



# Securing a Sustainable Future

Plymouth 2020's  
Sustainable Development Framework

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## Plymouth 2020's Sustainable Development Framework

*Adopted Version: 12 December 2008*

The Local Strategic Partnership will ensure that sustainable solutions to modern living are at the heart of Plymouth's vision for the long term; a commitment that is clearly set out in the city's Sustainable Community Strategy. It is a cross-cutting issue that matters to every Theme Group and to all of the LSP's partner organisations.

Through our actions, collectively and individually, the Partnership and local communities will contribute in a real and practical way to improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the city and to sustainable development throughout the region, in the UK and internationally.

The LSP will apply recognised sustainability principles to everything we do through the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement and encourage all our partner organisations to reflect the same in their strategies and plans.

In doing so, the Plymouth 2020 will seek to raise both awareness and the extent of positive, sustainable action within the wider community.





## Our Aim

The aim of this document is to enable the LSP to embed a common set of sustainability principles into local decision making and to ensure that sustainability is considered from the outset – not added at the end. It's not about changing what we do – it's all about improving the way we do it.

## What does this mean for the LSP ?

Using the Framework, and an appropriate way of appraising the impact of our decisions, plans and strategies, the LSP will be able to judge its progress towards more sustainable outcomes. At a strategic level, this will enable Plymouth to develop as a city that:

- Promotes economic prosperity through a sustainable economy.
- Supports strong, healthy, just and sustainable communities.
- Lives within clearly established environmental limits.
- Seeks to manage resources effectively, to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the impacts of climate change.
- Enjoys a high and sustainable quality of life.

## The LSP's Sustainability Objectives

The Local Strategic Partnership will promote and deliver a common approach to future sustainability. Our sustainability objectives are:

- 1.0 To share a recognised definition of sustainable development.
- 2.0 To tackle climate change and move towards a low carbon economy.
- 3.0 To improve the sustainability of decision making by assessing the impact of plans and strategies and mitigating any negative impacts.
- 4.0 To 'green' the Local Area Agreement - ensuring that every target undergoes a Sustainability Check.
- 5.0 To embed a means of monitoring progress towards improved sustainability - using regular reviews of baseline information and the indicators that contribute towards sustainable development.
- 6.0 To provide an annual 'position statement' setting out the progress made – building on the strengths of nationally agreed principles and priorities for sustainable development and a wealth of local innovation and best practice examples.
- 7.0 To share good practice, learning and achievement with the support of a citywide sustainability network that combines expertise with practical action across the Partnership.

# The Business Case for Greater Sustainability

## A clear sense of place

*Plymouth enjoys an enduring reputation as a sustainable city with a great quality of life... a view supported by an increasing amount of evidence from independent sources.*

In Plymouth we have a very ambitious vision to be recognised as “one of Europe’s finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone”. We want Plymouth to be:

- A healthy place to live and work
- A wealthy city which creates and shares prosperity
- A safe and strong city
- A location for learning, achievement and leisure

Plymouth’s communities share a spectacular location and enviable environment. With this in mind, perhaps our strongest card is the way in which we choose to shape the city and the quality of life it offers. Plymouth’s ‘place shaping’ vision gives a very clear picture of where we want to be and actions, such as the physical transformation of the city, are turning the vision in to a reality.

