

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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**2008 – 2011**

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## **FOREWORD**

East Ayrshire Council has long recognised the importance of delivering sustainability across all Council services as part of the ongoing process of continuous improvement. The East Ayrshire Community Plan has provided the strategic context for the delivery of sustainable development across Council services with the principles of sustainability at the centre of its vision.

Now, more than ever, the Council recognises that in order to achieve strong and vibrant communities we need to ensure that the decisions we make meets the needs of today while protecting the environment for the future.

However, sustainability isn't just about environmental issues such as pollution control or biodiversity it is also about ensuring we live in safe communities and in appropriate homes with access to opportunities for learning, employment and improving our health. To achieve this, it is essential that we sustain a careful balance between achieving long-term economic stability and meeting the social and environmental demands of the services we provide.

This strategy takes forward the Council's work to achieve a sustainable community within East Ayrshire, developing the strategic guidelines established in the Community Plan to ensure sustainable, continuous improvement which doesn't falter.

**Councillor Douglas Reid**  
**Leader of the Council**

## Comments and Feedback

We would welcome any comments you may wish to make on East Ayrshire Council's Sustainable Development Strategy.

In addition, if you would like to be included in future consultations or informed of events associated with our implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy please contact us at the address below or visit the East Ayrshire Council web-site and complete the on-line feedback form. You can also telephone, e-mail or fax the Council using the details given below:

Neighbourhood Services (Housing)  
Cleansing Services – Strategy & Policy Section  
Western Road  
Kilmarnock  
KA3 1LL

Tel: 01563 554093

Fax: 01563 554077

E-mail: [CleansingServicesPolicy&Strategy@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:CleansingServicesPolicy&Strategy@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Web-site [www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

This document is also available on request, in Braille, large print or recorded onto tape and can be translated upon request.

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents East Ayrshire Council's Sustainable Development Strategy. The preparation of this strategy took place following an audit of sustainability activity across Council services during 2007.

Sustainable development has been an important component of East Ayrshire Council's vision for our communities since the inception of the Council in 1996. Both the Community Plan and Environment Strategy, which was adopted in 2001, emphasised the importance of sustainability in the Council's role within the community. Indeed, the East Ayrshire Community Plan has the concept of sustainability at the very centre of its vision:-

*"East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs."*

In making the decision to give sustainability a prominent platform within the Community Plan, it was essential that each of the six thematic action plans within the Plan made a firm commitment to sustainability in all its applications:-

*"Sustainability is at the heart of this plan, we are committed to making sure that the outcomes of social, economic and environmental improvements are sustainable and will stand the test of time. A sustainable community is one which makes sure that today's decisions do not have a negative effect on the future and where actions will have a long-lasting effect. Sustainability is an important part of community life from health, housing, education, transport and economic development to conservation and waste management. We will make sure that the decisions we make meet the needs of today and protect the environment for the future."*

This Sustainable Development Strategy provides a framework for action that seeks to deliver the objectives of the UK shared framework for sustainable development, *One Future – Different Paths*, an approach which has also been adopted by the Scottish Governments' strategy for sustainable development - *Choosing Our Future* both published in 2005. The action plan which is incorporated within this strategy provides a strategic direction detailing a number of actions which are required in order to improve effectiveness in meeting the Community Plan's strategic aim for sustainability.

In adopting this Sustainable Development Strategy, East Ayrshire Council is providing clear leadership for its Departments and Services as well as guidance to its partner organisations, key stakeholders and local communities; the efficient and effective use of resources is key to embedding the principles of sustainability into the plans, policies and strategies of the Council as it strives to maximise economic and social growth without compromising the environment.

The requirement to develop a Sustainable Development Strategy was instructed by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) in September 2006, as a direct response to an action highlighted within the East Ayrshire Council Audit of Best Value and Community Planning in September 2006. The publication states:

*“Sustainability: better mainstream sustainable development across Council services to achieve required outcomes”<sup>1</sup>*

4 key themes to be addressed by the Strategy were identified by CMT as Sustainable Procurement, Energy Efficiency, Waste and Biodiversity.

In order to ameliorate these key themes with the East Ayrshire Community Plan, the templates of the Best Value & Sustainable Development Toolkit for Local Authorities, as endorsed by the Scottish Government and the Sustainable Scotland Network, were employed. The delivery of sustainable development is integral to the ongoing process of continuous improvement as required by the Best Value framework. This exercise concluded that the themes of the Community Plan and the SSN Toolkit primarily focussed on the social considerations of sustainability, whereas the 4 key themes for the Sustainable Development Strategy identified primarily with the environmental and economic priorities of sustainability. Whilst economic growth is essential for the long term stability of East Ayrshire, there is a requirement to ensure that such growth is balanced alongside social inclusion and environmental protection.

The Strategy considers how the principles of sustainability will be communicated, monitored, evaluated and reported to local communities on an annual basis. By adapting to change, improving efficiency, and responding to increasing awareness, East Ayrshire Council will achieve its aim of embedding sustainability into the actions of everything we do.

The purpose of this Sustainable Development Strategy is: to provide a focus to East Ayrshire Council’s own economic, social and environmental performance; to provide leadership, commitment and direction to our partners, stakeholders, businesses and individuals regarding the integration of sustainable development through the principles of Best Value; and to ensure efficient and consistent deployment of resources through the actions associated with the 4 key themes as presented in the Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> East Ayrshire Council : The Audit of Best Value and Community Planning, published in September 2006 by Audit Scotland

## **BACKGROUND**

Following the election in May 2007, the Scottish Government announced that their key purpose was to focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

To achieve this purpose, a series of 5 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES** was announced:

### **WEALTHIER AND FAIRER**

Enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth.

### **HEALTHIER**

Help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care.

### **SAFER AND STRONGER**

Help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer place to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

### **SMARTER**

Expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to life long learning ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements.

### **GREENER**

Improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.

In order to create a greener Scotland, five key themes have been identified: climate change; sustainable places; people and nature; consumption and production; and, people and landscape. The challenge is to move to a one-planet living and a one-planet economy. Natural resources are being consumed faster than they can be replenished. To maintain current consumption patterns the equivalent of three planets are required.

### **Sustainable Development**

Sustainable Development is probably the most commonly used term for describing a wide range of actions which ensure that we live within our means at a global level and for the long term. It is a means of increasing awareness of the effects of our everyday actions while ensuring we enjoy high levels of rewarding employment associated with an effective and efficient economy in a society which encourages social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being. Sustainable Development is not a new concept for East

Ayrshire Council – it is one which has been at the heart of policy development and service delivery since the inception of the Council in 1996.

Most simply, sustainable development can be defined as:

*“Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*  
(World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

### **Best Value**

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a duty on local authorities to achieve Best Value in service provision including continuous improvement in performance, having regard to economic influences, efficiency, effectiveness, meeting the requirement for equal opportunities for all as well as making a commitment to achieving sustainable development.

This duty to achieve Best Value has informed the Community Planning process and encourages Community Planning partners to take full cognisance of sustainable development when developing services now and in the future.

