

Delivering for the
environment in our
communities:
An audit of Single
Outcome Agreements

**A report to Scottish Environment LINK
by CAG Consultants**

February 2011



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For further information about this report please contact:

LINK, 2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road, PERTH PH2 8BD.

Tel 01738 630804

Email enquiries@scotlink.org

Web www.scotlink.org

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Executive summary

Purpose of the report

This report summarises the findings of an audit of the extent to which sustainable development and environmental issues are being addressed in the 32 Single Outcome Agreements dated 2009 onwards (SOAs) in Scotland. It seeks to highlight the ways in which the SOA process and any successor arrangements can more effectively address sustainable development and environmental priorities. It is intended:

1. at a national level, to inform the ongoing development of the unified outcomes-based approach to the relationship between the Scottish Government and local government; and
2. at a local level, to support Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in the ongoing development of their SOAs and any successor agreements.

The report builds on Scottish Environment LINK's policy paper (January 2010) which called for greater recognition of the importance of sustainable development and the environment in SOAs and proposed preferred outcomes and indicators for ten key environmental topics.

SOAs are intended to be high-level statements about the priorities for improvement within individual localities. They do not capture all of the priorities and activities of CPPs. The audit has been conducted on the basis that, taken as a whole, the 32 SOAs represent a useful indication of where local priorities currently

lie and where there are gaps in terms of the treatment of sustainable development and key environmental issues.

Key findings

The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) established sustainable development as a statutory duty as part of the Best Value regime. However, the findings of this audit suggest that **sustainable development is not widely seen as a strategic priority for Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland.**

Neither does sustainable development appear to be widely understood, either in SOAs or in the guidance for SOAs, as an over-arching framework for policy development which it is intended to be in the UK's shared framework for sustainable development (*One Future - Different Paths*, 2005).

Perhaps as result of the absence of sustainable development as an overarching framework, **the interconnectedness between outcomes is not fully capitalised upon and few SOA's explicitly recognise and address the 'crunch issues' which it would be necessary to address in a truly sustainable approach. Allowing such conflicts to remain wastes resources and will undermine the achievement of the intended outcomes.**

Many SOAs do recognise the interconnectedness of environment,

health and transport outcomes and this provides a useful model for integrated thinking in other areas, demonstrating the multiple benefits and efficiencies which can be achieved by adopting such an approach.

At a general level, the environment receives considerable attention within SOAs and most in some way recognise the environment as a priority. However, in some cases, the coverage of environmental issues is quite narrow in its focus (e.g. on waste, recycling and street cleanliness) and some significant gaps in coverage have been identified including:

- **Climate change mitigation** – only two SOAs include indicators for per capita production-based emissions across the local authority area, although 10 include a carbon footprint indicator (for consumption-based emissions).
- **Climate change adaptation.**
- **Historic environment.**
- **Landscape** – no SOAs include outcomes or indicators for landscape.
- **Sustainable management of water resources**, including links to climate change mitigation.

Because of the patchy coverage and inconsistent treatment of environmental issues in SOAs, it is unclear how activity at the local level in Scotland will contribute to the meeting of key national outcomes and targets, such as the demanding national target for reducing CO₂ emissions.

The scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face is not well reflected in SOAs and **there is a danger that environmental priorities may be increasingly overshadowed by economic ones in the current economic climate. The interconnectedness between the two is not well recognised, which could**

have serious adverse impacts on Scotland's economic prosperity in the long term.

Recommendations for policy makers

1. Guidance to CPPs should reiterate the duty to promote sustainable development and clearly explain the principles of sustainable development (as expressed in the shared UK framework), how they apply to SOAs and any future outcome-based agreements and how they can be implemented. The use of resources such as the Sustainable Scotland Network's *Best Value & Sustainable Development Toolkit* could be promoted in support of this.
2. To encourage integrated approaches, all CPPs should be required to clearly state a small number of genuinely strategic local priorities and to map out the interconnectedness between them and each of the different national outcomes.
3. Scottish Government should ensure that environmental issues are not sidelined in the context of economic and financial pressures but rather that the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face is clearly reflected in all local outcome-based agreements. The importance of the environment to economic prosperity and quality of life, and therefore its important role in responding to the economic downturn, needs to be clearly recognised.
4. Scottish Government should ensure that all outcome-based agreements are based on a clear and comprehensive evidence base covering all aspects of the environment, including those topics currently most neglected (sustainable development education, landscape, recreational access and the sustainable management of water resources), and including recognising its cross-cutting

contribution to different local priorities and national outcomes.

5. Through guidance, training, advice and the sharing of good practice, CPPs need to be enabled to address the current gaps in coverage of key environmental issues within SOAs, including carbon emissions, climate change adaptation, sustainable water management, historic environment and landscape.
6. Scottish Government should ensure greater robustness and consistency in the choice of indicators for environmental topics to ensure that they are robust. Drawing on the recommendations put forward by SNH (September 2010) the gaps in relation to the environment in the menu of local outcome indicators need to be filled. A better balance between economic, social and environmental indicators is needed, along with guidance on what approaches should be adopted where robust indicators or data are unavailable. In addition, further support is needed to ensure that specific, measurable and realistic targets are set.
7. In order for the gaps in the indicator set to be filled, work is also needed to improve the related data sets. Where data sources do not exist, or are inadequate, to support indicators that relate to strategic local priorities, the Scottish Government should take steps to close gaps in required data and data sources.
8. Greater consistency needs to be achieved in the format, structure and presentation of agreements so that comparisons between them can be more easily made and learning achieved. Particular areas of inconsistency currently include the expression of local strategic priorities and the detail provided regarding below-the-waterline activities.

9. All CPPs should be required to report on their intended contribution to key national targets, such as the 42% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020.
10. Scottish Government should be reviewing and evaluating outcome-based agreements in a way that supports CPPs to continually improve performance and contribute to the national performance framework.

Recommendations for CPPs

1. CPPs need to give much greater priority to the environment within their agreements with the Scottish Government, recognising its underpinning role in economic prosperity, quality of life, health and wellbeing. Furthermore, the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face, particularly in relation to climate change, need to be reflected in the setting of local priorities and levels of ambition.
2. In preparing their outcome-based agreements, CPPs need to recognise their statutory responsibility to promote sustainable development. This will necessitate, among other things, better joining-up of economic, social and environmental objectives and ensuring that environmental limits are understood and respected.
3. CPPs need to base their outcome-based agreements on a clear evidence base covering all aspects of the environment, including the 10 priority topics identified in this report. The findings from this audit suggest that a number of these are currently neglected in area profiles, particularly sustainable development education, landscape, recreational access and the sustainable management of water resources.
4. Evidence from this audit suggests that, rather than starting with the national

outcome templates, integration of objectives is facilitated by CPPs building on their area profile to develop a small number (6-9 seems to have worked well in those looked at during the course of this audit) of local strategic priorities as a starting point, with the interconnectedness between different local and national outcomes then explored and applied.

5. The next revision of agreements will provide an opportunity to refine environmental outcomes, making them more robust and measurable, through the use of more specific indicators and targets, drawing on the work of SNH (September 2010) in particular. Particular attention should be paid to filling the current gaps in the coverage of key environmental topics, including:
 - Carbon emissions within the local authority area. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 introduces a duty on all public bodies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the exercise of their functions. This will come into force by February 2011. We would therefore suggest that all outcome-based agreements include an indicator for per capita emissions across the local authority area, with clear and measurable targets set. This should be in addition to a consumption-based indicator for ecological and/or carbon footprint.

- Climate change adaptation. Climate change will have major impacts on communities, economies and service delivery. However, although a number of SOAs refer to the impacts of climate change within their area profile, in very few cases does this translate in to specific references within the resulting outcomes. Urgent action is needed to address this.
- Landscape. No SOAs include outcomes or indicators for landscape. Its value and significance to Scotland needs to be recognised by CPPs.
- Historic environment – fewer than half of SOAs include specific indicators on the historic environment. The value of the historic environment, including the 95% which is not subject to specific designations, needs to be more clearly recognised.
- Sustainable management of water resources. This is an important issue both in terms of water quality, adapting to the impacts of climate change (minimising flood risk etc.) and in terms of mitigating climate change, since water use has a significant energy component. Fewer than half of SOAs include outcomes and/or indicators relating to this topic. CPPs need to recognise the significance of minimising water use in reducing emissions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the study

CAG Consultants were commissioned by Scottish Environment LINK (the network for Scotland's environmental NGOs, referred to as 'LINK' in the remainder of the report) to audit the extent to which sustainable development and environmental issues are being addressed in the 32 Single Outcome Agreements dated 2009 onwards (SOAs) in Scotland.

This report summarises the findings of the audit and seeks to highlight the ways in which the SOA process and any successor arrangements can more effectively address sustainable development and environmental priorities. It has a dual purpose:

1. at a national level, to inform the ongoing development of the unified outcomes-based approach to the relationship between the Scottish Government and local government; and
2. at a local level, to support Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in the ongoing development of their SOAs and any successor agreements.

The report is therefore accompanied by two short briefings, one for policy-makers and one for CPPs.

1.2 Scope of the study

The audit has assessed the extent to which sustainable development and environmental issues are addressed within current SOAs. This includes consideration of the ten priority topics for SOAs identified in LINK's

policy paper *Working for Sustainable Development through Single Outcome Agreements* (January 2010):

- biodiversity / ecosystems / greenspace
- climate change
- ecological or carbon footprinting / consumption and use of resources / waste
- sustainable development education / volunteering
- historic and built environment
- landscape
- physical activity / health
- recreational access
- transport
- water and flooding

In each SOA, we have examined:

- the area profile;
- local outcomes;
- high level outcome indicators; and
- below-the-waterline activities (i.e. supporting activity which is not sufficiently strategic to be included within the agreement itself).

This report provides an overview of the findings, summarises the main trends, discusses gaps and issues which have emerged, and makes recommendations for central government and CPPs.