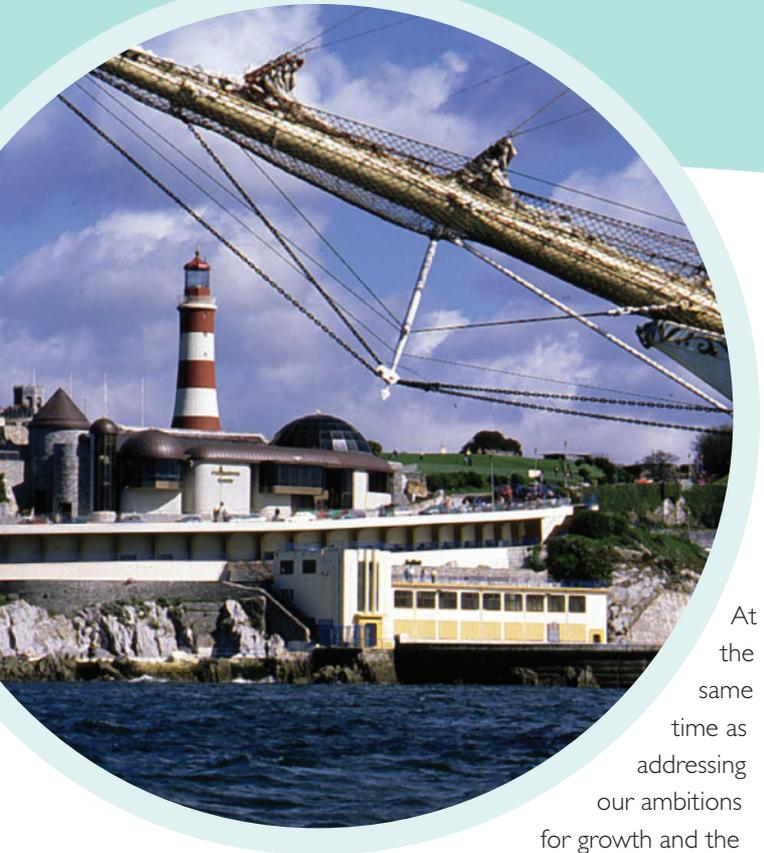
Increasingly, maintaining and improving that quality, and achieving the city’s ambitious plans for growth and prosperity, will rely on the availability of resources and our ability to live within environmental limits. This will be a challenge but it one that Plymouth has the potential to meet extremely well.

## The challenge

Our sense of place also represents challenges for the development of the infrastructure we’ll need and future service delivery, as we seek a 100,000 increase in the population of the city and its surrounding area, 42,500 more jobs, 32,000 new homes and the critical mass to enable us to provide more amenities for people locally and regionally.

The sustainability challenge isn’t limited to change in the physical environment. Being inclusive is a critical ingredient of this vision, central to our partnership’s objectives and a fundamental principle for sustainability; but we face challenges here too. We have, for instance, 40,000 people who are classed as income-deprived, one in six of our current population of 248,000. The difference in life expectancy between our healthiest and least healthy wards is 13 years and widening; while just over half, 52%, of our housing stock is classed as non-decent when set against the government’s decency standard.





At the same time as addressing our ambitions for growth and the social inclusion agenda, we

are being called upon to tackle the overall sustainability of the city and pressing environmental issues such as climate change and energy demand.

These new challenges, principally embodied in the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 and the Climate Change Act 2008, provide us with an opportunity and the means to refresh our existing commitments to both sustainable development and the reduction in carbon emissions and to lead by example in ensuring a sustainable future.

## A Strong Base

In many respects we are operating from a strong base. Plymouth has an excellent reputation for delivering sustainable solutions in partnership with the local community. Recent research also shows that Plymouth has the lowest ecological footprint of the UK's top 60 cities. In addition, the 'Sustainable Cities Index' compared our environmental impact, quality of life and ability to prepare for a sustainable future. It showed Plymouth as the fourth most sustainable city in the UK, but noted that we have a great deal of work to do to ensure the city continues to build on these assets and grow sustainably.

Following the 1992 Earth Summit, Plymouth was one of the first UK cities to sign up to Agenda 21 – the globally recognised commitment to a sustainable future – and its European equivalent, the Aalborg Treaty (1994). Plymouth's own Local Agenda 21 Plan was published in 2000 following an extensive, and award winning, consultation programme

with the local communities that shaped the document. That commitment has endured and grown as new plans, policies and strategies have been developed.