A Best Value Task Force was established in May 1997 to develop and implement Best Value across all local authorities and has provided explicit guidance which highlights that a local authority which is achieving best value and sustainable development will be able to demonstrate seven distinct qualities. The commitment to achieving these in East Ayrshire is highlighted alongside each quality:

- **Leadership**

- *That there is commitment at both elected member and senior officer level to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and to promote an integrated approach to improve economic, social and environmental well-being.*

*Objective: Provide leadership, guidance and commitment to employees, stakeholders, businesses and residents within East Ayrshire*

- **Integration**

- *That contributing to the achievement of sustainable development is reflected in the authorities objectives and highlighted in all strategies and plans at corporate and service level.*

*Objective: Ensure sustainable development considerations are integral to all Council plans, programmes and strategies*

- **Consultation**
  - *That these plans, priorities and actions are informed by the views of its communities and key local partners.*

*Objective: Consult widely with partners, stakeholders and individuals to ensure environmental impact is a key consideration in decisions, large and small*

- **Performance Management**
  - *That quality of life indicators are identified to measure performance in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and reported to the public.*

*Objective: Identify and introduce annual performance targets in relation to the 4 key themes and to produce an annual public performance statement*

- **Evaluation**
  - *That review activities take account of sustainability issues and assess the impact of policy proposals on sustainable development.*

*Objective: Ensure the evaluation of this strategy is consistent with the Community Plan. To ensure that sustainability criteria are embedded within the Council's plans, programmes and strategies*

- **Resource Management**
  - *That sustainable development requirements are taken into account in the procurement strategy.*

*Objective: Maximise efficient use of resources to secure maximum effect and minimisation of waste. Ensure that those responsible for environmental misconduct are held accountable for their actions*

- **Influence**
  - *That there is a systematic approach to the management of resources which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.*

*Objective: Ensure that sustainability considerations are integral to the decision making process for plans, programmes and strategies*

It is clear that East Ayrshire Council has made substantial progress in addressing each of the criteria identified by the Task Force above. Action 9 of the Securing Continuous Improvement, Best Value & Community Planning Audit Submission, January 2006, reported on Council progress to date and

highlighted areas for improvement which have further informed the development of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

Through its action plan, the Sustainable Development Strategy establishes a series of baselines which: will provide a focus for environmental considerations; aims to ensure consistency of approach across Departments; and, will encourage cross-service consultation and discussion. These processes in line with the requirements of Best Value will ensure that all Services operate in a cohesive manner and deliver a co-ordinated approach to the sustainability agenda to achieve improved outcomes.

### **The International Context**

Internationally, there has been a series of high profile events which have marked a steady progression in the understanding of sustainable development:

In 1987, a Report by the World Commission on Environment & Development, *Our Common Future*, was published. This report, more commonly referred to as The Brundtland Report, is attributed with establishing the definition for sustainable development of “*development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs*”;

In 1992, the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro established the framework for the production of a Local Agenda 21 (LA21) by all local authorities in the UK by 2000. This document is a plan by which sustainable development is to be achieved;

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol established a legal framework for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG's) emissions by developed countries by 2008-2012, with an average of 5.2% reduction based on 1990 levels;

The 1999 EC Directive on the Landfill of Waste, EU1999/31/EC is intended to prevent or reduce the adverse effects of the landfill of waste. This Directive also introduced Landfill Taxation;

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, Government leaders reaffirmed their commitment to Agenda 21;

At the G8 Summit at Gleneagles in 2005, a Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development was agreed;

The 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali culminated in the adoption of the Bali roadmap, which charts the course for a new negotiating process to be concluded by 2009 that will ultimately lead to a post-2012 international agreement on climate change.

The foregoing list of international agreements, Directives and strategies, whilst not exhaustive, provides the focus for the development of policies and actions

at both national and local level. International evidence and opinion, indicates that the Earth's natural resources are being used at a faster rate than can be replenished. As the emergence of a new era of developing nations has intensified the demand for global resources, the negative effects of economic growth and development are being demonstrated through growing evidence of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the widening of the poverty gap between nations.

### **The National Context**

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*, and a shared framework for sustainable development by the devolved administrations, *One Future – Different Paths*, were published in March 2005. Scotland's sustainable development strategy, *Choosing Our Future*, then followed in December 2005. These documents established a set of five guiding principles which aimed to be translated into sustainable development policies across the country. These are:

#### ***Living within Environmental Limits***

*Respecting the limits of the planets' environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.*

#### ***Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society***

*Meeting the needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunities for all.*

#### ***Achieving a Sustainable Economy***

*Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them and efficient resource use is incentivised.*

#### ***Promoting Good Governance***

*Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.*

#### ***Using Sound Science Responsibly***

*Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty as well as public attitudes and values.*

These principles are ineffective unless translated into positive action at a local level and the main themes of East Ayrshire's Community Plan effectively deliver the national guiding principles.

## **The Local Context**

The East Ayrshire Community Plan adopted a vision for how its communities should develop which pre-empted the guiding principles identified by the UK and Scottish Governments as early as 2003. This foresight has allowed sustainability in its broadest sense to be addressed through six thematic action plans:

### ***Promoting Community Learning***

Ensuring people have access to community based learning opportunities throughout their lives by advancing active citizenship.

### ***Improving Opportunities***

Ensuring opportunities for improving the local economy are maximised by supporting business and employment as well as promoting availability of good quality homes as well as leisure and cultural facilities. Further, ensuring transport options allow people to access all that East Ayrshire has to offer.

### ***Improving Community Safety***

Creating safe places to live, work and play by reducing crime, improving public safety and improving safety in neighbourhoods and homes.

### ***Improving Health***

Improving the health and well-being of people by tackling the worst health problems, ensuring that services are fully accessible, helping everyone to make healthy lifestyle choices as well as fully supporting vulnerable groups.

### ***Eliminating Poverty***

Working to improve employment opportunities for all including the disadvantaged in the economy including supporting self-help initiatives, carers and those requiring debt counselling and money advice.

### ***Improving the Environment***

Protecting the natural and built environment by making more efficient use of our resources including how our housing stock is managed. Ensuring that access to outdoor amenities is encouraged as well as improving our transport networks and improving how we deal with waste.

These six thematic plans address many of the issues identified by the national guiding principles for sustainable development.

However, in addition to the actions established in the thematic action plans, the East Ayrshire Community Plan also recognises the need to ensure effective delivery of the plan through three core values:

- ***Effective partnership working;***

- ***Listening to, communicating with and involving the community;***
- ***Agreeing joint priorities and action plans to deliver our aims.***

In brief, East Ayrshire Council has already established a clear strategic context by which sustainability is at the centre of our vision. Nevertheless, this Sustainable Development Strategy is an essential component in ensuring that the Council's approach to sustainability is better co-ordinated to ensure delivery of our objectives across all Council services in order that we can achieve improved outcomes throughout the community.

