

SCRA'S SUSTAINABILITY BRIDGE PLAN 2025-27



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Background

SCRA's Corporate and Business Plans set out our commitment to fulfil specific environmental duties as a part of our functions, namely:

- To contribute to the delivery of Scotland's national net zero target (**mitigation** – reducing greenhouse gas emissions);
- To help deliver Scotland's climate change adaptation programme (**adaptation** – resilience to the impacts of a changing climate); and
- To **act sustainably** (sustainable development as a core value).

Our Priorities

To deliver upon these duties, in June 2024, SCRA's Strategic Sustainability Group agreed and launched the eight sustainability priorities for our organisation. These are:

1. **Property Use** – Energy efficient offices and Hearing Centres.
2. **Energy Consumption** – Smarter use of our resources.
3. **Travel** – Active and sustainable journeys to work.
4. **Waste Minimisation** – Reduce, reuse, recycle.
5. **Sustainable Procurement** – Considering the environmental, social and economic impacts of what we buy.
6. **Biodiversity** – Making the most of our environment.
7. **Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change** – Developing knowledge and skills.
8. **Improving Data Capture & Analysis** – Helping to track progress, identifying areas for enhancement and where to direct our efforts and resources.

Underpinning the priorities are 33 actions, which are detailed in the section '**Our Actions and Progress to Date**'.

To support the development and achievement of the priorities, SCRA is fortunate to have an Environmental Ambassadors group who play a key role in influencing plans, policies, and behaviours to keep the focus on achieving our net zero and environmental objectives.

Our Targets

SCRA's Board has committed to a three-year target of reducing our emissions by between 10 and 20% from the 2022/23 figure of **578.2 tCO₂e**.

In addition to reducing our emissions by up to 20% by 2027, we also are committed to the targets set out for the public sector and those in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act of:

- Zero **waste to landfill** by 2030
- Net zero **direct emissions** from our estate by 2038
- Becoming a **net zero organisation** by 2045

Our Constraints and Challenges

There are several organisational constraints and challenges impacting this plan.

Resourcing

Given competing pressures and the nature of the organisation's fundamental purpose, there are not significant resources directed to implementing the actions related to our environmental priorities, beyond those directed towards our property strategy. Making the changes and progress needed will require more input from across the organisation. Localities have undertaken to have sustainability actions in their plans for the year, however these have been perceived as additive and the purpose of them is somewhat unclear.

Staff Engagement & Understanding

In the 2024 Staff Survey, staff were asked about sustainability for the first time. The first of the two questions was "Are you aware of SCRA's eight environmental strategic sustainability priorities?" A total of 84 respondents said yes, 148 said no and 5 skipped the question. Hopefully if the campaign is a success, we will see an increase in awareness in the 2025 Staff Survey.

Funding

The level of funding available for sustainability initiatives is unclear. The Financial Strategy for 2025-2030 does stipulate that there will be investment in key resources such as staff, digital and property will be with a view to building sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness and resilience, whilst including scope for investment in new developments which will improve future performance, reduce annual running costs and reinvest staff time towards increased child and family facing activities. A small budget is being made available to support actions against our Biodiversity priority, but the funding of sustainability initiatives outside of those areas is unclear.

Facilities

Across our office estate, only three locations have showers. The lack of changing and comfort facilities places a natural constraint on the numbers of staff willing or able to cycle or run to work. It is not currently feasible to plan for all sites to have changing and shower facilities.

Data

There are significant gaps in our data at present with work ongoing to identify and resolve these. In the short term however, our data will not be of the quality we would want, making definitive baselining difficult.

Our Actions and Progress to Date (as of end September 2025)

Priority	Action	Progress	Status
Property use	Measure utilisation of our properties	Utilisation of hearing centres carried out using CSSAS data	Closed
	Assess recommendations of Mott MacDonald surveys and build into capital planning	Findings and recommendations reviewed and included within Sept Board report for consideration	Closed
	Develop Target Operating Model requirements for Property beginning with hearing room standard.	Work underway to develop new hearing room standards.	Ongoing
	Undertake LED lighting upgrades and BMS installation from allocated 24/25 budget	LED lighting projects planned in 6/7 locations	Ongoing
Energy Consumption	Establish baseline energy consumption per core building	We now have an energy consumption tracker and information is extracted from this for each locality and used at budget meetings. Next step is for the Budget Lead to take this information back to the Energy Champs to try and influence behaviours.	Ongoing
	Investigate energy reduction strategies with a focus on staff awareness and behaviour change		
	Investigate smart tech for core estate and overcome connectivity issues with Digital		
Travel	Promote cycle to work scheme and active travel	Link to awareness raising (see 7 below)	
	Undertake staff travel to work survey in 2025		
	Develop and implement sustainable travel guidance for SCRA	Link to SG Sustainable Travel Strategy	
	Investigate the availability of a leasing scheme to support transition to electric cars.		
Waste Minimisation	Reduce staff printing and support move to paper light processing incl. use of DESC		
	Work with CHS to promote increase in uptake of digital panel papers.		On hold
	Continue to promote waste minimisation and appropriate disposal in teams including advice on appropriate disposal of plastic envelopes.	Increased use of recycling costs less compared with disposal of general waste - measurable metric.	
	Raise awareness on food waste	Raised as part of monthly communication in February.	Closed

