, lobbyist and voice of the community, your Council's credibility will be influenced by the example which it sets.

However, the leaders of the world's governments did not convene in Rio in 1992 only to ensure that Council employees switched the lights off behind them. The challenge over the next 16 months is to engage all sections of the community in agreeing a vision and a local action plan for sustainability in the next century. Our priority now must be to ensure that each of the other three essential core elements of the process will be covered by all Councils.

Fortunately there is now a wealth of expertise within Scottish Councils on tackling issues such as their energy conservation, paper recycling and staff travel. Pointers to further information on good practice in in-house action can be found throughout '*Changed Days*', and the Network enables you to share ideas and experience. Indeed, SLACN proposes to work with COSLA and the Scottish Executive to strengthen networking and provide a database for the sharing and updating of this good practice between Councils.

There are also two important points to note on securing in-house action. The first is that a huge amount of energy, credibility and goodwill can be dissipated in trying to persuade your Council to do things like changing the vehicle fleet, revising mileage allowances, challenging investment policies or renegotiating the purchasing contracts. But operational change on this scale will only ever happen when it is preceded by a corporate commitment to sustainability and by you working within your Council's delivery system. This Route Planner covers these issues in some depth.

The second point is that achieving in-house action has become entangled with **Best Value**, and Best Value has achieved a life of its own. Best Value is meant to be about "how" we do things, it is not the means for deciding "what" we do – that is the work of our Councillors. It is meant to ensure that our services are delivered in accordance with our goals. However, there is still little practical guidance available on how to ensure that Best Value can actually be used to deliver cross-cutting corporate goals such as social inclusion, equality or sustainability. So for now we shall focus our guidance on securing corporate commitment, policy integration and your delivery systems, particularly through the service planning process.

But, as you almost certainly will have to engage in the Best Value process at some stage, there are some useful arguments which may influence the "gatekeepers" and help establish your professional credibility:-

- * resource efficiencies are at the heart of sustainability and Best Value. Councils are in the business of educating, housing and caring for people, not heating and lighting buildings or paying for waste to be thrown away. Waste of natural resources is inefficient and expensive.
- * the national agendas for sustainability will determine the context within which all Council services will have to be delivered. The Fuel Duty escalator, the Landfill Tax ratchet and the Climate Change Levy are obvious drivers for resource efficiency which should be built into budget projections and contract specifications. The national obligations under the Kyoto Protocol will affect all public services. Are your Best Value teams taking this into account?

IN-HOUSE ACTION

* indicators are an important management tool both for Best Value and for sustainability. Indicators can help you to clarify, both for yourself and to colleagues, what it is that you are all trying to achieve. Sharing indicators, and the means of measuring them, could help ensure that sustainability is taken seriously. In this case it is credibility by association (i.e. if something is in the Best Value performance plan then it must be an important issue). Just remember that, in the spirit of Best Value, performance indicators should measure change in the quality of life and the satisfaction of the customer and the community, not just the means by which the change is delivered.

* consultation is a key part of both the Local Agenda 21 and Best Value processes. A range of techniques, including focus groups and citizens panels, can inform either process. So there may be opportunities to pool information and resources, with the benefit of avoiding consultation fatigue.

Finally, COSLA, Councils and organisations throughout the UK are looking at ways of making Best Value work for sustainability. Two Scottish Councils are planning Best Value service reviews of their LA21/sustainability functions. Any useful findings from all this work will be circulated when available.

POLICY INTEGRATION

“Joined-up everything” is the mantra of our time. At a corporate strategic level Community Planning, Rural Development Strategies, social inclusion and health improvement offer opportunities to broaden and strengthen Local Agenda 21. For all of these joined-up strategies there is then the need to translate them through service-specific plans into change on the ground.

The scale and scope of a Local Agenda 21 strategy mean that it must rely on other, more manageable, plans and strategies for its implementation. Some of these are already being nationally guided towards sustainability, e.g. transport planning, waste management, local biodiversity action plans and the land use planning system, and you should already be familiar with this. Other strategies may have direct and immediate impacts upon this group of plans and on the wider sustainability of the area, e.g. economic development plans and housing strategies. Your Council’s policies for community safety, lifelong learning, leisure and social inclusion will also have significant, though longer term, impacts on local sustainability.

It can be difficult for the people dealing with the pressures of these services to see what relevance Local Agenda 21 has for them. **You** are peddling notions of motherhood and apple pie, while **they** are trying to tackle poverty, crime and unemployment. Yet anyone dealing with these intractable issues knows very well that their causes are complex and that their solutions require partnership and innovation. There are two ways of integrating your interests and theirs. Firstly, you can establish common ground through sharing thinking during the sort of effective training session outlined in the section on *‘Awareness Raising’*.

Secondly, what you can offer them is a reminder of the common ground on which partnership and innovation can flourish. When you look at our summary of *‘A Sustainable Community’* you can see that it describes the sum of what you, your colleagues and the Council’s partners are trying to achieve for your area. This is not motherhood and apple pie; it is the reason why people give up their time for voluntary work, it is why people are prepared to stand for local elections, it is why people accept public sector pay. We are **all** working for a sustainable community.

This vision is at the heart of the Government’s agenda for modern local government, where Councils exist to promote the long-term well-being and sustainable development of their areas through their Community Plans.

Community Plans

Community Planning in Scotland is not imposed by the Government, it is owned by the Councils. Our Community Plans will establish long-term visions and action plans for the social, economic and environmental well-being of their areas, through partnership working and community involvement. COSLA recognises that there are strong and obvious parallels now between Community Plans and Local Agenda 21. COSLA has therefore recently issued guidance on *‘Best Practice in Community Planning’* to all Councils, and a copy of this Newline has been sent to all SLACN members.

Community Planning is a learning and evolving process. All Scotland’s Councils are working to produce, with their local partners, their draft Community Plans in 1999. COSLA encourages Councils to regard this as the first stage, with partnership working and community involvement continuing in 2000 and beyond.

Five pathfinder Councils have produced draft Community Plans with their local partners. Four of them have made the links between their Local Agenda 21 and the overall Community Plans for their area.

