



Adapting to climate change: local authority case study

Bournemouth Borough Council - Sustainability Impact Assessment for cabinet decisions and project management systems

Overview:

Bournemouth and Poole Borough Councils have a joint Adaptation Action Plan to reach NI188 Level 3 by March 2011. Whilst the coalition government has recently announced that the National Indicator Set (NIS) will be replaced, Bournemouth Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2011/12 remains committed to climate change adaptation. One of the Council's top corporate priorities is "An Improving Environment", for which the Council plans to have "Increased activity to respond to climate change".

One of the ways the Council plans to increase activity is through the development of a new Sustainability Framework and Impact Assessment Tool to underpin the Council's decision making and planning process, which includes a climate change assessment section with a question specifically on adaptation. The intention is to ensure that Cabinet decisions and project management systems have considered the impacts of climate change prior to decisions being made.

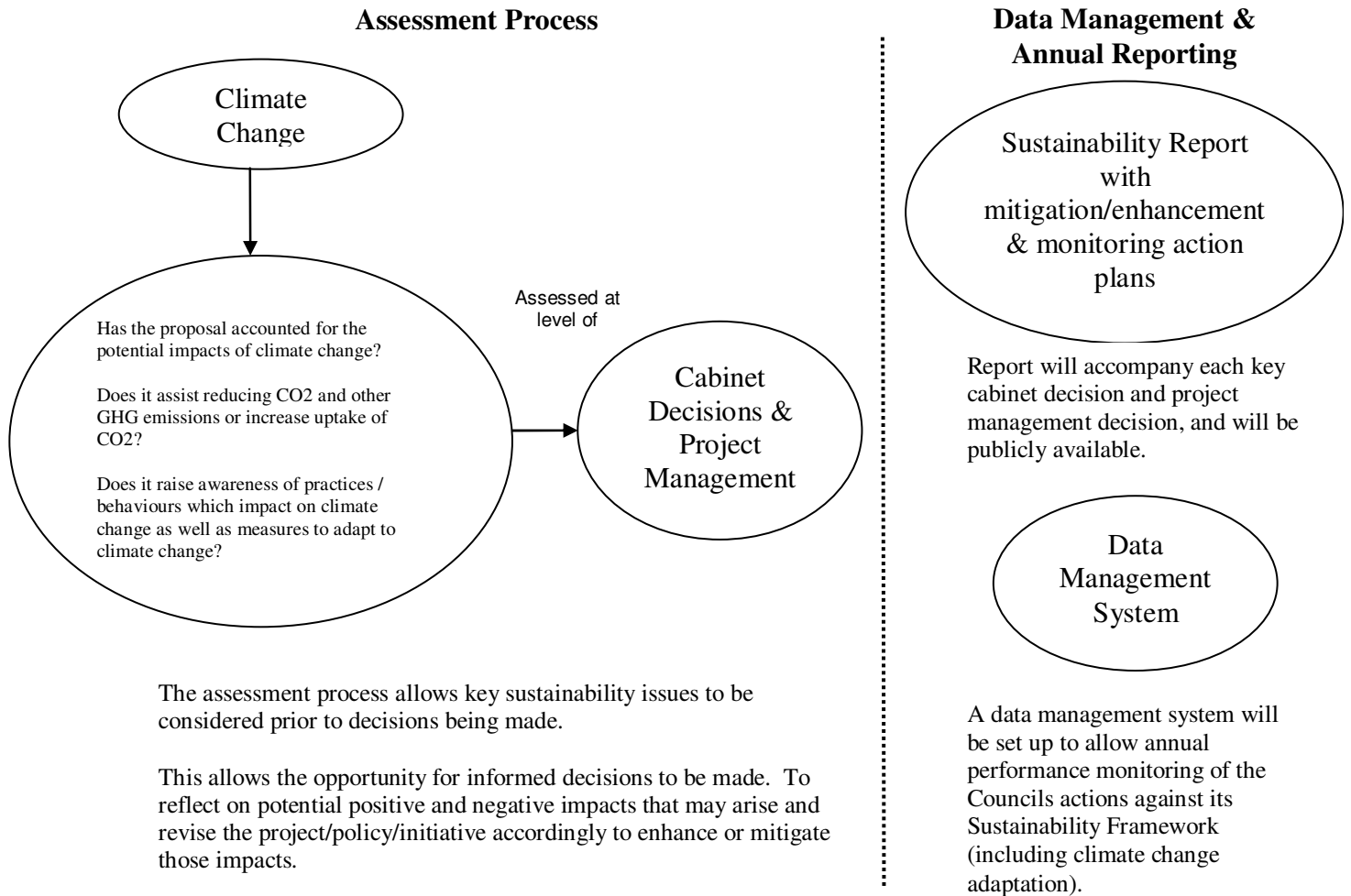
Adaptation measures:

The assessment process, Figure 1 below, is due to be introduced after July 2011. The Tool provides an overview of issues and key policy and legislation relating to climate change and adaptation; links to useful information; examples of best practice; a list of key partners; and key indicators for monitoring.

Benefits:

- 1) *Education*: The aim of the toolkit is to highlight sustainability issues and knowledge gaps, creating common understanding. The Tool can be used as a 'Library Function' when preparing policies/plans/initiatives, thereby offering the opportunity to enhance Council practices.
- 2) *Monitoring & Reporting*: The tool provides a systematic means of collating and recording information about the actions that have been taken and the reasons for them. It also provides an important evidence base to show that climate change adaptation issues have been addressed, and provides evidence of thinking and future judgements as to success or failure.

Figure 1: Assessment Process



The assessment process allows key sustainability issues to be considered prior to decisions being made.

This allows the opportunity for informed decisions to be made. To reflect on potential positive and negative impacts that may arise and revise the project/policy/initiative accordingly to enhance or mitigate those impacts.

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