Sustainable Procurement	SG Climate literacy e-learning - Procurement team, Delegated Purchasers and Environmental Ambassadors to undertake and complete by end of April 2025.	12/5/25: Progress being made with reminder emails in March and May 2025. DP's and Environmental Ambassadors have been emailed re Climate Literacy e-learning & asked to complete by 30/4/25. Procurement team completed e-learning in 2024.	Closed
	Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA) refresher training - update & deliver to ensure sustainability in smaller contracts is considered/put in place	DPA refresher training completed - 5/11/24.	Closed
	NEW: Contract Supplier Management (CSM) - training/refresher training - to enable CSMs to manage contracts, ensure any sustainability/environmental obligations are adhered to/incorporated successfully	All contract managers are undertaking training between 15/9-18/9/25	Ongoing
	Explore with Property - requesting Works projects waste reporting during contract lifetime period	Contractors waste reporting is starting to be asked as part of Works tender Quality responses - Nov 2024. To integrate life-cycle into non-works projects in 2025.	Ongoing
	Attend Annual Procurement conference for insight into future plans/reporting/innovation/AI	Conference booked for 28 October 2025	Ongoing
Biodiversity	Map all SCRA property (Leased and owned) with useable outdoor space	Initial list of outdoor spaces under SCRA control prepared	Ongoing
	Map current use of outdoor space against biodiversity aims		
	Map current activity against staff well being aims		
	Instigate a small grants scheme to maximise outdoor space use against biodiversity/wellbeing aims		Ongoing
Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change	Sustainability will be an objective in locality planning for 2025/26. Each locality will develop actions to 1. raise awareness locally of SCRA's 8 environmental strategic aims, and 2. take steps to improve sustainability locally in line with the strategic aims.		Closed
	Develop comms strategy for Enviro Champs including 1. expanding Greenspace and 2. national monthly awareness raising campaign linked to 8 priorities which will be promoted by Enviro Ambassadors within their teams.	In terms of staff awareness, we have come up with a year-long campaign during 2025 with a different focus each month. The campaign started on Monday 6th January with a focus on 'Veganuary'.	Ongoing

	Enviro Ambassadors to consider suggestions to improve sustainability from staff survey and develop action plan to implement those that can be taken forward now.		
	Expand cohort of Enviro Ambassadors to ensure coverage across all teams		
	Hold joint event for Strategic Sustainability Group and Environmental Ambassadors to raise the profile of sustainability and the 8 priorities within SCRA.		
Improving Data Capture & Analysis	Calculate the environmental impact of a children's hearing as an average/baseline against which we can measure impact.		
	Identify the data gaps	Currently information gathering on gaps	Ongoing
	Identify the priority areas Estimate costs and progress for approval	<p>From the recent annual submission we have identified that we need to have a better idea of the proportion of time staff are working from home;</p> <p>Other priority areas to progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Capture commuting; Improve GPC recording to be able to identify flights (from and to airports); Improve expenses recording to be able to identify public transport (from and to destinations and mode (train, bus, taxi, ferry etc.); Improve expenses recording to be able to identify car transport - engine size and type (diesel/petrol/hybrid/electric); Improve waste recording, currently a third are estimates and of those we do have I think often we just get bin size rather than waste volume; Improve water volume recording, current data quality is really poor with many offices not captured; Improve gas/electricity data provision, currently not all electricity is automatic meter readers. Not sure if any gas is. 	

Bridge Plan Proposal

Taking the above into account, it is proposed to prioritise efforts in the short to medium term on a subset of the strategic priorities. These are the priorities which emphasise developing the sustainability culture within SCRA, putting the attitudes, efforts and choices of staff at the centre, as well as options which require less direct financial input.

This approach, if approved, will be done in two phases over the next 21 months. Actions which are actively ongoing will continue in one of the two phases – as shown in the action tables below.