1.3 Limitations of the study

1. SOAs are intended to be high-level statements about the priorities for improvement within individual localities. We therefore recognise that they do not capture all of the priorities and activities of CPPs. Just because an issue is not covered within a SOA does not necessarily mean that the CPP is not addressing it. Furthermore, the level of detail included within SOAs with regard to below-the-waterline activities varies enormously. Most simply include lists of related plans and strategies but few explain the nature of their role in any detail and some include no detail at all regarding supporting plans and strategies so it has not been possible within this audit to make a comprehensive assessment of the extent of related activity which falls outside the SOA.
2. Different CPPs have taken very different approaches to the development of their SOAs in terms of format, structure, length etc. For example, the number of indicators in each SOA ranges from 33 in Dundee City to 222 in Argyll and Bute. Decisions about the level of the 'waterline', i.e. what is sufficiently strategic to be in the SOA itself and what is considered to be a supporting priority or strategy, have also varied significantly between CPPs. Caution therefore needs to be exercised in making any direct comparisons between SOAs.
3. The audit has been an entirely desk-based study. The 32 SOAs have each been examined in detail but no discussions have taken place with representatives from CPPs to test the findings or to explore areas of uncertainty, e.g. where we were uncertain how to interpret particular aspects of the SOA. Furthermore, our findings have not been checked by CPPs themselves. We recognise that our

interpretation of different SOAs may, therefore, differ from what was intended by its authors, and that some references to environmental issues may simply have been missed.

In the light of all of the above, we have consciously avoided making any criticisms of individual CPPs in this report. Rather, we have conducted the audit on the basis that, taken as a whole, the 32 SOAs represent a useful indication of where local priorities currently lie and where there are gaps in terms of the treatment of sustainable development and key environmental issues.

1.4 Background

The *Concordat* between the Scottish Government and COSLA (November 2007) set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government based on mutual respect and partnership, which included measures to free-up the capacity of local government by reducing bureaucracy through a more streamlined national performance framework, and through reductions in the amount of ring-fenced funding.

The formation of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) between local authorities and the Scottish Government was a key aspect of this new relationship. According to the *Concordat* they were expected to be high-level strategic and outcome-based agreements between central and local government and their CPPs. They were to be based on 15 national outcomes set out in the *Concordat* (see appendix 1). These outcomes formed part of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

The second-phase SOAs were presented to the Scottish Government in February 2009 and were signed off in June 2009. It is worth noting that in the discussions between Scottish Government and CPPs in the lead up to this, certain issues were given particular priority, including work to reduce

poverty, improve children's start in life, improve health (particularly the health of the most deprived), raise education standards for all, improve safety and address the challenges posed by the recession (Scottish Government, 2010, p.6).

Perhaps partly as a result of this prioritisation, subsequent reviews of the second phase agreements have highlighted concerns about their treatment of environmental issues.

Analysis by Herbert (2010) for the Scottish Parliament suggested that the number of indicators ascribed to national outcomes 12 (natural and built environment) and 14 (environmental impact of consumption and production) was lower than the average for all indicators. He suggested that three SOAs (Moray, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian) *'did not contain any consideration of how environmental issues had been dealt with'* (p.18).

Scottish Natural Heritage (February 2010) suggested that explicit references to natural heritage decreased between rounds one and two of the SOA process. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that all second round SOAs were required to become much more strategic, with fewer outcomes and indicators as a whole. SNH suggest that, as a result of the rationalisation which took place between rounds 1 and 2, much to do with the natural heritage was deemed to fall below the waterline, particularly since *'clear indicators of outcome could rarely be found to support its inclusion'* (p. 2).

LINK's policy paper (January 2010) called for greater recognition of the importance of sustainable development and the environment in SOAs and suggested that serious gaps existed in the *Menu of Local Outcome Indicators* (Improvement Service, 2009) and the accompanying guidance. This has been acknowledged, to some extent, by the Improvement Service in their Good Practice Note, which identifies gaps in

relation to the natural environment (including biodiversity, clean air/water/land, green space) and the historic environment as two of the key gaps to be addressed in their Improving Local Outcome Indicators project (Improvement Service, August 2010).

LINK's policy paper proposed preferred outcomes and indicators for the ten key environmental topics, along with additional outcomes and indicators to inform below-the-waterline activities. More recently, SNH, echoing the concerns expressed by LINK about gaps in coverage, have produced a suite of 31 environmental indicators which could be included in the national menu (SNH, September 2010).

Both the LINK and SNH reports recognise that achieving effective coverage of sustainable development and the environment within SOAs is not simply about achieving the inclusion of more environment-related outcomes and indicators however. Rather, they emphasise the need for greater understanding to be gained of the role which the environment plays in delivering a wide range of outcomes, avoiding the tendency for it to become boxed in to those national outcomes which are most directly linked, i.e. national outcomes 12 (natural and built environment) and 14 (environmental impact of consumption and production). LINK's paper (January 2010) includes a table demonstrating how the achievement of many of the national outcomes and indicators is *'underpinned by the quality of our environment and its importance as a context for other activities'* (p.7).

As well as assessing the extent to which environmental outcomes and indicators are included in SOAs, this audit has therefore also sought to examine the extent to which the area profiles recognise the central importance of the environment and the extent to which environmental outcomes are

seen to have cross-cutting links with other outcomes.

As already noted, SOA's were rationalised between rounds 1 and 2. The first round of SOAs contained an average of 112 indicators (Herbert, 2008), whilst the second round of SOAs contained 105 (Herbert, 2010). The agreements may well be rationalised further, resulting, as SNH (February 2010) put it, in '*intense competition for space*' (p. 3). This will be heightened by the impact of the current economic climate and the budget cuts affecting the public sector. In this context, it is imperative that the underpinning role played by the environment in economic prosperity and quality of life is clearly recognised and that this is fully reflected in the strategic priorities agreed between local partnerships and central government.

2. Findings

2.1 Sustainable development and the environment in area profiles

The guidance for CPPs states that SOAs must be evidence-based and explains that this means they *'should be based on an integrated area profile of social, economic and environmental conditions and trends, and consideration of future challenges and opportunities'* (COSLA et al, October 2008, p. 3). The area profile is intended to outline the evidence base from which the SOA has been developed. The extent to which sustainable development and environmental issues are addressed within the area profiles, therefore, will be a significant determinant of the extent to which they are prioritised in the setting of local outcomes.

Figure 1 shows the number of SOA's referring to sustainable development, the environment and the 10 key topics in their area profiles.

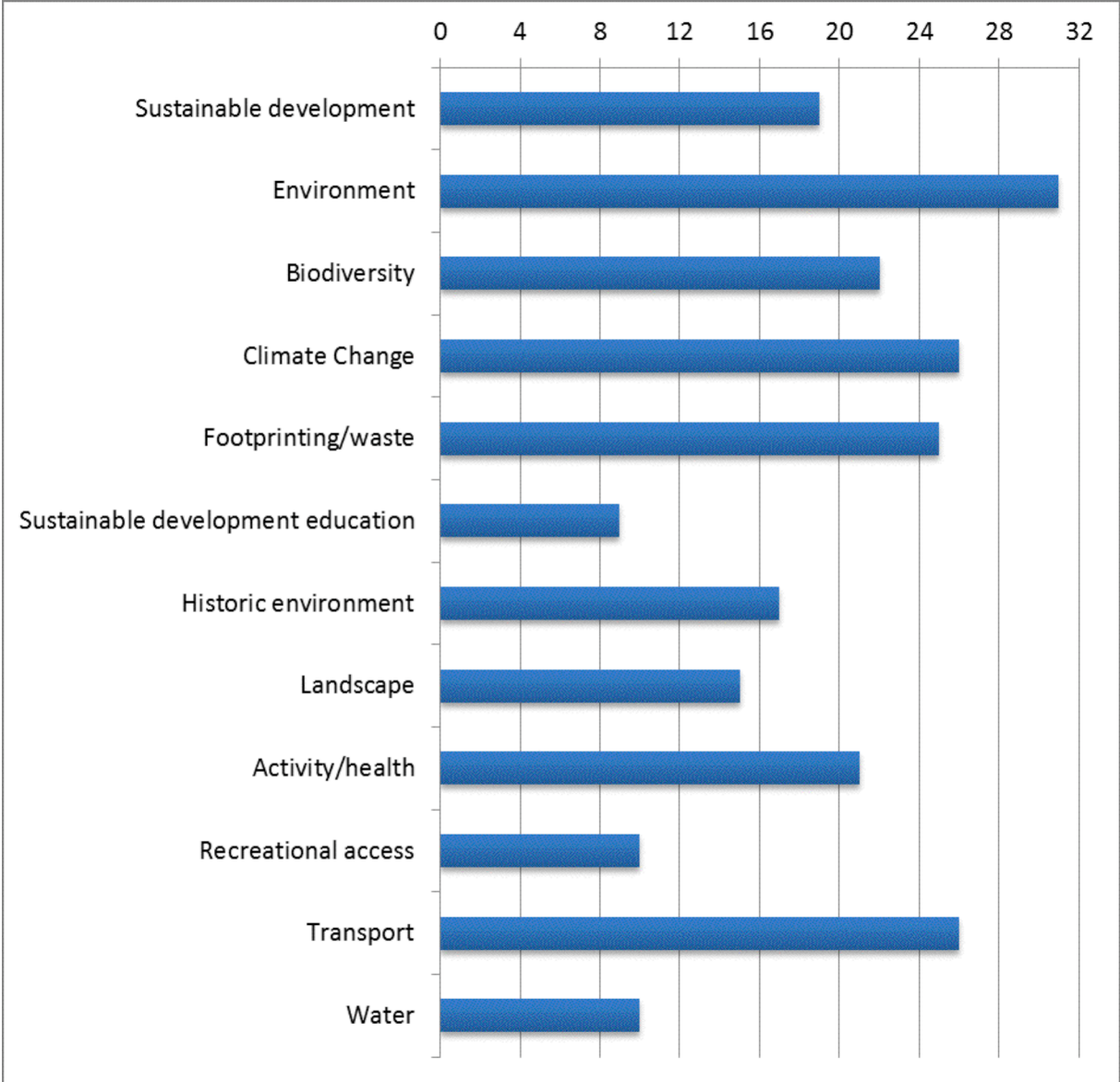
The environment is discussed in all but one of the area profiles, with most including sub-sections on the environment. By contrast, sustainable development is only referred to in 19 (59%).

Of LINK's 10 key topics, the following are the least well covered, appearing in fewer than half of the area profiles:

- **Sustainable development education / volunteering**
- **Landscape**
- **Recreational access**
- **Water and flooding**

The coverage of the general themes of sustainable development and the environment within the area profiles is discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3. The subsequent sections discuss the coverage of the ten key topics in the area profiles, outcomes and indicators.

Figure 1: The number of area profiles which refer to sustainable development, the environment and the 10 key topics



2.3 Sustainable development

2.3.1 Approach to the analysis

The *Third Annual Assessment of Progress by the Scottish Government* (SDC, 2009) emphasises the need for policy in Scotland to reflect three key themes:

1. scale, recognising that we remain a long way from sustainable development at present;
2. urgency, recognising the urgent nature of challenges such as climate change; and
3. interconnectedness, recognising the need for integrated thinking, policy and delivery.

