



From Global to Local: Our strategy to promote sustainability

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

2003

DRAFT



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Foreword

Our Sustainability Strategy is intended to guide how we work and to help people to change life for the better.

We have taken account of policy documents from strategy makers at European, national and regional level. We will work to link that guidance with local action that achieves practical results.

We aim to integrate the principles of sustainable development into all our policies and actions. We accept our responsibility for promoting sustainability as a way of securing the wellbeing of communities within the District.

A crucial sustainability issue affecting the residents of Lewes District is the sense of urgency in the community to change the way we dispose of waste to avoid the need for an incinerator for the next 25 years. That sense of urgency has to be translated into practical action. We will support the work of local communities and use every effort to achieve waste reduction, reuse and recycling in the District with every means at our disposal to resist the siting of an incinerator in the District.

Julie Carr
Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment

1 DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

What is sustainability?

- 1.1 Sustainable Development or Sustainability means "ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, both now and in the future".
- 1.2 It is a broad concept not only integrating environmental, social and economic wellbeing, but also how people are involved in decisions affecting their local community.
- 1.3 The concept of sustainability guides how we provide our services here at Lewes District Council and encompasses virtually everything we do that can affect the quality of life of our residents. This includes:
 - Health
 - Planning and Land Use
 - Housing
 - Crime and Disorder
 - The Environment
 - Local Amenities and Facilities
 - Democracy and the power of groups and individuals to have their say
 - Social cohesion and opportunity
 - Transport
 - Volunteer involvement
 - Local distinctiveness
 - Promoting local products
 - Waste and Recycling
 - Energy Efficiency and Climate Change
- 1.4 A successful approach to sustainability needs to work at all levels from global to national to local, through to individual lifestyle choices on matters like transport and waste recycling.

How will this strategy help deliver a more sustainable future?

- 1.5 This document sets out Lewes District Council's strategy for promoting sustainability. We are working hard to ensure that our decision making and service delivery are centred around this principle.
- 1.6 The strategy begins by summarising the wider context in which we are working for a more sustainable future from the global down to the local.
- 1.7 It goes on to explain how we are putting sustainability at the heart of our work, in the services we deliver, in the way we work with partners and in the way we engage with local communities.

- 1.8 The strategy then looks ahead to how we can improve what we do and how we intend to measure our progress towards a better quality of life in Lewes District for all our residents, businesses and visitors. A framework for action is set out in Appendix A and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

2 FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL

- 2.1 Sustainability is not a new concept. It has developed from environmental concerns to include a wider agenda including economic prosperity, community development and equal opportunities. A brief outline of the development of sustainability at different levels over recent years is provided below.

Global

- 2.2 The importance of integrating all the relevant issues together in a single principle was confirmed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In Rio, world leaders agreed a global action plan called "Agenda 21". A tenth anniversary Earth Summit was held in Johannesburg in 2002 and reaffirmed sustainability as a guiding principle.
- 2.3 Local authorities and communities were recognised as having a vital role in developing actions which improve people's quality of life and are now required to adopt their own local sustainable strategies and action plans. These were called "Local Agenda 21 Strategy" (or LA21 for short).

National

- 2.4 In May 1999, the UK Government produced its own strategy called "A Better Quality of Life" which sets out the key issues and priorities at a national level. It has four broad aims: -
- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.
 - Effective protection of the environment.
 - Prudent use of natural resources.
 - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

It also sets out 150 indicators of sustainable development including 15 'headline indicators' which will be used to monitor and report on progress nationally.

Regional

- 2.5 The South East Regional Assembly (SEERA) adopted "A Better Quality of Life in the South East: Framework for a Sustainable Future" in February 2001. This provides a sustainable development framework for all regional level strategies and a reference point for promoting sustainable development in the South East.

East Sussex

- 2.6 The County Council has prepared a vision of a sustainable East Sussex in consultation with local people and partners in business and public service. It aims to achieve 'a county of distinctive, prosperous, vibrant and accessible communities, providing a high quality of life and environment for everyone'. This led to preparation of a detailed Sustainability Strategy which was agreed in December 2000.
- 2.7 They have identified seven key aims these are: Use resources wisely; protect and enhance the environment; promote sustainable transport; encourage and promote a successful local economy; develop successful communities; protect and care for our communities; meet key individual needs. These aims are developed further in a detailed action plan.