Throughout the city, sustainable communities are being delivered through the Local Development Framework (LDF), transport, housing, home energy efficiency, waste management, recycling, green space and biodiversity initiatives.

Social and economic sustainability is being tackled through our schools, in local communities and in our partnerships. Our council is also leading by example in establishing its own carbon footprint and a five year action plan to reduce emissions.

However, we need to be careful. Gains in citywide sustainability may not be reflected once local neighbourhoods are compared. Our low carbon footprint, for example, may also reflect high levels of fuel poverty and, although national figures show that Plymouth's streets are some of the cleanest in the UK, there are wide differences in the recorded levels of litter in different areas. Equally, the citywide figures provide us with a series of clear environmental limits within which to grow and prosper:

## Social and economic imperatives

Much is happening, but much more needs to be done. The challenges are great and will not always be easily resolved. For example, if we don't comply with reductions in landfill targets, we could face fines rising from £1.9m in 2009/10 to £8.6m in 2020.

Given the growing interest in environmental and quality of life issues

as a unique selling point, we will not be able to attract businesses, visitors and new residents to our city unless we champion a sustainable environment. Our huge growth agenda could, at a superficial glance, be seen as not offering the right basis for sustainable development. Yet it provides us with an opportunity to build-in sustainability and eco-friendly criteria from the outset when building new houses, designing new schools and locating new work bases.

Increasing the city's population, workforce and employment opportunities within these limits will be a challenge but, there is no reason why the city cannot grow and prosper sustainably and, in doing so, lead the South West's aspirations to be the UK's 'greenest' region. Environmentally, socially and economically, we still have a great deal to do to balance out the difference and ensure a great quality of life for everyone.

Similarly, if we are to address existing priorities such as disadvantage, we must take a holistic approach. Environmental sustainability needs to be completely embedded in our thinking. Home insulation, for instance, not only reduces carbon emissions, but lowers the cost of heating and provides a warmer environment of particular benefit to low income households and the elderly. Whilst we want to develop our skills base to support our growth agenda, we will also need to ensure that people can access training and development opportunities in a cost efficient and environmentally friendly way.

## Value for money and community engagement

We recognise that many of our natural resources are being placed under increasing pressure but there are other concerns. The financial support available for public service provision is limited, business growth is highly competitive and takes place in within an

increasingly global economy. If we are to achieve value for money and to provide services of a quality our customers, residents and visitors want, we cannot afford to continue to lose money by maintaining business and public premises and other assets that are environmentally inefficient. Nor can we support social and economic initiatives that solve one problem whilst creating others, instead of having multi-beneficial outcomes.

Making progress on the sustainability agenda will require changes to how people think, feel and behave. Again, we are not starting from a blank canvass, as there is considerable interest in and support for the environment, particularly amongst young people. But there will be challenges as individual interests are affected. The involvement of local communities and individuals is fundamental to the delivery of a more sustainable city. We will need to put a lot of focus on how we communicate and engage with our communities and the staff within our respective partnership bodies in terms of both decision making and local action if we are to deliver the sustainable future we seek.