As well as examining the extent to which sustainable development is referenced and discussed within SOAs, we also explored key questions emerging from the three themes above. These were:

1. To what extent do the SOA's reflect the 'step change' needed to achieve sustainability?
2. To what extent is there integration between the delivery of different outcomes?
3. To what extent are 'crunch issues'¹ acknowledged and addressed?

2.3.2 Overview

As already noted, sustainable development is referred to in 19 (59%) of the 32 SOAs. A number of others suggested that the SOA had been developed in line with statutory

¹ The history of human development has often been the pursuit of conflicting social, economic and environment objectives. The goal of sustainable development is to find new and innovative ways to reduce these conflicts and to resolve "crunch issues" where sustainable development objectives are commonly in conflict. If genuine sustainable development is to be achieved, then policies must do much more than simply promote parallel sustainable development objectives. Instead, they must also confront and help to resolve crunch issues.

duty to promote sustainable development but where there was no explanation of how this duty had been applied or there was no further reference to sustainable development, these are not included in the above figure.

The extent to which sustainable development is discussed and the extent to which it can be seen to have impacted on the SOA varies significantly across the 19 SOAs. We would suggest that **only 11 (34%) of the SOAs could be said to have clearly demonstrated that the delivery of sustainable development is a strategic local priority.**

2.3.3 Overarching framework?

A number of the SOAs suggest that sustainable development is seen as a cross-cutting issue. Examples include West Lothian, Shetland Islands (which states that they have sought to 'embed' sustainable development throughout the SOA) and East Ayrshire (which describes sustainable development as a 'guiding principle'). Others refer to supporting strategies or structures. For example, both Falkirk and Edinburgh (see below) refer to the council's sustainable development strategy, whilst South Lanarkshire's CPP includes a sustainability partnership and East Dunbartonshire's SOA refers to an 'implementation group' which is working to apply cross-cutting issues, including sustainable development.

However, **there is very little evidence from this audit to suggest that sustainable development is commonly seen by CPPs, or by the Improvement Service in their guidance, as the overarching framework for policy development which it is intended to be in the UK's shared framework for sustainable development** (*One Future - Different Paths*, 2005).

The differing interpretations of sustainable development as a concept are also apparent and some CPPs have tailored their definition

of sustainable development to their own local circumstances. Inverclyde, for example, state that:

'The achievement of the outcomes set out in this SOA will contribute to the delivery of the three strands of sustainable development with a focus on social and economic regeneration and assessment of the environmental impact of any work carried out to tackle poverty.'

2.3.4 Crunch issues and integration

Perhaps as a result of the absence of sustainable development as an overarching framework, **few SOAs explicitly recognise the 'crunch issues' which it would be necessary to address in a truly sustainable approach.** For example, many include objectives relating to reducing congestion and improving road infrastructure alongside objectives for promoting a modal switch to public transport and/or active modes, and reducing carbon emissions. Others focus on economic development but do not make any reference to environmental limits. Whilst many of the tensions and conflicts remain unacknowledged, there are exceptions, as demonstrated in the East Lothian example.

Good practice example – East Lothian: addressing the 'crunch issue'

East Lothian's SOA recognises the cross-cutting nature of sustainability. It states that *'sustainability applies to each national outcome and touches on the way we in Scotland live our lives and organise society'*.

This is followed through into well-considered local outcomes, drawn from the priority issues identified in the area profile, and a relatively comprehensive set of environmental indicators.

Furthermore, the potential conflicts between environmental sustainability and other outcomes are clearly recognised. In seeking

to 'increase individual well-being, reduce inequalities and promote environmental sustainability' in East Lothian, the SOA acknowledges the tension between continuing to reap the economic benefits from being part of the Edinburgh city region and the negative consequences in terms of the viability of local services, the vibrancy of local communities and the carbon emissions from commuting.

The response, as expressed in the SOA, is to seek 'sustainable growth' which defines 'a role for East Lothian that both recognises the realities of the City Region and helps to diversify the local economy'. This is accompanied by a priority for 'Encouraging enterprise, with a focus on small businesses, tourism, and local food production' which it suggests 'will strengthen the economy while not compromising East Lothian's identity.'

There are a number of examples of outcomes being integrated. **Perhaps the most common example of integration is in relation to the linkages between environment, health and transport.** In specifying outcomes or indicators for the promotion of sustainable transport, many SOAs recognise that this will also have benefits in terms of the environment, health and other outcomes. For example, in setting an outcome for achieving a more integrated transport system, East Dunbartonshire recognise that this will contribute to national outcomes 1 (making Scotland an attractive place to do business), 6 (health), 7 (inequalities), 10 (sustainable communities) and 12 (natural and built environment).

Other important linkages between outcomes are less well served in SOAs. For example, few address the links between economic development and climate change (leading to the kinds of 'crunch issues' discussed above).

It should be acknowledged that integrated thinking is not easy to capture clearly in documents like this, which are in most cases

structured around the 15 national outcomes. Some examples appear in the explanatory text, e.g. in Edinburgh's recognition that its work on ensuring good design under national outcome 10 has the potential to contribute to transport objectives: *'The appearance and 'sense of place' is also important not only in its own right, but also in encouraging travel by sustainable modes'*. Linkages between health and transport are also clearly recognised in this SOA, e.g. under national outcome 14: *'Health Improvement, and more specifically, increased physical activity, is another key partnership priority. Active travel - walking and cycling - allows people to integrate health improving physical activity into their daily lives and contributes to National Outcome 6.'*

Good practice example – Inverclyde: integrating outcomes

The national outcomes were not the starting point for Inverclyde's SOA. Instead, the CPP looked first at what were the priority issues for Inverclyde, identified the key local priorities for delivery, and then looked at how these would contribute to the delivery of the national outcomes. It was recognised that the eight local outcomes identified each contribute to a number of the national outcomes. The SOA includes a table which maps out the linkages between the local outcomes, national outcomes and community plan priorities. Their local outcome on the environment, for example, is linked to 5 national outcomes. The SOA states *'It is recognised that the natural and built environment has an influence on wellbeing, confidence and civic pride'*.

Although the primary focus of the SOA is on the need for regeneration and physical improvements there is also a recognition of the need to ensure *'that developments do not have a negative impact on the environment, that where possible they will protect and enhance biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions, they will work towards*

reducing consumption and waste, promote the use of public transport over individual car journeys and manage property better to ensure less use of energy'.

A further example of the integrated thinking which Inverclyde's approach generated can be seen in their approach to addressing health inequalities. The SOA states *'This [health inequalities] represents a considerable challenge to improve both the physical and mental health of Inverclyde's people and will rely on progress across the SOA in respect of financial inclusion, employability, regeneration, children, alcohol and the environment'*.

2.3.5 Step-change?

Most SOAs fail to demonstrate an understanding of the need for a 'step change' in our management of natural resources. For example, only 2 (6%) include community-wide targets for reductions in carbon emissions, only 3 (9%) include specific targets for reducing carbon footprint and only 3 (9%) include specific targets for reducing ecological footprint. Similarly, few acknowledge the potential impacts of climate change on communities and service provision. The scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face are generally not well reflected compared to the emphasis on the current economic challenges, as discussed further below, and the role which **the environment could play in addressing the economic challenges is not well recognised.**

2.4 The environment

As already noted in the background section, SNH (February 2010) have suggested that explicit references to natural heritage decreased between rounds one and two of the SOA process. **Many of the current SOAs focus on responding to the impacts of the economic downturn** and it would be interesting to analyse the precise extent to which this has impacted on the priority given to the environment. West

Dunbartonshire's SOA, for example, states that the *'economic climate has changed significantly since the SOA process was commenced; this has served to focus us on economic regeneration and poverty given the increasing negative impact the recession is having on our local economy'*.

All but one of the area profiles directly address environmental issues, most in a specific sub-section on the issue. However, their scope varies considerably. Some make relatively brief and general reference to the need to protect and enhance the environment, whilst others are limited in scope (typically referring, for example, to waste, street cleanliness and/or climate change). However, some cover a broader range of issues, with some discussing the role of the environment in addressing a range of outcomes.

The environment is prominently addressed in Renfrewshire's SOA, for example, which states *'the built and natural environments of Renfrewshire are key assets that have a significant impact on quality of life, economic development and the health of the local population.'* Similarly, the Western Isles SOA sees its local outcome on the environment as contributing to national outcomes 2 (economy and employment), 3 (education and skills), 12 (built and natural environment), 13 (national identity) and 14 (environmental impact of consumption and production).

Good practice example – Fife: Prioritising the environment

Fife's 20 local outcomes are grouped around five key themes, one of which is *'sustaining and improving our environment'*. The 5 outcomes grouped under this theme are drawn from a wide-ranging analysis of the local context, which is summarised in the area profile. This analysis articulates the importance of climate change, consumption of resources, energy, waste, biodiversity, transport and active travel, accessibility and

air, water and land quality. In addition, the interconnectedness of the environment with other key issues is recognised, including the economy, social equity and health.

The context set out in the area profile also draws on an analysis of the key challenges which need to be addressed in order to achieve a prosperous and sustainable Fife, which was carried out as part of the Community Plan preparation process in 2007. One of these is 'conserving energy and resources' because, as the SOA explains, *'there is growing evidence of climate change and over consumption of the world's resources. This is a problem that needs to be tackled by all individuals and organisations. In Fife we can and must make a decisive move towards sustainable development, because it is in our own long term interests and everybody has a part to play.'*

This comprehensive analysis of the environmental context and key challenges is followed through in to the outcomes and indicators, with environmental priorities being reflected throughout and good integration between some policy areas, e.g. between health, education and environment.

Clear links are also made with below-the-waterline activities, with extensive references to related documents including Carbon Management Plans for key partners and the development of an overall plan for tackling climate change. The priority given to the environment is also reflected in the structure of the local partnership, which includes a dedicated Environment Partnership, whose action plan is referenced within the SOA.

Good practice example – Clackmannanshire: Recognising the cross-cutting nature of environmental objectives

Like Inverclyde, Clackmannanshire have approached their SOA by identifying local

priorities as a starting point. The SOA maps these 9 priority outcomes in terms of their contribution to the 15 national outcomes but, unlike most SOAs, the SOA is structured according to the local rather than national outcomes.

