

Sustainable Communities

A shared agenda, a share of the action

A guide for local authorities



Securing the future
delivering UK sustainable development strategy


Local Government Association


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Food and Rural Affairs

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Lord Bruce-Lockhart Ian Pearson

Foreword

Central and local government share the ambition to create sustainable communities which embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. These principles include taking local action to tackle global environmental challenges, while at the same time ensuring a vibrant local economy, good governance and a strong, responsible and healthy society.

Local Authorities have a critical role in making sustainable communities happen in all places – large and small, urban and rural. One of the many ways in which councils can help deliver this agenda is through joining-up and co-ordinating delivery of key local outcomes. Many of these are reflected by the seven ‘Shared Priorities’ agreed between central and local government.

This joint LGA and Defra guide is intended to help you build on your existing work by giving practical ideas and case studies about how each shared priority or outcome can be delivered in a way that helps achieve social, environmental and economic goals together. It is only by taking account of this ‘triple-bottom line’ in the delivery of local outcomes that we can create genuinely sustainable communities. This means taking account of the overall impact and interactions of delivering each shared priority and ensuring that the efforts on one do not undermine the others.

We hope that you will find this guide informative and will help your Council enhance its contribution to this important agenda.

Lord Bruce-Lockhart

Chairman of the Local
Government Association

Ian Pearson

Minister of State for the
Environment and Climate Change



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What are sustainable communities?

Sustainable communities are places in which people want to live, now and in the future. They embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. This means they improve quality of life for all whilst safeguarding the environment for future generations.

The UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*, was published in March 2005 and included the Government's definition and components of a sustainable community.

Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level.

They

- balance and integrate social, economic and environmental components* of their community
- meet the needs of existing and future generations
- respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable

* Active, inclusive and safe; Well-run; Environmentally sensitive; Well designed and built; Well Connected; Thriving; Well-served; and Fair for everyone

Delivering sustainable communities through shared priorities

Delivering genuinely sustainable communities requires a joined-up approach which brings together social, economic and environmental considerations. It recognises the linkages and impacts between different local and national priorities. It requires a distinctive approach to the way services are planned and delivered. One which goes beyond professional or service silos to address the area's social, economic and environmental goals together.

For example:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Well run | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How is the service engaging and involving the wider community? |
| Environmentally sensitive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How is the service minimising its local or more global environmental impacts and maximising the opportunities to deliver wider environmental benefits? |
| Well connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How is the service improving access for all and reducing the need to travel by car? |
| Fair for everyone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How is the service reducing the gap in outcomes between residents or service users ■ How is the service helping to ensure that its own 'downstream' impacts are not compromising the ability of future residents, at home or abroad, to enjoy a good quality of life in their own 'sustainable community'? |

This guide

In 2001, the Central Local Partnership agreed a set of shared priorities as a common focus for central and local government. They are:

- Creating safer and stronger communities
- Improving the quality of life of older people and children, young people and families at risk
- Meeting transport needs more effectively
- Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities
- Promoting the economic vitality of localities
- Raising standards across our schools
- Transforming the local environment

Each one forms a vital strand that contributes to our collective wellbeing, and in delivering what we now refer to as 'sustainable communities'. These shared priorities are often now reflected in Local Area Agreements.

This guide shows how local outcomes such as those reflected in the seven shared priorities, can be delivered in a way that helps create genuinely sustainable communities. It highlights the cross-cutting issues which need to be addressed for each outcome.

The Guide has a section for each of the seven shared priorities or outcomes and one for the councils community leadership role which is critical in delivering genuinely sustainable communities. In each section, there are some practical examples of the sort of activities which councils can do to help deliver the social, economic and environmental components of a sustainable community at the same time. These ideas are not in any sense a definitive list and they do not attempt to suggest a one-size-fits-all approach. Each local area will have its own innovative ways of delivering joined-up outcomes as part of the shared sustainable communities agenda.

The guide also provides some real life case studies which illustrate how councils have already taken joined-up approaches which embody the principles of a sustainable community. In addition, the sections in the guide also include references to other useful sources of information, practical tools or relevant organisations.



Community leadership for sustainable communities

Sustainable communities cannot be delivered by councils on their own. Many local organisations and agencies need to play their part, as do individuals within the communities themselves. Central Government too needs to be flexible to allow a focus on cross-cutting outcomes with multiple social, economic and environmental benefits, rather than reinforcing narrow or blinkered thinking.