## **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the systematic process of evaluating the environmental consequences, whether positive or negative, of any plan, programme or strategy (PPS). This is undertaken in order that these consequences are fully included and appropriately addressed at the earliest stage of decision making. SEA ensures the delivery of the principles of sustainable development by making environmental considerations as pertinent as economic and social issues when making strategic decisions.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was introduced into Scottish law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004, the purpose of which was to transpose and implement Directive 2001/42/EEC of the European Parliament and Council (entitled the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment). The Regulations were subsequently superseded and revoked by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 which came into force on 20 February 2006. The Act allows those plans, programmes and strategies that were started before 20 February 2006 to progress to adoption under the provisions of the 2004 Regulations.

The Act and the preceding Regulations are only concerned with the environmental effects of any PPS and do not take account of social and economic considerations.

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 can be broken down into five distinct parts: (1) pre-screening/screening; (2) scoping; (3) environmental report, (4) post-adoption and (5) monitoring.

The minimum timescale in which a strategy can proceed through the first three stages of the SEA process is 26 weeks and this can place additional burdens on decision-making processes. However, SEA also provides a template for building sustainability into corporate decision making where economic and social factors may otherwise take precedence.

While Strategic Environmental Assessment places a statutory obligation on local authorities to scrutinise the environmental sustainability of plans, programmes and strategies, there remains a poor understanding of the requirement and criteria for undertaking SEA as well as the full range of assessment responsibilities required by the regulations.

Several of the Council's plans, programmes and strategies are already progressing through the SEA process. These include the Local Plan, the Core Path Plan and the Cumnock Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan.

As the Sustainable Development Strategy will have a positive impact on the environment, the requirement to complete a SEA was identified at an early stage. This conclusion was endorsed by the views of the three Consulting Authorities, namely Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

In December 2007, the Consulting Authorities endorsed the scope and level of detail proposed for the Sustainable Development Strategy and accompanying Environmental Report.

*Prior to engaging in external consultation, as required by the SEA process, the Draft Sustainable Development Strategy should be reviewed by each Council Service to ensure maximum opportunity for consultation. Service responses were sought during March/April 2008.*

The experience gained in undertaking the Strategic Environmental Assessment of these Plans has highlighted the difficulties of instilling a corporate-wide understanding of the obligations placed on the Council to deliver SEA as appropriate across all Council services.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change is an issue which is causing increasing concern as a consequence of rising awareness of its effects. The impact of climate change is already being experienced at a global, national and local level with more significant impacts predicted for future decades. In recent years, as more extreme weather events occur at local level, the reality of climate change has become tangible.

The Scottish Government is working in partnership with the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland to establish a UK Climate Change Bill which will set a UK reduction target for carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. The UK Bill includes setting targets in statute and setting a limit on the total carbon which can be emitted by the UK over a 5 year period, namely carbon budgeting. In December 2007, the Scottish Parliament agreed to a Legislative Consent Motion which will mean that many of the provisions of the UK Bill, on enactment, will extend to Scotland.

The Scottish Government does, however, intend to establish a higher carbon reduction target of 80%, with the intention to include this requirement within a Scottish Climate Change Bill. The Scottish Government believe that Scotland's emissions, and the potential to reduce emissions in Scotland are different to the rest of the UK. In addition, Scotland has the scope from marine and wind energy to benefit from renewable energy potential.

Addressing climate change requires action that can be grouped under two main themes:

### *Adaptation*

Most scientists have reached a consensus that climate change is already underway, with its effects likely to intensify over the coming decades. Communities will have to adapt to the effects, which may now be unavoidable, of changing weather patterns on Council services, infrastructure, human health, economic development as well as the environment.

### *Mitigation*

Scientific evidence indicates that levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs) which cause climate change are continuing to rise and concerted action is required to both stabilise and reduce emissions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the main international body overseeing research on climate has recommended that global cuts in emission of 60-90% are required if climate is to be stabilised. There is a clear relationship between mitigation and adaptation with the more rapidly emissions of GHGs are reduced, the less adaptation will eventually be required.

It has been indicated that the response to climate change from local authorities is focussed on mitigation, for example through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promotion of renewable energy. However, irrespective of mitigation measures undertaken now, adaptation will also be

required as, given existing emissions, we are already committed to some level of future climate change.

The Climate Change Scenarios for the United Kingdom Briefing Report (2002) provides details of the extent of climate change as it is predicted for East Ayrshire. The scenario for East Ayrshire to 2080 anticipates that there will be an increase in temperature of between 0.5°C and 4.5°C and change in precipitation ranging from -30% to +30% of current levels. It is anticipated that there will be warmer, wetter winters with warmer, drier summers including more frequent extreme weather events throughout the year.

In March 2007, East Ayrshire Council made a commitment to adapt to and mitigate against the effects of climate change by signing the Scottish Climate Change Declaration. This Declaration has now been signed up to by all 32 local authorities in Scotland.

In signing this Declaration, the Council has indicated that it considers climate change will have a significant impact on services and that action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, it is necessary for the Council to demonstrate that it is putting in place adaptation measures across all services.

In developing an appropriate response to climate change, it is necessary to assess the risks and opportunities for the Council's services and communities of predicted climate change scenarios and their impacts and take action to adapt accordingly and in line with principles of sustainable development.

The Council's commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration requires an annual statement to be produced detailing the progress and performance of the Council's response to climate change. This statement should outline the targets set as well as the actions taken, outcomes achieved and further actions required.

The Council can demonstrate good practice in attempting to mitigate against climate change through the commitment to establish a base-line position in terms of carbon emissions. Additionally, the Council's partnership with the Carbon Trust, has permitted the development of a Carbon Management Strategy aiming to minimise carbon emissions from buildings, waste, street lighting and transport activities. Such activities are direct responses to climate change. However, there are many other examples of good practice which are less obvious such as the use of energy efficient vehicles across the Council fleet and using locally sourced foods in schools meals.

## **OFFICERS WORKING GROUP & SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT**

In September 2006, the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT), identified a requirement for East Ayrshire Council to develop a Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) which would allow the Council to better co-ordinate its response to the Best Value requirements for sustainability.

CMT identified that the 4 themes of sustainable procurement, energy efficiency, waste, and biodiversity should be incorporated within the Strategy as areas for priority action.

Tasked with developing the Sustainable Development Strategy, Housing Services invited representatives from each Council Department to form an Officers' Working Group. This Group's remit was to undertake an audit of sustainability activities undertaken throughout the Council and to develop the 4 themes into a strategy which would co-ordinate and progress the sustainability agenda of the Council while remaining consistent with the overall principles of the Council's Community Plan.

Initial discussions by the Working Group identified that there appeared to be an inconsistent approach to adopting sustainability criteria across Council activities. As such, each Department's representative was tasked with identifying the extent to which sustainability considerations were evidenced in current service delivery within their own Departments. In addition, examples of good practice were sought to provide a baseline from which all Council Services could identify with examples of existing good practice and provide a mechanism for sustainable practices to be incorporated within everyday activities.

The gathering of this information was initially undertaken on an informal basis by Working Group members. However, due to disparities in the collection process adopted by the Group, it was agreed that a more appropriate method of gathering the information would be a survey, addressed to all Heads of Service and this took the form of the Sustainability Audit.