One of the local outcomes is *'the environment is protected and enhanced for all'*, and the indicators included cover carbon footprint, nature conservation, transport, waste, the historic environment and general cleanliness. These are seen to contribute not just to national outcome 12 (natural and built environment) and 14 (environmental impact of consumption and production) but also national outcomes 10 (well, designed sustainable places), 1 (making Scotland the most attractive place to do business in Europe) and 6 (health). It states *'protecting and enhancing our environment gives an attractive location for enterprises, visitors and tourists, generates a platform for business opportunities; it gives opportunities for activity, recreation which promote health improvement; it promotes community spirit and pride'*.

Assessing the number of SOAs which have the environment as a strategic local priority is not straightforward. Not all SOAs have tightly defined, genuinely strategic local outcomes. Many just list a wide-range of local outcomes under the national ones, others refer to priorities in the community plan, whilst others have 'key themes' or 'strategic themes'. Using a degree of subjective judgement however, we would suggest that **the vast majority of the 31 SOAs which directly address the environment also state that it is in some way a local priority.**

2.5 The 10 key topics

2.5.1 Overview

Figure 1 shows the number of SOAs which address the ten topics within their area profiles. Figure 2 shows the number of SOAs which include local outcomes and/or

indicators for the ten key topics within their SOAs.

Outcomes and indicators are grouped together in figure 2 because separating them out presents quite a confusing picture. In many cases, indicators for the individual topics are included under far more general outcomes (e.g. for the environment or natural resources) or under seemingly unrelated outcomes. In other cases, outcomes for the individual topics are included but no relevant indicators. By grouping outcomes and indicators together, therefore, figure 2 shows how many SOAs address the issues to some degree in their outcomes and indicators. The detail of how this is expressed in the SOAs is then fleshed out and discussed in more detail in the remainder of this section.

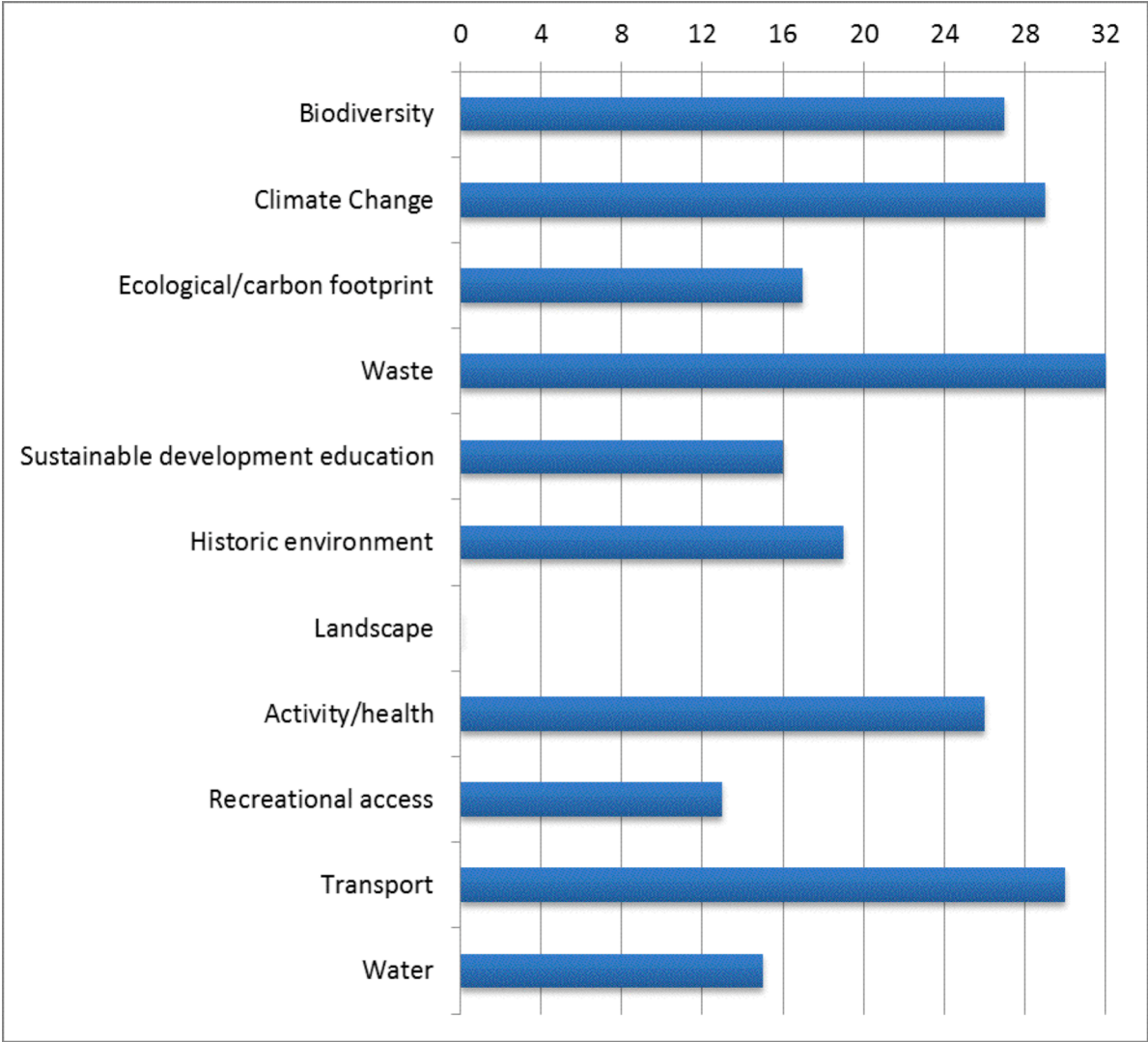
Figures 1 and 2 paint a broadly similar picture, i.e. the topics which tend to be neglected in the area profiles are also most neglected in terms of the outcomes and indicators. These are:

- Sustainable development education / volunteering
- Landscape
- Recreational access
- Water and flooding

Further detail regarding which SOAs include coverage of the different topics is included in table 1 at the end of this report.

The coverage of each of the 10 key topics is discussed in detail below.

Figure 2: The number of SOAs which include outcomes and/or indicators for the ten key topics



Note: Because all SOAs include waste indicators, this chart distinguishes between those which include waste indicators and those which include an indicator for ecological and/or carbon footprint.

2.5.2 Biodiversity / ecosystems / greenspace

Area profiles

22 area profiles (69%) contain reference to biodiversity, ecosystems and/or greenspace. However, although giving a precise number is not straightforward (see earlier discussion in 2.4), we would suggest that **only three SOAs (9%) specifically recognise and state this topic as a strategic local priority**. These are Dumfries & Galloway, Fife and Stirling.

This topic is relatively broad in scope. To give an indication of the focus of the references to it, 16 of the area profiles refer specifically to biodiversity or to designated sites, whilst the remaining 6 refer to other aspects such as green space.

The extent of the references to this topic within the area profiles also varies considerably. Some simply state the need to protect wildlife and the countryside, others provide detail on the statutory designations or important species/habitats within their area, whilst others refer to specific initiatives relating to this topic. Inverclyde's area profile, for example, refers to an Integrated Habitat Network Modelling project which *'should help the local authority to protect, enhance or create key areas of woodland, wetland and grassland, working to link up habitats, ensuring sustained biodiversity across the area'*.

A number of the area profiles for urban areas include reference to reducing derelict or vacant land, which may have negative consequences for biodiversity, but this potential conflict is not addressed.

Few area profiles explore linkages between this topic and other outcomes. An exception to this is Perth and Kinross, which states *'the uniqueness of the diversity of the landscapes is central to our tourism industry. Maintaining and improving this and the diversity of species and habitats in the*

area is important for the prosperity of the area'.

Renfrewshire's SOA discusses the linkages between green space improvements and wider outcomes: *'Improving the open spaces within a community can help reverse patterns of decline, provide opportunities for sport, recreation and environmental education, generate civic pride and help to establish cultural identity. Partners have committed to investment in open spaces, sports pitches and public access and will also manage the local delivery of the Scottish Rural Development Fund's LEADER Programme to promote activities and investment in the rural area of Renfrewshire.'*

Outcomes and indicators

27 SOAs (84%) contain outcomes and/or indicators relating to this topic. However, the focus of indicators relating to this topic varies considerably between SOAs. **Only 19 (59%) include some form of biodiversity indicator(s)**.

Many of the urban areas do not include biodiversity indicators, which suggests a **lack of recognition of the importance of urban biodiversity** as a unique component of Scotland's overall biodiversity. Aberdeen simply uses the street cleanliness score, Dundee includes no specific indicators for this topic and Edinburgh uses the cleanliness index, the number of parks achieving Green Flag awards and two indicators relating to the planning service. Glasgow includes an indicator which is simply labelled 'biodiversity' with a number of biodiversity-related actions included alongside it as targets.

The importance of greenspace is not clearly reflected in SOAs, with only 7 SOAs (22%) including an indicator relating specifically to greenspace.

LINK's preferred outcome for this topic is *'Delivery of priorities identified in the Local*

Biodiversity Action Plan'. None of the SOAs include this as an outcome. Many include their indicators relating to this topic under a more general outcome relating to the natural environment or natural resources. A significant number do have outcomes which are specific to biodiversity, greenspace or land quality. These tend to be phrased more generally than the LINK outcome, e.g. improved biodiversity or improved quality and access to greenspace.

LINK's preferred indicator for this topic is *'Number of LBAPs that have progressed and/or increased/been completed'*. Only two (6%) SOAs (Midlothian and Fife) include this indicator. In addition, the Perth & Kinross SOA includes a very similar indicator - the percentage of priority species for which positive action is underway. 11 others refer to their LBAP as a supporting strategy.

Midlothian's target is for 100% of the actions in their LBAP to be completed by 2010-11 (from 75% in 2007-8). Their SOA also includes indicators for:

- Percentage of respondents to Citizens' Panel Quality of Life Questionnaire who rate 'Nature, Woodlands and Open Space' to be at least 'Fairly Good'
- Hectareage of Midlothian's land area affected by non-native invasive plant species
- Hectareage of land designated as SSSI
- Hectareage of broadleaf/mixed woodland cover
- Hectareage of Midlothian's land area that is vacant or derelict

These are supported by a range of strategies and plans including Midlothian Council Commercial Services Divisional and Service Plans; Parks & Open Spaces Strategy; Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan; Forest Habitat Network Plan and Site Management Plans.