Sustainable Community Strategies will play a vital role in helping to deliver genuinely sustainable communities. All Councils and their Local Strategic Partnerships now have a Community Strategy in place. The challenge is now to turn these into Sustainable Community Strategies. Strategies which develop a stronger focus on integrating social, economic and environmental issues and in tackling the area's longer-term and more global impacts.

With a robust vision for a sustainable community, **Local Strategic Partnerships** and **Local Area Agreements** can provide powerful mechanisms to focus the financial and non-financial resources of local partners and Central Government, in order to turn the vision into reality on the ground.

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to undertake a sustainability appraisal of your Community Strategy. This takes a systematic view of the Strategy and how it integrates social, economic and environmental objectives, addresses longer-term issues and tackles the area's wider impacts in the region or even internationally. When your Community Strategy is next reviewed, the results of the sustainability appraisal can help strengthen the Strategy, fill gaps and reshape it into a Sustainable Community Strategy.

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- All components

Why not.....

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| <p>Explore with your Local Strategic Partnership ways in which the individual outcomes in your Local Area Agreement can each be delivered in a way that maximises environmental, social and economic benefits (the triple bottom line). If you are reviewing or negotiating a Local Area Agreement why not choose some cross-cutting or 'joined-up' outcomes which link together environmental, social and economic priorities or consider holding a workshop with partners to look at the sustainability of your LAA.</p> | <p>■ All components</p> |
| <p>Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to raise awareness about the importance of the principles outlined in this guide which underpin the shared sustainable communities agenda. Why not suggest a joint training plan for the LSP which improves everyone's skills and knowledge about joining-up their agendas to deliver a genuinely sustainable community.</p> | <p>■ All components</p> |
| <p>Use the Local Quality of Life indicators to audit your area and see which environmental, social and economic issues need most attention. These indicators cover a whole range of quality of life issues and all the data for your area is already available on the Audit Commission's website. You can compare your area's results to that of another local authority area too.</p> | <p>■ All components</p> |

Case Studies

Sustainable communities as a golden thread through Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships

Oldham Partnership

The Oldham Partnership's vision is to make Oldham a place where everyone is proud to belong. In May 2005, the Partnership published its updated sustainable community strategy which set out the steps to mould Oldham into a sustainable community. Each step has a lead organisation and work is mapped to social, environmental and economic indicators. This ensures that the Community Strategy is structured and manageable, that ownership is clear, and that the organisations and agencies in the Partnership understand their role in the development of Oldham as a sustainable community. An integrated appraisal toolkit was used to identify conflicts and areas for joined up working and a variety of innovative methods were used to engage the Borough's residents in the strategy development. The commitment and achievement of the partnership was recognised when they won the 2006 Local Government Chronicle Partnership Award for Sustainable Communities.

Oldham's Local Area Agreement will be the delivery mechanism for their Sustainable Community Strategy. Rather than being content with a balance of social, economic and environmental indicators, the Partnership will include the ecological footprint of the Borough within the LAA as a means of tracking the long-term perspective.

Further information can be found at www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/key-documents.htm

Durham County Council

Durham County Council has been working corporately and through the LSP to integrate economic, social and environmental issues into decision making. The Durham County Community Strategy contains several themes and 12 challenges. It was originally proposed that the Durham Local Agenda 21 Partnership should be the lead partnership for the environment theme. However, the LA21 Partnership felt that this was inappropriate because sustainable communities is about treating economic, social and environmental priorities holistically. The LSP has now agreed that the LA21 partnership will undertake sustainability appraisals of all of the LSP's key decisions and initiatives. The LA21 partnership is establishing an innovative appraisal mechanism which will be much more than just a checklist, and will use the expertise of partnership members. Currently, action plans are being prepared for the 12 Community Strategy challenges, and each of these will be subject to sustainability appraisal. Recommendations for improvement arising from the appraisal will be discussed with the challenge leaders and expert advice offered.

Under a new programme established in October 2005 the Local Agenda 21 Partnership will undertake Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Development Framework documents produced by four district councils and of the County Council's Waste and Minerals plans.

Warwickshire County Council

The Council has produced an annual Quality of Life report for the past five years. The report provides a comprehensive source of information on economic, social and environmental performance across the County, and helps gauge how successful the various local agencies and organisations are at meeting the aims detailed in community and strategic plans. The report continues to be used across a wide range of organisations and is now firmly embedded as a vital component of the local decision-making process. Recently, the Authority has placed an increasing emphasis on its web pages and now updates the indicators on an ongoing basis, rather than just once per year. The most recent report was also published in a poster format to help publicise the information in libraries, schools, GP surgeries and other community venues and encourage users to obtain further, and more current details via the website.