POLICY INTEGRATION

South Lanarkshire's Community Plan "takes a long-term view, identifying priority issues to be addressed by partners in developing sustainable and practical solutions to the social, economic and environmental problems and opportunities facing an area." "The need to connect and balance economic development, growth, environmental protection and enhancement as well as the promotion of health and social well-being will underpin our approach to Community Planning. By doing so South Lanarkshire will demonstrate its commitment to sustainable development and to the Rio Earth Summit's Local Agenda 21."

Stirling's Community Plan identified 3 mutually reinforcing principles (social inclusion, sustainability and quality services) and, in more detail, 7 strategic themes, each of which guides the others. These are:- quality services; local democracy and accountability; social inclusion; prosperity, income, jobs and opportunities; sustainable development and environment; community safety; and a caring community.

Highland's Community Plan adopted 4 principles for Community Planning:- Highland in Scotland (integration in the national economy); Strength in Diversity; More Sustainable Development (ensuring sustainable businesses, communities and use of resources); and Long Term Commitment. Highland's 5 more detailed strategic themes are:- Learning Communities; Prosperous Communities; Safe, Healthy Communities; Capable, Confident Communities; and Sustainable Communities.

Edinburgh's vision for the future of the city embraces the 7 strategic themes of meeting its challenges of:- capital city role; social inclusion; community well-being; economic growth; information and learning; environmental sustainability; and major developments.

Community Planning has a political priority and urgency which few Local Agenda 21's have attained. It is an equally ambitious process, but it is being worked for on a tighter timescale. It will eventually provide the strategic context for all of your Council's other policies. You therefore have three choices, bearing in mind that Community Planning may be taken to mean different things in some areas.

Firstly, you can work **apart** from the Community Planning process, promoting a separate identity for Local Agenda 21 and hoping that your colleagues, local partners and community will bear with the apparent duplication of work and consultations – and hoping that your Local Agenda 21 will then be compatible with the Community Plan. Because it won't get delivered if it isn't. This may be realistic where your Council is still not comfortable with Local Agenda 21, or where your Local Agenda 21 has achieved real momentum but your Council is not yet comfortable with Community Planning.

Secondly, you can try to work **within** the Community Planning process, so that it becomes, in effect, the Local Agenda 21 for your area. We would urge you to make every effort to achieve this, as it is the best means of engaging the real decision makers in your Council and its partners, and then your community, in thinking about the long-term well-being of your area. To be blunt, there was never any realistic prospect that all of Scotland's conveners, chief officers, chief constables, managers of Health Boards and chief executives of enterprise companies were going to give their time, attention and consultative resources to Local Agenda 21. But now Community Planning has opened that door.

Thirdly, you can try to work **alongside** the Community Planning process, sharing as much thinking and activity as possible, but recognising that the vision in Local Agenda 21 may be longer term, that the well-being which we seek is national and global as well as local, that your partners may also include voluntary and pressure groups, and that your community involvement may be more in-depth. This would suggest a separate and subsidiary, but very closely and explicitly related, strategy which could almost provide an aspirational framework for the evolution of your local Community Planning process. A nice trick if you can manage it!

POLICY INTEGRATION

So, how are you going to get through the door and into the Community Planning process? The earlier section on *'Corporate Commitment'* provides some useful tips on getting into the policy mainstream. The next section on *'Partnership Working'* shows how some key local partners now share a requirement to promote sustainable development and a need to better understand it. The section on *'Community Involvement'* suggests ways in which Local Agenda 21 can help the Community Planning process by getting people thinking about big, complex and long-term issues through local examples. And the COSLA Newslines on *'Best Practice in Community Planning'* should be a real help now.

Rural Development Strategies

In rural areas Councils are now working, through Rural Partnerships, to prepare Rural Development Strategies. They have been told by the Scottish Executive that their Rural Development Strategies "should be integrated with the overall community plan" and "should establish a vision for the sustainable development of the area and the respective and complementary contributions each partner will make towards attaining that vision." The need for linkage with your Local Agenda 21 will be obvious. Has it been made?

Social Inclusion Partnerships

The Government describes social exclusion as a complex set of linked problems including unemployment, low skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown. Social Inclusion Partnerships will be the means for tackling these problems at a local level, within the strategic context set by the Community Plan for the whole of the Council's area. Useful work establishing the links between your interests and the needs of stressed communities has already been done through the Sustainable Communities projects, which have been co-ordinated by Forward Scotland. The results of those projects will be available later this year.

Health Improvement

There is now a convergence of thinking on the promotion of sustainability and health improvement as allied and cross-cutting themes. The White Paper *'Towards a Healthier Scotland'* proposes that the first level of national action to improve health should be "life circumstances" i.e. the social, economic and environmental determinants of well-being.

The White Paper proposes that all Councils should be asked to make health improvement a corporate goal and to use Community Planning to improve the circumstances in which people live. The White Paper also calls for the Health Boards' Health Improvement Programmes to be linked with Community Plans. This offers another way in to the Community Planning process.

National Policy Integration

There is now a national context for the integration of sustainability into all areas of policy. The text of the *'Agreement for the First Scottish Parliament'* sets out in its Principles that "We will integrate the principles of environmentally and socially sustainable development into all government policies." (and) "We will work to promote environmentally and socially sustainable economic development." The Standing Orders for the Scottish Parliament provide that any Bill introduced by a member of the Scottish Executive must be accompanied by an assessment of the effects of the Bill on equal opportunities, human rights, island communities, local government and sustainable development.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

When guidance on Local Agenda 21 first began to appear, a Council's partners were usually seen as environmental groups, community groups, businesses, farmers, landowners and twinned Councils in the Third World. These partners still have a greater or lesser stake in the process, but times have changed. Partnership working is the name of the game in the public sector now - and Community Planning is the biggest game in town.

So your highest priority for partnership working should be your Community Plan – because it is likely, over time, to set the context for all of your Council's future activity. Because it will become the main focus of local debate about the vision for the area's future. Because it will increasingly shape the service delivery of the other local partners in the process. And because those partners are having to think about their own responsibilities for sustainable development.

So who are these partners? They will usually be the Local Enterprise Company, Scottish Homes, the Health Board and the Police. They may also include the major businesses in the area and bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Chamber of Commerce, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, the Water Authority, the Tourist Board and educational institutes.

