

# Best Value and Sustainability Checklist

Guidance from the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions requires local authority Best Value Reviews to 'give effect to the principles of sustainable development'. Local authorities will also have a new power 'to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their areas'.

This checklist is a straightforward way of testing the sustainability of individual Council services. It will help in assessing the potential impact of a service on the environment and will identify where the service is successful in meeting the principles of sustainability.

Use the checklist to systematically review services against the economic, social and environmental criteria established in the Government's Sustainable Development strategy 'A Better Quality of Life'

# Best Value and Sustainability Checklist

Identifying sustainability issues and addressing them should be part of the everyday planning and delivery of services. This checklist will help clarify the key issues to be considered when building the principles of sustainability into the Service Planning and Best Value Review processes.

The checklist has been derived from the Government's sustainable development strategy 'A better quality of life', and specifically the work on sustainability indicators.

Further help and training may be needed for Best Value teams to ensure that everyone understands the concepts and principles involved. Advice on this is available from:

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76 – 86 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG

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Fax: 020 7296 6666  
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The checklist is a framework from which the review process can develop. Other, more detailed questions may need to be asked to gather sufficient knowledge of the service before the overall impact can be judged.

Councils may wish to re-order the questions to bring the checklist into line with their Corporate Plans or other approaches to Best Value.

For each question assess if the service currently contributes a positive or negative effect, then show how any planned improvements will improve the effect, making the service more sustainable. Summarise planned improvements in section 10.

Not every theme will be relevant to every service, but it is important to explain why in a particular case a theme is considered not applicable. This may not become clear until sufficient data has been examined during the course of the review.

- if the effect is positive tick 'Yes'
- if the effect is negative tick 'No'
- if not applicable please tick 'N/A'

When completing the checklist appraisers should please

1. Consider potential impacts and lost opportunities, not just the direct impacts of the service.
2. Judge the service over its whole life span-how it has performed in the past and how it is changing
3. Make relative not absolute judgements. Sustainability is about improving on existing benchmarks.
4. Where you have indicated that your service has a positive or negative impact, indicate in the space provided after each question as follows
  - a. against *current contribution*, the key current actions you are taking to contribute to sustainability by either increasing the positive impact or diminishing the negative impact of your service, and
  - b. against planned improvements, any planned improvements to your service that will improve the contribution of the service to sustainability
5. Summarise the list of planned improvements in Section 10.

Wherever you record a 'no' consider the possibilities for changing the service specification to ensure that in house and external contractors are providing a more sustainable service.

## 1. Building Sustainable Communities

<b>Does your service increase the cohesiveness and capacity of the local community by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Improving the sense of community? <i>Current contribution</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
b) Reducing the need to travel by improving or adding local facilities? <i>Current contribution.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
c) Increasing the capacity of local communities to influence decisions that affect their lives and their capacity to manage resources and facilities? <i>Current contribution</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
d) Minimising crime and the fear of crime? <i>Current contribution</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
e) Helping to deliver targets set in the local Community Safety strategy? <i>Current contribution.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Planned improvements</i>			

## 2. Buildings, Planning and Land Use

<b>Does your service make the best use of land and buildings by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Using brownfield sites or vacant buildings rather than greenfield sites? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Enhancing the built environment and preserving local heritage? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Minimising energy and resource use for new buildings by maximising solar gain and by designing buildings for a long life span? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Ensuring developments maximise security? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Improving the distinctiveness of areas and the range of facilities locally? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3. Managing the Environment and Resources

<b>Does your service ensure energy and resources are used wisely and that the broader environment is protected and enhanced by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Reducing energy and water use through efficiency measures? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Taking measures to reduce, reuse and recycle resources wherever possible? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by use of renewable energy? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Considering environmental issues, including chemicals released into the environment, when purchasing goods and services? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Enhancing the quality and provision of urban green spaces and countryside parks and access to them? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Having policies to minimise air pollution? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Considering the timing of operations in order to minimise noise and disturbance? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Encouraging voluntary organisations and businesses (including suppliers) to undertake environmental assessments and develop environmental management systems? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Being registered with or adhering to the principles of an environmental management system such as EMAS or ISO140001? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 4. Health

<b>Does your service maximise health promotion by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Taking measures to reduce factors that contribute to ill health (poverty, diet, lifestyle, stress and pollution) especially for more vulnerable communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
b) Improving access to health facilities and the quality of health facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
c) Providing healthy and safe working environments for staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			

## 5. A Sustainable Economy

<b>Does your service add to the local economy and the employment needs of people and businesses by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Reducing low pay and dependency on long working hours, for in-house and external contracting teams?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
b) Increasing employment opportunities for local people by advertising vacancies locally and considering local companies when tendering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
c) Supporting welfare to work schemes and disadvantaged groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
d) Encouraging investment in skills, technology and the local community and encouraging jobs in the environment sector?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
e) Buying locally made products where possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
f) Helping local community based businesses to set up and grow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
g) Encouraging local businesses to increase their competitiveness through environmental management and encouraging them to participate in their local community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
h) Supporting local self-help schemes including LETS schemes, credit unions and community trusts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			

## 6. Housing

<b>Does your service promote decent housing and amenities by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Ensuring housing developments are within easy walking distance of local facilities e.g. schools, shops, community facilities and public transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
b) Increasing the energy efficiency of housing (public and private sector) and the use of renewable energy?.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
c) Helping to tackle homelessness and providing safe and warm homes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			
d) Improving the quality and/or upkeep of the current housing stock?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Current contribution</i>			
<i>Planned improvements</i>			

## 7. Social Equity and Opportunity

<b>Does your service encourage equity and opportunities for all by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Increasing opportunities for lifelong learning for all? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Increasing the skills and education of your workforce (including IIP accreditation) and service users? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Increasing equality of information access by communicating in differing ways (such as different formats and languages) as appropriate? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Assisting people on low incomes and disadvantaged groups? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Increasing access to, and the range of, facilities for arts, cultural, and leisure pursuits? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Improving facilities, services and opportunities for young and elderly people? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Increasing facilities and opportunities for disabled people? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Promoting racial and religious harmony and understanding? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 8. Transport

<b>Does your service improve its transport profile (meeting people's transport needs and protecting the environment) by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and promoting public transport? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Encouraging employees to cycle, walk, use public transport and car share for commuting and other work journeys? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Using service vehicles in the most environmentally friendly manner (e.g. reducing dead miles and using vehicles fuelled by alternative fuels)? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Improving access and facilities locally and especially for those with disabilities or without a car? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 9. Sending the Right Signals

<b>Does your service put sustainability into practice and encourage others by:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
a) Using Fairtrade products such as tea, coffee etc ? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Improving awareness of sustainable development? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Encouraging individuals to do their bit ? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Contributing to your Local Agenda 21 or Community Plan? <i>Current contribution</i> <i>Planned improvements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 10. Summary of Planned Improvements

***Include changes to service specifications and policy changes that will make the service more sustainable***

1. Building Sustainable Communities
2. Buildings, Planning and Land Use
3. Managing the Environment and Resources
4. Health
5. A Sustainable Economy
6. Housing
7. Social Equity and Opportunity
8. Transport
9. Sending the Right Signals

This checklist has been prepared for SOLACE by Nottingham City Council and draws upon previous work by the London Borough of Harrow, Leicester City Council, Derby City Council, De Montford University and ENVIRON.

This checklist can be downloaded from the SOLACE website at [www.solace.org.uk](http://www.solace.org.uk).  
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