A further innovation to appear during the past twelve months is a reorganisation of the indicators. They now appear within one of four headings – economic, social, environmental and natural resources – to align with the Authority's increased emphasis on sustainable development. The annual report offers a 'snapshot' of performance, but users are now in a position to see how indicators are changing on a much more frequent basis via the website www.warwickshire.gov.uk/qualityoflife

The Stevenage Partnership

The Stevenage Partnership is an inclusive partnership of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It has been using quality of life indicators to help identify and

understand what is happening in the local area. It sees the indicators as true outcome measures of progress in improving the environmental, social and economic well-being of the town. The community strategy was based on hard evidence and extensive consultation and the quality of life indicators were a key part of the hard evidence – they helped to establish the priorities for the implementation plan. The partners use the indicators as a measurement tool and an early warning system. They can be found in the data document on www.stevenagepartnership.org.uk and this will evolve into a trends document as progress is tracked over time.

Local Area Agreements which deliver genuinely sustainable communities.

Cornwall

In Cornwall a LAA stakeholder conference identified sustainability – in particular the application of the ‘triple bottom line’ - as a focus for the LAA. Following the conference, an options appraisal matrix was developed which tested the robustness of the draft LAA and how well long list outcomes would contribute to the triple bottom line. Short list outcomes were chosen which demonstrated support for more than one block in the LAA framework. This approach is based on the standard model from the European Foundation of Quality Management. Further information and contact details can be found at www.cornwallstrategicpartnership.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=12893

Kingston

In 2004, Kingston’s Community Plan committed to producing a sustainable Kingston. This commitment to sustainability informed the overarching themes of Kingston’s LAA, the first of which is ‘Quality of Life: enhancing people’s local environment and increasing opportunities for enjoyment and fulfilment (in a way that is sustainable for future generations). However, thinking had moved on since the development of the community plan, and the Partnership wanted to encourage ambition and innovation in terms of the outcomes to be included in the LAA (rather than cutting and pasting from existing strategies). The council’s environment and sustainability department provided a nucleus for the work.

Outcomes in Kingston’s LAA include:

- Personalised travel planning delivering modal shift and CO2 emission savings.
- Reduced business waste and increased recycling and energy efficiency on industrial estates.
- Enhancement of the local environment through the conservation of biodiversity and the natural environment
- Supporting local Small and Medium Enterprises and third sector organisations to procure from public sector organisations
- Improved community transport options leading to greater social inclusion

Further information is available at

www.kingston.gov.uk/information/your_council/council_structure/chief_executive/strategic_services/community_planning.htm

Shropshire

In Shropshire, the single pot LAA replaced the Economic Development and Enterprise block with a Sustainable Communities block. It includes outcomes to: (1) improve the quality of the environment in which people live; (ii) enable local people and key workers in communities across Shropshire to access new appropriate affordable housing; (iii) improve access to services and work for local people – enabling people to live their daily lives; (iv) sustainable low carbon communities with strengthened economic capability in this rapidly growing area; (v) improved safety for people using Shropshire's roads. Further information can be found at www.shropshire.gov.uk/shroppart.nsf

Birmingham

Birmingham's LAA set out a vision of *'Improving the quality of life for Birmingham's citizens, with a particular focus on making the fastest improvements for the people and for the places with the greatest need'*.

To achieve this vision, Birmingham's Partnership put three approaches at the heart of the LAA, including a sustainable development approach to make sure that Birmingham's development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Integral to the LAA were also 6 cross cutting themes including environmental sustainability, community engagement and voluntary and community sector.

The local strategic partnership recognised the need to join up targets and actions across the blocks and cross-cutting themes and the LAA sets out how each of these themes will be addressed. Some issues are reflected as LAA targets, for example, reduced CO2 emissions, while others will be addressed as part of the delivery process.

To make sure these themes were fully integrated across the LAA, each theme has an expert lead officer who worked with each 'block' lead to ensure that outcomes and targets addressed cross-cutting issues and, at the same time, added value. An example of this is the job creation potential of an expansion in recycling activities. The LAA will help ensure that these new job opportunities will be targeted at the neighbourhoods with the highest unemployment rates.

The Birmingham Environment Partnership has also funded and appointed the UK's first dedicated LSP 'sustainability champion' who is leading on both the cross-cutting environmental sustainability theme and the overall sustainable development approach.

The LAA will seek to use the quality of life indicator set and ecological footprints at a neighbourhood and city wide level in order to ensure that the gap is narrowed between areas and that it is done so without negatively impacting upon environmental limits.