In June 2007, the Sustainability Audit was circulated to all Heads of Service within the Council. The findings of the survey are detailed in Appendix 1.

### **Key Audit Findings**

#### ***Sustainable Procurement:***

- Services recognise the role of the Council's Procurement section and operate within the recognised framework. Where budgets allow, and where feasible, the long term financial considerations associated with purchases are a prioritised consideration.
- Services will actively seek the views and guidance of the Procurement section in their purchasing decisions and would welcome further guidance in order to maximise Best Value with a sustainable context.
- Examples of best practice include:

- The Vehicle Purchase Framework for the Council;
- The supply of fresh, locally produced food products;
- Trials of organic non-bitumous binder for surface dressing of roads.

### ***Energy Efficiency***

- Services recognise the role of the Council's Energy Advice Unit. Feedback to individual services regarding energy consumption would be welcomed;
- Services recognise that the Council has a lead role to play in promoting carbon reduction measures to its local communities;
- Examples of best practice include:
  - The development of a Procurement Guide for green energy;
  - Installation of low energy lightbulbs & high energy ballasts;
  - The installation of energy efficient dishwashers within schools.
  - The installation of wind turbines, solar panels and ground source heat pump as renewable energy sources.

### ***Waste***

- Services predominantly recognise the requirement to reduce the volume of paper waste generated from their operations. The promotion of recycling is viewed as a priority for services.
- Services recognise the publication of the Council's Waste Prevention Action Plan, which provided both Council wide and individual service targets regarding waste reduction, reuse and recycling opportunities.
- Examples of best practice include:
  - The widespread introduction of paper and cardboard recycling;
  - The introduction of materials recycling skips in depots e.g. rubble, timber & green waste;
  - The formation of a cross Departmental Officer Working Group to monitor performance against waste targets. This group reviews and develops waste minimisation opportunities for Council activities.
  - The installation of grey water system in new school development.

### ***Biodiversity***

- Services recognise the value of data on wildlife and habitats within East Ayrshire, and the requirement to consider the impact on local biodiversity in their decision making processes.
- Awareness of the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Plan is disappointing.
- Examples of biodiversity considerations being taken into account include:
  - Cognisance of local habitats in the construction of new flood prevention measures;
  - Consideration to nesting seasons when pruning/trimming;

- The Countryside Ranger Service education programme which annually involves approximately 6000 primary school pupils.

Overall the audit responses indicate that while there is a high level of sustainable development activities going on in practice, conversely, there is a poor understanding of sustainable development criteria. The audit has indicated that there is an important opportunity to raise awareness of sustainability across the Council in each of the key themes and further areas such as climate change.

The audit also highlighted that opportunities for services to share their expertise and seek information and advice is limited. The audit found that only the key theme of Waste had a means of disseminating and sharing information with each Council service in the form of an Officers' Working Group. Subsequent to the audit, a Procurement Strategy Working Group has been established.

## **KEY THEMATIC AIMS**

In identifying key thematic aims for East Ayrshire Council's response to the requirements for best value and sustainable development, the Corporate Management Team selected four key areas where the Council has already made significant progress in achieving sustainability, but where the impacts of these four areas significantly cut across many of the Council's services.

These four areas are:

- Sustainable Procurement;
- Energy Efficiency;
- Waste;
- Biodiversity.

The Community Planning process has placed the achievement of sustainable development at the centre of its vision and this has been observed in the findings of the audit of sustainable practices undertaken by Council services. In addition, the analysis of the Community Planning priorities undertaken by the Sustainable Development Officer's Working Group found that although sustainability is indeed built into the Plan there is an emphasis on the social dimension of sustainability which is appropriate within the community planning context. For this reason, the Sustainable Development Strategy key themes identified above, while influencing the three core areas of sustainable development of social, economic and environmental consequences, place particular attention on the economic and environmental impacts of Council services.

Each of the four key themes identifies a thematic objective which is representative of the Council's expectation for how sustainability is to be addressed within each of these priority areas. The sections which follow also discuss how the four themes influence the local and wider environment and ultimately inform the many of the actions arising in the Sustainable Development Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 to this Strategy.

## SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

***THEMATIC AIM: In developing the Environmental and Sustainable Procurement Guidelines, the Council's Procurment team has the aim of ensuring value for money for the Council whilst complying with EU, UK and Scottish legislation and the necessity to be considerate of the environmental implications of our procurement decisions.***

Sustainable procurement has been defined as

*"Using procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long-term benefits".*

*Sir Neville Simms,  
Chair UK, Government Sustainable Procurement Task Force*

All local authorities are required to comply with EU procurement legislation as outlined in the EU guidance - *Green Public Procurement*. In addition, there is also the UK document - *Procuring the Future* and the *Scottish Procurement Action Plan* which specifies Scottish targets for minimum recycled content.

In line with the above guidance, sustainable procurement should take cognisance of 4 key factors:

- i. The need to achieve Best Value within the financial resources available;
- ii. The economic, social and environmental implications of goods and services purchased;
- iii. The relevant legal requirements relating to procurement procedure, and;
- iv. Links to other Council policies and strategies.

The purpose of achieving environmental sustainability specifically in the procurement of goods, services and works has been identified as:

- i. To conserve energy, water, wood, paper and other resources particularly those which are scarce or non-renewable, in an appropriate manner;
- ii. To reduce waste by purchasing refurbished and recycled products and materials where such materials alternatives are available, affordable, and fit for their purpose;
- iii. To promote internal recycling, to reduce the need for materials, and therefore cost;
- iv. To phase out ozone depleting substances and minimising releases of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds, vehicle emissions and other substances with the potential to do damage to health and the environment;

- v. To ensure that suppliers work to minimise the pollution resulting from the manufacture, use and eventual disposal of goods purchased, either by careful selection of suppliers through specification, or by partnership agreements;
- vi. To ensure that all suppliers' and contractors to the Council support the welfare and rights of both their own employees and those of subsidiary companies supplying components and raw materials;
- vii. To ensure that the socio-economic and environmental benefits of goods and services purchased are achieved by the use of locally sourced goods and services where practicable;
- viii. To ensure that any products derived from natural sources such as timbers, plants and animal products are from ecologically sustainable sources that comply with EU and other international trading rules, such as CITES (the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species);
- ix. To encourage manufacturers, suppliers and contractors through specifications to develop socially and environmentally preferable goods and services at competitive prices.

East Ayrshire Council is a major purchaser of goods, services and works locally, nationally and even internationally, and consequently, our purchasing decisions have significant economic, social and environmental implications at each of these levels. These range from potential pollution and biodiversity loss arising from the manufacture of goods and services which we have purchased to the potential employment and economic benefits of purchasing locally manufactured goods. An excellent example of economic and environmental benefits to be derived from procuring locally is demonstrated through the pilot Food for Life project at Hurlford Primary School. This project required that 50% of produce be locally produced, 30% of foodstuffs be organic and 75% be unprocessed. Subsequent to this successful pilot project, there is increased impetus in the sustainable procurement of local produce for school meals, which has provided direct economic benefit to a local farm producer who from 2008 will supply 30 schools, in contrast to one in 2005.