Local

- 2.8 Since the mid 1990's, we have been developing our sustainability work both in local communities and within the Council. The latter has involved a strong commitment to environmental management.
- 2.9 A small team, including volunteers, working with local communities to develop sustainable local projects carries out our LA21 work. This work is based on the idea that the best place for sustainable decisions to be made is within communities themselves. The team is based at our North Street Recycling Centre in Lewes, and has a library/meeting room, which acts as a resource centre for local people. A wide network of local people, communities and organisations are supported by our LA21 work. Earlier LA21 strategies were approved in 1996 and 2001.
- 2.10 Our commitment to environmental management has led to external accreditation under both EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme) and ISO 14001, which are international standards for assessing and improving environmental performance.
- 2.11 Since 2001, the Council has had a statutory responsibility to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of local communities and to work with partners to prepare a Community Strategy. These new responsibilities have given added importance to work on sustainability and on improving the quality of life, both now and in future years.

3 PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK

- 3.1 We recognise that sustainability must be at the heart of our work. Sustainability informs all our work from the high-level strategies guiding work with key partners, to our internal business planning and performance management, down to the individual services we provided.

Community Strategy

- 3.2 Over the last couple of years we have been working with a range of partner organisations and local communities to develop a number of local projects that reflect the different needs and aspirations of our four main towns and the rural areas of the District. These projects are being developed by local area partnerships, involving local people and organisations. The area partnerships have consulted with their communities and are working together to plan their priorities for sustainable local action.
- 3.3 These local action plans have fed into a five year Community Strategy for the whole District. A District-wide Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has been formed, bringing together many providers of local services such as the District and County Councils, health services, the police, education services and other partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
- 3.4 The Strategy aims to improve the quality of life and will be at the heart of the partners' commitment to meeting the future needs of local people. As well as providing an overall future direction, it will set agreed targets and real action for improvement. Two key priorities for sustainable local action identified so far are improving transport and improving facilities for young people.
- 3.5 During 2003/4 a work programme will be developed to turn the aims and objectives of the Strategy into tangible improvements. Further integration between existing partnerships will be encouraged to "join up" community development within the District.

Business Planning and Performance Management

- 3.6 Lewes District Council has four overarching corporate aims for all our work. These are:-
- To protect and enhance the environment
 - To help people improve the quality of life in local communities
 - To strive for continuous improvement in Council services
 - To promote equality of access to Council services
- 3.7 In January 2003, the Council's Cabinet agreed a set of priorities to guide its work over the following three years up to 2006. These priorities reflect the seven national priorities for public services of local residents' priorities established following a survey carried out in October 2002. The priorities are:
- 1 Care for the natural and built environment.
 - 2 Provision of affordable housing.
 - 3 Provision of good local facilities
 - 4 Action to support local communities.

- 5 Action to protect local employment.
 - 6 Action to reduce crime and disorder.
 - 7 Local democracy, encouraging people to vote.
 - 8 Food hygiene.
- 3.8 All of these priorities reflect aspects of sustainability. They are carried forward through a set of corporate strategies and developed into detailed programmes of work through departmental service plans. In turn, the service plans help define the service standards which the public can expect. These service standards impact directly on the quality of life which is enjoyed by people in Lewes District.
- 3.9 Integral to all these business planning arrangements is a system of performance management. This means that we are developing a comprehensive set of targets, monitor progress towards them and feedback results to the public and also seek public views on setting targets for future years.

Environmental Management

- 3.10 The Council provides and purchases a wide range of services and makes policy decisions, which can make an enormous impact on local people and local communities. The Council has a responsibility to understand and manage that impact. The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a European regulation for monitoring and managing the effects of our actions on the environment, both good and bad.
- 3.11 The Council has been working on EMAS since 1997 and was one of the first four councils in the country to receive the accreditation. Since that time we have been working on an environmental improvement programme which identifies actions and targets for the Council and its service departments to ensure we continually improve our environmental performance.
- 3.12 Under the Scheme we must be regularly assessed by an independent environmental auditor and have to prepare an Environmental Statement showing our progress and future plans for environmental protection. Our latest statement is available on the Council's website. Our most recent audit took place in April 2003.
- 3.13 In 2002 we began work on a "LIFE" EU funded pilot project called 'eco Budget' which we hope will help us to make further improvements. This European pilot project aims to look at environmental protection and sustainability using methods similar to financial accounting to limit "spending" on natural resources. By the end of 2003 we will start to evaluate our achievements during the pilot and will publish our results. The District Council is the only UK participant in the project.