Further information is available at www.bhamsp.org.uk/index.php?page=89

Looking at your area's wider and longer-term impacts on sustainable communities

York

York has used footprinting and other information to help to set targets for more sustainable development. York has concentrated on implementing wide-ranging energy efficiency measures to reduce energy consumption across the city by 21 per cent. The study has also informed its work on the relative impacts of kerb-side waste collection, composting and pay for waste schemes. It has also used the tool widely as an educational resource to

demonstrate the impacts of different types of lifestyles – linking resource use to everyone’s daily life. York City Council has established a target to reduce the ecological footprint of the city in its community strategy. www.york.ac.uk/inst/sei/ecofootprint/york-footprint.html

Useful links and information

- Your regional Government Office or Regional Assembly may be able to provide information on existing sustainability appraisal toolkits or techniques which you could use for Sustainable Community Strategies or Local Area Agreements. See the contact list at the back of this guide.
- The Local Area Agreement toolkit is published on the IDeA website. It includes a special section about sustainable communities to give you practical advice about choosing outcomes which can deliver environmental, social and economic priorities at the same time. www.idea.gov.uk
- The Academy for Sustainable Communities works with a wide range of different organisations and professions to help make sure people have the right skills to be able to deliver sustainable communities. www.ascskills.org.uk/home/index.cfm
- The local quality of life indicators and the data for your area is available on the Area Profiles website run by the Audit Commission. www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/InformationPages/Information.aspx?info=START&menu=6

Meeting the needs of existing and future generations

Why not.....

Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to run a visioning exercise which looks at what your area’s environment, community and economy should be like in twenty or even fifty years time. How will the area deal with the big changes on the way such as the impacts of climate change, more information technology and an ageing population? What can be done to improve the environment, economy and community in a joined-up way so that your area has a bright future to look forward to? There are already some facts, figures and forecasts about the changes that are likely to happen in the UK. These provide a starting point to think about what sort of environment, community and economy the children living in your area would want to enjoy when they are pensioners.

Useful links and information

- The LGA has published a Futures Toolkit which helps local authorities to consider the changes that face their communities. It covers all the issues in the sustainable communities agenda. www.lga.gov.uk
- The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit undertook work to look at the long-term trends affecting communities in the UK. Summary findings on health, transport, economy, environment and other issues are available from the website. www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/strategic_futures/research.asp
- Scenarios have been prepared showing the likely impacts of climate change on life in the UK. www.ukcip.org.uk/scenarios/

Respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable

Why not.....

Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to prepare or publicise an ecological footprint for your area which can start a discussion with your community about the wider impacts of local life and ways of reducing the area's footprint on the rest of the world. Every local authority area now has access to information about its ecological footprint.

Look at the social, environmental and economic challenges facing your wider region and your regions priorities for sustainable development. Your Regional Assembly and Government Office will provide information and advice on the contribution your council can make.

Encourage global citizenship as well as active local citizenship by helping local citizens and communities to play their part in international decisions which impact on the lives of people in communities abroad. For example, set-up a twinning scheme or even an exchange with a community in a developing country or swap good ideas on local issues like community safety, crime, local environmental quality and community involvement.

Useful links and information

- The Local Government International Bureau website has case studies and more information about linking local communities to communities abroad. www.lgib.gov.uk/index.html
- Up to date information about your region's social, economic and environmental issues can be found on the Government's sustainable development website at this link www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/regional/index.htm
- Details of your regional Government Office can be found through www.gos.gov.uk
- Your region's Observatory also holds a rich source of information about quality of life in the area. www.regionalobservatories.org.uk/
- A complete set of all local authority area ecological footprint results was made publicly available in December 2005. Any local authority can download these results along with a summary report at no cost from the Ecological Budget UK website. The local authority results will be compatible with the Ecological Budget UK project, which forms part of the wider Biffaward Programme on Sustainable Resource Use to map the environmental impacts of resource consumption and resource flows throughout the UK. www.ecologicalbudget.org.uk



Creating safer and stronger communities

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

Bring together frontline staff across local agencies who are working on environmental issues (parks, cleansing, greenspaces and wildlife), neighbourhoods (including wardens and regeneration teams) and community safety (including police community support offices and community safety officers) to share their knowledge and expertise and develop joined-up approaches which help create safe and pleasant environments for all.

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Environmentally sensitive

Promote design measures in new and existing buildings which will help improve community safety and reduce crime (for example, layout of buildings, lighting, security measures).

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well designed and built

Promote mixed developments with well planned and safe public spaces.

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well designed and built

Put in place plans for the security and safety of the community, including the most vulnerable or exposed, which take account of flooding, severe weather events, droughts and other likely impacts of climate change

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Fair for everyone
- Environmentally sensitive

Promote diversionary activities for young people which exploit and support local environmental, cultural and recreational opportunities.