# Delivering Our Sustainability Objectives

## Delivery Objective I

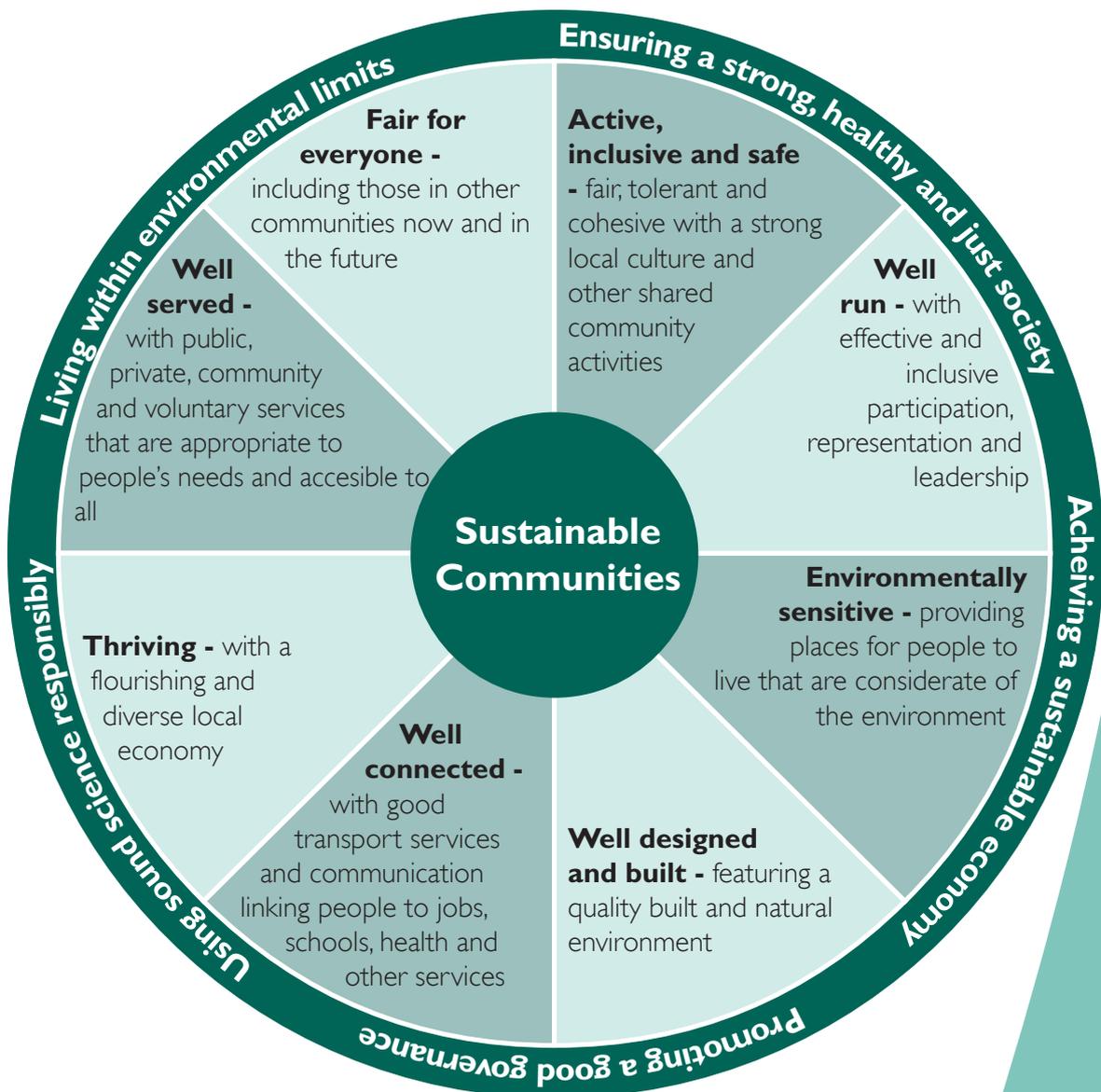
### Sharing A Recognised Definition of Sustainable Development.

The LSP will share a common definition of sustainable development that will complement the application of recognised sustainability principles and “enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life for future generations”.

#### A Shared Definition

*Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”*

*(Brundtland, 1987)*



The Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and all subsequent corporate and partnership plans will promote this definition and the principles of sustainable development (set out below) at a local level.

In doing so, the Local Strategic Partnership will create sustainable communities that balance and integrate all their associated social, economic and environmental components. We will seek to:

- Promote economic prosperity through a sustainable economy.
- Support strong, healthy, just and sustainable

communities.

- Live within clearly established environmental limits.
- Manage resources effectively, to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the impacts of climate change.
- Enjoy a high and sustainable quality of life.

### The LSP will:

I.1: Ensure that all its decisions and actions are sustainable – benefiting the overall social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the city, its residents and visitors.

