



## Minutes

### Sustainable Development Forum

10 December 2025 | 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

At: Mossley Mill, Carnmoney Rd N, Newtownabbey, BT36 5QA

**Chair:** Claire Shortt

**Minutes:** Amy Garbett

**Attendees:** Claire Shortt, Amy Garbett, Andrew Mowat, Amy Gallagher, Avril Given, Colin Duff, Ciaran Coleman, Eamonn Keaveney, Claire Evans, Zara Hamilton, Grace McGurk, Olivia Dath, Brenda Roddy, Nicola Keown, Lisa Kirkwood

**Apologies:** Christine Watts, Connor O'Doran, Catherine Hunter, Claire Duddy, Emma Adair, Johnathan Hayes, Emma Stubbs, Alison Curtis, Marcella Kinsella, Mura Quigley, Mark McAdoo, Kirsty Pinkerton, John Murtagh, Kelly Devlin

		Action
1	<b>Welcome</b>	
	Claire Shortt ( <b>CS</b> ) welcomed everyone to the meeting, a round of introductions followed.  Apologies were recorded.	
2	<b>Minutes of meeting on 10 Sept 2025</b>	
	Minutes of the meeting on 10 Sept 2025 were adopted as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by: Grace McGurk ( <b>GM</b> ), Seconded by: Claire Evans ( <b>CE</b> ).  <b>CS</b> noted that most actions have been completed.	
3	<b>SNI Updates</b> Amy Garbett ( <b>AG</b> ), Sustainable NI	
	Amy Garbett ( <b>AG-SNI</b> ) introduced the proposed 2026 webinar series and invited feedback from the group. SNI will also offer Carbon Literacy training for Local Authorities, with a discounted rate for SNI partners.	<b>Action 1: AG-SNI</b> to resend Sustainability Compass login details for the new domain.

	<p><b>AG-SNI</b> highlighted the Sustainability Compass and will resend login details for the new domain. Members requested adding a justification section to the Compass to support use in standard committee reports, noting that robust reasoning is vital. SNI will explore implementation options. Potential further additions discussed included space to upload photos and/or a one-page general summary to append to reports. Members expressed strong interest in using the tool to improve projects.</p> <p>The group requested real (non-fictional) examples and an additional civic centre example to support application.</p>	<p><b>Action 2: AG-SNI</b> to scope and report back on adding a justification section to the Sustainability Compass.</p> <p><b>Action 3: AG-SNI</b> to explore options for photo uploads and a one-page summary output within/alongside the Compass.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Round Table Updates – Mitigation reporting (feedback)</b>	
	<p>All to share the latest mitigation report and actions.</p> <p>Conversion factors change annually; DESNZ factors are UK-wide (not NI-specific) and may not fully reflect NI circumstances.</p> <p><b>AG-SNI</b> will track electricity conversion factor trends. It was noted electricity data often combines metered and estimated usage, with challenges in obtaining readings for all sites. With increasing <b>renewable generation</b>, conversion factors are expected to decrease over time.</p> <p>It was noted that Growth (e.g., a new civic centre) will increase absolute emissions; the group discussed using intensity ratios (e.g., floor area, staff, turnover, footfall) to enable more useful benchmarking across sites (e.g., leisure centres).</p> <p>SDF will consider best practice at the next meeting.</p> <p>Formal mitigation reporting is every three years, most councils intend to continue annual internal reporting to drive efficiency, highlight progress, and give directorates/sites ownership via annual monitoring. There were differing views on whether annual reports should go to committee or remain internal to departments.</p> <p>Most councils agreed to publish mitigation reports ahead of DEARA publications.</p> <p>It was noted that all public body reporting in Scotland is published on the Sustainable Scotland Network (<a href="https://sustainable-scotland-network.org">sustainable-scotland-network.org</a>).</p> <p><b>CS</b> will share the BCC template for annual reporting and encouraged others to share theirs.</p> <p><b>Targets, plans, and audits</b></p> <p>Councils discussed whether they have reduction targets and/or reduction plans. Some councils are conducting audits and feasibility studies before introducing reduction plans.</p>	<p><b>Action 4: All</b> members to share their mitigation report and actions.</p> <p><b>Action 5: AG-SNI</b> to track electricity conversion factor trends and report insights.</p> <p><b>Action 6: SDF (next meeting)</b> to consider and agree best practice for intensity ratios/benchmarking.</p> <p><b>Action 7: CS</b> to share the BCC annual reporting template; <b>All</b> encouraged to share theirs.</p> <p><b>Action 8: CD</b> to present LCCC energy audits overview at the next SDF.</p> <p><b>Action 9: ZH</b> to share Ards &amp; North Down energy management plan.</p>

	<p>Colin Duff (<b>CD</b>) will present an overview of LCCC energy audits at the next SDF.</p> <p>There was discussion of options where retrofitting is not feasible.</p> <p>Fermanagh &amp; Omagh noted their annual figures are on their climate websites; having reduction targets helps drive action. Most past actions are on track (green), and going forward heads of department will have increased oversight.</p> <p>It was suggested to include climate on performance report cards to normalise data collection and action tracking.</p> <p>Ards &amp; North Down are establishing a net zero board to encourage council-wide engagement. Zara Hamilton (<b>ZH</b>) will share their energy management plan.</p> <p><b>Collaboration and next meetings</b></p> <p>The group noted that the 11 councils often work in silos and agreed collaboration is more powerful. As a forum, members will set shared cross-council targets (e.g., solar PV, staff training for senior management and elected members) and explore joint funding for NI-wide projects. This will be the focal point for the next SDF meeting.</p> <p><b>CS</b> offered Donegall Pass for the next SDF meeting, with the subsequent meeting provisionally in Castlewellan.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Adaptation reporting</b>	
	<p>Upcoming adaptation reporting was discussed. Most councils did not include adaptation actions within mitigation reports.</p> <p><b>GM</b> noted they have an adaptation plan using NICAP(P)2 as a basis.</p> <p>The group stressed the wider sustainability spectrum, not only emissions, education and preparation are key aspects of adaptation. Reminder of core community needs: 1) Food, 2) Shelter, 3) Safety, addressing these sustainably (e.g., retrofitting for warmer, affordable housing) will reduce emissions over time.</p> <p>Community groups are essential to resilience; ongoing engagement is key. Lisa Kirkwood (<b>LK</b>) will share a community resilience toolkit.</p> <p><b>CS</b> mentioned the NI Emergency Preparedness group, focused on adaptation measures.</p> <p><b>All</b> councils will send draft adaptation reports/templates around January 2026; <b>AG-SNI</b> will circulate these to the group. Some councils may submit drafts pending committee approval.</p>	<p><b>Action 10: LK</b> to share community resilience toolkit.</p> <p><b>Action 11: All</b> to send draft adaptation reports/templates around Jan 2026; <b>AG-SNI</b> to circulate to the group.</p>

<b>8</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting:</b> Wednesday 11 March 2025, 10:00 – 12:30 (Donegall Pass)</p> <p>It was agreed that the focus for the next SDF session will be on setting united targets across councils.</p>	<p><b>Action 12: CS</b> to host the next SDF at Donegall Pass; subsequent meeting provisionally Castlewellan.</p>