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Fair for everyone
- Environmentally sensitive

Why not.....**Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community**

Promote neighbourhood plans and parish plans as ways of actively engaging people to help shape their own sustainable community. With the right support, preparing these plans can help strengthen local communities and give people new skills and confidence.

- All components

Use local environmental, cultural and recreational activities to engage people and raise awareness about new learning or training opportunities.

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Fair for everyone
- Environmentally sensitive

Launch a new drive in your area to help your local communities help themselves and create a better, brighter future for your area by:

- Signing-up to the LGA's Greening Communities campaign and combining this with your Council's community involvement activities
- Actively promote and participate in the new 'every action counts' initiative which offers a wealth of practical ideas and support to help local community groups and local voluntary organisations take simple actions on the environment which add up to make a big difference. Find out more at www.everyactioncounts.org.uk
- Encourage more community involvement in Sustainable Community Strategies, parish and neighbourhood plans - all of which can set out a vision and joined-up priorities for a more sustainable community

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive

Useful links and information

- Information about how to make neighbourhoods Cleaner, Safer and Greener at www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk
- Wildlife Trusts www.wildlifetrusts.org
- Groundwork www.groundwork.org.uk/
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers www.btcv.org.uk
- Secured by design standard for buildings www.securedbydesign.com/
- Further information and examples of parish plans can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/parish-planning.htm
- Find out more about 'every action counts' - a new initiative to help local community groups and voluntary organisations take action on the environment at www.everyactioncounts.org.uk
- The LGA's Greening Communities campaign <http://www.lga.gov.uk/ProjectHome.asp?section=59&ccat=1132>



Improving the quality of life of older people...

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Help create healthy homes and lifestyles for older people by bringing together services, staff and information which offer advice on healthy living, care and repair, community safety, home energy efficiency, fuel poverty, housing and local food, to provide joined-up assistance for older people.

Encourage developers and registered social landlords to incorporate high standards of design which offer safe, accessible, energy efficient and comfortable homes for older people and which are flexible enough to house people throughout their lifetime as their needs change.

Develop a joint vision with your LSP for the future of local service provision for leisure, environment, housing, transport, community safety and economic development in order to meet the needs and aspirations of older people.

Consider whether the local public open space is accessible and attractive for the elderly.

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well served

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well designed and built
- Environmentally sensitive

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well connected
- Thriving

- Well designed and built

Why not.....

Run an intergenerational scheme to encourage older people and young people to share their experiences, build respect and use the lessons of the past to highlight the social, economic and environmental changes which are needed to secure a more sustainable future for the community.

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Fair for everyone
- Environmentally sensitive

Useful links and information

- Care and Repair England is a national charity providing tools and resources which help local staff provide joined-up advice to older people. www.careandrepair-england.org.uk/index.htm
- The Lifetime Homes standard is a voluntary benchmark of good house design for older people. www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/home_front.php



...and children, young people and families at risk.

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Run a scheme to increase young peoples' participation and to debate the key social, environmental and economic challenges that face the area and to shape a vision from the area's future.

Promote popular local cultural and environmental activities as a way to engage socially excluded young people and then raise awareness about other opportunities for healthy lifestyles, community safety, education and skills.

Start an incentive scheme for young people, to encourage take-up of local educational, health, transport and environmental opportunities and change behaviours to more sustainable lifestyles.

Encourage young people to become informed and active citizens, both locally and globally, by promoting ways they can make a difference in local decisions and through local action on international issues like poverty, development and climate change.

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- Active, inclusive and safe.
- Well run
- Thriving
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well served

- Active, inclusive and safe.
- Well served.
- Environmentally sensitive
- Thriving
- Fair for everyone

- Well served
- Well run
- Thriving
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well connected

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Fair for everyone
- Environmentally sensitive

Why not.....

As part of local work to implement 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, identify ways in which activities can be joined-up with work to improve the environmental well-being of children. Poor environmental quality has a major influence on their health, safety and overall life chances.

Ensure that there is safe and accessible public open space for play, skateboarding etc.

