

'LEARNING TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY'

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES - MADE UNDER SECTION 121 OF THE GOVERNMENT OF WALES ACT 1998

SECTION 1: THE DUTY

1.1 The National Assembly for Wales has a duty under section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions, that is everything it does. The Act requires us to make a Scheme setting out how we propose to implement the duty, to consult before making it, keep it under review, publish an annual report on progress and evaluate its effectiveness every four years.

1.2 The Sustainable Development Scheme provides the over-arching framework for all of the Assembly's work. To fulfil its legal obligations, the principles of sustainable development must be mainstreamed into the way the Assembly operates. This represents a change of culture and working practices. The Assembly will produce an Action Plan that will spell out how the commitments in the Scheme are to be met, what action is needed, by when and by whom. This will be delivered through www.betterwales.com - the Assembly's Strategic Plan.

1.3 The Assembly takes the view that our current way of living is unsustainable and that real progress can no longer be gauged by standard measures of economic growth alone. Indicators that give a broad measure of our success will be developed, from an initial set, over time.

1.4 This Scheme sets out how we intend to fulfil our duty. We do not anticipate that it will need to be amended until after the Assembly's next ordinary elections.

SECTION 2: THE DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The National Assembly for Wales will promote development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2 This means that we will take social, economic and environmental issues into account in everything that we do. We will integrate the principles of sustainable development into our

work and seek to influence others to do the same.

SECTION 3: THE VISION OF A SUSTAINABLE WALES

3.1 The Assembly will pursue the vision (first set out in its Strategic Plan, www.betterwales.com) of a sustainable Wales that is:

- united, confident and creative
- committed to fostering its unique and diverse identity, and the benefits of bilingualism, while looking confidently outwards and welcoming new cultural influences
- prosperous, well-educated, skilled, healthy, environmentally and culturally rich
- served by modern, effective, efficient and accessible public services
- active in its local communities, where the voice of local people is heard
- fairer – a place where everyone is valued and given an opportunity to play a full part
- a place which values its children and where young people want to live, work and enjoy a high quality of life

1. We believe that this means

- the environment being cherished and protected so that it remains healthy and biologically diverse, and can continue to support us all
- a self-sustaining economy which respects the environmental and social context of Wales and responds to sustainable development opportunities
- action to make our communities strong and viable, and people healthier
- people being enabled to play a part in taking decisions that affect them
- recognising the needs of all parts of Wales
- Wales contributing to sustainable development at a global level as well as a local

SECTION 4: SUPPORTING UK ACTIVITY

4.1 The Assembly supports the objectives set out in the UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy of:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

- and will seek to achieve them simultaneously. We believe that economic growth can and must be pursued in ways that are conducive to a sustainable Wales.

4.2 In common with the UK Government, the Assembly is committed to:

- putting people, and their quality of life now and in the future, at the centre of its concern
- ensuring everyone has the chance to get information, see how decisions are made and take part in decision-making
- taking a long-term perspective to safeguard the interests of future generations, whilst at the same time meeting needs of people today
- using scientific knowledge to aid decision-making, and trying to work out in advance what knowledge will be needed so that it can be researched
- taking account of the full range of costs and benefits when making plans and decisions, including those which cannot easily be valued in money terms, and taking account of timing, risks and uncertainties
- respecting environmental limits, so that resources are not irrecoverably depleted or the environment irreversibly damaged: this implies, for instance, contributing to protection of the planet's climate; protecting and enhancing biodiversity; minimising harmful emissions; promoting sustainable use of natural resources
- applying the precautionary principle, that cost-effective measures to prevent possibly serious environmental damage should not be postponed just because of scientific uncertainty about how serious the risk is
- preventing pollution as far as possible, and making the polluter pay for the damage done by pollution, and more generally trying to ensure that costs are met by those whose actions incur them

SECTION 5: FULFILLING THE DUTY

1. Translating the Assembly's vision into action will mean ensuring that:

- sustainable development is integrated, over time, into everything the Assembly does;
- decisions in each field of policy take account of effects of proposals 'in the round', not just in the field in question;
- policies and programmes are designed in an integrated way so that they are mutually reinforcing;
- funding and grant schemes reinforce this integrated approach;
- opportunities are recognised early and acted upon;
- spending plans must recognise the need for sustainable development objectives to be

achieved;

- new ways of working with our partners to achieve our objectives are developed;
- decisions about the short term should not be contradictory to long-term aims;
- Wales is at the cutting edge in demonstrating good sustainable development practice, bearing in mind the uniqueness of our legal obligation.

