

Report on	Sustainable Northern Ireland SLA Funding Request
Reporting Officer	Raymond Lowry
Contact Officer	Yvonne Zellmann – Sustainability Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To request continued Council support of Sustainable NI from 2017 to 2020 in the form of £5,000 annual membership funding.
2.0	Background
2.1	Sustainable NI was established in 1997 to support Northern Ireland local government in mainstreaming sustainable development policies and activities throughout their organisations. To date, Sustainable NI has been financially supported by local authorities with additional funding from charitable trusts. It is currently solely funded through council subscriptions to the Local Government Sustainable Development Forum. Mid Ulster District Council contributed £5,000 to Sustainable NI for the 2016/17 financial year.
2.2	Sustainable NI has over 25 years of direct experience of the sustainable development agenda in Northern Ireland. It has positioned itself to provide authoritative advice on all aspects of sustainable development with expertise on a wide variety of issues including green procurement, sustainable construction and renewable energy and smart technology; it has published a suite of associated support materials for guidance and reference.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	A funding request has been received by Sustainable NI (appendix 1) to ask Council to provide continued support for their services with an annual subscription of £5,000 over the next three financial years (2017-20). For this period, Sustainable NI are suggesting the adoption of a basic Service Level Agreement (SLA) for client organisations and have provided a 'model' SLA (appendix 2) which can be tailored to reflect specific requirements.
3.2	<p>The following detailed services will be provided by Sustainability NI as part of the SLA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance and guidance for Council to comply with the Departments' reporting requirements through a Sustainability toolkit. • Assist Council to develop a Sustainability Policy and Action Plan • Work in partnership with Council to build Sustainability into its plans for the delivery of the Strategic Growth plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, maintain and expand the Sustainable Development Forum to promote good practice at a local level. • Provide support to Council and other public bodies to deliver government initiatives to meet Sustainability and Energy Reduction targets in the region. • Promote understanding and awareness of sustainability issues in Council through the provision of staff training, workshops and other events. • Work in collaboration with Council on EU project delivery to raise awareness on sustainable initiatives, through seminars, training and workshops. • Work in partnership with Council to develop strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change at a regional level. • Work in partnership with Council to advise and support the Sustainable Food Cities application process and the development of a regional Food Network initiative.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u> Financial: £5000 annual contribution to Sustainable NI for 3 years (Apr 2017- Mar 2020) Human: Staff time required to engage in the Sustainable Forum activities.
4.2	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u> N/A
4.3	<u>Risk Management Implications</u> Reduced impact on potential joint initiatives with other sustainable organisations / departments and potential delays in keeping abreast of new legislation.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report and approve the Service Level Agreement with Sustainable NI for period April 17 – March 2020 subject to review every 12 months .
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 - Letter of 10 July 2017 from Nichola Hughes re Three Year Commitment: Sustainable Northern Ireland.
6.2	Appendix 2 - Draft Service Level Agreement between Mid Ulster District Council and Sustainable NI 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2020



Council funding underpins the existence of Sustainable NI and I hope you will be able to add the support of Mid Ulster District Council with an annual subscription of £5000 over the next three financial years (2017-20). For this period, we are suggesting the adoption of a basic Service Level Agreement (SLA) for client organisations and, to that end, we have attached a suggested SLA together with a work plan to guide the activities of the Sustainable Development Forum over the next three years.

I hope that Sustainable NI can continue to help you to deliver Mid Ulster's sustainability objectives and, to that end, I would welcome an opportunity to discuss your requirements in some more detail so that we may tailor the Service Level Agreement accordingly.

Yours sincerely,



Nichola Hughes
Sustainability Officer



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Service Level Agreement

between

Mid Ulster District Council

and

Sustainable NI

1st April 2017 – 31st March 2020

Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI) is a NI charity working with partners to advance the pursuit of sustainable development by public authorities and others. We are committed to the principles of sustainable development; our work programmes encourage organisations to integrate these principles throughout their own operations and business planning functions. Sustainable Northern Ireland also established the Belfast Food Network, a project to develop initiatives that will make Belfast a Sustainable Food City.