#### **This means...**

I.2: Ensuring that the decisions and actions taken by the LSP, or any of its partners, do not compromise the ability of future generations, in or beyond Plymouth, to meet their needs.

I.3: Demonstrating that a balanced view of the economic, social and environmental implications of action have been considered and that the interdependencies between them are recognised.

I.4: Using robust evidence and community sourced information to meet the needs of existing and future generations.

I.5: Reflecting the commitments to sustainability set out in local, regional, national and international plans and strategies.

I.6: Prioritising actions to tackle challenging issues such as climate change.

### And, in doing so, the LSP will:

I.6: Recognise the strength of the extended partnerships offered by

- (i) National and international agreements such as the Millennium Goals, Aalborg Agreement and Agenda 21, the Kyoto Protocol and their appropriate successors and
- (ii) the opportunities offered by appropriate national and international legislation including the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

## Delivery Objective 2: Tackling Climate Change and Moving Towards a Low Carbon Economy.

Climate change is possibly the most pressing challenge we face. In recognition of the need to act, the Partnership has adopted significant targets for the citywide reduction of emissions and has committed to action to tackle the impacts of climate change.

### The LSP will:

2.1: Contribute to actions to reduce citywide carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by 20% by 2013, 60% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 from a 2005/06 baseline.

*(Source: Climate Change Framework, IPCC and UKCIP data and SW Climate Change Action Plan 2008)*

2.2: Work together to reduce the carbon footprint of the city's residents from 5.8 tCO<sub>2</sub> to 5.0 tCO<sub>2</sub> by 2013.

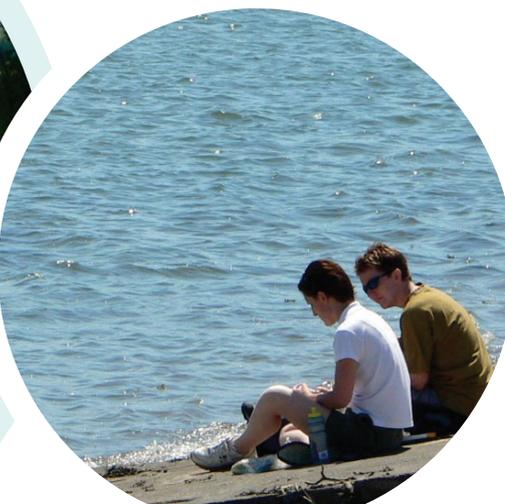
*(Source: Local Area Agreement target W6)*

### This means...

2.3: Working together to deliver a low carbon economy; promoting zero carbon development, carbon neutrality and renewable energy solutions that enable us to meet our aspirations for growth within environmental limits.

2.4: Supporting the delivery of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that enables the city to mitigate, and to adapt to, the impacts of climate change – reducing risk and emissions and improving our overall quality of life.

2.5: Protecting and enhancing the city's green spaces and biodiversity.



## Delivery Objective 3: Improving the Sustainability of Decision Making.

The extent of the LSP's commitment to sustainable development must be clear and applicable to everyone. This is a partnership initiative in which we all have a role. In practice this means tackling civic, economic, social and environmental policies and practices in a mutually supportive and consistent way.

In addition to providing a shared understanding of what needs to be done, partner organisations need to be able to develop and deliver against their own innovative approaches and solutions which, in turn, we can all share. Delivering a consistent message is essential.

A number of suitable assessment toolkits are already available but we need to be sure that the approach we use is suitable for Plymouth's needs and that it can be applied consistently across the LSP. In some cases more complex appraisal techniques will be required but the toughest challenge will be to change the way we

We therefore aim to work with partner organisations to develop and agree a simple, but appropriate, sustainability checklist by December 2008.