A number of the SOAs include indicators which are similar to some of the additional indicators proposed by LINK, with *'the percentage of designated sites in favourable condition'* being the most common (10 SOAs include this or 'percentage of SSSIs in favourable condition'). Many use the national target of 95% for this indicator.

2.5.3 Climate Change

Area profiles

26 area profiles (81%) include direct reference to climate change. A significant number of these include some reference to the potential impacts of climate change, as well as the need for mitigation actions.

Outcomes and indicators

LINK's preferred outcome and indicators for climate change cover greenhouse gas emissions from local authority operations and per capita CO2 emissions in the local authority area.

29 of the 32 SOAs (91%) include outcomes and/or indicators for climate change. Although many include climate change indicators under general outcomes relating to the natural environment or natural resources, **15 SOAs include outcomes which make specific reference to carbon emissions or carbon footprint.**

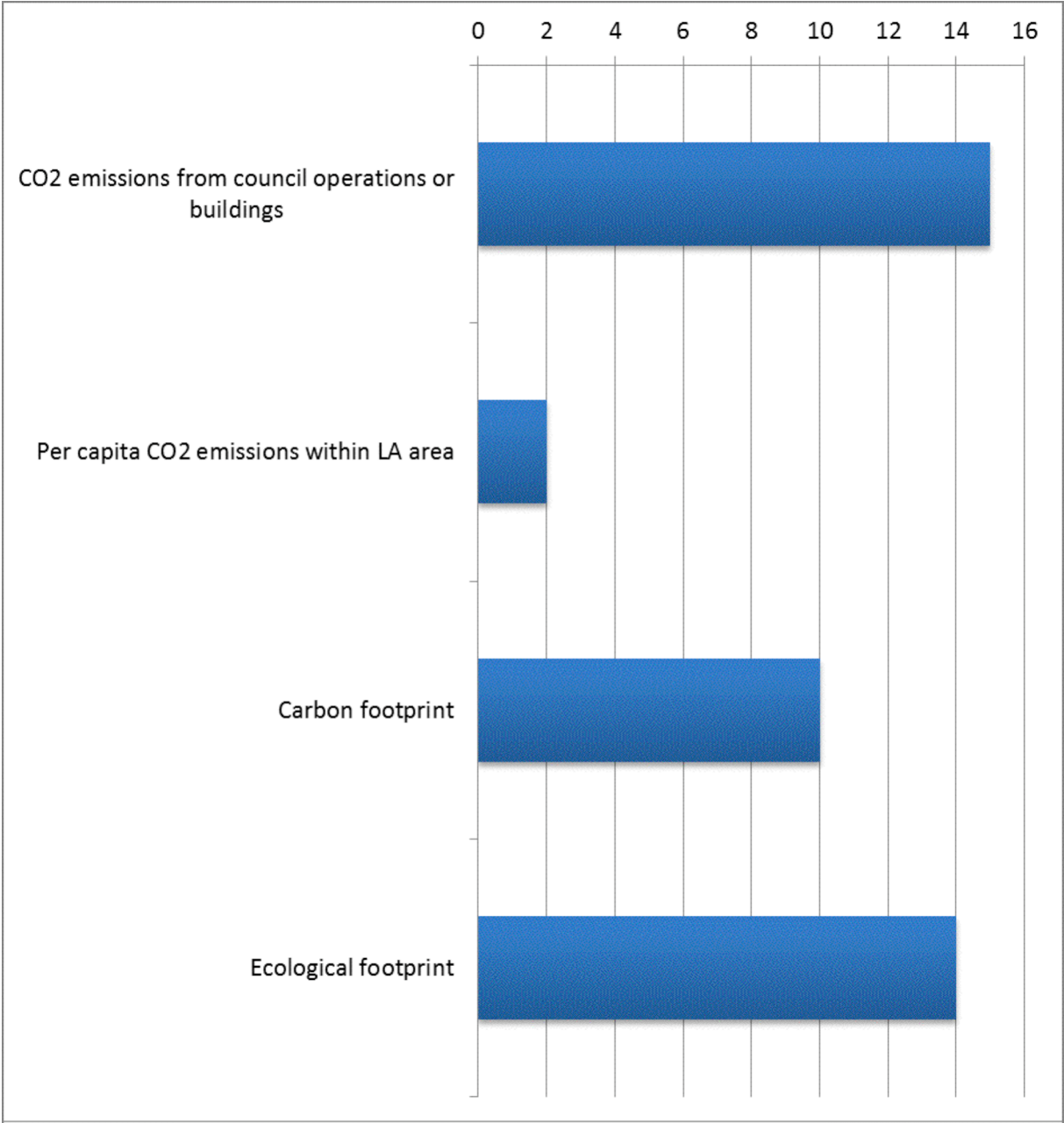
LINK's policy paper recommends that CPPs have separate indicators for carbon footprint and/or ecological footprint under the next key topic (ecological footprinting / consumption and use of resources / waste). Having a separate outcome and/or indicator for production-based emissions within the local authority area (in addition to ecological/carbon footprint calculations, which are based on consumption) is important because the national emissions reduction target, to which local authorities must contribute, is a production-based target.

Figure 3 shows the level of usage of the main different climate change and footprint indicators. The most commonly used is the indicator for emissions from council operations, with a significant number of SOAs referring to work with the Carbon Trust on Carbon Management Plans in support of this.

However, **only two (6%) SOAs (Dundee and Orkney) include an indicator for per capita emissions within the local authority area. A total of five SOAs (16%) include no indicators for either CO2 emissions or carbon/ecological footprint**, although two of those have related indicators for renewable energy or energy consumption.

Only three SOAs (Highland, South Ayrshire and Western Isles) include outcomes and/or indicators which make direct reference to the impacts of climate change and the need for adaptation responses.

Figure 3: Usage of climate change and footprint indicators in SOAs



2.5.4 Ecological or carbon footprinting / consumption and use of resources / waste

Area profiles

25 of the area profiles (78%) contain reference to this topic. However, in most cases the reference is narrowly focused on levels of waste and recycling, with **only 4 SOAs (13%) having specific sub-sections which discuss footprinting or resource use and impact more broadly**. These are Highland, Stirling, South Lanarkshire and Shetland.

Outcomes and indicators

Figure 2 shows that **whilst all SOAs include outcomes and/or indicators for waste, fewer than half include outcomes and/or indicators for ecological /carbon footprint**

Many of the indicators for this topic are included under general outcomes relating to the natural environment or waste. However, five SOAs include outcomes with a specific reference to ecological or carbon footprint being reduced, which is LINK's preferred outcome for this topic. These are Angus, East Lothian, Midlothian, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire.

LINK's preferred indicator for this topic is ecological or carbon footprint. As shown in figure 3, 14 SOAs include an indicator for ecological footprint and 10 include a carbon footprint indicator. 7 SOAs include both so, in total, 15 SOAs (47%) include neither an ecological or carbon footprint indicator.

Furthermore only 3 of the ecological footprint indicators are accompanied by specific reduction targets (Aberdeen, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire). Edinburgh's SOA, in fact, suggests that specific reduction targets would be inappropriate, since ecological footprint is a *'fairly theoretical concept'*. This indicator has, in fact, been removed from the Menu of Local Outcome Indicators because it is not

considered to meet the criteria of being *'statistically robust'* (Improvement Service, August 2010). Nevertheless, it is useful to include it in SOAs as a 'high level compass' which provides a holistic assessment of the global environmental impact of the area's consumption.

Similarly, only 3 of the carbon footprint indicators are accompanied by specific reduction targets (Clackmannanshire, East Lothian and South Ayrshire).

Although all SOAs include indicators for waste, in most cases these are for levels of recycling and/or diversion from landfill. **Only 8 SOAs (25%) include an indicator for the more fundamental issue of the overall level of waste**. These are Aberdeenshire, Dundee, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

2.5.5 SD education / volunteering

Area profiles

Education issues are given considerable coverage in area profiles but **only 9 refer to sustainable development education or environmental volunteering specifically**. In some cases, this consists of a relatively brief reference to the participation of schools in the Eco-Schools initiative but some address the role of the environment in education more broadly. Highland's SOA, for example, states that one of its regional priorities is to *'manage the outstanding natural heritage of the Highlands to optimise the economic, health and learning benefits'*. There is also reference within the area profile to the high levels of provision of environmental volunteering opportunities in the region.

Outcomes and indicators

Half of SOAs include outcomes and/or indicators relating to this theme. LINK's preferred outcome for this topic is *'All schools have a whole school approach to*

sustainable development education (SDE) – embedding it in their work on the curriculum, how the campus is run and in the culture of the school’. None of the SOAs include an outcome which is as specific as this. Rather, most include indicators relating to this theme under more general outcomes relating to education (usually linked to national outcome 4) or the natural environment (usually linked to national outcomes 12 or 14). In some cases the outcome refers to raising environmental awareness more generally. West Dunbartonshire, for example, sees its work on the Eco-Schools initiative as contributing to the objective of *‘raised awareness of environmental issues.’* Similarly, South Ayrshire states an objective to *‘Engage people, businesses and communities more effectively in the sustainability agenda’.*

LINK’s policy paper suggests four preferred indicators for this topic:

- Number of schools with SDE in their school development plan
- Number of schools with an SDE Action Plan
- Number of schools achieving an Eco-Schools Green Flag
- Number of schools achieving Rights Promoting School or other Global Citizenship Award

Only the Eco-Schools indicator is currently used in SOAs, with 11 SOAs using the Eco-Schools initiative within an indicator. The level of ambition varies considerably however. Some have targets for getting a percentage of their schools on to the first (bronze) stage of the scheme. Others are more ambitious. West Lothian, for example, has a target of 100% of schools achieving Green Flag status by 2010/11.

A number of schools have indicators for pupil awards which involve outdoor activity such as Duke of Edinburgh or John Muir Awards.