Enterprise - in August 1998 Donald Dewar reminded Scottish Enterprise and Highland and Islands Enterprise of the Government's commitment to sustainable development, and requested them to propose deliverable objectives in support of this commitment, both for their own operations and for the companies which they support. Some follow-up can be expected and your Local Enterprise Company should be reminded of the need to contribute to this work.

Scottish Homes - is increasingly looking for ways that it can contribute to the local sustainability agenda. Its functions have very obvious links both to direct environmental impacts and to social inclusion. The environmental impacts have been identified and are being addressed. The wider relationship of the agency's work to local sustainability is now being considered.

Health Boards - improving people's life circumstances is the first level of action in the White Paper '*Towards a Healthier Scotland*'. This means tackling social, economic and environmental conditions. The White Paper recommends that all Councils will be asked to make health improvement a corporate goal and to use Community Planning to improve the circumstances in which people live. Health promotion and public health professionals are well equipped to make the links between sustainability and health, and their influence is likely to increase. These parts of the health sector have financial and consultative resources which can be (and are being) used to engage people in thinking about their life circumstances. There is tremendous potential for synergy between Health Boards and Local Agenda 21 processes, and COSLA will work on this with you.

Be aware that Health Improvement Programmes (HIPs) are the Health Board equivalent of Community Plans. If your work isn't built into the HIP then it won't get done. Remember also that the health sector is often only second to the local authority in terms of its local impacts as a consumer of energy, purchaser of goods and services, and generator of both traffic and waste. Your Local Agenda 21 strategy should have something for the Health Board to say about this!

Police - it won't be easy to get the Force thinking about all aspects of sustainability, but they should readily recognise their contribution to the bigger picture of a sustainable community, as they are increasingly having to think through their contribution to social inclusion. Try to identify and discuss this with your Council's community safety lead officer. Acknowledge that the Force has a lot of experience in consulting local communities on issues that really matter to them. Designated Community Police Officers often have tremendous local knowledge, excellent local contacts and a strong personal commitment to improving local conditions. They are tireless attendees of formal and informal local meetings. So, try to think how you might help each other.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

However, don't forget the need for in-house action. There is no reason why the Police, like all the partners in the Community Planning process or any other local partnership, should not be taking steps to quantify and reduce their energy, transport, waste and purchasing impacts.

Water Authorities – West of Scotland Water is actively seeking ways to support Local Agenda 21 processes through its Water Watch campaign. East of Scotland Water is working with businesses on waste minimisation projects.

Councils – your neighbouring Councils are also key partners. You may already be working together on joint structure plans, transport or biodiversity. You should be liaising to ensure that compatible messages are being given to partner organisations which cover several Council areas. And you should certainly be checking that your local visions of sustainability are compatible. Issues of waste disposal, water supply, development sites and traffic flows spring to mind.

Community Planning, in its early days, has been very much about people in suits and uniforms meeting in offices and cautiously learning to understand each others' priorities and agendas. Only then can they feel comfortable in framing some sort of vision for their area and then going out to consult the community about it. But long experience has shown that community ownership can only be won through active community involvement from the earliest stages. Whilst the Council is likely to have the most experience of community consultation, it may have little real experience of engendering community involvement.

However, there are many other local partners, particularly in the voluntary sector, who could be engaged in your Local Agenda 21 process or even, through your work, drawn into the Community Planning process. And there is, across the UK, a wealth of experience through Local Agenda 21 in helping local communities to start thinking about big and complex issues by working up from very local concerns. This could be a service which you offer to the people trying to drive forward and widen the ownership of your Community Plan. After all, you will be of much more interest to them (and better able to influence their work) if you are seen as a resource and a solution to their problems.

(SLACN at its second Scottish National Forum in August 1999 will have speakers from some of these national sectors with a stake in sustainability, whose local bodies will be the partners in Community Planning and Local Agenda 21. We hope that a day devoted to partnership working will create new opportunities for you to think about how to link up with your local partners. One outcome of the Conference could be a fuller insert on partnership working for this Route Planner.)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local Agenda 21 is about working towards a sustainable community, with the active involvement of all the sectors of that community, perhaps through Community Planning. As with so much of the Local Agenda 21 process we have had a fair idea of what we are trying to achieve, but less idea of how we are going to achieve it. So how will we engage our community – and are we the right people to be doing it?

Community involvement is at the heart of Local Agenda 21, because local people must own the vision for their area and take a personal responsibility for achieving it. But the idea of sustainability can be hard to get across to people for whom “environmental issues” are dog dirt and street sweeping, and the real issues are poverty, crime and illness.

How can you involve people in a process which is meaningful for them, which meets their needs and which leads them on to issues such as resource use, biodiversity and climate change? Consultation alone won't do this. Awareness raising will help, but is not enough. However, the **community development** approach suggests a way.

The theory of community development recognises that people have a hierarchy of needs, and their basic needs for food, shelter and personal safety must be met before they will have the time or inclination to concern themselves with politics, culture or sustainability. The theory also recognises that people learn best when the subject is relevant to their interests. So if we really want to help people think about their long-term well-being, we should start from practical actions based on meeting their immediate needs.

This means working at a community level to identify local issues, building groups who can work on their own issues, advising them of possibilities, supporting group members as they gain in confidence, reinforcing their confidence with wins which meet local needs, enabling them to become self-managing, and encouraging people to realise that change is possible and that they can make it happen. This is what is meant by “capacity building”. From this base groups can then move on to address larger scale and longer-term issues.

None of this is just theory. There are inspiring examples all around Scotland of local communities taking their own well-being into their own hands and getting to grips with sustainability in very practical ways. We intend to provide further material on community development, written by the people who have been helping it happen, in the Winter of 1999. At this stage we will simply set out some of the universal lessons from the national experience of community involvement.

Firstly, it isn't easy. It takes time and patience and particular skills. Skills which can be found in Councils and in Health Boards, among the people working on community development, community education, health promotion, community arts and regeneration programmes. The staff with these skills are often over-stretched, under-funded and working to existing organisational objectives which have not recognised Local Agenda 21. However, these people are often great enthusiasts for Local Agenda 21 once they learn about it. So an exploration of their work programmes and your aims can get your local community involvement process started.