The Council's approach to securing Best Value through procurement requires cognisance to be taken of the whole life costs and benefits of goods, services and works from acquisition, operation and ultimately disposal. The Council's Procurement Team has undertaken a complete review of sustainability guidelines when developing a revised Procurement Strategy, completed in 2007, which is now designed to address the full range of concerns relating to the economic, social and environmental impacts of goods and services.

Clear guidance has been provided by the Procurement team which will allow sustainable development to be fully integrated into all procurement decision making.

It is essential that these guidelines are fully disseminated to all services and employees who have responsibility for purchasing and procurement at all levels of expenditure.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

**THEMATIC AIM: Quantify and reduce Council carbon emissions arising from Council services and operations thereby contributing towards Scottish Government targets for carbon emission reduction.**

The use of energy for power and transport is one of the most commonly identified environmental threats associated with the carbon emissions that lead to climate change.

In 2004, the estimated average total worldwide power consumption of the human race was 15 Tera Watts (which is 1,500,000,000,000,000 W) with 86.5% of this arising from the burning of fossil fuels. Since 1970, the total amount of energy used per household in the UK has approximately doubled with the level of car ownership also significantly increasing.

East Ayrshire Council's baseline position for carbon emissions has been based on the period 2004-5 and has been calculated at 19,119 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Without remedial carbon reduction measures, this could increase by an estimated 21.6% by 2009-10.

There are two categories under which the use of energy is considered - direct energy and embodied energy:

### *Direct Energy*

The use of energy such as of fuel for Council vehicles or the use of energy to heat and light buildings is considered as direct energy. The costs of direct energy are easily observed such as in the rising cost of petrol and diesel for vehicles.

### *Embodied Energy*

Embodied energy may be defined as the energy used to make a product or provide a service. For example, the energy required to produce paper includes the energy involved in growing and harvesting trees, processing the timber into paper and the eventual distribution of the final product. Using recycled paper removes part of the energy needed in the early part of this process. Embodied energy permeates all aspects of the Council's business and the products it uses.

## **Carbon Management Programme Strategy and Implementation Plan**

In June 2006, the Council entered an agreement with the Carbon Trust to participate in the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. This has resulted in the development of a Carbon Management Programme Strategy and Implementation Plan which is the Council's guiding document in achieving the Council's carbon reduction targets.

The Plan highlights four key areas where action is necessary to reduce the carbon emissions arising from Council activities:

- i. Reducing the environmental impact of the Council's energy consumption;
- ii. Reducing the environmental impact of the Council's vehicle fleet;
- iii. Reducing the environmental impact of landfill by minimising waste arisings and recycling waste wherever practical; and
- iv. Reducing the environmental impact of street lighting.

### ***Buildings***

The Carbon Management Programme Strategy has identified that 71% of the Council's total carbon emissions come from buildings alone. These emissions can be tackled in a number of different ways:

- i. All new builds should have a high standard of energy efficiency which is indicated at tender specification for the new building; e.g. as per the new build primary school in Galston which will be occupied from August 2008,
- ii. Existing buildings should be upgraded where possible. This has already been partly achieved utilising the Central Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) and council capital investment in renovations.
- iii. Council housing stock has been improved under the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA), whereby there is a programme of on-going upgrading;
- iv. The type and source of the fuel purchased should be considered. The Council, in conjunction with other local authorities, participates in the ABC. The Council endeavours to procure green energy supplies as a preferred option, where it is feasible and non cost prohibitive to do so, thereby adhering to the principles of Best Value;
- v. There should be a clear list of suitable building products that conform to sustainable standards.

### ***Transport***

Transport accounts for 14% of the Council carbon footprint. The Council supports a large number of vehicles, but also sponsors a large number of car journeys through its daily business such as individuals travelling to and from work, and between Council offices.

Whilst a number of these journeys are necessary, and the Council is required to run its own fleet of vehicles, thought should be given to the type of vehicle, its fuel source, and use.

- i. Individuals should be encouraged to take a responsibility for reducing vehicle usage. This could be done by encouraging car share schemes, or by providing a financial incentive to reduce car usage. Use of alternative forms of meetings could be promoted such as video conferencing suites;
- ii. The appropriateness of the existing fleet of vehicles should be re-assessed to determine if it meets the needs of the Council in the most sustainable manner. The Council already promotes the use of bio-diesel and low sulphur products, but it may be appropriate to

- extend this to further vehicles and it could be made a requirement of suppliers to services to the Council such as for school buses.
- iii. A policy of positive promotion towards environmentally low energy practices for transport should also be encouraged.

### ***Waste***

The kerbside recycling service and the Waste Prevention Action Plan are already promoting the minimisation of waste and the re-use of materials, rather than these going into landfill. Waste minimisation can have a positive effect on limiting energy use, as the re-use of materials may lead to a decline in the amount of energy used in the production of those materials.

### ***Street Lighting***

Street lighting is a very real requirement for safety and security, as well as providing amenity. However, new types of lighting, and new technologies in casting light are continuously being developed. It would be unfeasible to renew all street lighting as each new improvement came out, but it is practical to take advantage of a rolling maintenance and renewal programme to achieve sustainability. The Council participation in the ABC buying consortium has allowed the Council to access energy efficient bulbs at a subsidised cost.

### ***Materials and Product use***

The Carbon Management Strategy calls for a substantial reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> production. It recommends the use of the energy labelling scheme as part of product selection. This scheme is being rolled out over a wider range of products, and should be considered as part of the drive for energy reduction. Where possible, 'A' rated products should be used, as these are the most energy efficient. More energy saving technology has been incorporated into the ABC catalogue, and as this represents a cost saving to the Council, these should be used as a benchmark for purchasing energy efficient goods.

The Action Plan which accompanies the Strategy and Implementation Plan has identified a range of initiatives from short term, low cost measures to large scale projects requiring significant investment. These actions will benefit the Council and the wider East Ayrshire community. Failure to implement the Plan could result in a rise of energy related costs from £2.73M in 2004/05 to £5.91M by 2010.

## WASTE

***THEMATIC AIM: Minimise the volume of waste produced within East Ayrshire and ensure that the reuse and recycling of waste is maximised thereby reducing the amount of waste being sent to landfill.***

The safe disposal of waste is as vital for health and well-being as it is for the environment. However, sustainable waste management extends far further than disposal and in order to avoid the unnecessary depletion of natural resources, the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste is required to be addressed. The energy associated with the production and existence of waste is a significant contributor to the Greenhouses Gases (GHGs) which are associated with climate change.

The EU Landfill Directive 1999/31/EC requires each member state to significantly reduce the quantity of biodegradable waste entering landfill sites for disposal. The Directive has given specific targets to each member state in relation to the quantities of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) entering landfill.

From a baseline of 1995 landfill levels, the amount of BMW permitted to landfill is as follows:

- 75% of 1995 levels by 2010
- 50% of 1995 levels by 2013
- 35% of 1995 levels by 2020

Following the transposition of the EU Landfill Directive into Scottish law, the then Scottish Executive introduced further targets for local authorities relating to recycling and composting resulting in a requirement to recycle at least 55% of all municipal solid waste (MSW) arisings by 2020.