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well served
- Fair for everyone

- Well designed and built

Useful links and information

- The J8 programme offers information, materials and resources to help young people and also their teachers get involved in the G8 decisions and meetings. www.j82006.com/
- Envision, a national charity which works with young people on visioning activities for more sustainable communities, can offer more ideas and advice. www.envision.org.uk/
- The UK Youth Parliament www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/
- The National Youth Agency is the secretariat for the Sustainable Development Youth Work Forum which has pages on this site www.nya.org.uk/
- The British Youth Council (BYC) is the national youth council for young people aged under 26 in the UK. www.byc.org.uk/
- Schools Councils UK promotes and facilitates effective structures for pupil participation in every school www.schoolcouncils.org/



Meeting transport needs more effectively

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

Develop safer walking and cycling strategies with schemes to promote healthier lifestyles and reduce car use.

- Active, inclusive and safe.
- Well served
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well connected
- Well designed and built

Use your local authorities accessibility planning work to help improve public access to a wide range of social, economic and environmental services which enable people to adopt healthier and more sustainable lifestyles. Giving people better choices to lead healthier, safer and more environmentally friendly lifestyles can help create a sustainable community from the bottom-up.

- All components

Team up with other local private or public organisations to negotiate better joint deals on dual-fuel or biofuel vehicles. Leading by example here will boost jobs in environmental technologies and lead to cleaner more pleasant environments which help tackle climate change.

- Environmentally sensitive
- Thriving

Work with LSP members to co-locate services in shared buildings (new or existing) or one-stop-shops to improve access for all to environmental and community services.

- All components

| Why not..... | Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community |
|--|---|
| Boost local community transport schemes and social enterprises which work with hard to reach communities and improve their access to services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well connected ■ Fair for everyone ■ Active, inclusive and safe ■ Thriving |
| Promote driver training schemes for local authority employees and others in the public, private and voluntary sector to improve employee road safety, prevent accidents and improve vehicle fuel efficiency. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Active, inclusive and safe ■ Well connected ■ Environmentally sensitive ■ Thriving |
| Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to develop a partnership travel plan which reduces congestion and the impact of business travel on the environment through, for example, staff shuttle buses, discounted travel cards, borrow-a-bike initiatives, attractive cycle parking, health walks and car share schemes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well connected ■ Environmentally sensitive ■ Thriving |
| Encourage LSP members and local businesses to create healthy workplace plans which offer information, incentives and support to improve the health and welfare of their employees and to maintain a safe and productive workforce. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thriving ■ Active, inclusive and safe ■ Well served |

Useful links and information

- The Department for Transport website offers a whole section on sustainable travel including travel plans for employers and schools, in order to help councils and their local partners balance social, economic and environmental objectives. www.dft.gov.uk
- The Community Transport Association UK offers helpful information about developing or supporting community transport schemes. They estimate that there are already around 700 community transport schemes in rural areas. www.communitytransport.com/
- The Social Enterprise Coalition provides information and case studies about supporting local social enterprises which offer improved access to transport. www.socialenterprise.org.uk/default.aspx
- Transport 2000, the national environmental transport body, offers good practice and information about a range of transport options which combine social, economic and environmental goals. www.transport2000.org.uk/



Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Encourage healthier diets by:

Promoting fresh locally grown produce which gives a boost to the local food economy by linking local consumers and producers.

Providing and supporting allotments, city farms and garden initiatives.

Team up with your Primary Care Trusts, health groups and conservation groups to bring together information and services on health promotion, parks, greenspaces, countryside and leisure services to offer people more outdoor opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles and which also raise awareness about the protection of the natural environment.

Reduce health inequalities by identifying your area's own priority local environments in need of improvement. Target work to improve environmental inequalities in air quality, home energy efficiency, housing quality, access to green spaces and access to fresh food.

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- Thriving
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well served
- Active, inclusive and safe

- Well served
- Active, inclusive and safe
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well connected

- Well served
- Environmentally sensitive
- Active, inclusive and safe
- Fair for all

Useful links and information

- Information on the quality of life and public services in your local area can be found at www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk and www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
- Guides, case studies and project summaries on health inequalities and environment and housing can be found at www.renewal.net/
- Information, tools and resources on health inequalities from Department of Health can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/HealthInequalities/fs/en
- Information on addressing environmental inequalities and links to health can be found at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/512398/289428/888451/
- Information and tools to encourage walking for health can be found at www.whi.org.uk/
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health www.cieh.org/knowledge
- Health Protection Agency data on burden of disease www.hpa.org.uk/publications/2005/burden_disease/default.htm
- The NHS Good Corporate Citizenship Assessment Model contains key resources to help promote healthier communities and narrow health inequalities. Although this is NHS focussed, it is very applicable to local government www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk
- DCLG Creating Healthier Communities resource pack for local partnerships www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1382
- Tools for working on health inequalities are available from the South East Public Health Observatory www.sepho.org.uk/viewResource.aspx?id=5890



Promoting the economic vitality of localities

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to develop a bold vision for 'smart growth' and 'smart productivity' in your area – growth which offers more skilled job opportunities, values and protects the area's existing economic advantages and environmental assets, and encourages a shift to cleaner environmental technologies and businesses.

