

Appendix 1: SUMMARY

SECURING THE FUTURE - THE UK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. The new vision - a common purpose

The 1999 strategy set out clearly that sustainable development means “a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come”.

The four central aims of the 1999 strategy were:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources, and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

These aims effectively captured the simple priority areas at the heart of sustainable development. However, although the 1999 strategy stressed that these objectives had to be pursued at the same time, in practice, different agencies focused on those one or two most relevant to them. So a new purpose is needed to show how government will integrate these aims and evolve sustainable development policy.

The following ‘purpose’, which has been agreed by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, has now been adopted as the new framework goal for sustainable development:

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 and the Devolved Administrations, 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 wellbeing. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.

Government must promote a clear understanding of, and commitment to, sustainable development so that all people can contribute to the overall goal through their individual decisions.

Similar objectives will inform all our international endeavours, with the UK actively promoting multilateral and sustainable solutions to today’s most pressing environmental, economic and social problems. There is a clear obligation on more prosperous nations both to put their own house in order, and to support other countries in the transition towards a more equitable and sustainable world.

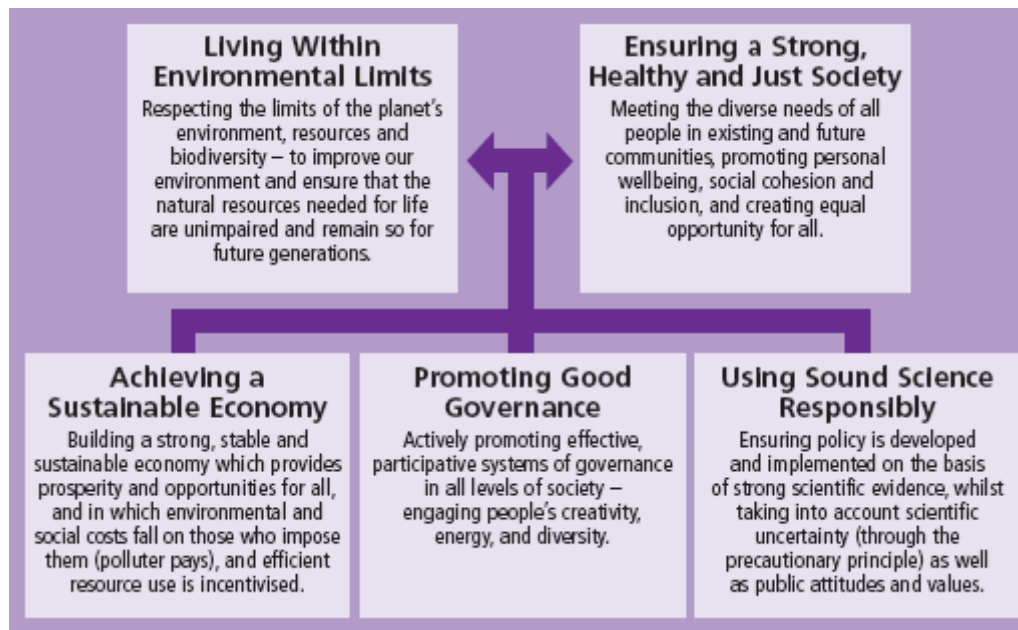
A vision of how a sustainable community should look like is outlined in Appendix 1. This will also be used to review the LSP’s Community Strategies.

Helping people make better choices. The government recognizes that we all – governments, businesses, public sector, voluntary and community organisations, communities and families – need to make different choices if we are to achieve the vision of sustainable development. A cross cutting priority, it provides the rationale and guidance on how government intend to encourage more sustainable behaviour. One of the key commitments is a new programme of community engagement – Community Action 2020 – Together We Can – to act as a catalyst for community action to continue the work of Local Agenda 21.

2. Guiding principles

The following is the set of shared UK principles that will be used to achieve the sustainable development purpose. These principles will form the basis for policy in the UK. For a policy to be sustainable, it must respect all five of these principles, though the government

recognises that some policies, while underpinned by all five, will place more emphasis on certain principles than others. Any trade-offs should be made in an explicit and transparent way. The government wants to achieve the goals of living within environmental limits and a just society, and it will do it by means of a sustainable economy, good governance, and sound science.



3. Shared priorities for UK action

As a result of the consultation the priority areas for immediate action, shared across the UK, are:

Sustainable Consumption and Production – Sustainable consumption and production is about achieving more with less. This means not only looking at how goods and services are produced, but also the impacts of products and materials across their whole lifecycle and building on people's awareness of social and environmental concerns. This includes reducing the inefficient use of resources which are a drag on the economy, so helping boost business competitiveness and to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation.