In addition, the Scottish Executive established further targets for the diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill through the creation of Landfill Allowance Scheme (Scotland) which specifies the maximum tonnage of BMW which may be sent to landfill by each local authority. The Scheme permits local authorities to sell or borrow tonnages in order to meet their landfill diversion targets. Failure to meet the terms of the Scheme may result in offending authorities being fined up to £150 per tonne for each excess tonne of biodegradable waste entering landfill.

More recently, the Scottish Government introduced additional national recycling/composting targets, placing a limit on the quantity of residual waste permitted to be used for energy recovery and a revision to the quantity of waste permitted for disposal via landfill, culminating with the recycling/composting target of 70% MSW by 2025.

## **Kerbside Recycling Service**

In order to comply with and achieve the Scottish Executive's targets Scottish local authorities were invited to apply for Strategic Waste Funding (SWF), to facilitate the required changes to domestic waste collection infrastructure.

East Ayrshire Council applied for and was awarded £14.89Million to implement a kerbside recycling service which would ensure that recycling targets set for 2006 (25%), 2008 (30%) and 2010 (40%) would be met.

The kerbside recycling service provides a 240 litre blue bin for paper and cardboard and a 240 litre brown bin for garden waste both of which are serviced 4 weekly as well as a 55 litre black box for glass and cans which is serviced fortnightly. In addition, the reduction in the quantity of residual waste arising from increased recycling permitted a fortnightly collection of residual waste to be introduced.

In addition to the introduction of the kerbside recycling service, the Council have continued to improve the facilities available at Recycling Centres and Points by increasing the number of sites, improving the appearance and accessibility to the sites and increasing the range of recyclables which may be deposited.

The introduction of the kerbside recycling service and improved recycling Centres and Points have resulted in the rise of East Ayrshire Council's recycling rate from 7% in 2004 to in excess of 36% by 2007. This increase in waste diversion from landfill has resulted in the authority exceeding all waste related targets to date and has placed East Ayrshire consistently within the top 5 recycling local authorities in Scotland.

An evaluation of the level of householder participation in kerbside recycling is currently being undertaken in a Participation Study. The study highlights where areas of low participation exist and identifies performance trends. The results of this study will inform a focused awareness campaign which includes intensive interaction within communities to promote the more effective use of the kerbside recycling service.

## **Sustainable Waste Management Initiatives**

In order to further support the kerbside recycling service, the Council have implemented several waste minimisation and recycling initiatives targeting a reduction in domestic waste arisings:

- The Council have worked in partnership with the reprocessor of garden waste collected within East Ayrshire to achieve a certified compost product. The compost, accredited by the Composting Association to the PAS100 standard, is available at Recycling Centres free of charge through the "Compost to Go" initiative;

- In order to minimise the amount of food waste entering landfill, the Council has worked in partnership with the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to provide households with discounted home composting facilities. In addition to receiving a composting unit, householders can access a local WRAP Composting Advisor who is on hand to provide expert advice on home composting.
- To minimise food waste as well as conserve resources, the “Love Food, Hate Waste” campaign, run in partnership with Waste Aware Scotland has been introduced. The campaign advises householders on how to reduce excess food purchasing as well as highlighting recipe ideas for left over food provided by well known chefs.

### **Internal Waste Audit**

In addition to diverting waste arising from domestic premises from landfill, the Council have also focused on its own housekeeping arrangement with regards to waste arising from our own premises and operations.

A comprehensive internal waste audit was conducted in 2006 which measured and recorded the types and quantities of waste arisings from all Council premises and operations.

Following the audit, a Waste Prevention Action Plan (WPAP), which highlighted the audit findings and included Council-wide and departmental specific waste minimisation and recycling targets was produced and adopted by Council. In order to ensure that targets highlighted within the Plan were met, a Waste Prevention Officers Group with representatives of each Council service was established to monitor progress against Action Plan targets and to share experience and best practice.

It would be appropriate to replicate the Participation Study of the kerbside recycling service and apply the method to a full internal waste Participation Study in order to determine the success of the arrangements undertaken through the WPAP. The findings of such a study would be relayed to the Waste Prevention Officer Group for consideration and action.

### **Commercial Waste**

Although the Council has achieved a significant increase in the rate of municipal waste recycling, there remains a requirement to further increase the diversion of waste from landfill in line with future targets.

Commercial waste arisings are included within the definition of municipal waste and therefore, any increase in recycling from this sector can contribute to the achievement of diversion from landfill targets. However, there is currently no additional funding available from the Scottish Government to support additional commercial services.

Nevertheless, in order to achieve diversion targets and avoid the financial penalties of failing to do so, it is recommended that a review of the current level of service provided for commercial customers be undertaken to identify opportunities for service and diversion improvement within the limits of existing resources.

### **Long Term Waste Treatment**

Targets for the diversion of waste from landfill to the year 2025 are such that they cannot be achieved by recycling and composting of garden waste alone. It will be necessary to adopt methods of further waste treatment in order to meet the targets.

The Scottish Government has asked that the Ayrshire group of authorities consider joint working arrangements for the long term treatment of waste arising within the area.

There may be both economic and environmental benefits and disadvantages to developing such joint working arrangements and these require to be fully identified prior to committing to any long term waste treatment option. Cognisance requires to be taken of The National Waste Strategy framework which ensures that four key principles are considered:

- i. the proximity principle and self sufficiency which requires that wastes be managed as close as possible to the place at which they arise, and that groups be able to deal with their own waste
- ii. the precautionary principle which requires that action should be taken now to avoid potential environmental damage in the future
- iii. the polluter pays principle which requires that polluters bear the full cost of their actions
- iv. the Best Practicable Environmental Option decision making tool be utilised to ensure that the protection and conservation of the environment be key to Ayrshire's decision making process.

Environmental assessment including carbon footprinting of the number of options available for waste treatment in the long-term is necessary in order to ensure the principles of sustainability are built into sustainable waste management processes.

## BIODIVERSITY

***THEMATIC AIM: Protect and enhance the flora and fauna of East Ayrshire with particular regard to those habitats and species which have recognised local and national significance.***

Biodiversity has been described as:

*“Biodiversity is all living things, from the tiny garden ant to the giant redwood tree. You will find biodiversity everywhere, in window boxes and wild woods, roadsides and rainforests, snow fields and sea shores.”*

Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, 1995

In 1992, the UK Government signed the convention on Biological Diversity at the Earth Summit in Rio. There was recognition of the need to protect the biodiversity of the planet from dangers such as pollution, climate change and exploitation of natural resources. Signatories of the Convention are obliged to:

*“Develop national strategies, plans and programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.”*

In 1996, The Scottish Biodiversity Group was established to co-ordinate action in Scotland. The Group prepared the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (2004) which adapted the UK Biodiversity Action Plan by considering species, habitats and cultural arrangements which differ in emphasis in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK. The strategy is referred to in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004) where all public bodies are given a “*biodiversity duty*” to “*further the conservation of biodiversity*” as they carry out their work. This legislation builds in consideration of all aspects of biodiversity into all relevant decision making process.