Approval of the Service Level Agreement

This document defines the roles of all parties to ensure effective working in partnership between the two parties named below to promote and enhance sustainable development in the council area.

In signing below, we agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this Service Level Agreement.

Mid Ulster District Council

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Sustainable NI

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Overview

Under the NI (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 councils have a statutory duty to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland. This has been reinforced in the Community Planning component of the 2014 Local Government Act. In addition, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, which provides councils with strategic direction for local development plans, is founded on the principles of sustainable development. This legislation provides a strong mandate for action on sustainability by the eleven councils, as well as their statutory partners.

Sustainable NI offers a range of technical and strategic support services to help councils understand the scope of their legislative responsibilities on sustainable development and to put in place the structural arrangements needed to comply with these obligations. Sustainable NI supplies expert advice on sustainability issues, as well as signposting to policy research and case studies, in areas as diverse as renewable energy, spatial planning, sustainable food and climate change adaptation. It also provides tailored support through its use of specialised toolkits, such as the Sustainability Audit Matrix.

Sustainable NI also manages the Local Government Sustainable Development Forum, a network of officers responsible for sustainable development in Northern Ireland. It provides critical support for councils in the SD statutory duty compliance process, fostering an environment in which colleagues have been able to share experience and intelligence in an atmosphere of trust and mutual support.

This support has helped to stimulate a healthy level of good practice on sustainable development among councils, especially important in the face of a diminished role undertaken by central government departments.

Terms of Reference

For the purpose of this document the following terms of reference include:

Service Provider:	Sustainable NI
Customer:	Mid Ulster District Council
Document Owner:	Mid Ulster District Council

Agreement Overview

This agreement represents a Service Level Agreement (the Agreement) between Sustainable NI (the Service Provider) and Mid Ulster District Council (the Customer).

The Agreement will be reviewed annually and will remain valid until superseded by a revised agreement mutually endorsed by the Customer and the Service Provider.

This Agreement outlines the parameters of all related activities by the Service Provider and the responsibilities of the Customer.

The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that the proper commitments are in place to provide satisfactory service support and delivery between the Client and the Service Provider and to obtain mutual agreement on the services that will be provided to the Client in year.

The objectives of this Agreement are to:

- Clearly define ownership, accountability, roles and/or responsibilities
- Present a clear, concise and measurable description of service provision to the customer

Service Agreement

The following detailed service parameters are the responsibility of the Service Provider in the ongoing support of this Agreement:

- Provide assistance and guidance for Council to comply with the departments' reporting requirements through a Sustainability toolkit.
- Assist Council to develop a Sustainability Policy and Action Plan
- Work in partnership with Council to build Sustainability into its plans for the delivery of the Strategic Growth plan.
- Manage, maintain and expand the Sustainable Development Forum to promote good practice at a local level.
- Provide support to Council and other public bodies to deliver government initiatives to meet sustainability and energy reduction targets in the region.
- Promote understanding and awareness of sustainability issues in Council through the provision of staff training, workshops and other events.
- Work in collaboration with Council on EU project delivery to raise awareness on sustainable initiatives, through seminars, training and workshops.
- Work in partnership with Council to develop strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change at a regional level.
- Work in partnership with Council to advise and support the Sustainable Food Cities application process and the development of a regional Food Network initiative.

Customer Responsibilities

Customer responsibilities in support of this Agreement include:

- Availability of a customer representative to liaise with the Service Provider
- On-going support for the initiatives developed by the Service Provider
- Appoint an Officer to represent Council at the Northern Ireland Local Government Sustainable Development Forum
- Provide a level of financial support to assist with the running costs of Sustainable NI's office facility and the delivery of the services provided.

Confidentially

The Service Provider will treat as strictly confidential all information acquired through its actions in delivery of the Agreement. No party will disclose such information to any other party, directly or indirectly, except where disclosure is required by law or is with the relevant parties' prior written consent.