- Thriving
- Well run
- Well served
- Fair for everyone
- Environmentally sensitive

Work with Business Link in your area to set up a scheme to encourage and celebrate local businesses who lead by example and demonstrate best practice on social and environmental objectives; for example healthy workplace schemes, robust environmental management systems or training initiatives, community involvement schemes, waste minimisation and water / energy efficiency programmes.

- Thriving
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive

Consider the benefits of adopting a robust environmental management system (ISO 14001, EMAS or BS 855) in your council to demonstrate commitment to continual improvement of performance, responsible management of risks, more effective outreach with local businesses and management of suppliers.

- Environmentally sensitive
- Thriving

Make your next council supported business park or business unit an exemplar development with high environmental and community standards in its design and operation. By taking a lead councils can help establish modern, cleaner and greener business parks which attract higher skilled, socially responsible investors to the area.

- Thriving
- Well served
- Well designed and built
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well connected

Why not.....**Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community**

Work with your Local Strategic Partnership to put in place joint procurement procedures which reflect the social, economic and environmental objectives in your Community Strategy. Smarter procurement can get better deals for providers, can boost local jobs by encouraging local small or community enterprises to bid and can also send a strong signal to suppliers that they need to raise environmental standards and protect the environment in their goods and services. Local authorities have a key role to play in implementing the sustainable procurement national action plan, launched on 12 June 2006.

- Thriving
- Well run
- Well served
- Environmentally sensitive
- Fair for everyone

Work with social enterprise support organisations in your area to see how you can promote the growth of the sector in your area. There may be simple ways in which you can help, for example making available business space. Social enterprises are well placed to be able to deliver local solutions and good quality, innovative and VFM public services.

- Thriving
- Fair for everyone

Useful links and information

- Your Regional Development Agency helped publish 'Smart Growth' and 'Smart Productivity' guides to economic growth which achieves social and environmental objectives at the same time. Download copies at www.englishrdas.com/home.aspx
- Forum for the Future is a national charity which offers ideas, advice and good practice on economic development which secures social and environmental enhancements at the same time. www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/
- Business in the Community works with over 700 of the UK's top companies who want to improve their social, economic and environmental impact on society. www.bitc.org.uk/index.html
- Business Link offers advice and support which can improve the competitiveness of existing businesses through environmental measures www.businesslink.gov.uk
- The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) promotes best practice standards in environmental management and provides training and guidance to help organisations put in place an EMS. IEMA also provides training for individuals who need to improve their skills for sustainable development. www.iema.net
- Defra has published a Position Statement which sets out Government policy on the role of EMSs. www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business.scp.ems.htm
- The STEM project involves local authorities in Northern Ireland working with local businesses and using the phased approach to EMSs (BS 8555) to help them reduce their environmental impacts. www.stemproject.com/business.php
- The Social Enterprise Coalition have produced a guide for local authorities on procuring from social enterprises. A copy can be found at www.socialenterprise.org.uk/Page.aspx?SP=1893
- The Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan can be downloaded at www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/procurement-action-plan/index.htm



Raising standards across our schools

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....



Promote the Government’s Sustainable Schools strategy to schools in your area. It provides a national framework for schools to put sustainable development into action as part of their curriculum, campus and community

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

- Active inclusive and safe
- Well served
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected

Recognise and reward ‘beacon’ schools in your area who have taken a whole-school approach to improving health, protecting the environment and contributing to quality of life in the wider community. There are many ways schools can embody the principles of a sustainable community in their everyday activities. A variety of grants, advice and support is available to help schools provide healthy school meals using local or organic food, prepare a school travel plan, install solar panels or wind turbines for renewable energy, participate in healthy schools initiatives and create wildlife havens in school grounds to use as educational resources.

- Active inclusive and safe
- Well served
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected

Include high standards in the designs for new schools in your area to increase walking and cycling to school, improve water and energy efficiency in school buildings, reduce waste on school sites and provide natural green spaces as ‘outdoor classrooms’.

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well served
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected

Work with members of your Local Strategic Partnership to co-locate relevant community services in schools and through Extended Schools, in order to improve access to these services for the wider community.

- Well connected
- Well designed and built
- Environmentally sensitive
- Active, inclusive and safe

Why not.....**Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community**

Encourage local leaders from businesses and other organisations to forge greater links with local schools in order to exchange skills and expertise, inspire pupils and raise the aspirations of young people about their future.