The Scottish Biodiversity List (2005), documents the species and habitats considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of biodiversity conservation in Scotland and is also referred to in the Act. The list includes 1,806 terrestrial and freshwater species, with a further 109 marine species. These lists are intended to be used to guide decision-makers such as local authorities in implementing their duty to further the conservation of biodiversity in Scotland when carrying out their normal functions.

The Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) was completed in 2001 and included an action plan for 2001 - 2005. The Plan was prepared by the Ayrshire Biodiversity Group, of which East Ayrshire Council was a founding member. This original Ayrshire LBAP provided a major assessment of Ayrshire’s biodiversity and was a valuable tool for directing conservation efforts.

The LBAP included a comprehensive set of Habitat Action Plans for 26 habitat types which together cover all habitat types existing in Ayrshire. Eleven

Species Action Plans were also included with detailed actions describing species and potential actions in Ayrshire.

The national context has changed since the Ayrshire LBAP was first written. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, its implementation plans and the Scottish Biodiversity List have all been published. In addition, the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on all local authorities and statutory bodies to:

*“further the conservation of biodiversity so far is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”*

The then Scottish Executive and Scottish Natural Heritage commissioned a study to assess the progress with LBAPs and in parallel, the Ayrshire Biodiversity group commissioned an assessment of the Ayrshire LBAP to clarify how effective the process had been to date. Both reviews identified a series of shortcomings of the original LBAPs in failing to identify achievable actions, being unable to maintain momentum and not succeeding in refocusing the participating organisations own priorities.

As a result of these reports, the Ayrshire LBAP Partnership decided that the Ayrshire Plan should undergo revision to take into account changes in the wider biodiversity context and to make the document more focussed on priorities and include SMARTer actions.

Specifically, the revised action plan was to be more flexible and have a reduced number of actions to ensure that it only covers priorities and local actions.

It is intended to promote the Plan as an electronic document allowing it to be easily modified as progress is made as well as providing comprehensive links to the progress reports and monitoring information.

The revised Plan was completed in 2007, almost 6 years after the original plan was written. It is a rolling document to be used as a working tool and to provide current information on priorities, ongoing work programmes and progress.

Outwith statutory sites, Ayrshire does not have a identified network of local biodiversity sites, although some work has been done by Scottish Wildlife Trust on identifying sites while taking into account local priorities. A network of Local Biodiversity Sites, should be identified throughout Ayrshire. These sites should be used to guide planning decisions, target biodiversity action (including actions within individual action plans) and target relevant advice and support for landowners. These sites should complement the network of linear features including hedgerows, rivers and streams, railway lines and roadside verges.

Conservation measures are not just related to the protection of habitats and species but include their sympathetic management in order to maintain or enhance their value. Currently there is a lack of targeted advice and support

to landowners and managers. Most agri-environment advice is only available at the request of owners and not targeted to owners of important areas.

Scotland's Rural Development Programme 2007-13, which was ratified by the European Commission's Rural Development Committee brings together a wide range of formerly separate support schemes including those covering the farming, forestry and primary processing sectors, rural enterprise and business development, diversification and rural tourism. The Programme includes measures to support and encourage rural communities. Scotland's Rural Development Plans provide an integrated approach to rural issues and provides the framework for biodiversity considerations to be fully incorporated into cross Council activities and decisions.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

The responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy lies with the Sustainable Development Working Group which reports directly to Corporate Management Team (CMT) via the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services. However, each Service must take responsibility for their individual commitment to achieving sustainability.

This group will

- *Provide cross-Council advice and guidance to ensure that sustainable development is embedded within all Council plans, programmes and strategies;*
- *Ensure that the Council's commitments to the Climate Change declaration are fulfilled;*
- *Develop sustainability performance indicators;*
- *Monitor Council performance and report to CMT on a quarterly basis;*
- *Communicate progress on sustainability to stakeholders and local communities on an annual basis;*
- *Review and update the strategy in line with Best Value and Community Planning requirements.*

In order to ensure the integration of social, economic and environmental goals into the development of future plans, programmes and strategies, the Action Plan which accompanies this strategy provides the mechanisms which Services should consider in order to improve the balance between social, economic and environmental requirements.

The strategy proposes the introduction of 4 thematic working groups based on its 4 key themes of procurement, energy, waste and biodiversity. These groups, reporting to the Sustainable Development Working Group, will facilitate the dissemination of cross-Council expertise, knowledge and best practice, and ensure that such guidance from the Sustainable Development Officer Group is pertinent and available to all Services. By adopting this approach to the key themes, it is anticipated that the development, implementation, audit and review of Council plans, programmes and strategies which significantly influence how Council and partner organisation resources are utilised, will be co-ordinated, informed and well structured.

## COMMUNICATION

The principle of ‘do a little, achieve a lot’ is of particular significance to the challenge of introducing sustainable activity into everyday activity. The relevance of ongoing consultation and participation with employees, partners, stakeholders and the wider community cannot be underestimated as the Council strives to achieve the vision embedded within the Community Plan:

*“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.”*

The challenge is not only to inform and increase understanding within the East Ayrshire community, but also to encourage, influence and provide the motivation necessary to change understanding, attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable development. How the Council educates, provides training and raises awareness of the sustainability agenda, contributes towards influencing and enabling Council Services, partner organisations, employees and the individuals within our communities to act.

The communication mechanisms adopted will fulfil the commitment to communicate progress on sustainability to all stakeholders by reporting progress on a range of sustainability performance indicators in addition to the annual reporting requirements for the Council in relation to the Scottish Climate Change Declaration. The Sustainable Development Working Group will co-ordinate and develop a communication policy which recognises the requirements of the wider East Ayrshire community and allows their participation in securing sustainable development for East Ayrshire.

## MONITORING & EVALUATION

Sustainability Indicators, sometimes referred to as Quality of Life Indicators, will be developed and utilised to measure and report the effectiveness of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy in minimising the environmental impact of the Council's activities whilst balancing social, economic as well as the environmental considerations of sustainable development.

These indicators will be developed following consultation with Services and will be centralised within the sustainability reporting mechanism of the Sustainable Development Working Group reporting to the Corporate Management Team.

The UK Government's strategy for sustainable development incorporates the use of performance indicators. In "*Choosing our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy*", the Scottish Government set out a number of ways in which it will measure progress in meeting the commitments made in the strategy, and more generally, national progress on sustainable development. The 18 indicators used in measuring progress reflect social and economic goals as well as environmental goals.

The East Ayrshire Community Planning process employs a series of indicators which measure environmental, economic and social progress in accordance with the action plans for each of the six priority Community Plan themes. As detailed earlier in this Strategy, the Best Value and Sustainable Development Toolkit identified that the themes of the Community Plan were primarily influenced by social considerations, whilst the 4 key themes for this Strategy have placed more focus on economic and environmental considerations. The development of a series of sustainability indicators will provide additionality to the Community Planning indicators and balance the requirements of social, economic and environmental considerations. The Sustainable Development Indicators will be published in an annual Sustainable Development Report.