This topic receives significant attention in Orkney’s SOA. In support of the outcomes *‘Better community awareness of the natural environment & environmental issues’* and *‘Learning is promoted as the shared responsibility of the whole community’*, the SOA includes an indicator for enrolment in the Eco-Schools initiative, as well as:

- Number of school children having an outdoor learning experience through Rangers, Field Teacher, Outdoor Education
- Number of environmental awareness raising walks, talks, events and activities

2.5.6 Historic and Built Environment

Area profiles

The value of the historic environment is not well recognised in SOAs. **Although just over half (17) of SOAs refer to the historic environment within their area profiles, in most cases the reference is relatively brief and focused on listed buildings or other designated sites rather than the wider historic environment.**

However, in some SOAs the importance of the historic environment is explored in more detail. Stirling’s SOA, for example, describes Stirling’s *‘rich historical built heritage... which presents responsibilities as well as opportunities for making Stirling a highly attractive place to live, work, visit and study’.* The area profiles for Orkney, Midlothian, Highland and Clackmannanshire recognise the importance of the historic environment to local economies. Inverclyde’s recognises the role of the historic environment in the area’s cultural identity, stating *‘Protecting Inverclyde’s historic natural and built environment is also a challenge linked with celebrating the area’s past.’*

Outcomes and indicators

19 SOAs include outcomes and/or indicators relating to the historic environment. However, this includes 6 SOAs which have general outcomes referring to the built environment but no specific indicators for the historic environment. So, **only 13 SOAs (41%) have specific indicators relating to the historic environment.**

LINK's preferred outcome for this topic is '*An effective system for managing change in the historic environment is maintained*'. None of the SOAs include this as an outcome. Rather, the indicators relating to this theme tend to be included under a more general outcome relating to the environment or the built environment.

LINK's preferred indicator for this topic is '*A historic environment service maintained by every local authority to an agreed national common standard*'. None of the SOAs include this or anything similar as an indicator. Some of LINK's additional indicators are used however. 5 SOAs incorporate an indicator for the number of buildings on the at risk register and 2 have indicators relating to conservation areas.

2.5.7 Landscape

Area profiles

Slightly fewer than half (15) of SOAs include reference to landscape within their area profiles. In some cases the reference is brief but a small number of the area profiles include discussion of the value of local landscapes, particularly in terms of tourism and outdoor recreation. Perth and Kinross's SOA, for example, states '*the contribution of our environment to the local economy is recognised; in particular, the uniqueness of the diversity of the landscapes is central to our tourism industry. Maintaining and improving this and the diversity of species and habitats in the area is important for the prosperity of the area.*'

There is little explicit recognition in SOAs of the importance of landscapes in terms of quality of life, wellbeing or cultural identity.

Outcomes and indicators

LINK's preferred outcome for this topic is 'exemplary management of National Scenic Areas (NSAs) by local authorities.' The preferred indicator is 'agreed management plans for NSAs drawn up and implemented with SNH and other stakeholders'.

In spite of the fact that 15 area profiles refer to landscape and a number of these do so in some detail, **no SOAs include outcomes or indicators which specifically relate to landscape. This is the biggest gap in terms of SOAs' coverage of the 10 key topics.**

2.5.8 Physical activity / health

Area profiles

21 of the area profiles (66%) include reference to physical activity, most in sub-sections on health.

The area profiles for Aberdeen, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk and Highland all refer to the links between physical activity and health inequalities. A number of area profiles, including Fife, Aberdeen and West Dunbartonshire, also recognise the links between promoting more sustainable forms of transport, physical activity levels and health.

Inverclyde's area profile makes links between recreational access, transport, carbon emissions, physical activity and health, stating '*Initiatives such as the Core Paths Plan and Paths for All will also contribute to reducing carbon footprints, promoting more sustainable forms of transport and getting people exercising through walking or cycling with the knock on benefits to health that this creates.*'

Outcomes and indicators

26 SOAs (81%) include outcomes and/or indicators relating to this topic.

LINK's preferred outcome is *'increase in the number of children and adults meeting recommended physical activity targets'*. No SOAs include outcomes which make specific reference to minimum activity levels but a significant number (13) do include outcomes which make direct reference to physical activity. Most of the other indicators relating to this theme are included under more general outcomes for health/wellbeing/healthy lifestyles.

The interconnectedness between physical activity, health, transport and emissions which is recognised in some SOAs is also reflected in the outcomes and indicators. Many include indicators relating to physical activity under national outcome 6 (we live longer, healthier lives) but links are made with a wide range of the other national outcomes.

LINK's preferred indicator for this topic is *'targets and activities in local physical activity strategy are achieved'*. None of the SOA indicators include specific reference to a physical activity strategy, although a number of references are made to such strategies in the links to below-the-waterline activity.

However, some SOAs do include indicators which directly relate to LINK's preferred outcome, i.e. making specific reference to minimum recommended physical activity levels. These include Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, West Dunbartonshire and Scottish Borders.

One of LINK's additional indicators for this topic is *'number of children walking and cycling to school'* and 8 SOAs include this indicator.

A wide variety of other indicators are included which relate to this theme, such as levels of participation in sporting activities

and visitor numbers to swimming pools, leisure centres or other sporting activities, which in themselves do not give an accurate indication of levels of physical activity.

2.5.9 Recreational access

Area profiles

Only 10 SOAs (31%) include reference to this topic in their area profile.

However, a number of these do recognise the important connections between this topic and other outcomes.

The Western Isles SOA, for example, recognises countryside access and *'enjoying the outdoors'* as being important to delivering many social, economic and environmental benefits, from more sustainable travel and increased tourism to better health and quality of life. *'Encouraging participation, promoting responsible outdoor access and supporting sustainable development are key to realising these benefits'* it suggests.

Similarly, Highland's SOA refers to a range of activities to support greater use and enjoyment of the outdoor environment and states that *'this activity improves economic, health and learning outcomes'*.

Outcomes and indicators

13 SOAs (41%) include outcomes and/or indicators which relate to recreational access. A number of others, whilst not including outcomes or indicators within the SOA, make reference to work in relation to core paths plans.

LINK's preferred outcome for this topic is *'more people enjoy regular visits to the outdoors / local greenspace for recreational purposes'*. None of the SOAs include this as an outcome. Rather, most of the indicators relating to this topic are included under more general outcomes relating to the natural environment, transport or access to services. However, one of LINK's additional outcomes relates to communities having

access to high quality countryside / greenspace and 2 SOAs include outcomes similar to this. West Dunbartonshire's includes the outcome 'Improved quality and access to greenspace' and Aberdeenshire's SOA includes the outcome 'People in Aberdeenshire have access to recreational opportunities in well maintained public spaces.'

LINK's preferred indicator for this topic is 'increase in the percentage of people making one or more visits to the outdoors each week'. Only the Shetland Islands SOA includes this indicator but a number of the SOAs include indicators which are the same as or similar to some of LINK's additional indicators. East Dunbartonshire's and the Scottish Borders' includes an indicator for usage of the core paths network, Shetland's includes an indicator for the completion of the core paths network, Highland's includes an indicator for the number of participants in ranger guided walks or events and West Dunbartonshire's includes an indicator for the percentage of households with an accessible greenspace.

Good practice example – East Dunbartonshire: Recognising the multiple benefits of improved recreational access

East Dunbartonshire's SOA includes an indicator for the number of people using core paths, in support of the wider outcome of achieving a more attractive and sustainable built environment. However, the CPP clearly recognise the potential benefits to a wide range of other important outcomes and are seeking to deliver these benefits through a number of below-the-waterline initiatives. The SOA states:

'The Council is implementing a Greenspace Strategy which embraces the wider policy agenda and the connections between the urban environment and the health and aspirations of the local community. The quality of our greenspaces are being

improved, where possible, to ensure that the benefits and opportunities associated with the urban environment, environment and wildlife, access and recreation and people and play are delivered and contribute to urban regeneration, social inclusion, community development, environment, ecology, education, lifelong learning, heritage, culture, health and wellbeing. A study of the links between Core Paths usage and health has been completed which will inform the promotion of physical activity and active travel. The Healthy Habits, Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme will encourage local people to enjoy their local environments through increased active travel.'

2.5.10 Transport

Area profiles

Sustainable transport is referred to in 26 (81%) of the area profiles. Many include references to improving the sustainability of transport through promoting a modal shift from the car to public transport and active modes. However, **a significant number of area profiles also suggest a need for increasing transport provision generally through investment in transport infrastructure. As discussed earlier, the potential conflicts between this and the environment are usually not explicitly addressed.**

Outcomes and indicators

All but 2 SOAs include outcomes and/or indicators relating to this topic.

LINK's preferred outcome is 'local environments are highly conducive to walking and cycling for people of all ages and abilities'. Most SOAs include more general outcomes which refer, for example, to 'a more integrated transport network', 'reduced environmental impact of transport', 'improved access' or 'improved health and wellbeing'. However, some do include specific reference to the promotion of active

travel, including Dundee City, Orkney, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire.

LINK's preferred indicator is *'increase in the number of local journeys (less than 5 miles) made by walking or cycling'*. A significant number of SOAs include an indicator for the number of children using active modes to travel to school (13 SOA's, 41%) and/or the number of adults using active modes to travel to work (12 SOAs, 38%), although often the indicators also include public transport alongside active modes. Many of these are accompanied by specific and measurable targets. Various other related indicators are also used, e.g. usage of bus and/or rail, car usage, pedestrian counts. However, only Renfrewshire's SOA includes an indicator which specifically refers to short journeys - *'increase the percentage of journeys under 2km in length undertaken on foot'*.

LINK have also put forward an additional outcome and indicators relating to the accessibility of local services and facilities and a number of SOAs include indicators which are linked to this. Glasgow's SOA, for example, includes the following detailed indicators:

- Percentage of 15% most deprived council population within 400m of a bus stop with at least 6 buses an hour every hour between 7am and 7pm on an average weekday
- Proportion of population within 400m of a bus stop with at least 6 buses an hour between 7am and 7pm on an average weekday
- Percentage of total population within 30 minutes public transport journey time of a hospital
- Percentage of total population within 15 minutes public transport journey time of a GP
- Percentage of total population within 15 minutes public transport journey time of a major retail centre

- Percentage of 16-19 year olds within 30 minutes public transport journey time of a further education establishment

2.5.11 Water and Flooding

Area profiles

Only 10 SOAs (31%) include reference to this topic in their area profile. In around half of these, the focus is on flood risk issues, including some which recognise the impacts of climatic changes on the risk of flooding. Others, such as Clackmannanshire's and Fife's, recognise the potential impacts of climate change on water quality. In the Western Isles SOA, perhaps unsurprisingly, the focus is on the impact of sea level rises and increasing storm intensity.

The most comprehensive coverage of this topic is in Orkney's area profile. The 'environment' sub-section recognises the vulnerability of Orkney's coastline to sea level rise and erosion and the importance of maintaining coastal habitats. It also highlights that maintaining the quality of Orkney's small water bodies (which are not included within the Water Framework Directive) is a priority for national organisations such as SEPA, SNH and RSPB. Furthermore, in discussion of their local outcome, *'A community where everyone may live, work, visit and play safely, without undue fear of risk or harm'* they highlight the risk of flooding and coastal erosion and actions that are being taken, particularly through the multi-agency Flood Liaison and Advisory Group (FLAG).

