

Public Sector Sustainability Awards 2012

The Sustainability Integration Toolkit (SIT) is for use by Powys County Council staff. It was developed, in partnership with Forum for the Future, for use within the Council's service development process. It aims to assist in the consideration, in a consistent way, of sustainable development throughout the planning process. The Toolkit uses the '5 Capitals' model to assess the sustainability credentials of the project. The '5 Capitals' model, financial, infrastructure, social, human and environmental, ensures that all these aspects are considered in a clear and consistent way. This ensures that many of the positive and negative outcomes are identified at an early stage and can be maximised or mitigated. It also allows possible joint working opportunities to be identified, resulting in better outcomes for reduced costs.

The SIT consists of four stages, although not all the stages have to be used unless it is appropriate to do so.

Stage 1: Needs and Assumptions Proforma

This sets out what it is that is to be achieved and the parameters for that. This is to ensure that everyone using the toolkit has the correct information.

Stage 2: SWOT Analysis with Prompts

This traditional SWOT analysis is subdivided into the 5 Capitals. There are a series of prompts for each Capitals area; financial, infrastructure, social, human and environmental, which are used during the SWOT process to ensure all aspects have been addressed. The SWOT is then analysed to identify what actions are needed to either maximise the positive outcomes or mitigate the negative outcomes.

Stage 3: Options Appraisal

This spreadsheet allows different options to be ranked against each other. It uses the same prompts as the SWOT analysis as questions, which are scored against their impact, magnitude and probability. The spreadsheet then calculates a 'significance' rating and plots the results on a spider diagram, which highlights areas which may need extra consideration in order to get the best sustainable outcome.

Stage 4: Review

This stages reviews the process to make sure that the project has delivered what was needed and whether the Toolkit needs any modification.

The Toolkit also has a range of supporting information such as an evidence pack and introductory presentation.

Using the Toolkit evidences how sustainability was considered, how decisions were taken and any mitigation measures that were put in place. The Welsh Government has made clear its intention to introduce a Sustainable Development Bill, which would require public bodies to evidence how they had made sustainable development their central organising principle. The Toolkit enables Powys County Council to show how that has happened in a consistent, transparent and integrated way. The Toolkit enables social, environmental and financial costs and implications to be considered along side each other with the impacts of one on another to be identified at an early stage and mitigated if necessary. The format of the Toolkit means that officers with only a limited knowledge are prompted to question their perception of a project from different viewpoints. The result is a more rounded and considered project or programme.

The review process ensures that the identified outcomes have been met and that the Toolkit remains current and fit for purpose. The review also allows for suggestion to be made about improvements or updates to the Evidence pack, in light of changing information, legislative or corporate requirements. The Evidence pack contains information about existing requirements which may need to be considered as well as links to whether further information and advice can be found.

The Toolkit makes it easy for people with little sustainability knowledge to consider the sustainability implications of a project or programme, while it is being developed. In turn, this increases staff and contractor, awareness of sustainability issues which they can then bring to other areas of their work.

As a consequence of using the Toolkit broader issues are considered and gaps identified. Opportunities for joint working, resource pooling and efficiencies are also highlighted as issues which may not normally be considered are raised.

Using the Toolkit enables wider sustainable thinking to take place at the beginning of a project before decisions are locked in, hopefully avoiding the need to rectify issues during the project, which can be expensive and time consuming. It also demonstrates that the organisation is taking sustainability seriously and acting in a socially responsible way. It unlocks extra benefits, especially in areas that it is traditionally harder to evidence, such as social benefits, but in a way that takes account of the financial and environmental impacts too. The SIT becomes part of an established process and not 'another thing to do,' making sustainability more acceptable and mainstream; making sustainability the way organisations do business.

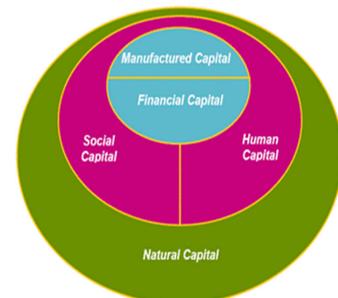


Sustainability Integration Toolkit

Powys County Council has developed, in partnership with Forum for the Future, an innovative Sustainability Integration Toolkit that will help to ensure sustainability issues are considered when the Council is planning its work.

Jonathon Porritt wrote to the Council congratulating us on the work saying, "Your ... innovation is right up there with pioneering work in business and the public sector anywhere. If the 'Integration Toolkit' project achieves its goals Powys Council will initiate sustainable projects as a matter of routine and good practice, which is worthy of serious praise indeed."

The Toolkit looks at sustainability in a new way; considering 5 Capitals on which we rely and that we need to protect and maintain, while using the benefits they provide. It aims for economic activity that works towards social progress and that is achieved within environmental limits, in line with the Welsh Government's sustainability vision contained in One Wales One Planet.



It is hoped that, as well as meeting the requirements of the new SD Bill, the Integration Toolkit will help to:

- **Unlock extra efficiencies** – designing in low energy and high performance from the beginning.
- **Do more with less** – holistic thinking from the start, identifying joint working opportunities
- **Innovate** – looking at things in a way that allows for new ideas and ways of working
- **Evidence** – recording and collating what we are doing
- **Consistency** – same system for all areas of work

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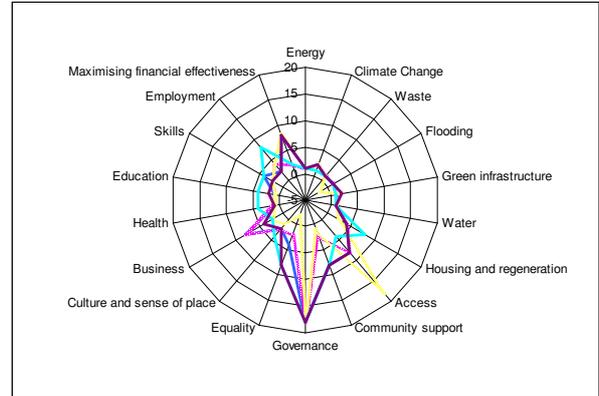
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The Toolkit also has a range of supporting information such as an evidence pack to explain the legislation, policy and procedure context underpinning the elements of the Toolkit and introductory presentation.

During the development of the Toolkit the draft resources were piloted on the Families First Programme and the draft Local Development Plan. Both pilot projects thought using the tools had been worthwhile. Dominique Jones said, "It did give us a broader perspective of sustainable development – beyond the green stuff."

The Local Development Plan is required by law to have a sustainability assessment carried out on it. In the past this has been done by external consultants with the final assessment being given to the Council. This time the Spatial Planning Policy Team had decided to undertake the assessment in-house, using the Toolkit to do it. This had the added advantage of keeping the expertise within the Council and extending the knowledge of sustainability issues within the team. Chris O'Brien, the lead on the project, said, using the Toolkit for the assessment was, "Better than any other way we could have done it."

The Toolkit is now ready to be used throughout the organisation to make projects and plans more sustainable. The Welsh Government is proposing to introduce a Sustainable Development Bill so the Toolkit will also evidence how we're considering sustainability. Further details can be found on the Intranet page 6167 and support is also available from Heather Delonnette, the Sustainable Development Co-ordinator.