Community development is an area which has lacked priority and resources in recent years. It isn't sexy, it doesn't offer any quick fixes and it requires a commitment to helping the community to realise its aims, not yours. A typical community development project can take 2-4 years to become self-sustaining. However, long and expensive experience of regeneration programmes which failed, because the communities were not truly involved, has prompted the Government to re-emphasise the social and economic necessity of involving communities in the decisions which affect them. This is recognised by those working in regeneration, and it is part of the thinking behind Community Planning and Social Inclusion Partnerships. It is a clear theme in the consultative processes required by Best Value. The resources needed to give people a say in their future are small compared to the money wasted by not involving them. All the strategic policy agendas for local government see community involvement as an essential, continuous and long-term process.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Effective community involvement, whether area-wide consultation or local community development, usually follows these principles:-

- Be clear about your aims. Only then can you give a clear picture to those you want to involve.
- Ensure that Members understand what you are doing, and why. Respect the democratic process.
- Be sure that your colleagues are committed. If not, then the process could end in recriminations.
- Secure a commitment to see the work through to the stage where local people can take it over.
- Do your homework. Find out the local issues and the history of consultations, initiatives and dealings with the Council. Check whether other consultations are in the pipeline. Can you take on their work (and resources)?
- Involve the stakeholders from the start. The earlier that you involve the people affected, the more trust you can build up.
- Use the best tools for the job. A standing representative group of different local interests will need different approaches and structures from a homogenous group tackling a practical project.
- Make it accessible to your stakeholders. Information should be clear and in appropriate language/s. Venues should be reachable and useable. Timings should be convenient. Show that you care.
- Have the resources ready. You may need posters, leaflets, venue hire, transport, land, tools, signers, catering, typing, photocopying, start-up grants and adverts. And the time to arrange them.
- Be open and honest. Build trust and commitment from day one. Do not raise unrealistic hopes. Point people towards actions which can be delivered. Then make sure that they are delivered.
- Build on existing community links such as community councils. If they've lasted then they probably work, so use them and respect them.
- Listen. Listening takes time, so allow time for it. And don't decide anything until you've heard all that your stakeholders know and want.
- Check what you hear. Are you really hearing what is really being said? And are you hearing from the quiet or absent stakeholders?
- Build consensus. Sustainability is about agreeing a way forward. We cannot afford to create "winners" and "losers" out of community involvement.
- Be clear. At the end of each stage everyone should know who will be doing what and when.
- Give feedback. If people get no feedback they may think their contributions made no difference or were not valued.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

An unresolved issue for Local Agenda 21, and for local government, is how to move from consultation to participation. Community development takes considerable resources and is often only possible with funding from Social Inclusion Partnerships, Europe or the Lottery. It cannot be replicated across a whole Council area, and yet it is by far the best way of getting people to think and work towards a sustainable future.

Until communities can reach out to offer community development support to each other (a process which is now starting) we shall have to rely on different ways of engaging our communities in the Local Agenda 21 process. The task for all of us over the next few years will be to ensure that every group and individual has a genuine opportunity to get involved in our work.

There is now a wealth of techniques for community involvement and a library of documents describing them. The most useful for us are probably:-

'Focusing on Citizens – A Guide to Approaches and Methods' (COSLA, 1998, 114 pp, free)
- the techniques described, with their main uses, strengths, limitations, costs and examples of use

'The Citizen-Customer Focus: Directory of Initiatives by Councils' (COSLA, 1999, 36 pp, free)
- who has been doing what in 16 Scottish Councils

Advice on community involvement may be sought from a number of organisations, including Forward Scotland, CADISPA (Conservation and Development in Sparsely Populated Areas), Friends of the Earth Scotland, and the Regional Environmental Education Forums.

As well as producing specific guidance on community involvement and Local Agenda 21 this Winter, we will also have a focus on community involvement for a day during our second Scottish National Forum in August 1999. Few of us are experts in this field, but we have now identified some willing speakers who can help us!

DELIVERY

This section of the Local Agenda 21 Route Planner is of crucial importance to the future sustainability and quality of life of your area. The messages in this section could have been set out straight after ‘Corporate Commitment’, or after ‘In-House Action’, or ‘Policy Integration’. We have kept them back to this stage so as to emphasise that all that work, and your achievement of awareness raising, partnership working and community involvement, leads up to this point. Now read on.....

So, you have managed to secure the Council’s top level commitment to sustainability. You have embodied that commitment within a workplan for the Local Agenda 21 process. You have worked your way into the Council’s partnerships and the Community Planning process. You have spread the message through awareness raising and community involvement - and you have probably shared a few panic attacks with other members of SLACN!

Congratulations. But before you snuggle down on your laurels to bask in the glow of your new-found status as a corporate “mover”, there is still the small question of delivering on your Council’s commitment to sustainability. Because the ultimate measure of your Local Agenda 21 process will be its ability to bring about tangible and lasting change, and so the real work starts now.

How can you ensure that your strategy is truly determining the decision making and service delivery of your Council? There are two main ways in which you can achieve this:-

Committee Reporting

Some Councils operate systems which test every committee report against corporate priorities. Your Council may operate a similar system, perhaps for equal opportunities or for budget management. These systems work best where sustainability has become strongly embedded within the culture and where Members and officers actually understand what it means for them. The effectiveness of the system will therefore depend upon all report-generating officers and committee members having had good and customised training in identifying potential sustainability impacts within their area of work. Otherwise, a system which seeks to question officers’ recommendations can breed cultures of defensiveness or cynical box-ticking.