Local Agenda 21 work

3.14 The Council's LA21 Strategy (2001) identifies a programme of work with local communities to promote sustainability. At the core of the Local Agenda 21 Strategy is the idea of empowerment and consensus, that is giving individuals and groups the tools to enable them to agree and resolve local issues. This currently includes facilitating:

- School Sustainable Wildlife Areas
- Sustainable tourism project in Seaford
- Alternative energy projects
- Development of town and Parish Action Plans
- Educational and promotion work in all sectors
- Community run website (la21online)
- Community run magazine (Making Things Happen)
- Developing neighbourhood indicators

3.15 We have selected a range of indicators, which reflect the quality of life in local communities, from the national strategy (see paragraph 2.4 above). We have taken account of the views of residents in setting these indicators. Data is being collected to build a library of indicators for individual wards in the District.

4 IMPROVING WHAT WE DO

Key Objectives

4.1 In developing our Sustainability Strategy, we have looked for best practice in promoting sustainability in UK local authorities.*

4.2 Best practice suggests that our Strategy should have the following key objectives:-

- Develop high-level commitment to sustainability and a corporate approach to deliver it.
- Provide mechanisms to assist in mainstreaming sustainable development.
- Maintain a dedicated unit within the authority to promote sustainability, co-ordinate and communicate action.
- Promote community involvement and leadership.

* An optimal approach to sustainable development in a local authority, Zöe Hassell, Forum for the Future, October 2002.

- 4.3 These key objectives are amplified in a set of action points set out in Appendix A. These provide a framework for our future work to make the area more sustainable and to improve the local quality of life.

Measuring Progress

- 4.4 Strategy development can over-emphasise process and give insufficient attention to delivering outcomes. Therefore, it is very important that we develop a better understanding of how the "Quality of Life" in Lewes District is changing. With this in mind, we are working with the Local Strategic Partnership to produce a comprehensive set of "Quality of Life" indicators, based on the basket of indicators prepared by the Audit Commission. These are listed at Appendix B.

Consultation and feedback

- 4.5 Consultation and feedback on this Sustainability Strategy is provided at several levels. We welcome comments from all sections of the community.
- 4.6 A key channel for consultation and feedback are the local partnership structures supporting the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the LSP itself. These partnerships are broadly based and draw in representatives from key players in the business, voluntary and public sectors. They also have a link to the citizen through our "Local Voices" website.
- 4.7 Our LA21 work in local communities provides another channel by which we can receive feedback on the Strategy. We are already working with a wide range of community groups, campaigning groups, schools, town and parish councils and local organisations.
- 4.8 Lastly, we are always pleased to hear from interested individuals or groups. There are several channels by which the District Council receives views - for example, our Annual Performance Plan, the Council's website and quarterly newsletter "District Link". In addition this Strategy has a feedback form is attached as Appendix C. There is no closing date for comments. We welcome comments at any time.

APPENDIX A

LDC SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

**KEY OBJECTIVE A: DEVELOP HIGH-LEVEL COMMITMENTS TO
-SUSTAINABILITY AND A CORPORATE APPROACH TO DELIVER IT**

ACTIVITY	CURRENT POSITION	FUTURE WORK REQUIRED	TARGET	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align Council's corporate Sustainability objectives with that of the Local Strategic partnership 	<p>Council has identified the quality of life in local communities as a Key aim, this is championed through the LSP and area partnerships.</p>	<p>Merge/closer co-operation between Community Planning and Local Agenda 21 as identified in Best Value Review.</p> <p>Develop mechanism for informing corporate objectives using community strategy/LA21 work etc.</p>	<p>Target 1: Set up Sustainability Working Group Develop cross-departmental sustainability working group (SWG) by November 2003</p> <p>Terms of reference for group agreed by November 2003</p> <p>Clear Political leadership within group (Chair invites each political party to nominate a champion) by November 2003</p> <p>Training event for group by December 2003</p> <p>Target 2: Linking Corporate Objectives with Community Strategy</p> <p>Commitment to link up community strategy and LA21 work with Corporate Objectives by November 2003</p> <p>Evidence of links in Corporate Objectives: April 2004</p>	<p>This would work on very similar lines to the Environmental Steering Group, but include Members.</p> <p>Ensuring all documents/policies are linked to sustainable principles.</p>