East Ayrshire Council and its Community Planning Partners have developed a Community Planning Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for the period 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2011. The SOA which affords joint accountability for delivery as shared with the Scottish Government is based on the 15 key national outcomes as agreed in November 2007, but also provides for local outcomes and local priorities. As each of the six East Ayrshire Community Plan strategic themes have been linked to the Scottish Government's 5 Strategic Objectives, the sustainability indicators will provide a tangible link to the SOA process.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Council's Community Plan 2007 – 2011 acknowledges the significance of sustainable development at its core, which is demonstrated in the statement:

*“Sustainability is at the heart of this plan, we are committed to making sure that the outcomes of social, economic and environmental improvements are sustainable and will stand the test of time. A sustainable community is one which makes sure that today's decisions do not have a negative effect on the future and where actions will have a long-lasting effect.”*

This Strategy provides the framework for cross-Council consultation, communication and co-ordination of activity to provide the momentum, motivation and will, to facilitate change and embed sustainability into the everyday actions and activities of the Council and each of our employees.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN**

The East Ayrshire Sustainable Development Strategy Action Plan aims to ensure that the guidance provided by the Best Value Task Force for achieving best value and sustainable development is delivered through all Council services and operations. The actions outlined below integrate the seven qualities (grouped as 5) required to be demonstrated by a local authority achieving best value and sustainable developments as identified in the Task Force Guidance:

- Leadership
- Integration and Resource Management
- Consultation and Awareness Raising
- Performance Management and Evaluation
- Influence

<b>1. Theme</b>		<b>Leadership</b>	
<b>Action</b> (What needs to be done?)	<b>Projected Outputs</b> (What do we propose to do?)	<b>Timescale</b> (When will the action be completed?)	<b>Delivery Partners</b> (Which departments/organisations are involved?)
1.1 Demonstrate a commitment at senior level to ensuring every Service has sustainability at the centre of its activities	1.1.1A Cabinet member will be appointed with a remit for sustainable development under the terms of Best Value	31 March 2009	Cabinet & Corporate Management Team (CMT)
	1.1.2 Provide a series of workshops for senior managers to: ensure sustainable development is fully understood; to identify areas of current good practice, and; to identify areas for improvement	31 December 2008	Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG); Sustainable Scotland Network(SSN) and relevant external bodies such as identified by SDWG
	1.1.3 Reaffirm the Council's commitment to the Scottish Climate Change Declaration	31 December 2008	Leader of the Council & Chief Executive

<b>2.Theme</b>		<b>Integration &amp; Resource Management</b>	
<b>Action</b> (What needs to be done?)	<b>Projected Outputs</b> (What do we propose to do?)	<b>Timescale</b> (When will the action be completed?)	<b>Delivery Partners</b> (Which departments/organisations are involved?)
2.1. Develop guidance for staff on the requirement to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) when developing plans, programmes or strategies	2.1.1 Provide guidance notes /intranet on the criteria for the requirement to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment	31 December 2008	SDWG, Planning , SSN
	2.1.2 Provide comprehensive guidance for the undertaking of Strategic Environmental Assessment Procedure intranet based	31 December 2008	SDWG, Planning, SSN
	2.1.3 Provide appropriate training for relevant staff in the Strategic Environmental Assessment process	31March 2009	SDWG, Planning, SSN
2.2. By means of guidance and advice provide the platform from which services can ensure decisions on resource allocation recognise social, economic and environmental considerations.	2.2.1 Introduce cross council thematic officer groups where required to recognise expertise and facilitate best practice. Incorporate sustainability agenda/reporting requirement/responsibility to existing officer groups where appropriate	31March 2009	SDWG
2.3 Develop mechanisms to incorporate sustainability within Corporate decision making process	2.3.1 Revise Cabinet reporting structure to include sustainability implications	31 March 2009	CMT, SDWG

<b>3. Theme</b>		<b>Consultation &amp; Awareness Raising</b>	
<b>Action</b> (What needs to be done?)	<b>Projected Outputs</b> (What do we propose to do?)	<b>Timescale</b> (When will the action be completed?)	<b>Delivery Partners</b> (Which departments/organisations are involved?)
3.1 In line with our Community Planning objectives, continue to actively engage the community and key partners in participative consultation on sustainable development	3.1.1 Bi-annual sustainability audit across all services – seek “audit champions” from each Department	31 March 2009 (champions) 30 June 2009 - audit	SDWG & All Council Departments/Services
	3.1.2 Include questions on environmental sustainability within the East Ayrshire Council householder survey	31 March 2009	CMT & SDWG
	3.1.3 Develop or utilise existing community forum to share examples of good practice and consult on areas for improvement	31 March 2009	SDWG, Community Planning Partners
	3.1.4 Publish an annual statement detailing progress on sustainability as detailed by the sustainability indicators – ensuring that indicators also meet reporting requirements of Section 9 - Sustainable Development, Securing Continuous Improvement, best Value & Community Planning	31 March 2009	CMT & SDWG/
3.2 Fulfil Council requirements in terms of the Scottish Climate Change Declaration	3.2.1 Produce a plan, with targets and timescales, designed to achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions arising from all service activities and operations	31 March 2009	CMT & SDWG
	3.2.2 Publish an annual statement on the monitoring and progress of our climate change response	31 March 2009	SDWG
	3.2.3 Identify the potential impacts of climate change on Council services and the residents of East Ayrshire	31 March 2009	SDWG & UKCIP ( UK Climate Impact Programme)

<b>4. Theme</b>		<b>Performance Management &amp; Evaluation</b>	
<b>Action</b> (What needs to be done?)	<b>Projected Outputs</b> (What do we propose to do?)	<b>Timescale</b> (When will the action be completed?)	<b>Delivery Partners</b> (Which departments/organisations are involved?)
4.1 Measure the sustainability performance of the Council across all services	4.1.1 Develop (or utilise existing indicators) a set of performance indicators measuring progress towards sustainable development.	31 December 2008	SDWG & Corporate Support
	4.1.2 Provide an annual report indicating progress against each performance indicator for sustainable development.	31 March 2009 and annually thereafter.	SDWG
	4.1.3 Provide a quarterly report to CMT detailing/co-ordinating progress made by SDWG and thematic groups	31 December 2008	SDWG

<b>5. Theme</b>		<b>Influence</b>	
<b>Action</b> (What needs to be done?)	<b>Projected Outputs</b> (What do we propose to do?)	<b>Timescale</b> (When will the action be completed?)	<b>Delivery Partners</b> (Which departments/organisations are involved?)
5.1 Encourage and facilitate community planning partners to adopt sustainability in their own working practices where they do not do so already	5.1.1 Identify areas of good practice in sustainability by our Community Planning partners and disseminate report findings - incorporate findings into reports as detailed at 3.1.4 and 3.2.2	31 December 2008	SDWG & Community Planning Partners
5.2 Encourage individual responsibility for incorporating sustainability into our everyday actions	5.2.1 Incorporate principles of sustainable development into corporate induction procedures	31 December 2008	SDWG & Community Planning Partners