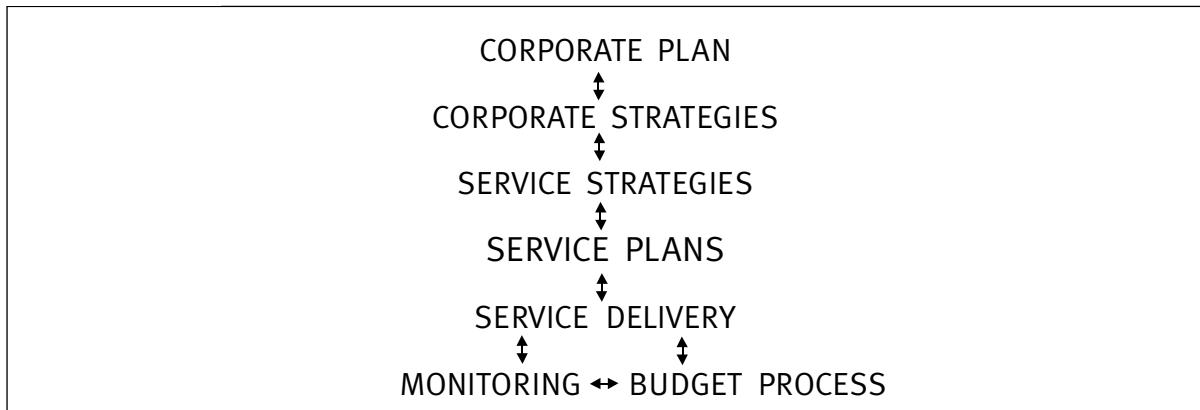
Such Councils often also have a strong central policy unit with the time, resources and credibility to “police” the use of the system by reviewing a significant number of committee reports. Without this embedding and corporate back-up any system which you introduce will be open to abuse and inconsistent usage. There is no point in trying to apply quality control to the output if you haven’t influenced the process.

Service Planning Guidance

Service planning affects everything that the Council does. It defines how the Council approaches Best Value and how it will deliver its Community Plan. In reality your Council may not yet be clear on the integration or separation of Best Value and service planning, and there is some truth in the simplification that Best Value is an improved way of doing service planning, rather than an alternative to it. So it is the service planning process which you will have to understand and work within, if you want to ensure that all your other work pays off.

Understanding – By now you are familiar with the corporate structure of your Council. But is this just a list of services with contact names and functions noted against them? If so, it’s now time to look deeper within the structure, to identify the mechanism which drives the individual units and draws them together in a corporate body. This mechanism is called different things by different Councils, but it is usually called service planning. This is how the Council examines its performance and decides how it does its business. Service planning extends from the corporate level, (where you should have established your Council’s commitment to sustainability), through the strategies of your service departments, and into front-line service provision:-

DELIVERY



Corporate Plan - This is where your Council has set out its long-term views and commitments. It may not exist as a stand-alone document but as a collection. Try digging back to 1996, as most Councils after re-organisation produced something like a corporate plan. Also, try to find a copy of your Council's original Best Value submission to COSLA. The first chapters will probably contain the information you require. Of course, your corporate plan is being rapidly overtaken by your Community Plan which, in most Councils, will soon sit at the top of this hierarchy.

Corporate Strategies - These are the main cross-cutting and external strategies for issues such as community care and lifelong learning. They may include your environmental strategy if one was done. They should include your Local Agenda 21 if it can not be aligned with the Community Plan. Some of the strategies at this level will be very "live" (perhaps social inclusion?), others will be moribund (perhaps decentralisation?). If all the strategies at this level are taken seriously by your Council then this could be an appropriate home for your Local Agenda 21. But you would have to be quite sure of this. And you would have to be sure that your Local Agenda 21 was understood to be about sustainability, not just the environment.

Service Strategies - These are the documents that you are going to have to influence. You must find out what has been done and what is planned. Particular ones to watch out for are planning, economic development, transport, waste management, etc. Your PR section will often have copies for you to look at. Then talk with your contacts in the departments about their current status and how they are likely to evolve. It is important that you win the understanding and support of the people who own the service strategies.

Service Delivery – The actual experience and expense of delivering a service in the real world (be it housing allocations, planning decisions or emptying the bins) informs and feeds back into the service planning and budget processes. Best Value will apply measures of performance and customer satisfaction to strengthen this part of the process.

Budget Process – It can be very difficult to get into the budget process and the "gatekeepers" may give you a frosty reception. Because, despite all your work to the contrary (and you should definitely try to cultivate some contacts among the committee or service accountants) they may still think of you as a "greenie" who is only asking them about budgets in order to get money for more tree-planting or a battered frog refuge. But if you have been able to secure a corporate commitment to sustainability, and that commitment is now influencing corporate strategies and service strategies, then the budget process will have to take account of this. Despite occasional appearances to the contrary, your Council is run by the political and policy processes, not by the budget process. But the need to set and live within annual budgets has meant that service planning has been an annual and inevitably budget-oriented process. This may change as the public sector now moves to three-year budgeting.

DELIVERY

The double-headed arrows in the diagram are there to show that all this is a two-way process. On the way down, the arrows show the Council's strategic management, in terms of developing and delivering its priorities down through its decision-making processes. This in turn determines the slicing of the "budget cake". On the way up, the arrows show the feedback into the strategic management process of service out-puts, real-world experience, measurable outcomes and financial factors, all of which require strategic realignment and continual monitoring.

Missing from this diagram is a two-way vertical arrow running alongside the process. This is the arrow of consultation which influences every stage of service planning. It covers the whole range of expressions of customer opinion, from Best Value focus groups to the local elections. Your likely involvement in consultation is covered in the sections on *'Awareness Raising'* and *'Community Involvement'*.

(NB. This is our description of the service planning process. In reality you may find that your Council uses slightly different terms and stages. The overall process may not even have been set down in any accessible document. So you may have to do a little detective work to find out how your Council reviews its priorities, services and budgets. This section gives you clues as to what you should be looking for).

Reflection - Before doing anything further, take a moment to reflect upon how far you have come and the work you have put in to get here. Think about all the ways in which national guidance and pressures are now beginning to mainstream sustainability. The challenge presented by actioning your corporate commitment may present some new and more complex tasks, but the principles which have secured your successes to date remain the same:- pragmatism, patience, timing, sensitivity, opportunism, and confidence in your own and other's abilities. These are your foundations for tackling service planning.

For many people the service planning process can seem daunting, and in many Councils it may appear to be shrouded in mystery. But you are just going to have to get inside it and develop a mechanism to influence it in a very fundamental way. So you will need to enlist the help of someone who knows how the process works and hopefully recognises the importance of sustainability. This may be a manager from your department who is senior enough to have first hand experience of service planning.