This plan will run in parallel with the Property strategy and will therefore benefit from property improvements enacted by that stream of work. This plan does not intend to detail actions which are being delivered by the Property strategy, but it will make suggestions for the Property team to consider as part of their delivery.

The plan is split into two phases:

Phase 1: October 2025 to March 2026

Phase 2: April 2026 to March 2027

Phase 1

Phase 1 will focus on creating a more energised staff base, with individuals, teams and localities more actively involved in driving organisational awareness and improvements. This period will build upon the good work of the environmental awareness campaign that the Comms team have been leading. This period will primarily be about familiarisation and normalisation of what the priorities are, what we mean when we talk about them, what they are trying to achieve and what role all of us can and do play in achieving them. We want people to feel it is easy to incorporate the priorities into their everyday role without it feeling burdensome, additive or irrelevant.

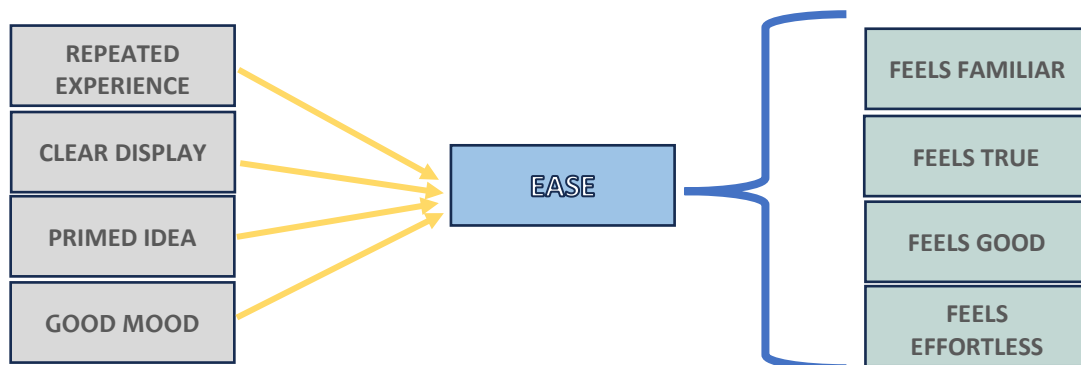
The two over riding principles for the Phase 1 approach are:

1. Culture consumes strategy



No matter how good our plan or strategy may be, it will fail without the right organisational culture in place to implement and live by it.

2. Make it feel easy



The above diagram shows how to create ‘cognitive ease’ – or to put it another way - creating the environment where **people can do the right things without having to think too much about it.**

For this to happen, we must get the conditions right for people to feel at ease with what they are being asked to do, or how they are being asked to operate. In an ideal state, people will be in a good mood, they will like what they see and feel that what they are being asked to do is familiar. If we don’t create that environment, people are more likely to be suspicious about what they are doing, feel less comfortable or engaged with any changes and may be less creative in their thinking than usual. The key inputs to achieve this are:

- **Repeated Experience** – Repeating messages and themes will make green practices feel familiar and normal. Making sustainability a recurring topic for the organisation and teams builds trust in the messaging.
- **Clear display** – Information is presented with clear definitions, instructions or guidance that people can easily absorb and understand. For example, written in plain English with shorter sentences or visual guides.
- **Primed Idea** – Using cues like posters, photos of green or open spaces in the office or the use of a green colour scheme in environmental messaging imply “environmental” without ever saying it. It subtly introduces the idea and instils a mindset whereby people are more ready to engage with certain topics after being exposed to something related to them.
- **Good Mood** – Making an activity or task feel good, worthwhile or engaging so people will develop a positive mindset towards it, and the sense of effort or difficulty is reduced.

This is not new. SCRA already has good practice in some of these areas, this plan suggests pushing them further.

Using these principles of culture and ease to guide our approach, the priorities which will be concentrating on in Phase 1 are:

- **Travel**
- **Waste Minimisation**

- **Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change**
- **Improving Data Capture & Analysis**

As part of this focussed approach, some existing actions may be repurposed or approached differently.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will look to introduce more ambitious actions and activities. We will establish a solid data grounding for measuring our performance and potentially forecasting how we anticipate we will perform. We will introduce some policy interventions to drive behavioural change within the organisation and implement nudge techniques and choice architecture to promote positive and more sustainable actions and choices by all staff in all our operations. Phase 2 will also be the period in which we will develop, consult on and deliver a sustainability/net zero plan for the period 2027-2030.

