

Sustainability Policy Framework

What is Sustainability?

A good quality of life for today's residents, workers and visitors should not be at the expense of future populations enjoying the South Hams as a place to live, work and visit. Sustainability is about current populations satisfying their needs and improving their quality of life, without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainability is often linked to protecting the environment and reducing the impacts of climate change. However achieving sustainability requires more than this, it requires a strong prosperous economy, a just society and the wise use of resources. The three pillars of sustainability; the environment, the economy and the social, need to be balanced to avoid the achievement of sustainability failing.

The key to achieving this balance is by:

- **Achieving a sustainable economy-** a strong, stable, vibrant and productive economy that is resilient to economic cycles and where environmental and social costs fall to those responsible (polluter pays).
- **Living within environmental limits-** enhancing, understanding and respecting natural resources and biodiversity ensuring they remain for future generations.
- **Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society-** an active, inclusive, safe and strong local culture that allows equal opportunity for all.
- **Using sound science responsibly-** making decisions based on strong scientific evidence, whilst recognising scientific uncertainty through the precautionary principle.
- **Promoting good governance-** effective governance of local areas and communities with inclusive participation, representation and leadership.

Based on the Sustainable Development Principles, Securing the Future, UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005.

Sustainability is a thread that runs through all of our corporate priorities and cross cutting themes, from securing affordable homes, to achieving efficiencies to give residents value for money.

Aims of this Policy Framework

South Hams District Council, in partnership with other agencies, has a responsibility to ensure that the district remains a place where people want to live, work and enjoy, today and in the future. Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainability at the local level and *"Local authorities and their partners are pivotal to delivering sustainable communities."* Securing the Future, UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005.

The overall aim of this policy framework is to demonstrate how we are delivering an improved quality of life for residents, workers and visitors through our existing policies and strategies. Collectively these detail how the principles of sustainability are integrated throughout the council processes and services, taking a holistic long-term view that balances economic, environmental and social factors in order to develop a sustainable South Hams community.

The following table demonstrates the policy framework that underpins sustainability both within the council, as well as through the creation of positive actions to encourage a sustainable south hams community. It should be noted that the list of achievements is illustrative not exhaustive.

Table 1. South Hams District Council's Sustainability Policy Framework

Policy/Strategy	Summary/Objectives	Pillar of Sustainability	Example of Specific Achievements
Climate Change Strategy	This aims to improve the well-being of the community by looking at the needs of customers, and the services we provide, and working in partnership to reduce the causes of climate change with a particular emphasis on reducing CO2 emissions; adapting to climate change; encouraging the development of appropriate business opportunities and raising community awareness.	Environment Economy Social	-Climate Change is a cross-cutting theme that underpins the council's Corporate Priorities - Green Team take a strategic approach to carbon reduction. -Climate Change Action Plan adopted and reviewed. -Council has signed up to the Devon Wide Declaration on Climate Change- linked to the Nottingham Declaration. -Have two Member Champions for Climate Change and Sustainability.
SCS (and Community Involvement Strategy)	The SCS aims to ensure that communities in the South Hams continue to be desirable places to live and work, with good quality local public services and an environment to cherish. Further to this, the Strategy aims to reflect the local culture that we have in the South Hams, ensuring promotion of equality and diversity. The Council's community involvement "mission" is: "Helping the community help itself".	Environment Economy Social	-Under the LSP there is an advisory group on sustainability issues, South Hams Sustainability group that promotes sustainable actions under the SCS. -Themes under the SCS are, Affordable Homes, Competitive Local Economy, Quality Built and Natural Environment and Community Vibrancy. -In 2009 worked with community groups to submit 11 proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act; including requesting the Gov increase funding for cycle paths and renewable energy initiatives.
Social Inclusion Strategy (inc Access to Services Strategy)	We are committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services to all sections of the community and the Council values people both as individuals and as members of social and community groups. The Council also recognises that diversity exists within the community it serves and is committed to achieving an inclusive community in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations.	Social	-South Hams Connect launched in Oct 09 to bring public services to rural areas- increasing access to services. - Gypsy and Travellers receive a delivery of waste containers and a free collection of waste. -Multi-lingual leaflet produced to help migrant workers access services.
Prosperity Strategy	Vision: By 2011, the South Hams economy will have become increasingly competitive, with less reliance on low wage sectors and a greater emphasis on a knowledge-based economy with low environmental impact.	Economy Environment Social	-Joint Prosperity Action Plan 2009 encourages local sourcing initiatives. -Partnership working underway on Next Generation Broadband to future-proof businesses. -Launched new website to help local businesses become greener. -Most mixed use employment schemes require travel plans under s.106 Agreements.
Corporate Equality Scheme	In line with our legal requirements we will use our Corporate Equality Scheme to eliminate unlawful discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good community	Social	-106 vulnerable households assisted through our programme of Disabled Facilities Grants and Safer Homes Assistance.