Try to get a feel for how the process works in practice and then think how you may build in a sustainability influence. Sometimes the best way to understand how service planning operates in your Council is to look back at an initiative which mysteriously failed to win support and to analyse the reasons for this. Then speak to colleagues from other departments who may have undertaken similar exercises for, say, your economic or social strategy. There will be specific issues of which you must be aware, such as the time-scales for the process, the number of stages involved, and any exercises which can be "tweaked" to allow you to feed into the process.

Above all, remember that service planning can feel like a time-consuming distraction for everyone involved. If you want to add to your colleagues' workloads then you had better be ready to fully justify why sustainability is so important, and then to make its integration into the process as easy as possible for them. For this you will need to give them a guide on integrating sustainability into their part of the service planning process.

DELIVERY

Action – We suggest that you will need to prepare both a generic guide for use throughout the Council, and service-specific guides (perhaps easiest first). If you want your guides to work then they must:-

- (i) have top level managerial and political support;
- (ii) be simple, straight forward and logical;
- (iii) be consistent with existing service planning guidance;
- (iv) emphasise **existing service activity** rather than new project work;
- (v) be clearly linked to your Best Value and Community Planning processes.

Remember, what you are trying to do is to ensure that the Council integrates the principles of sustainability into the way it designs and delivers its core services. Those principles are about partnership working; community involvement; long-term social, economic and environmental well-being; and their delivery through services. These principles of sustainability are also fundamentally compatible with achieving resource and efficiency improvements, cost savings and customer focus. There should be nothing new for anyone to fear in this, as these are the principles which now shape Best Value and Community Planning.

Preparing your guides and getting them working will require a great deal of time and effort. In the early stages that will require a hands-on approach, to lead colleagues through the process and dispel any irrational fears they may have. The process will be eased if your guides are prepared with officers from the services in question - particularly if you have done awareness raising with those officers. At all times you must be absolutely sure of what you can offer to the process and be prepared and ready to listen, sympathise and above all **help**.

Be aware that COSLA will be working from this Autumn to prepare guidance on the implications of sustainability for all main local government services. This will have to be a phased process which will take time. Nevertheless, it should be a valuable tool both for awareness raising and for the delivery of your Local Agenda 21.

Finally, as the lead agency for the Local Agenda 21 process, your Council must be able to show that it is leading by example, in order to establish credibility with the community and with your partner organisations. The effective use of the service planning process will go a long way to helping establish that credibility.

FOR FURTHER HELP

We recognise that things will not always go to plan and that there may be no off-the-shelf answers to your specific local problems. That is why you should keep in touch with your colleagues in SLACN and call on them for help as soon as you need it. Remember too that Bob Christie, COSLA's Local Agenda 21 Adviser, is here to help you. He will visit, listen, advise, take your problems back to COSLA, and help you promote your Local Agenda 21 to your colleagues, councillors and communities. SLACN, COSLA, the Scottish Executive and Forward Scotland can all provide appropriate people to make presentations and join in local events.

People

Contact details for the members of the Network are provided at the back of the Route Planner. You can find help from the Network's national partners by contacting them at :-

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Sustainable Development Team

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Forward Scotland

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Training

SLACN is conscious that the Local Agenda 21 process requires a wide range of skills, and that members of the Network might benefit from some capacity building in specific areas. COSLA is therefore consulting the Network on your training needs. This could cover topics such as managing meetings, making effective presentations, developing influencing skills and awareness raising.

FOR FURTHER HELP

Reading

There has been considerable guidance on the scope and content of Local Agenda 21. We hope that this Route Planner will now provide more user-friendly and practical direction on taking the Local Agenda 21 process forward in Scotland. One recent document could also be of interest:

'Sustainable Local Communities: Some Model Approaches to Strategy Development'
(LGMB & LGA 1998)

For those of you with access to the Internet, the following websites are worth watching:

www.sustainable.scotland.gov.uk

This Scottish Executive site is the main Internet focus of sustainability activity in Scotland. *'Changed Days'* is already on the site. We hope that *'The Scottish Local Agenda 21 Route Planner'* will appear on the site later this year.

www.sustainability.org.uk

This is the website of Forum for the Future. It has a good range of Local Agenda 21 case studies, which it compiles on behalf of all the local government organisations in the UK. It is currently developing its pages on tools and techniques for promoting the elements of Local Agenda 21.

www.la21-uk.org.uk

This website of the Improvement and Development Agency for local government in England and Wales (the former LGMB) still has a wide range of case studies, together with a discussion forum, Local Agenda 21 Round Table guidance notes and past guidance on Local Agenda 21 in the UK.

SLACN intends to set up a best practice network and database and hopes that this will also feature a website for the Network.

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Like the Local Agenda process, SLACN believes that this Route Planner should evolve and grow, to meet your changing needs. So we propose to hold a consultation later in the year on future directions. What further material would you want to see appear in the Route Planner - and what could you contribute? Some suggestions might include - techniques for community involvement, sustainability indicators, case studies, Best Value, arrangements for monitoring and reviewing, or guidance on links to topics such as education, community care, housing, social work, economic development, or health. Start thinking now!

AND FINALLY...

just a few earlier quotes as reminders –

Introduction

“For Local Agenda 21, the 31st of December 2000 will be a beginning, not an end.”

Core Elements of Local Agenda 21

- “1 Sustainability covers everything
- 2 Local Agenda 21 should involve everyone
- 3 Some things will not get done by the deadline!”

How to use the Route Planner

“There is no one right way or answer for tackling each part of the process. The important thing is to find out what works in your area, and then work with that.”

Corporate Commitment

“You need a plan!”

“Corporate means corporate.”

Awareness Raising

“Raising awareness is as much about working with people as working on them.”

Tackling the Core Elements

“Don’t use up all your time and energies trying to crack one part of the process.”

In-House Action

“However, the leaders of the world’s governments did not convene in Rio in 1992 only to ensure that Council employees switched the lights off behind them.”

Policy Integration

“The scale and scope of a Local Agenda 21 strategy means that it must rely on other, more manageable, plans and strategies for its implementation.”

“We are **all** working for a sustainable community.”

Partnership Working

“Partnership working is the name of the game in the public sector now - and Community Planning is the biggest game in town.”