Variations

There may be circumstances during the duration of the Agreement which prevent the full discharge of each party's responsibilities through no fault of either party. Circumstances in which variations may occur during this period may include, but are not limited to:

- No-provision of responsibilities by the Service Provider or Customer
- Significant changes in the anticipated workload
- Changes in Government or EU legalisation

Each party will discuss the need for any variation to the Service Level Agreement at the earliest opportunity and will make any variation by mutual agreement

Periodic Review

This Agreement is valid from the effective date outlined herein until further notice. The Agreement will be reviewed annually. However, in lieu of a review during any period specified, the current Agreement will remain in effect.

The Customer is responsible for facilitating regular reviews of this document. Contents of this document may be amended as required, provided mutual agreement is obtained from the Customer and the Service Provider. The Customer will inform the Document Owner of all subsequent revisions and obtain mutual agreement/approval as required.

Amendments and revisions are recorded in the document.

Review Date: on or before 31st March 2018

Document Owner:		
Revision Reference	Revision Date	Author

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Local Government Sustainable Development Forum Work-plan 2017-20

SD Forum's Measures of Success	Targets (2017-2020)
Governance	
1. All eleven councils are members of the SD Forum, actively participating in its meetings and other activities.	<i>100% of district councils are members of the SD Forum, actively participating.</i>
2. Quarterly meetings of the SD Forum are held, with additional working group meetings, as required.	<i>A minimum of four SD Forum meetings will be arranged.</i>
3. The terms of reference for the SD Forum, its membership and its work-plan will be subject to a biennial review, led by the SD Forum Management Group.	<i>The SD Forum Management Group will instigate a review of the SD Forum's current terms of reference (adopted in December 2015), its membership and its work-plan.</i>
Compliance	
1. Performance Indicators: The SD Forum develops a model set of indicators to assess organisational progress on sustainability.	<i>By March 2018, the SD Forum has agreed a set of indicators as a means of providing evidence of progress in achieving improvement objectives.</i>
2. Compliance tools: The SD Forum's Sustainability Assessment Tool (SAT) is revised to reflect the augmented responsibilities of councils.	<i>By March 2018, an SD Forum working group has drafted amendments to the existing SAT that will meet the criteria set out in the departmental Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement.</i>

SD Forum's Measures of Success	Targets (2017-20)
Capacity-Building	
1. Skills Training: The SD Forum develops resources for its members to support their delivery of sustainability skills training for colleagues	<i>By March 2019, training materials will have been developed and tested by member organisations.</i>
2. Expert Speakers: The SD Forum provides presentations from identified experts on a range of topics to support members' professional development	<i>By March 2018, the SD Forum will organise presentations on topics to include: NI Executive SD policy; sustainability in capital projects; community energy models; climate change adaptation; open data; waste management; sustainable procurement; Energywise programme.</i>
3. Guidance Materials: The SD Forum develops guidance materials for members to support their promotion of sustainability principles throughout their organisations	<i>By December 2018, an SD Forum working group will have developed a suite of guidance materials on topics to include: SD legislation; councils' SD duties; procurement (inc Fairtrade); sustainable food & catering; adapting to climate change; transport; energy opportunities; sustainability in Local Development Plans.</i>
4. Study Visits: The SD Forum will arrange study visits for members to projects that demonstrate best practice in sustainable development.	<i>By March 2018, the SD Forum will have organised study visits to identified projects of best practice. These projects may include Incredible Edible Cloughmills; Lightsource Solar Farm; the PRONI building, biomass and CHP installations in Culmore.</i>
5. Conference: The SD Forum will collaborate with partners to organise a NI-wide event on sustainable development.	<i>By March 2018, the SD Forum will have organised an event in collaboration with partners (DAERA? NIEL? Climate NI?)</i>
Communication	
1. Promoting the SD Forum: The SD Forum will develop engagement plans to build its profile among councillors and senior managers.	<i>By March 2018, the SD Forum will collaborate with NILGA to engage councillors and with SOLACE to promote the SD Forum to CEOs.</i>
2. Promoting progress and best practice in sustainable development within the local government sector and sharing this information unilaterally through a report.	<i>By March 2019, the SD Forum will have contributed evidence to a report on the state of sustainable development in Northern Ireland's local government sector.</i>