Using the agreed sustainability principles to guide decision making and debate the LSP will then:

- 3.1: Work together to establish and adopt an appropriate 'checklist' or appraisal for use across the Partnership.
- 3.2: Embed the use of the agreed 'checklist' in decision making at the simplest level and from the outset.
- 3.3: Where necessary, support the use of additional ways of assessing progress using Sustainability Appraisal techniques, Strategic Environmental Assessment or similar appraisal tool.
- 3.4: Improve the capacity of LSP members to deliver change – providing the training and support.

## Delivery Objective 4: Greening the Local Area Agreement.

As a very first step, sustainability will be at the heart of the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. To ensure this the LSP will use the agreed Sustainability Checklist to:

- 4.1: Ensure that all LSP partners use the 'checklist' to improve the sustainability of their decisions.
- 4.2: Ensure a 'Sustainability Statement' is completed for every LAA target.



## Delivery Objective 5: Monitoring Progress

What matters in sustainability is our ability to see the bigger picture – where we are, where we've come from and where we want to be – and not simply the detail of every action we take.

Providing a consistent list that can be reviewed over time, sustainability indicators have long been used to reflect progress in this respect. Using this approach, Forum for the Future, one of the UK's leading sustainability advisors, has suggested that Plymouth is the fourth most sustainable city

in the UK.

Whilst we do not want to duplicate indicators that already measure progress elsewhere (in the Local Area Agreement for example), there is a need to be able to assess outcomes against the adopted sustainability objectives.

To do this, we will:

- 5.1: Adopt a sustainability monitoring format, drawn from Forum for the Future's Sustainable Cities Index, that enables us to 'future proof' local decision making.

*Definition: Future proofing – the process of trying to anticipate future developments so that action can be taken to minimise possible negative consequences and to seize opportunities.*

To inform sustainable decision making, the following high level indicators will be used to provide an annual progress report:

- **The Quality of Life for Residents** – what the city is like to live in for all residents comprising existing indicators for life expectancy, satisfactions with quality of life, traffic congestion, jobs, skills, crime and affordability.
- **The Environmental Impact of the City** – the impact of the city on the wider environment in terms of resource use, pollution and environmental limits comprising existing indicators for air quality, water quality, water supplies, waste management, street cleanliness, land use, climate change, biodiversity, and recycling.
- **Future Proofing (forecasting)** – how well the city is preparing itself for a sustainable future including new and existing indicators for action on climate change, energy use (renewables) and the city's progress towards a low carbon economy.

Over time, the outcome of the annual reports will be compared against two further, long term sustainability measures – Plymouth's overall ecofootprint and Plymouth's

carbon footprint.

**Our Ecofootprint...** is the sum total of all the resources we consume as a city, including food and fuel, together with an assessment of the impact of all the resources we waste or throw away and the emissions we create. If everyone in the world lived as we do in the UK we would need three planets to support us. In 2007, the Worldwide Fund for Nature looked at Plymouth's 'ecofootprint' and compared it with 60 other UK cities. **Our ecofootprint was calculated as 2.78 planets – the lowest in the UK.**

**Our Carbon Footprint...** is the sum total of the emissions we create from energy use. Spread over the domestic, housing, commercial and transport sectors it is measured by the Government each year and compared with our overall population. Research for our LAA targets calculated Plymouth's carbon footprint as just over 1,488,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> based on figures from 2005. The footprint for each resident is therefore just over 5.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. The UK average (calculated from estimates for 2006 and published by DEFRA) is 8.84 tCO<sub>2</sub>.

## Delivery Objective 6: Reporting Progress

The LSP is not alone in its desire to create a more sustainable future for Plymouth. The goal of sustainable development reflected in this Framework is shared regionally, nationally and internationally.

It makes good business sense to ensure that change is delivered in the most cost effective and resource efficient way and, given the impact the global economy has on our lives, to ensure that others can do the same. In supporting sustainable development, the Sustainable Community Strategy enables the LSP to deliver this goal at a local level.