Community Involvement

“It isn’t sexy, it doesn’t offer any quick fixes and it requires a commitment to helping the community to realise its aims, not yours.”

Delivery

“There is still the small question of delivering on your Council’s commitment to sustainability.”

For further help

“Remember too that Bob Christie, COSLA’s Local Agenda 21 Adviser, is here to help you.”

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

A sustainable community is one where everyone works together to try to ensure their long-term social, economic and environmental well-being. It is a place with:-

A healthy environment

- Resources, water, land and energy are used efficiently.
- Waste is minimised then re-used, recycled, or recovered before careful final disposal.
- Pollution is limited to levels which do not damage natural systems.
- The diversity of nature is valued and protected.

A prosperous economy

- Local needs are met locally – supporting local business and employment.
- Everyone can undertake satisfying and fairly paid work in a vibrant and diverse economy which recognises the value of unpaid work.
- Access to work, goods, services and other people is not achieved at the expense of the environment or limited to those with cars.
- Everyone has access to good quality food, water, housing and fuel at reasonable costs.

An inclusive society

- Health and well-being are promoted through safe, clean and pleasant environments. Health services work to prevent illness as well as providing care for the sick and support for carers.
- People live in confidence without fear of violence and crime, or persecution because of their race, gender, sexuality, personal circumstances or beliefs.
- Local traditions and cultural identity are valued, whilst opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all.
- Everyone has access to the skills, knowledge and information needed for them to play a full part in their society and its decision-making.

THE MODEL SCOTTISH COUNCIL

Although the scope of Local Agenda 21 has been clear for seven years, it may still be daunting to see it all set down in this one document - particularly as the process does mean working with the major local decision-makers and local communities. But don't be discouraged! There are four reasons why your task is actually easier now than it was before:-

1. You no longer have to do **everything** by December 2000, so long as you can show how everything **will** be done.
2. This Route Planner now puts Local Agenda 21 into its **Scottish** context.
3. Good practice in Local Agenda 21 has **already** developed in Councils throughout Scotland.
4. SLACN and COSLA's Local Agenda 21 Adviser are here to help **you**.

In this section on '*The Model Scottish Council*' we have flagged up just some of the significant good practice which has come to light through, or since, the publication of '*Changed Days*'.

We know that there has been widespread good practice in areas such as HECA strategies, supporting Eco-Schools, biodiversity partnerships, publicity, internal officer teams, Landfill Tax projects, Environment Week activities, development plan policies, etc. etc. – but these were well signposted in '*Changed Days*' and so they are **not** featured here unless they are particularly noteworthy and directly linked into the wider Local Agenda 21 process. Instead we have emphasised the good practice which has enabled the majority of our Councils to start tackling the essential processes and core elements of Local Agenda 21.

'The Model Scottish Council' is a "who's done what?" guide to getting help from your colleagues in the SLACN network. It is not yet comprehensive and so we are bound to have missed out some of the best local initiatives. And, where several Councils are demonstrating very similar good practice, we have often only highlighted one. Nevertheless we have already identified 52 activities worthy of note in 25 Councils. Please let us know of any good work which ought to be brought to wider national attention.

To find out more on any example of good practice just pick up the phone or send an e-mail to the person identified in the next section under '*SLACN Contact Details*'. Or have a word with Bob Christie at COSLA.

THE MODEL SCOTTISH COUNCIL

Corporate commitment

Aberdeen City	- made the concept of sustainable development central to policy formulation and the Council's activities. The Corporate Plan integrates the Council's Economic, Community and Environment Strategies.
Angus	- adopted sustainability as one of the Council's 7 key themes in 1995 and made LA21 one of their 7 corporate priorities in 1998
Dundee City	- made a commitment to Local Agenda 21 in the Corporate Plan. Every committee report identifies the Local Agenda 21 implications of the recommendations made.
Moray	- placed sustainable development at the heart of the Council's decision making. The Corporate Plan integrates the Council's Community Care Plan, Economic Strategy and Environmental Charter.
North Ayrshire	- established a Corporate Team of senior officers for Local Agenda 21, reporting direct to the Corporate Strategy Committee.
Perth & Kinross	- fully integrated sustainability principles into the preparation of the Corporate Plan and the Council's Key Themes.
South Ayrshire	- made working towards a sustainable community one of the aims of its Vision of 2020, the corporate strategy for the Council and its partners.
South Lanarkshire	- set sustainable development as a defining principle of the Council's environment and economic and social strategies, and of its service planning system, based on pragmatic demonstrations of savings achieved and added value delivered.

Awareness Raising

East Ayrshire	- uses the "brand recognition" of National Spring Clean to raise wider awareness of LA21 and sustainability issues through an intensive programme of activities.
Falkirk	- developed a two-year marketing and communications plan, benchmarked public awareness of environmental issues by questionnaire, and supports the Falkirk Environment Trust's delivery of Landfill Tax funded sustainability projects.
Fife	- successfully promotes environmental awareness and best practice across the local economy through Green Business Fife, with 10 businesses now approved for ISO14001. Fife's Sustainability Indicators are regularly monitored and reported.
Moray	- provides presentations and training on sustainability for Councillors, staff and community councils, with 25% of HQ staff now covered and "training for trainers" introduced. A comprehensive Internet site for Moray's LA21 keeps people informed of progress.
North Ayrshire	- raises awareness of LA21 within each school with an annual conference on a sustainability theme and holds a major annual LA21 debate for secondary schools.

THE MODEL SCOTTISH COUNCIL

North Lanarkshire - promotes “greening the office” in staff induction training and runs a staff competition which awards suggestions for sustainability in the workplace with substantial and appropriate prizes from national sponsors associated with the themes of social inclusion, energy, waste, transport and green purchasing.

Renfrewshire - helps stressed communities to address pressing local issues in practical ways which reveal both the unsustainable roots of their problems and the sustainability of their solutions.

Scottish Borders - struck a deal with a local newspaper to provide a running story on the progress of three very different families as they try to live more sustainably, and held a well reported LA21 pub quiz with a celebrity compère.

South Ayrshire - raises awareness with small businesses in the Girvan Sustainable Communities Project through environmental audits.

Stirling - provides a programme of sustainability education for teachers and Council staff and supports the Kippen Environment Centre (part of a Sustainable Communities project) to undertake community environmental education and to provide schools’ and pre-school resources and projects.