ACTIVITY	CURRENT POSITION	FUTURE WORK REQUIRED	TARGET	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment from Chief Executive and Lead Members to make sustainability a corporate priority Make sustainability an active responsibility of Corporate Management Team. 	<p>This commitment has been expressed in the Annual Performance Plan</p> <p>Already committed – as above.</p>	<p>This needs to cascade down through all priorities, projects, strategies, policies and service delivery.</p> <p>Further development of this area so all priorities, projects, strategies, policies and service delivery reflect this responsibility.</p>	<p>Target 3: Monitoring of Major projects, new services and activities and changes to policy and strategy.</p> <p>Set up monitoring mechanism for the above to ensure the prioritisation of sustainability is apparent - devised by SWG by March 2004.</p> <p>Initial monitoring June 2004</p>	<p>All major projects assessed to determine benefit for wellbeing of the District.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear linkage between Community Strategy, LA21, 	<p>Need for link identified in Best Value Review</p>	<p>Build on links through CMT/SWG and respond to new modernisation initiatives</p>	<p>Target 4: Linking the Community Strategy, LA21 work, best value and other modernisation initiatives</p> <p>Ensure the Sustainability Officer, Community Services Manager, and Best Value Officer are part of the SWG by November 2003</p>	<p>This avoids duplication of effort and improves communication between Departments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain long-term perspective 	<p>Existing LA21 work maintains long-term perspective</p>	<p>Expand current work, particularly for issues impacting on for example climate change</p>	<p>Target 5: Maintaining a long term perspective</p> <p>Maintain membership of Climate Change Partnership</p> <p>Ensure evidence of long-term perspective in priorities, projects, strategies, policies and service delivery.</p>	<p>Assists with Council's long-term planning and vision.</p>

KEY OBJECTIVE B: PROVIDE MECHANISMS TO ASSIST IN MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITY & AIM	CURRENT POSITION	FUTURE WORK REQUIRED	TARGET	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective environmental management system across the authority. 	<p>LDC has EMAS and ISO 14001 accreditation and is regularly audited for continuing compliance and improvement</p>	<p>Continuously improve environmental performance using effective system</p>	<p>Target 6: Effective environmental management system</p> <p>Maintain certification</p> <p>Renew registration after 2005</p>	<p>Promotes and shares best practice.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop corporate mechanisms for consistent integration of sustainability into business planning. 	<p>No mechanism in place</p>	<p>Develop sustainability appraisal to inform all decision making including business planning</p>	<p>Target 7: Develop Sustainability appraisal to aid decision-making at all levels. Conduct training in its use.</p> <p>SWG to produce 'sustainability appraisal' by Jan 2004</p> <p>Training in its use with all managers and report writers initiated by Feb 2004</p>	<p>This would be similar to sustainability checklist used in Best Value Reviews.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend sustainability appraisal into LSP and other key partnerships. 	<p>Sustainability checklist used in Best Value reviews</p>	<p>Further utilise the skills within the partnerships to develop appraisal</p>	<p>Target 8: Extend Sustainability Appraisal into LSP</p>	<p>Encourage the use of sustainability principles by our partners.</p>