- Thriving
- Well served
- Active, inclusive and safe.

Work with your local strategic partnership members to provide a co-ordinated package of support to priority schools on health, youth services, transport, environment and community safety issues in order to reduce the gap between successful schools and those whose educational, personal and social outcomes are much lower.

- Fair for all
- Well served
- Well connected

Case study

Durham County Council

The Sustainable Environment Policy Officer and the Energy Manager have been trained as BREEAM Assessors and are working with the Council's 'Building Schools for the Future' project team to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are considered from the beginning of this 20 year programme to refurbish or rebuild all 36 of the County's secondary schools. They hope to achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating for the new school buildings.

More information contact: Maggie Bosanquet, Sustainability Section Manager, Durham County Council Tel: 0191 383 4253 maggie.bosanquet@durham.gov.uk

Useful links and information

- The Sustainable Schools strategy is currently out for consultation and is published by Dfes. www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations
- A sustainable schools web service will be provided from 9th June 2006 at the following web address: www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools
- Council for Environmental Education. www.cee.org.uk
- Eco-schools. www.eco-schools.org.uk



Transforming the local environment

Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of the community

Why not.....

Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community

Sign up to the LGA's Greening Communities campaign which provides practical information about all the things your council can do which will make a big difference locally on key environmental issues.

- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well served

Focus on improving the environment in the most run-down neighbourhoods so that the people living there see visible proof of regeneration quickly – but remember the need for on-going maintenance.

- Thriving
- Well-run
- Fair for all
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built

Work with transport planners to promote forms of transport which reduce emissions while allowing safe, reliable travel.

- Well connected
- Well designed and built
- Environmentally sensitive
- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well-run
- Thriving

Work with your local biodiversity action partnership to conserve and enhance biodiversity within your community to make the area more attractive, encourage recreation and improve people's quality of life – through creating wildlife havens, designing greenspaces with nature in mind, installing bird boxes or encouraging residents to manage urban gardens in a wildlife-friendly way. Involve your community through volunteer, family or community wildlife days at your Local Nature Reserves.

- Thriving
- Well-run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built

| Why not..... | Joining-up the following components of a sustainable community |
|--|--|
| Promote energy-efficiency to businesses in your area and the use of renewables locally in communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well designed and built ■ Environmentally sensitive ■ Well-run ■ Thriving |
| Promote recycling and better waste management across your area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well designed and built ■ Environmentally sensitive ■ Well-run ■ Thriving |
| Set an example through your own procurement policies to include whole-life costing, high environmental standards, and high levels of good design. Local authorities have a key part to play in implementing the National Sustainable Procurement Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well designed and built ■ Environmentally sensitive ■ Well-run ■ Thriving |
| Design attractive green spaces for the use of the whole community; and promote open access to the countryside for recreational purposes and for good health. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well connected ■ Well designed and built ■ Environmentally sensitive ■ Active, inclusive and safe ■ Well-run ■ Thriving |

Useful links and information

- Information about how to make neighbourhoods Cleaner, Safer and Greener at www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk
- www.renewal.net - the online guide to what works in neighbourhood renewal
- Information on sustainable travel can be found at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_susttravel/documents/sectionhomepage/dft_susttravel_page.hcsp
- English Nature champions the conservation of wildlife, landscape and countryside recreation www.english-nature.org.uk
- Information on local biodiversity partnerships in England can be found at www.ukbap.org.uk/ebg/lbap.asp
- A Defra brochure *Life Support* demonstrating the links between biodiversity and communities ' well being can be downloaded at www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/lifesupport/index.htm
- The Association of Local Government Ecologists represents professional ecologists working in local government in the UK www.alge.org.uk
- Wildlife Trusts are actively involves in local nature reserves across the UK www.wildlifetrust.org.uk
- Energy Saving Trust www.est.org.uk
- Help for local authorities to meet recycling targets can be found at www.wrap.org.uk/local%5Fauthorities/
- Environmental Information on I&DeA Knowledge www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=80839
- Commission for Architecture and Built Environment www.cabespace.org.uk

Useful Contacts

For information on any aspect of Defra's work, please contact the Defra helpline by telephone on 08459 33 55 77 or by e-mail at helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk

For help and information on all Local Government Association activities and other local government matters please contact LGA Connect on 020 7664 3131 or by e-mail through www.lga.gov.uk/contactInfo.asp

Contact details for the Government Office in each region can be found at www.gos.gov.uk/contactus/

Contact details for each Regional Assembly can be found at <http://ern.smartregion.org.uk/page.asp?id=19>