In-House Action

Argyll and Bute - reduces staff travel, traffic and pollution with a video conferencing network for 11 Council sites.

Falkirk - developed a comprehensive Environment Strategy and management system for its delivery.

Moray - demonstrates good environmental and employment practice by actively encouraging teleworking from home by appropriate staff, and has reviewed each service’s contribution to LA21.

Perth and Kinross - set up Green Teams to improve environmental practice in each department, developed a staff travel plan, introduced an office waste recycling service shared with local businesses, and reviewed each service’s contribution to LA21.

Shetland Islands - has integrated waste, energy and purchasing initiatives through a waste-to-energy plant which provides district heating, and by supporting a local business which recycles the islands’ waste glass as construction materials satisfying the Council’s performance criteria.

West Lothian - has cross-service groups reviewing the Council’s main environmental impacts.

Policy Integration

Clackmannanshire - has made “working towards sustainable development” the theme of the Structure and Local Plans and is developing a sustainability appraisal framework and sustainability indicators in support.

THE MODEL SCOTTISH COUNCIL

Edinburgh	- makes sustainability a key theme of its Community Plan and is working to integrate LA21 with the Community Planning process.
Fife	- appraises all service plans and new policies for their sustainability.
Highland	- makes sustainability a key theme of its Community Plan and the guiding principle for the review of the Structure Plan.
Moray	- uses the Community Care Plan, the Economic Strategy and the Environmental Charter both to shape the Corporate Plan and to guide sub-strategies for housing, transport, youth, health, community safety, etc.
South Lanarkshire	- integrates its corporate environmental, social and economic strategies, makes sustainability a key theme of its Community Plan, and is working to integrate LA21 with the Community Planning process.
Stirling	- makes sustainability a key theme of its Community Plan and is working to integrate LA21 with the Community Planning process.

Partnership Working

Aberdeenshire	- works with Grampian Enterprise and Scottish Homes to integrate and deliver social, economic and environmental improvements under the Aberdeenshire Towns Programme, and has secured joint funding from Grampian Health Board for 3 posts to promote health at policy, area and local community levels.
Argyll and Bute	- is one of the partners supporting the Islay Development Company's highly successful community-led strategy for sustainable development, and has brought together a strong cross-sectoral partnership for a Local Biodiversity Action Plan which addresses real economic and community issues.
Edinburgh	- nurtures a strong Edinburgh Environment Partnership of 15 key organisations, which has initiated the Lord Provost's Commission on Sustainable Development, secured substantial Lottery funding for the Millennium Awards scheme and is now linked into the Capital Partnership for the City's Community Plan.
Fife	- has an active cross-sectoral Sustainable Fife Roundtable which includes farming, fishing, business and academic interests alongside community and voluntary groups, with advisers from Fife Enterprise, Fife Health Board, Scottish Homes, SEPA, SNH and East of Scotland Water.
Glasgow	- benefits from strong partnerships working for sustainable regeneration (Glasgow Alliance) and well-being/sustainable development (Glasgow Healthy City Partnership).
Moray	- has an active cross-sectoral Sustainability Forum representing Grampian Police, the RAF, the Tourist Board, the Enterprise Company, Moray Health Services and community councils, together with forestry, distillery, and landowner interests.

Community Involvement

Aberdeenshire	- is enabling communities in its 6 Areas to identify local sustainability priorities and to develop demonstration projects as the basis for local LA21's, and has produced the ' <i>Consulting and Involving Customers and Citizens</i> ' toolkit adopted by COSLA.
Dumfries/Galloway	- has an active Youth Strategy with young people based in the Council's HQ with direct access to senior Councillors, and through the Dumfries and Galloway Rural Partnership's 'Community Horizons' project is supporting large scale community participation in the visioning of sustainable futures for all local towns and villages.
Dundee	- has a Sustainability Forum of motivated individuals and groups, which has been recognised as a community of interest in the City's Decentralisation Scheme.
East Ayrshire	- involves communities through an Environment Forum which has representatives from the 7 Local Area Committees.
Highland	- supports, with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the EU-funded Duthchas project, which helps remote and fragile communities to identify and agree visions and action plans for the sustainable development of their areas, using "planning for real" techniques, and is developing a "sustainable community award".
Inverclyde	- has established an active Community Working Group, tasked a community development worker in support of LA21, consulted 101 voluntary groups on their quality of life priorities, and takes a LA21 Roadshow out to local communities.
Perth and Kinross	- works within their Local Rural Partnership to provide funding and professional support for communities to undertake Community Appraisals to identify local needs and agree action plans to address them, and makes Better PLACE awards to community groups for innovative examples of local action for sustainability, and uses a range of consultative techniques to involve communities in the Sustainable Rural Strategic Framework.
Renfrewshire	- is expanding the number and range of communities which, by raising people's capacity to create their own sustainable solutions to their problems, are benefiting from the Council's involvement in the Sustainable Communities project.
Scottish Borders	- works within their Local Rural Partnership to support a Rural Resource Centre which helps communities to develop projects which meet their needs while respecting the principles of the Scottish Borders Sustainable Community Initiative.
South Lanarkshire	- brought together a Customer Panel for LA21 from the wider South Lanarkshire Citizens' Jury and facilitated a debate which set environmental issues in their social and economic contexts, thus also informing the service planning and Community Planning processes.

THE MODEL SCOTTISH COUNCIL

Stirling	- involved the influential Stirling Assembly of community interests in a special conference and visioning exercise to identify Stirling's priorities for sustainability.
Delivery	
Aberdeen	- uses its Corporate Plan to integrate the Council's economic, community and environmental strategies with its budget process, structural organisation and Best Value.
Dundee	- identifies the significant implications for sustainability of all reports to its Committees, using a version of the themes of ' <i>A Sustainable Community</i> '.
Renfrewshire	- is identifying all the relevant legislation pertaining to the 12 themes of ' <i>A Sustainable Community</i> ' as a context for the Council's delivery of Best Value across all services.
South Lanarkshire	- delivers its corporate commitment to sustainable development through the service planning system and its approach to Best Value.

SLACN NETWORK CONTACT DETAILS

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