

The challenge of sustainable development and climate change

The South West's Mission for Sustainability

"People in the South West of England choose to live, work and prosper within environmental limits, pursuing justice and well-being and valuing diversity and distinctiveness."

Introduction

One of the key messages of *Strong and prosperous communities* is the importance of local government being 'fit for purpose' to tackle the issues of the 21st century. The sustainability challenge established in *Securing the Future* recognises the importance of local government in delivering that agenda.

A revised regional sustainable development framework (RSDF) has recently been put in place. The operating principles that have emerged will assist the unitary authority to ensure that strategically, operationally and culturally its actions will be measured against these principles. This will ensure that in all our policy development and service delivery the need to deliver the objectives of *Securing the Future* paper will be met.

Operating Principles of the RSDF

- Develop sustainability learning and skills
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Improve equality in meeting basic needs
- Be resource wise
- Support thriving low carbon economies
- Reduce high carbon travel
- Use local and ethical goods & services
- Enhance local distinctiveness & diversity including biodiversity
- Help everyone to join in public decision-making
- Take a long term approach

The benefits of a unitary authority

- Culture – through training and learning we can develop a sustainability culture throughout the whole authority
- Improved co-ordination with other partners delivering a more focussed approach
- Less duplication and the development of a county wide approach
- County wide property asset management functions prioritising resources for energy reduction
- County wide approach to procurement will lead to greater influence over local and environmentally preferable markets
- Stronger position to influence local investors and developers in delivering sustainable development benefits – carbon neutral developments, production of biofuel, use of renewables
- A single planning authority can secure through policy a consistent approach to the delivery of sustainable development
- Links between planning, transport, regeneration and public health strengthen to achieve a more integrated approach to sustainable development and climate change
- Better integration of waste collection, disposal and recycling
- Better community decision making