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Local Development Framework (incl. Sustainability Appraisals and Statement of Community Involvement)	The South Hams LDF sets out the planning framework and policies for the area and will make specific proposals for new developments through a portfolio of documents.	Economy Environment Social	-Council has adopted LDF policies (including CS11: Climate Change) and best practise sustainability assessments. -Council's initial Sustainability Appraisal work cited as best practise by SWRA. -Council developed Sustainability Threshold Assessment Tool.
Housing Strategy	This describes the Authority's intended plans for housing related activity over the next three years.	Social Environment Economy	-The Council tackles low energy efficiency in our private housing stock and targets fuel poverty for vulnerable groups. -Devon Warm Zones Partnership delivers free and subsidised insulation to private sector. -Code for Sustainable Homes introduced, publicly funded affordable housing schemes meet a min. of Code level 3. -Affordable Housing Team currently progressing plans to develop one of the first Code Level 5 schemes in the country.
Carbon Management Plan	A programme of measures to reduce the Council's carbon footprint by 20% by 2012.	Environment Economy	-Council joined the Carbon Trust Management Prog in Apr 2008. -Aim to reduce Council's overall carbon footprint by 20% over the next two years through at least £40,000 investment. -New fuel efficient refuse vehicles, fitted with an Ecoprocess bin lift. -Improved monitoring of carbon footprint in leisure centres and council offices through use of improved Smart Meters.
Cultural Strategy	The main aim of this strategy is to promote the cultural well-being of the area. As such, it gives a clear rationale of why the local authority funds, manages, supports, encourages or regulates certain services and activities; it provides the basis from which an authority can best determine its own contribution to the cultural well being of the community.	Social	-Council has secured EU funding to continue developing sustainable tourism. -Greater Dartmoor LEAF and South Devon Coastal LAG
AONB Management Plan	The AONB Partnership should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the special qualities and significance of the AONB. • Present a vision for the future of the AONB. • Set out policies and objectives to secure the vision. • Identify what needs to be done, by whom, and when. 	Environment	-New Plan adopted 2009 that secures best practise in environmental management including sustainable construction, sustainable urban drainage and reducing industrial and agricultural run-off. -Bidding for funds from EU Interreg Autumn 09. -Promotes cycle routes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State how the condition of the AONB and the effectiveness of its management will be monitored. Reflect the views and aspirations of a wide range of AONB 'stakeholders'. <p>Co-ordinate the work of different partner organisations.</p>		
Public Space Strategy	The purpose of this Strategy is to set a clear vision and objectives for the provision and management of public space in the South Hams.	Environment Social	<p>-Council uses glyphosphate on its land as a less harmful weed killer.</p> <p>-Works closely with the Woodlands Trust to develop 'More Woods' partnership using s.106 funds from Langage.</p>
Air Quality Strategy	The provision of an air quality strategy is not currently a legal requirement, but greatly assists the Environmental Health Control Section to co-ordinate the implementation of its many statutory duties with respect to air pollution control.	Environment	<p>-Air Quality Zones declared and managed at Dean Prior, Ivybridge and Totnes.</p> <p>-100% of inspections undertaken in line with the target.</p>
Land Drainage and Coastal Protection Policy	Provides a public statement of the Council's approach to flood and coastal defence in the district.	Environment Economy	<p>-Good liaison links with the Environment Agency.</p> <p>-Councils work on community adaptation to coastal climate change, where the Slapton area was adopted as a national demonstration project by Defra and awarded innovation funding for a 3 yr prog 07-2010.</p>
Waste Management Strategy	<p>This document is produced in order to outline our aims, objectives and policies to achieve targets set.</p> <p>The Recycling Plan looks at wastes generated past and present, our current methods/activities, our targets and proposals for the future.</p>	Environment	<p>-Council is running a series of roadshows 'Love Food Hate Waste' promoting reduction of waste.</p> <p>-District achieved the 2nd area in the country for lowest amount of waste sent to landfill in Nov 09</p> <p>-Recycling rates currently 58% exceeding targets, next target 60% by 2014/15.</p>
Community Safety Strategy	This Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008 has been formulated as a result of the findings of the crime audit conducted in 2004.	Social	<p>-2000 Keep Safe packs have been distributed to adults with learning difficulties in south Devon.</p> <p>-the 'Safe Place' scheme has been rolled out across Devon</p> <p>-Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership roadshows run to raise awareness of community safety.</p>
Asset Management Strategy	The purpose of this strategy is to provide a strategy to optimise the use of property assets in terms of service benefits and financial return in order to meet corporate priorities and targets.	Environment	<p>-Investments have resulted in 40% reduction in our water consumption, through waterless urinals (saving £1,500/yr)</p> <p>-Capital Prog- Sustainable Development checks must be completed as part of a capital project appraisal.</p>
Procurement Policy	To improve the quality and/or reduce costs of bought in goods and services by improving the skills, knowledge and processes within individual councils and by driving forward regional collaboration amongst the South Devon & Dartmoor Procurement Partnership	Environment	-Includes a sustainability checklist and standard conditions of contract require suppliers to consider sustainability