Guidance on implementing these strategies, issued by the Government in July 2008, also clearly emphasises the need to work with the local communities, to take a long term approach and to address the impact the city has beyond its boundaries. From global resource use to individual responsibilities, our actions should embody the concept of 'thinking globally, acting locally'.

Communication becomes a vital component of sustainable change and the way in which we report progress and encourage even greater levels of action.

6.1: We will therefore review progress on an annual basis; producing a Sustainability Statement setting out the progress made, any achievements and any appropriate changes to the principles, priorities or objectives.



## Delivery Objective 7: Sharing Good Practice.

Good networking and communication arrangements will allow the Partnership to make the most of local expertise and the support available at regional, national and international levels.

As a cross cutting issue, sustainability will be a key driver for every action - not just those with an environmental theme.

**Accountability – governance arrangements within the LSP [discuss with AH].**



### Within the LSP:

#### This means that .....

- 7.1: Sustainability reporting will become a feature of reporting requirements , with clear lines of accountability to all four Theme Groups, to the LSP's Executive and Board.
- 7.2: The responsibility for leading the delivery of these objectives will be clear.
- 7.3: The LSP will support the formation and administration of a 'Sustainability Network' which will bring together local expertise and provide advice and support to the Partnership, its members and the local community.
- 7.4: The LSP will lead by example in ensuring that LSP administration and events reflect best practice in environmental management – using recognised guidelines to ensure sustainability and the efficient use of resources.
- 7.5: Carbon accounting will be encouraged alongside financial accounting techniques to support actions to improve resource use and the delivery of a low carbon economy.

### Beyond the LSP and into the local community

- 7.6: The LSP's commitment to sustainable development will be clearly set out on the Partnership's website, together with links to the support and advice available from the Sustainability Network.
- 7.7: The LSP will continue to support identified training needs to ensure that partner organisations and community members alike can apply the principles set out in this document to their own circumstances; thereby contributing to the achievement of a more sustainable, low carbon city.

## Supporting Information

Greater sustainability is a goal we share with organisations all over the World. In addition to Agenda 21, the global sustainability plan developed in response to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, a number of key agreements continue to influence the delivery of sustainable decision making at every level. Two of the most significant agreements are set out below. The first is internationally significant. The second could significantly contribute to our vision to be “one of Europe’s finest waterfront cities”.

### A. The Millennium Development Goals

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. Nearly 190 countries have subsequently signed up to them. The eight Millennium Development Goals are:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

### The Call to Action

In July 2007, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, speaking alongside the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, launched the MDG Call to Action, with the support of 14 heads of state or governments and 21 private sector leaders. With many of the MDGs still off-track at the halfway point to the target year of 2015, this seeks to accelerate progress on achieving them.

### B. The Aalborg Charter

The 1994 Aalborg Conference built on the Rio Summit of 1992, laid the foundations for, and established, the main requirements for sustainability in European cities and towns. The key principles are:

- The Responsibility of cities and towns for sustainability.
- The Notion and Principles of Sustainability
- Sustainability as a Creative, Local, Balance-Seeking Process.
- The Urban Economy Towards Sustainability.
- Social Equity for Urban Sustainability.
- Sustainable Land-Use Patterns.
- Sustainable Urban Mobility Patterns.
- Responsibility for the Global Climate.
- The Prevention of the Poisoning of Ecosystems.
- Citizens as Key Agents and Community Involvement.
- Instruments and Tools for Urban Management Towards Sustainability.

Therefore, any Local Agenda 21 must incorporate the general objectives as set forth in Agenda 21 and transform them into concrete action plans adapted to that particular city or town. The main principles which must govern a Local Agenda 21 are the following:

- Integrating the objectives of Sustainable Development into local administrations, its strategies and management.
- Social awareness of environmental and sustainability issues.
- Public access to environmental information.
- Citizen participation and inquiries.
- Co-operation. with companies, non-governmental organisations, twin cities, etc.
- Assessment, review and submission of reports on progress made towards sustainability.







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