No links are made in any area profile, however, between water conservation and action to mitigate climate change.

Outcomes and indicators

15 SOAs (47%) include outcomes and/or indicators which are linked to this theme.

LINK's preferred outcome is '*sustainable management of water resources and flooding*'. This is not included as an outcome in any SOA. In some cases, the indicators relating to this topic are included under general outcomes relating to the environment, although in 3 of those cases specific mention is made of water. 5 SOAs include indicators for this topic under outcomes relating either to resilience to flooding, more general preparedness for emergencies or to responding to the impacts of climate change. The SOAs which include outcomes specifically referring to the impacts of climate change are Highland, South Ayrshire and the Western Isles.

LINK has two preferred indicators for this topic, one relating to water quality and the other to flood risk management. They are:

- Number (or percentage) of water bodies meeting good ecological status/potential under the Water Framework Directive
- Ratio of expenditure on flood risk management devoted to natural flood management measures, hard engineering and other measures.

6 SOAs include indicators for water bodies meeting good ecological status but none include an indicator for ratio of expenditure on flood risk management. A number of SOAs do however include indicators for specific actions relating to flood risk management (e.g. completing particular flood prevention schemes), including Glasgow, Highland, Moray and the Western Isles.

3 SOAs include indicators which are similar to LINK's suggested additional indicators for properties affected by flood risk.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) established sustainable development as a statutory duty as part of the Best Value regime. However, the findings of this audit suggest that **sustainable development is not widely seen as a strategic priority for Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland**. Only around one third of SOAs could be said to have clearly demonstrated that the delivery of sustainable development is seen as a strategic local priority.

Neither does sustainable development appear to be widely understood, either in SOAs or in the guidance for SOAs, as an over-arching framework for policy development which it is intended to be in the UK's shared framework for sustainable development (*One Future - Different Paths*, 2005).

Perhaps as result of the absence of sustainable development as an overarching framework, **the interconnectedness between outcomes is not fully capitalised upon and few SOA's explicitly recognise and address the 'crunch issues' which it would be necessary to address in a truly sustainable approach. Allowing such conflicts to remain wastes resources and will undermine the achievement of the intended outcomes.**

Many SOAs do recognise the interconnectedness of environment,

health and transport outcomes and this provides a useful model for integrated thinking in other areas, demonstrating the multiple benefits and efficiencies which can be achieved by adopting such an approach.

Where integration is apparent, this seems to have been facilitated to some degree by the CPP generating a small number of local strategic priorities as a starting point, with these then mapped against national outcomes and the interconnectedness between different local and national outcomes recognised and capitalised upon.

At a general level, the environment receives considerable attention within SOAs and most in some way recognise the environment as a priority. However, **in some cases, the coverage of environmental issues is quite narrow in its focus** (e.g. on waste, recycling and street cleanliness) **and some significant gaps in coverage have been identified including:**

- **Climate change mitigation** – although slightly fewer than half of SOAs include an indicator for emissions from Council operations or buildings and 10 include a carbon footprint indicator (for consumption-based emissions), only two include indicators for per capita production-based emissions across the local authority area.

- **Climate change adaptation** – although a number of SOAs refer to the impacts of climate change within their area profile, in very few cases does this translate in to specific references within the resulting outcomes. Work is clearly needed to support CPPs in addressing adaptation issues.
- **Historic environment** – fewer than half of SOAs include specific indicators on the historic environment. The value of the historic environment, including the 95% which is not subject to specific designations, needs to be more clearly recognised.
- **Landscape** – no SOAs include outcomes or indicators for landscape, in spite of its value and significance being recognised in some area profiles.
- **Sustainable management of water resources**, including links to climate change mitigation – very few SOAs recognise this as a priority issue.

Because of the patchy coverage and inconsistent treatment of environmental issues in SOAs, it is unclear how activity at the local level in Scotland will contribute to the meeting of key national outcomes and targets.

For example, gaps in indicators and targets for production-based carbon emissions make it unclear how local authorities and their partners in Scotland will contribute to the demanding national target for reducing CO₂ emissions.

The third annual assessment of progress on sustainable development by Scottish Government (SDC, 2009) suggests that *'action must be bold and based on a fundamental shift in approach'* (p. 62). The report stresses that policy in Scotland needs to recognise the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face. However, the findings from this audit suggest that this is not well reflected in SOAs and **there is a danger that environmental priorities may be increasingly overshadowed by**

economic ones in the current economic climate. The interconnectedness between the two is not well recognised, which could have serious adverse impacts on Scotland's economic prosperity in the long term.

3.2 Recommendations for policy makers

1. Guidance to CPPs should reiterate the duty to promote sustainable development and clearly explain the principles of sustainable development (as expressed in the shared UK framework), how they apply to SOAs and any future outcomes-based agreements and how they can be implemented. The use of resources such as the Sustainable Scotland Network's *Best Value & Sustainable Development Toolkit* could be promoted in support of this.
2. To encourage integrated approaches, all CPPs should be required to clearly state a small number of genuinely strategic local priorities and to map out the interconnectedness between them and each of the different national outcomes.
3. Scottish Government should ensure that environmental issues are not sidelined in the context of economic and financial pressures but rather that the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face is clearly reflected in all local outcome-based agreements. The importance of the environment to economic prosperity and quality of life, and therefore its important role in responding to the economic downturn, needs to be clearly recognised.
4. Scottish Government should ensure that all outcome-based agreements are based on a clear and comprehensive evidence base covering all aspects of the environment, including those topics currently most neglected (sustainable development education, landscape,

recreational access and the sustainable management of water resources), and including recognising its cross-cutting contribution to different local priorities and national outcomes.

5. Through guidance, training, advice and the sharing of good practice, CPPs need to be enabled to address the current gaps in coverage of key environmental issues within SOAs, including carbon emissions, climate change adaptation, sustainable water management, historic environment and landscape.
6. Scottish Government should ensure greater robustness and consistency in the choice of indicators for environmental topics to ensure that they are robust. Drawing on the recommendations put forward by SNH (September 2010) the gaps in relation to the environment in the menu of local outcome indicators need to be filled. A better balance between economic, social and environmental indicators is needed, along with guidance on what approaches should be adopted where robust indicators or data are unavailable. In addition, further support is needed to ensure that specific, measurable and realistic targets are set.
7. In order for the gaps in the indicator set to be filled, work is also needed to improve the related data sets. Where data sources do not exist, or are inadequate, to support indicators that relate to strategic local priorities, the Scottish Government should take steps to close gaps in required data and data sources.
8. Greater consistency needs to be achieved in the format, structure and presentation of agreements so that comparisons between them can be more easily made and learning achieved. Particular areas of inconsistency currently include the expression of local

strategic priorities and the detail provided regarding below-the-waterline activities.

9. All CPPs should be required to report on their intended contribution to key national targets, such as the 42% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020.
10. Scottish Government should be reviewing and evaluating outcome-based agreements in a way that supports CPPs to continually improve performance and contribute to the national performance framework.

3.3 Recommendations for CPPs

1. CPPs need to give much greater priority to the environment within their agreements with Scottish Government, recognising its underpinning role in economic prosperity, quality of life, health and wellbeing. Furthermore, the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face, particularly in relation to climate change, need to be reflected in the setting of local priorities and levels of ambition.
2. In preparing their outcome-based agreements, CPPs need to recognise their statutory responsibility to promote sustainable development. This will necessitate, among other things, better joining-up of economic, social and environmental objectives and ensuring that environmental limits are understood and respected.
3. CPPs need to base their outcome-based agreements on a clear evidence base covering all aspects of the environment, including the 10 priority topics identified in this report. The findings from this audit suggest that a number of these are currently neglected in area profiles, particularly sustainable development education, landscape, recreational

access and the sustainable management of water resources.

4. Evidence from this audit suggests that, rather than starting with the national outcome templates, integration of objectives is facilitated by CPPs building on their area profile to develop a small number (6-9 seems to have worked well in those looked at during the course of this audit) of local strategic priorities as a starting point, with the interconnectedness between different local and national outcomes then explored and applied.
5. The next revision of agreements will provide an opportunity to refine environmental outcomes, making them more robust and measurable, through the use of more specific indicators and targets, drawing on the work of SNH (September 2010) in particular. Particular attention should be paid to filling the current gaps in the coverage of key environmental topics, including:
 - Carbon emissions within the local authority area. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 introduces a duty on all public bodies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the exercise of their functions. This came into force in January 2011. We would therefore suggest that all outcome-based agreements include an indicator for per capita emissions across the local authority area, with clear and measurable targets set. This should be

in addition to a consumption-based indicator for ecological and/or carbon footprint.

- Climate change adaptation. Climate change will have major impacts on communities, economies and service delivery. However, although a number of SOAs refer to the impacts of climate change within their area profile, in very few cases does this translate in to specific references within the resulting outcomes. Urgent action is needed to address this.
- Landscape. No SOAs include outcomes or indicators for landscape. Its value and significance to Scotland needs to be recognised by CPPs.
- Historic environment – fewer than half of SOAs include specific indicators on the historic environment. The value of the historic environment, including the 95% which is not subject to specific designations, needs to be more clearly recognised.
- Sustainable management of water resources. This is an important issue both in terms of water quality, adapting to the impacts of climate change (minimising flood risk etc.) and in terms of mitigating climate change, since water use has a significant energy component. Fewer than half of SOAs include outcomes and/or indicators relating to this topic. CPPs need to recognise the significance of minimising water use in reducing emissions.

Table 1: Local authorities including outcomes and/or indicators for the 10 key topics

	Biodiversity	Climate change	Waste	Footprint	Education	Historic environment	Landscape	Activity/health	Recreational access	Transport	Water
Aberdeen City	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Aberdeenshire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Angus	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Argyll & Bute	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓
Clackmannanshire	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Dumfries & Galloway	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	
Dundee City	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓
East Ayrshire	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	
East Dunbartonshire	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
East Lothian District	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
East Renfrewshire		✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	
Edinburgh City	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Falkirk	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓
Fife	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Glasgow City	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Highland	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Inverclyde	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
Midlothian	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
Moray			✓							✓	✓
North Ayrshire	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	
North Lanarkshire	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	
Orkney Islands	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Perth & Kinross	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Renfrewshire	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	
Scottish Borders	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	
Shetland Islands	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
South Ayrshire		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
South Lanarkshire		✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓
Stirling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
West Dunbartonshire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
West Lothian			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
Western Isles	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
TOTAL	27	29	32	17	16	19	0	26	13	29	15

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Appendix 1: National outcomes

1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.
2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
6. We live longer, healthier lives.
7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Policy briefing for national bodies

A briefing for policy makers in Scottish Government, Improvement Service and COSLA

Introduction

The second-phase Single Outcome Agreements between Scottish Government and the 32 Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland were agreed in June 2009. Subsequent reviews of these agreements have highlighted concerns about their treatment of environmental issues. With the unified outcomes-based approach to the relationship between central and local government set to remain beyond the Holyrood elections in 2011, these concerns need to be addressed. It is imperative that the underpinning role played by the environment in economic prosperity and quality of life is clearly recognised and that this is fully reflected in the strategic priorities agreed between local partnerships and central government.