It is anticipated that the role of the environmental ambassadors in shaping and implementing our approach will continue to grow – with co-design and engagement being key components in the development and implementation of actions.

In this Phase we will continue to develop our efforts in Travel, Waste and Staff priorities but will expand the scope of our work to leverage some of our Phase 1 actions to drive improvements in:

- **Energy Consumption**
- **Improving Data Capture & Analysis**

The plan for Phase 2 will evolve as we learn more from our data, as we work more closely with the environmental ambassadors and as, hopefully, staff and teams become more comfortable with some of the changes being made. Progress will be reviewed at each SSG and prior to the start of Phase 2 in April 2026 to ensure the right actions are being taken forward in a way which is achievable. For the purposes of this document and to test the ambition with SSG members, some high-level actions are proposed to give a sense of direction and intent.

Assumptions

The phased approach makes some **key assumptions** which are expected to remain valid for the duration of the plan:

- Our services will continue to be delivered from a geographically dispersed estate with representation in each of the local authority areas of our key partners.
- As our organisational drivers and target operating model become clearer, we will establish and adapt the type of actions that can and will be undertaken to help us achieve net zero.
- The Property Strategy and roadmap, based upon the energy efficiency surveys prepared by Mott MacDonald for our 19 owned buildings will continue to be developed and delivered in parallel with this plan.
- Phase 2 planning assumes the success of the actions undertaken in Phase 1.

Measuring Our Progress

In the absence of more rigorous data, a series of high-level goals and measures are proposed to allow us to track and monitor progress of the bridge plan in support of our priorities and aims. These will be kept under review, and as our awareness of and confidence in our data improves, more specific and targeted metrics can be considered and implemented.

Sustainability Aim	SCRA Pillar(s)	Goal	Measure	Trajectory
Mitigation	Property Use	Reduction in emissions from our estate	Annual emissions performance	Reducing
Mitigation	Waste Minimisation	Reduction our consumption of materials	Volume of, and spend on, consumables	Reducing
Mitigation	Travel; Improving Data Capture & Analysis	Reduction in car travel for business purposes	Reduction in mileage claims	Reduction
Adaptation	Biodiversity	Utilisation / improvement of greenspace around offices	Number of greenspace initiatives undertaken	Increasing
Act Sustainably	Staff Awareness, Engagement & Behaviour Change	Increased staff engagement	Number of Environmental Ambassadors	Increasing
Act Sustainably	Staff Awareness, Engagement & Behaviour Change	Increased staff awareness	Awareness of sustainability priorities and their relevance	Increasing
Act Sustainably	Energy Consumption; Staff Awareness, Engagement & Behaviour Change	Behavioural change in everyday operations	Energy usage in offices	Reducing

Consultation and Engagement

If approved to proceed, it would be advisable to discuss the plan with our Environmental Ambassadors as well as our Unison partners.

Action plans for Phases 1 and 2 follow.

Action Plan

Existing Actions – All Action listed as ‘ongoing’ to be updated and fed into Phase 1 plan or have their outcomes updated and status resolved to ‘closed’.

Priority	Action	Status
Property use	Develop Target Operating Model requirements for Property beginning with hearing room standard	Ongoing
	Undertake LED lighting upgrades and BMS installation from allocated 24/25 budget	Ongoing
Energy Consumption	Establish baseline energy consumption per core building (<i>align to Identify the data gaps</i>)	Ongoing
Sustainable Procurement	NEW: Contract Supplier Management (CSM) - training/refresher training - to enable CSMs to manage contracts, ensure any sustainability/environmental obligations are adhered to/incorporated successfully	Ongoing
	Explore with Property - requesting Works projects waste reporting during contract lifetime period	Ongoing
	Attend Annual Procurement conference for insight into future plans/reporting/innovation/AI	Ongoing
Biodiversity	Map all SCRA property (Leased and owned) with useable outdoor space	Ongoing
Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change	Develop comms strategy for Enviro Champs including 1. expanding Greenspace and 2. national monthly awareness raising campaign linked to 8 priorities which will be promoted by Enviro Ambassadors within their teams	Ongoing
Improving Data Capture & Analysis	Identify the data gaps** (being taken forward as key project in Phase 1)	Ongoing