Climate Change and Energy – The effects of a changing climate can already be seen. Temperatures and sea levels are rising, ice and snow cover are declining, and the consequences could be catastrophic for the natural world and society. Scientific evidence points to the release of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere by human activity as the primary cause of climatic change. The UK will seek to secure a profound change in the way we generate and use energy, and in other activities that release these gases. At the same time we must prepare for the climate change that cannot now be avoided. We must set a good example and will encourage others to follow it.

Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement – Natural resources are vital to our existence and that of communities throughout the world. We need a better understanding of environmental limits, environmental enhancement and recovery where the environment is most degraded to ensure a decent environment for everyone, and a more integrated policy framework.

Sustainable Communities – Our aim is to create sustainable communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. This will involve working to give communities more power and say in the decisions that affect them; and working in partnership at the right level to get things done. The UK uses the same principles of engagement, partnership, and programmes of aid in order to tackle poverty and environmental degradation and to ensure good governance in overseas communities. These priorities for action within the UK will also help to shape the way the UK works

internationally, in ensuring that our objectives and activities are aligned with international goals.

4. Indicators

The government's Quality of Life indicators have been adapted to suit the new set of priorities. There are 68 indicators, again ranging from economic to health to social and environmental ones. They have been cross referenced with other relevant public service agreements and policy statements. A statistical report on the baseline figures for these indicators will be published in June 2005.

5. Action Plans

The action plan of most relevance to local authorities is about local delivery, which is reproduced below.

Strengthening local delivery

Local authorities and their partners, through Local Strategic Partnerships, are pivotal to delivering sustainable communities ... The government has developed an action plan, which will ensure the delivery of sustainable development at the local level ... From 2005, the Central Local Partnership will receive an annual progress report on the delivery of the action plan set out below:

Sending the right signals

- In 2005 the Government will hold a cross-departmental workshop to explore ways of improving the Government's communication of consistent messages on sustainable development and sustainable communities to local Government.
- The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process from 2005 onwards, including the Key Lines of Enquiry and Guidance to Inspectors, will seek to recognise and reward good performance on sustainable development and community engagement. We will work with the Audit Commission to train CPA Inspectors and equip them with a good understanding of sustainable development as a whole and how it applies to the CPA process.
- The next rounds of Beacon Council Themes (rounds 7 and 8) will include themes around aspects of sustainable development at the local level.

Making best use of existing tools to support local leadership

- During 2005 the Government will work with its partners to develop toolkits and other materials to support Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in developing and delivering Sustainable Community Strategies, which help deliver sustainable development in the UK.
- During 2005 the Government, Local Government Association and IDeA will develop a joint central-local government commitment to the delivery of sustainable development in the context of the new vision on sustainable communities. This commitment will harness the energies of local authorities and their partners and will allow freedom and flexibility in the approach taken at the local level.

Skills and knowledge for local public sector bodies

- Following the recommendation contained in Sir John Egan's Review 'Skills for Sustainable Communities' (2004), the Government has announced the establishment of a new Academy for Sustainable Communities. The Academy will work with partners to promote a new agenda for sustainable communities, increase the availability of generic skills and widen and improve access to sustainable communities skills. The Academy's programme will include the development of learning opportunities for the core occupations identified in the Egan Review, including those for Local Strategic Partnerships.
- On the theme of 'cleaner, safer, greener communities' the Government will launch a 'How To' programme to promote the take up and use of new and existing powers and guidance to transform the local environment. The Government will also provide a joined

up programme of support for our delivery partners to promote the improvement of the local environment.

- The Improvement and Development Agency will roll out a Leadership Academy module on Sustainable Communities, which develops local leadership on sustainable development issues. It will also offer a peer review tool on 'Sustainable Communities'.
 - In addition, the Government will improve local Government skills and knowledge on sustainable communities through wider training schemes such as the Local Government Capacity Building Programme.
- ... The Government will:
- ask the Regional Centres of Excellence to champion a number of sustainable procurement themes including sustainable energy, sustainable waste, sustainable food, sustainable timber and minimum product standards, and
 - disseminate good practice to local authorities and other Regional Centres in order to build skills, knowledge and understanding on sustainable procurement: in particular, that produced by the European Procura Plus sustainable procurement campaign.

The full document, which also contains interesting and compelling facts, is available at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/>