

“Supporting councils across Northern Ireland to deliver their statutory obligations on sustainable development”

This work plan represents work activities related to local authorities in the second phase of Sustainable Northern Ireland’s Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020.

### 1. Elected member and officer training and development

Sustainable NI in 2018/19 will co-ordinate the effective delivery of an **Elected Member and Officer Training programme**, for all of NI’s 11 councils.

A minimum of **4 regional training events** will take place on topics identified by councils to improve staff awareness, knowledge and capacity on areas such as fuel poverty, environmental management, resource efficiency, circular economy, climate change preparedness, sustainable procurement, and community energy solutions. These events will be open to council staff and elected members. In addition, **tailored sessions** can be delivered in house for staff, community organisations or elected members depending on the needs of individual councils.

Sustainable NI will host a **sustainable development showcasing event**, bringing industry experts together with decision makers and elected representatives to highlight the role government and local government plays in delivering national sustainable development goals, and showcase exemplary projects undertaken by councils and their partners and how this work is contributing to the pursuit of economic, social and environmental sustainability in Northern Ireland.

Additionally, Sustainable NI will work with Councils to develop a sustainable development learning package for inclusion in the **Elected Member Induction Programme**, in advance of the May 2019 elections, to ensure a core, consistent, and contemporary understanding and appreciation of the importance and relevance of sustainable development as part of the Councillors’ Guide for all 462 returning members.

### 2. Regional working groups

Sustainable NI will continue to provide the secretariat function for the **Sustainable Development Forum**, a networking forum for sustainability officers which meets quarterly to promote the sharing of good practice and a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of sustainable development in Northern Ireland. It provides critical support for public sector organisations, particularly councils, in complying with their statutory duty for sustainable development.

Additionally, this year, Sustainable NI will establish a **new cross-party Elected Member Champion group on sustainable development**, with representation from each of the 11 councils. The purpose of this group will be to exchange ideas, share good practice, learn about new and innovative solutions to common sustainability challenges, and provide strategic

direction for Sustainable NI's local authority support service. The group will also help provide thought leadership and a consolidated voice on policy matters related to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland.

### **3. Research, development, guidance, and publications**

We are pleased to say that following the success of the Responsible Procurement Training Event held in autumn 2017, we will be publishing a user-friendly **Social Value Toolkit** designed to help councils and other public sector organisations deliver social and environmental value when procuring goods and services.

Sustainable NI will research and develop a suite of **sustainability performance indicators** for use in corporate performance improvement plans, to help public sector organisations demonstrate compliance with the statutory duty for sustainable development, as per Section 25 of the NI (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006.

These indicators will feed into new **sustainability reporting guidelines**, which will be published in 2018, providing minimum standards on monitoring and reporting key environmental sustainability metrics.

In addition, we are developing a **State of Sustainability Report**, assessing the current state of play in the sector and summarising progress made in sustainable development at a regional level.

### **4. National and regional policy and lobbying**

Sustainable NI in 2018/19 will provide **essential policy guidance and analysis** to and with the 11 councils and submit consultative work to relevant NI Executive Departments, Westminster and all island bodies to protect, advocate and enhance national objectives on sustainable development. This includes participating in the Fuel Poverty Coalition, All Party Working Group on Social Value, Climate NI Steering Group, and Nature Matters NI Brexit Coalition Group.

Sustainable NI will participate fully in any **strategic work at national level** including continued liaison with DAERA, the lead government department for Sustainable Development, and facilitating closer working between government departments and Councils to deliver national climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.

Sustainable NI will host a **cross-sector think tank** to review progress on sustainable development in Northern Ireland and highlight common interests, opportunities and shared challenges with senior leaders from a relevant government and non-government organisations.

Trans-nationally, Sustainable NI will work with the 11 councils to **access investment opportunities** stemming from the EU and UK investment funds for sustainable development including Interreg, Horizon 2020, ERDF, Innovate UK and other charitable trust funds.

**5. Regional communications, News Bulletins, a new web platform, member & officer liaison**

Sustainable NI will produce **6 Regional eBulletins**, provide *ad hoc* policy briefings and presentations to councils, party group leaders and SOLACE as required, attend relevant Conferences, represent council's best interests in national and regional media and forums such as Nature Matters NI, the environment sector's coalition group on Brexit.

Sustainable NI will also contribute to NILGA's forthcoming **monthly showcase initiative**, offering member councils the opportunity to showcase the work that the council is doing to deliver sustainable development and improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing at a local level.

For all member councils, councillors and officers, Sustainable NI will in 2018 develop a new, interactive, **modern media platform**, with improved website, social media and **case study library**.

**Annual Subscription**

**Council subscription for the above Work Plan in 2018/19 is £5000 (excluding VAT), representing a 0% increase on 2017/18.**

Councils with a 3-year Service Level Agreement will benefit additionally from the bespoke consultancy support outlined in their agreement. All member Councils will be sent an invoice on 1st April 2018 for payment by 30th June 2018.



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