Proposed Actions for Phase 1: October 25 to March 26

Priority	Action	Timescale
	Using the results of the travel to work survey, revise and refresh SCRA's travel policy and travel decision matrix	By March 2026
	Undertake a session with Sustrans promoting sustainable travel choices	TBD
	Design and publish a Connect page with travel guide to each office, detailing public transport options	December
	Implement a 'virtual first' meeting policy for internal meetings	TBD
Waste Minimisation	Explore further segmentation of waste with Facilities Management partners to further reduce unnecessary waste to landfill	December
	Introduce food waste bins in all offices to remove compostable waste from the landfill stream.	TBD (dependant on above)
	Change the label of bins from 'General Waste' to 'Landfill'	December
	Consider a policy of no purchased lunches for internal only events	TBD
	Complete the move to being a Paperlite organisation by March 2026	March 2026
Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change	Environmental Ambassadors to be included as standing members of the SSG. Terms of Reference of the SSG to be updated to reflect.	By March 2026
	Ascertain the progress of sustainability suggestions considered by the environmental ambassadors and how they align with SSG plan**	December
	Assess, prioritise and implement sustainability suggestions where appropriate	Ongoing
	Create a "glossary of terms" for sustainability and net zero key phrases to establish a common understanding of the main concepts related to our targets and performance.	By March 2026
	Work with environmental ambassadors to co-design guidance and support information for Localities for including the sustainability pillars in their locality plans for 2026-27	By March 2026
	Trial at least one 'nudge' technique in each locality and monitor results. To be co-designed with environmental ambassadors	January
	Design a competitive contest for waste reduction to be undertaken by the localities (similar in principle to the Big Team Challenge). Prize TBD – likely link to Biodiversity and support small pot of funding for greenspace or related wellbeing initiative.	By March 2026
	Hold at least two staff events with a speaker from a peer organisation promoting sustainable behaviours	By March 26
Identify training for environmental ambassadors as part of an 'offering' to increase interest. Implementation in Phase 2.	By March 2026	
Improving Data Capture & Analysis	Complete the ongoing identification of gaps in our data**	TBD
	Establish a baseline of "where we are now"	Dependant on above action
	Undertake a gap analysis to understand the scale of work required to get from where we are to where we want to be	Dependant on identifying the gaps in our data
	Produce an action plan for action to be undertaken in 2026-27 to close the gaps ahead of drafting our sustainability plan	March 2026

(**pre-existing action)

Phase 2 Actions: April 26 to March 27 (revised April 2026)

Priority	Action	Timescale
Travel	Using the results of the travel to work survey, revise and refresh SCRA's travel policy and travel decision matrix	Q2
	Undertake a session with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) promoting sustainable travel choices	Q2
	Explore whether we can promote car sharing journeys between offices, meetings or external events through our booking system, or highlight on Connect	Q3
Energy Consumption	Establish baseline energy consumption per core building (align to Identify the data gaps)	Ongoing
	Investigate smart tech for core estate and overcome connectivity issues with Digital	Q3
NEW Waste Minimisation - Print Strategy	Timeline/Plan to show what steps need to be taken in line with SCRA's Digital Strategy to achieve more update of digital papers	Q2
	Plan to continue to reduce the MFD fleet in accordance with reduction in clicks	TBD
	Plan to work towards a Central Print Hub	TBD
Staff Awareness, Engagement and Behaviour Change	Run a seasonal environmental campaign (4)	Q4
	Create an e-learning sustainability package for inclusion in inductions and mandatory e-learning packages – content and timing would need to be right	TBD
	Hold a joint greenspace/wellbeing event to promote both areas for staff by highlighting the linkages between the environment and mental health	Q3
	Recruit a sustainability coordinator	TBD
	Consult and engage on the development of SCRA's sustainability/net zero plan	Q4
	Design and publish a Connect page with our environmental performance – <i>updated monthly or quarterly as our data improves and develops</i>	Dependent on Data actions
	Design a competitive contest for waste reduction to be undertaken by the localities (similar in principle to the Big Team Challenge). Prize TBD – likely link to Biodiversity and support small pot of funding for greenspace or related wellbeing initiative.	SSG / EA Joint Event
	Hold at least two staff events with a speaker from a peer organisation promoting sustainable behaviours	Q3 (consider combining with H&W joint event)
	Identify training for environmental ambassadors as part of an 'offering' to increase interest. Implementation in Phase 2.	Q2
	Publish a carbon management plan	Q4

Improving Data Capture & Analysis	Publish SCRA's 2027-2030 sustainability/net zero plan	Q4
	Undertake a gap analysis to understand the scale of work required to get from where we are to where we want to be	Ongoing
	Complete the ongoing identification of gaps in our data	Q2
	Produce an action plan for action to be undertaken in 2026-27 to close the gaps ahead of drafting our sustainability plan	Q3
	Implement data improvement action plan	Q4 - aligned to and informing Sustainability Strategy