In order to inform the ongoing development of the arrangements between central and local government, Scottish Environment LINK (the network for Scotland's environmental NGOs) commissioned CAG Consultants to conduct an audit of the extent to which sustainable development and environmental issues are currently being addressed in the 32 Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).

This paper presents the key findings from the audit and makes recommendations for ways in which the SOA process and any successor arrangements can more effectively address sustainable development and environmental priorities. It is aimed at

policy makers in Scottish Government, the Improvement Service and COSLA and is accompanied by a separate briefing and recommendations aimed at Community Planning Partnerships.

Key findings

The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) established sustainable development as a statutory duty as part of the Best Value regime. However, the findings from LINK's audit suggest that **sustainable development is not widely seen as a strategic priority for Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland.**

Neither does sustainable development appear to be widely understood, either in SOAs or in the guidance for SOAs, as an over-arching framework for policy development which it is intended to be in the UK's shared framework for sustainable development (*One Future - Different Paths*, 2005).

Perhaps as result of the absence of sustainable development as an overarching framework, **the interconnectedness between outcomes is not fully capitalised upon and few SOA's explicitly recognise and address the 'crunch issues' which it would be necessary to address in a truly sustainable approach. Allowing such conflicts to remain wastes resources**

and will undermine the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Many SOAs do recognise the interconnectedness of environment, health and transport outcomes and this provides a useful model for integrated thinking in other areas, demonstrating the multiple benefits and efficiencies which can be achieved by adopting such an approach.

At a general level, the environment receives considerable attention within SOAs and most in some way recognise the environment as a priority. However, in some cases, the coverage of environmental issues is quite narrow in its focus (e.g. on waste, recycling and street cleanliness) and some significant gaps in coverage have been identified including:

- **Climate change mitigation** – only two SOAs include indicators for per capita production-based emissions across the local authority area, although 10 include a carbon footprint indicator (for consumption-based emissions).
- **Climate change adaptation.**
- **Historic environment.**
- **Landscape** – no SOAs include outcomes or indicators for landscape.
- **Sustainable management of water resources**, including links to climate change mitigation.

Because of the patchy coverage and inconsistent treatment of environmental issues in SOAs, it is unclear how activity at the local level in Scotland will contribute to the meeting of key national outcomes and targets, such as the demanding national target for reducing CO₂ emissions.

The scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face is not well reflected in SOAs and **there is a danger that**

environmental priorities may be increasingly overshadowed by economic ones in the current economic climate. The interconnectedness between the two is not well recognised, which could have serious adverse impacts on Scotland's economic prosperity in the long term.

Recommendations

1. Guidance to CPPs should reiterate the duty to promote sustainable development and clearly explain the principles of sustainable development (as expressed in the shared UK framework), how they apply to SOAs and any future outcome-based agreements and how they can be implemented. The use of resources such as the Sustainable Scotland Network's *Best Value & Sustainable Development Toolkit* could be promoted in support of this.
2. To encourage integrated approaches, all CPPs should be required to clearly state a small number of genuinely strategic local priorities and to map out the interconnectedness between them and each of the different national outcomes.
3. Scottish Government should ensure that environmental issues are not sidelined in the context of economic and financial pressures but rather that the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face is clearly reflected in all local outcome-based agreements. The importance of the environment to economic prosperity and quality of life, and therefore its important role in responding to the economic downturn, needs to be clearly recognised.
4. Scottish Government should ensure that all outcome-based agreements are based on a clear and comprehensive evidence base covering all aspects of the environment, including those topics currently most neglected (sustainable

development education, landscape, recreational access and the sustainable management of water resources), and including recognising its cross-cutting contribution to different local priorities and national outcomes.

5. Through guidance, training, advice and the sharing of good practice, CPPs need to be enabled to address the current gaps in coverage of key environmental issues within SOAs, including carbon emissions, climate change adaptation, sustainable water management, historic environment and landscape.
6. Scottish Government should ensure greater robustness and consistency in the choice of indicators for environmental topics to ensure that they are robust. Drawing on the recommendations put forward by SNH (September 2010) the gaps in relation to the environment in the menu of local outcome indicators need to be filled. A better balance between economic, social and environmental indicators is needed, along with guidance on what approaches should be adopted where robust indicators or data are unavailable. In addition, further support is needed to ensure that specific, measurable and realistic targets are set.
7. In order for the gaps in the indicator set to be filled, work is also needed to improve the related data sets. Where data sources do not exist, or are inadequate, to support indicators that relate to strategic local priorities, the Scottish Government should take steps to close gaps in required data and data sources.
8. Greater consistency needs to be achieved in the format, structure and presentation of agreements so that comparisons between them can be more easily made and learning achieved. Particular areas of inconsistency currently include the expression of local strategic priorities and the detail provided regarding below-the-waterline activities.
9. All CPPs should be required to report on their intended contribution to key national targets, such as the 42% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020.
10. Scottish Government should be reviewing and evaluating outcome-based agreements in a way that supports CPPs to continually improve performance and contribute to the national performance framework.

Policy briefing for local bodies

A briefing for local authorities and their partners

Introduction

The second-phase Single Outcome Agreements between Scottish Government and the 32 Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland were agreed in June 2009. Subsequent reviews of these agreements have highlighted concerns about their treatment of environmental issues. With the unified outcomes-based approach to the relationship between central and local government set to remain beyond the Holyrood elections in 2011, these concerns need to be addressed. It is imperative that the underpinning role played by the environment in economic prosperity and quality of life is clearly recognised and that this is fully reflected in the strategic priorities agreed between local partnerships and central government.

In order to inform the ongoing development of the arrangements between central and local government and to support Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in the ongoing development of their SOAs and any successor agreements, Scottish Environment LINK (the network for Scotland's environmental NGOs) commissioned CAG Consultants to conduct an audit of the extent to which sustainable development and environmental issues are currently being addressed in SOAs.

This paper presents the key findings from the audit and makes recommendations for ways in which CPPs can more effectively address sustainable development and environmental priorities. It is aimed at members and officers in local government,

as well as their community planning partners.

Key findings

The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) established sustainable development as a statutory duty as part of the Best Value regime. However, the findings from LINK's audit suggest that **sustainable development is not widely seen as a strategic priority for Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland.**

Neither does sustainable development appear to be widely understood, either in SOAs or in the guidance for SOAs, as an over-arching framework for policy development which it is intended to be in the UK's shared framework for sustainable development (*One Future - Different Paths*, 2005).

Perhaps as result of the absence of sustainable development as an overarching framework, **the interconnectedness between outcomes is not fully capitalised upon and few SOA's explicitly recognise and address the 'crunch issues' which it would be necessary to address in a truly sustainable approach. Allowing such conflicts to remain wastes resources and will undermine the achievement of the intended outcomes.**

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Because of the patchy coverage and inconsistent treatment of environmental issues in SOAs, it is unclear how activity at the local level in Scotland will contribute to the meeting of key national outcomes and targets, such as the demanding national target for reducing CO₂ emissions.

The scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face is not well reflected in SOAs and **there is a danger that environmental priorities may be increasingly overshadowed by economic ones in the current economic climate. The interconnectedness between the two is not well recognised, which could have serious adverse impacts on Scotland's economic prosperity in the long term.**

Recommendations

1. CPPs need to give much greater priority to the environment within their agreements with Scottish Government, recognising its underpinning role in economic prosperity, quality of life, health and wellbeing. Furthermore, the scale and urgency of the environmental challenges we face, particularly in relation to climate change, need to be reflected in the setting of local priorities and levels of ambition.
2. In preparing their outcome-based agreements, CPPs need to recognise their statutory responsibility to promote sustainable development. This will necessitate, among other things, better joining-up of economic, social and environmental objectives and ensuring that environmental limits are understood and respected.
3. CPPs need to base their outcome-based agreements on a clear evidence base covering all aspects of the environment, including the 10 priority topics identified in this report. The findings from this audit suggest that a number of these are currently neglected in area profiles, particularly sustainable development education, landscape, recreational access and the sustainable management of water resources.
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5. The next revision of agreements will provide an opportunity to refine

environmental outcomes, making them more robust and measurable, through the use of more specific indicators and targets, drawing on the work of SNH (September 2010) in particular.

Particular attention should be paid to filling the current gaps in the coverage of key environmental topics, including:

- Carbon emissions within the local authority area. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 introduces a duty on all public bodies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the exercise of their functions. This came into force in January 2011. We would therefore suggest that all outcome-based agreements include an indicator for per capita emissions across the local authority area, with clear and measurable targets set. This should be in addition to a consumption-based indicator for ecological and/or carbon footprint.
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- Landscape. No SOAs include outcomes or indicators for landscape. Its value and significance to Scotland needs to be recognised by CPPs.
- Historic environment – fewer than half of SOAs include specific indicators on the historic environment. The value of the historic environment, including the 95% which is not subject to specific designations, needs to be more clearly recognised.
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CAG Consultants

Founded in 1983, CAG Consultants is an independent, employee-owned co-operative. We provide support, policy advice and training in a wide range of fields relating to sustainable development and climate change, regeneration and stakeholder & community involvement. We deliver high quality, innovative and thoughtful work for our clients, who include government departments, local authorities, public agencies, the NHS and regeneration and community planning partnerships across the UK. We pride ourselves on our strong ethical approach and our commitment to social justice and improving and protecting the environment. For more information, see www.cagconsultants.co.uk

Gordon House
6 Lissenden Gardens
London NW5 1LX
Tel/fax 020 7482 8882
hq@cagconsult.co.uk
www.cagconsultants.co.uk

REPORT AUTHOR

Tim Maiden
Director
CAG Consultants
tel 0191 224 1390 mob 07961 541 281
tm@cagconsult.co.uk

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