

The Law Officers Department Sustainable Development Action Plan

Forward by Vera Baird QC MP Solicitor General

I am pleased to introduce the latest version of the Sustainable Development Action Plan produced by my Departments.

The Government affords a high priority to sustainable development issues whilst recognising the challenges posted. My Departments have worked hard to improve the collection of data and put in place more robust monitoring systems to ensure that challenging targets are met.

We will work with our partners in the criminal justice system and elsewhere to tackle these issues and build sustainable communities.

Vera Baird QC MP Solicitor General

Background

In March 2005 The Government published *Securing The Future*, an updated Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK. The Strategy set out the Government's overall plans and required all government departments to draw up action plans for tackling sustainable development issues. The Strategy refers to a number of cross government commitments and this plan demonstrates how the LODs propose to meet those commitments which apply to their work.

The strategy explained that:

“the goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. For the UK Government, that goal will be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well being. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.”

The strategy set out five principles to form the basis for sustainable development policy in the UK.(See Annex 1)

Detailed information on the five principles can be found at: www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/principles.htm

“Securing the Future” also outlines four priority areas:

- i. Sustainable Consumption and Production;
- ii. Climate Change and Energy;
- iii. Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement;
- iv. and Sustainable Communities.

The Law Officers Departments (LODs)

The Attorney General and the Solicitor General are the Law Officers. High level information on the Law Officers’ Departments is shown below. The main business of the departments include criminal prosecutions and the provision of legal advice.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Staff Numbers 8834, Major or sole occupier in less than half of our buildings out of an estate of 87 buildings across England and Wales.

Serious Fraud Office (SFO)

Staff Numbers 293, Major occupier one building. minor occupier two buildings – all in London.

Treasury Solicitors Department (TSD)

Staff Numbers 798. Main occupier of one building in London and lease responsibilities for a building in Taunton.

Attorney Generals Office (AGO)

Staff Numbers 50, sole occupier of one listed building in London

HM CPS Inspectorate (HMCPSI)

Staff Numbers 52, sole occupier in one listed building in London and occupier of half of one floor of a building on a CPS lease in York.

Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office (RCPO)

Staff Numbers 234, Minor occupier in two buildings; one in London, one in Manchester.

The Law Officers’ aim is for their departments to provide world class public services that deliver justice and meet the needs of the victims and communities so that:

- people feel more secure from crime and anti social behaviour; fewer people’s lives are ruined by drugs; and communities are safer places to live and work;
- more offenders are brought to justice and proceeds of crime recovered through a modern and efficient justice process;
- the UK is a more prosperous country because investments are secure and tax revenues protected;
- the public has confidence and trust in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and the work of the Law Officers’ Departments;
- through the performance of the Law Officers’ role as the government ‘s chief legal advisers and through the legal services that the treasury solicitor provides across government, the best legal support is given to departments in their delivery of quality public services and in their management of their business and people.
- The Law Officers have joint responsibility with the Home Office and Department for Constitutional Affairs for the delivery of the following targets

in the 2004/ CJS Public Service Agreement (PSA): to improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.24 million by 2007-08; - to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti social behaviour, and building confidence in the CJS without compromising fairness.

Sustainable development in the Law Officers' Department

The Law Officers Departments will follow the five principles in *Securing the Future*. The core business of each department contributes directly to, 'ensuring a strong, healthy and just society'. The Law Officers' Departments action plan, which is attached, describes how the four key priority areas, from *Securing the Future*, will be addressed.

The plan includes action to raise awareness of sustainable development issues across the departments in order to ensure that sustainable development considerations are embedded both within policy development (where appropriate) and operational delivery. The Law Officers' Departments will work to:

- comply with relevant environmental legislation;
 - minimise waste by reducing and reusing and maximise recycling opportunities;
 - conserve energy, water and other natural resources;
 - reduce carbon emissions from buildings and business related travel and
 - reduce the usage of paper and office consumables.
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- introduce better procurement of sustainable goods and services;
 - ensure buildings are refurbished and operated to improve their environmental performance; and
 - introduce Environmental Management Systems based on international standard ISO14001.

In the management of our estate, performance will be measured against a series of targets within the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate.

Action on sustainable development will form part of the efficiency programmes arising from the Gershon review and will be included as part of the work for the forthcoming comprehensive spending review for 2007.

Benefits and Risks

The benefits to the LOD of achieving the SDAP objectives include substantial savings in resource use and running costs along with waste reduction and raising awareness of SD in our operations.

The risks of not taking action include:

- Failure to protect natural resources
- Increased running costs
- Reputational damage
- Failure to contribute to UK government target reductions of CO2 emissions

Ministerial responsibilities

The Solicitor General is the sustainable development Minister for the Law Officers' Departments and has overall responsibility for ensuring the Law Officers' Departments fulfil their sustainable development commitments.

Policy and Operations

The Law Officers' Departments are not significant Policy making departments but will ensure that sustainable development policies are embedded into all their operational processes. Each department has appointed a champion for sustainable development. A Steering Group on Sustainable Development comprising representatives from Law Officers' Departments, is responsible for implementing the action plan and will endeavour to "Lead by example" in all that it does.

Engaging staff and stakeholders

Staff and managers will be engaged in the delivery of these actions by raising awareness of key issues where appropriate to their work, through articles in the in house journals, intranet publicity and poster campaigns on key activities, e-learning, presentations, cascade briefings and team meetings. We will publish the Action plan on our respective intranets. Sustainable development will be integrated into induction processes and appropriate training programmes.

Monitoring and reporting

The Law Officers' Departments will monitor and review progress and performance against the sustainable development policy statement and their action plan. The Steering Group on Sustainable Development for the Law Officers' Departments reports progress to the Solicitor General. The policy statement and the action plan will be reviewed in 2007. Progress against the action plan and performance against our sustainable development targets will be included in the annual Departmental Report covering the Law Officers' Departments.