KEY OBJECTIVE C: DEDICATED UNIT TO PROMOTE, CO-ORDINATE AND COMMUNICATE SUSTAINABILITY

ACTIVITY & AIM	CURRENT POSITION	FUTURE WORK REQUIRED	TARGET	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated unit within authority to promote co-ordinate and communicate sustainability 	<p>Small team in Planning & Environmental Services Directorate</p>	<p>Review and assess resource requirements of Sustainability Unit.</p>	<p>Target 9: Ensure resources are available to support sustainability team in Planning & Environmental Services Directorate</p> <p>CMT and SWG to consider this by Jan 2004</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External role: promoting education and awareness in local community and feeding back 	<p>LA21 work, Community work by Environmental Health and Community Services promoting education and awareness in local community. Feedback through District Link, Staff Bulletin and 'Making things happen' newsletter</p>	<p>Improve dissemination mechanisms through partnerships</p>	<p>Target 10: Improve dissemination mechanisms</p> <p>This target needs to be developed in consultation with the Press and consultation Officer in light of the new communication Strategy</p>	<p>This is similar to the Dissemination Strategy developed for the ecoBudget project.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication role: Spreading good practice and learning from others 	<p>Part of EU wide 'ecoBudget project,' Sussex Sustainability Network, Attendance at conferences and events. (Many examples need to be filled in by others.)</p>	<p>Improve dissemination mechanisms</p>	<p>Target 11: Develop 'good practice' website</p> <p>Development of a 'good practice' site on web where staff can report back from events, conferences, training and workshops by June 2004</p>	

KEY OBJECTIVE D: PROMOTE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

ACTIVITY & AIM	CURRENT POSITION	FUTURE WORK REQUIRED	TARGET	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful participation with all key stakeholders and effective communication of community planning process 	<p>Town and Parish Action Plans involve a range of participatory techniques to ensure input from a wide audience.</p>	<p>Extend current activity</p>	<p>Action plans for all parishes and towns suggested target – need to discuss this further</p>	<p>This would require Members' involvement in the Local Community</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority leads by example and shares good practice with partners 	<p>Many examples: EMAS ecoBudget, LA21 work</p>	<p>Improve internal feedback mechanisms 'Betre' Project for businesses</p>	<p>Target 12: Continue to work with local businesses Action: Number of businesses enrolling on the Betre Project in Lewes area to reach 30 by 2004</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness and sharing of international good practice in sustainability 	<p>Awareness at many levels through conferences, workshops, research, updates. Sharing through existing communication links (District Link, Staff Bulletin etc) and LA21 newsletter</p>	<p>Improve internal feedback mechanisms</p>	<p>Target 13: Continue to participate in ecoBudget project Action: Develop new ecoBudget Master Budget for 2003/04</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively facilitating the community engagement process, providing advice and facilities. 	<p>Extensive work via LA21 team. Provision of advice, library facilities and meeting room at Community Recycling Centre in Lewes.</p>	<p>Consider expanding this work</p>	<p>Target 14 : Develop Sustainability Action plan by April 2004</p>	<p>This incorporates the action plan contained within the existing LA21 Strategy.</p>

ACTIVITY & AIM	CURRENT POSITION	FUTURE WORK REQUIRED	TARGET	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local stakeholders aware of global sustainability issues. 	<p>HECA and LA21 work involved in this currently, for example raising awareness of climate change</p>	<p>Continue existing work, but address similar issues in relation to all department communication</p>	<p>Target 15: Local stakeholders aware of global sustainability issues.</p> <p>Develop wind turbine project by March 2004.</p> <p>Continue work with local schools on renewable energy.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of Life indicators developed via stakeholder participation; used consistently and reviewed regularly. 	<p>Neighbourhood indicators currently being developed as part of LA21 work on Town and Parish Action Plans.</p>	<p>Build on existing indicators</p>	<p>Target 16: Quality of Life indicators developed via stakeholder participation; used consistently and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Produce a comprehensive set of indicators working with the LSP from the basket contained in Appendix B by Dec 2004</p> <p>Continue with ongoing expansion of neighbourhood Indicators</p>	<p>This process is already being developed and is particularly useful as a mechanism for measuring benefit to residents of the District through the Council and other partners actions.</p>

APPENDIX C

Your Ideas

This is the most important part of this strategy! We need your comments and ideas on what we have said so far so that we can work towards getting it right. This is about your quality of life, your local environment and about your children's future. Please let us know what you feel by filling in the form below. Alternatively, feel free to phone the team on the number below to have a chat.

Name (Individual/group):

Address:

Tel No:

E-mail:

The following comments are from:

.....(individual)

.....(group)

COMMENTS

Send to: Sustainability Developer Officer, Lewes District Council, Community Recycling Centre, North Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2PE or e-mail to Trevor.Watson@lewes.gov.uk