5.2 The Assembly will take the actions set out below.

SECTION 5A: Through decision making

- We will review all policies, programmes and grant schemes over a 5 year period (including procurement policies, as far as legal requirements allow) to align them collectively with sustainable development objectives - a 'Green Audit'
- We will review and refine our existing appraisal mechanisms and definitions of value for money to align them with the objectives and principles of sustainable development
- We will ensure that all new policies, projects, programmes, grant schemes, appraisal mechanisms and definitions of value for money reflect the objectives of sustainable development

SECTION 5B: Through strategic policies which contribute to sustainable development including

5.3 The Assembly intends that its key strategies should not only be underpinned by sustainable development principles but linked together. Key policies in this respect include:

- National Economic Development Strategy
- Communities First
- National Spatial Framework
- Transport Framework
- Strategic Energy Framework
- Waste Strategy
- Better Health, Better Wales
- Planning Guidance Wales
- Building for the Future

- National Housing Strategy
- Learning is for Everyone
- Children and Young People's Strategy
- The UK Climate Change Strategy;
- The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy
- Crime Reduction Programme for England and Wales

SECTION 5C: Through specific policy actions

5.4 The Assembly will undertake specific actions, to be spelt out in the Action Plan, to seek to achieve the following aims:

- grasping growth opportunities in key sustainable development sectors (for example environmental technology, public transport, renewable energy and Information and Communication Technology)
- use of resources from European programmes including Objective 1 in ways that support sustainable development and, through promoting genuine local partnerships, develop the capacity of the social economy
- integrated transport developments, that support social inclusion and healthier life styles
- more sustainable agriculture and diverse rural economy in a cherished landscape
- preserving biodiversity
- combating fuel poverty
- greater energy efficiency in homes and businesses
- development of sustainable energy
- effective teaching of sustainable development in the school curriculum
- a less wasteful way of working and living

5.5 As **priorities for review** of its existing policies and programmes, the Assembly will:

- develop ways to assist Welsh businesses to exploit the opportunities of emerging eco-friendly markets
- review Planning Guidance Wales, in the context of the National Spatial Framework ,for compliance with sustainability objectives so as to facilitate developments which can be clearly identified as promoting sustainability
- overhaul relevant grant scheme criteria
- develop and implement sustainable policies for reducing and managing waste
- develop a strategic framework for energy developments in Wales

- develop a single statement on the opportunities for sustainable development in energy, waste and clean technology
- review its standards for social housing development to reduce the environmental impact of such dwelling design and construction and to demonstrate good practice for other new building
- develop a healthy food policy for Wales
- develop new guidance on sustainable procurement criteria for major capital schemes
- look at how to influence policy in non devolved areas such as aspects of transport and energy

SECTION 5D: By working with others

5.6 Many of the changes we seek can only take place with the help and co-operation of others, and the Assembly intends working in partnership with them to deliver those changes. This section gives examples of how this will happen:

Within Europe and further afield

- by developing and maintaining links with the European Commission to contribute to its Sustainable Development Strategy
- by developing links and networks with countries and regions within Europe to share and develop best practice, expertise and experience
- by contributing to the achievement of international and European Union targets relating to sustainability
- by seeking cost-effective ways to raise Wales' profile abroad as leading on sustainable development

With the UK Government at national and regional levels, and with other devolved administrations

- by sharing and developing best practice
- by developing and pursuing shared objectives
- by helping deliver UK commitments
- by protecting and promoting Welsh interests
- by setting an example for others to follow

With local government:

- by encouraging local government to promote sustainable development through its corporate planning and strategic policies particularly in key areas such as community strategies, Local Agenda 21 and Best Value, ensuring that local services are delivered without jeopardising long term sustainability;
- by providing leadership, guidance and best practice
- by learning from local government experience of the development of Local Agenda 21 strategies and sustainability appraisal tools;
- by working together on issues such as the ongoing development of indicators of sustainable development
- by seeking to agree a compact with the Welsh Local Government Association on co-operating to promote sustainable development

With other public bodies

- by guiding or requiring them to them to
- promote sustainable development actively through their corporate planning and policy development particularly in key areas such grant schemes, consultation, guidance and advice to the Assembly and others; and
- work with each other and with the Assembly's partners whenever possible
- by scrutinising corporate plans and strategies to make sure that this agenda is incorporated into their activities, and by monitoring their sustainable development performance

With the voluntary sector:

- by promoting and developing active citizenship within communities
- by sharing and promoting best practice on sustainable development
- by working in partnership to develop innovative policies, programmes, grant schemes etc through a 'top down, bottom up' approach
- by recognising their key role in the delivery of services

With business:

- by consulting on new policies

- by discussing ways business can contribute to sustainability objectives, for example green transport policies
- by being clearer and more open on matters that affect businesses
- by providing support through Assembly's Business Environment campaign and the WDA
- by providing specific support

With experts and stakeholders

- by calling on expertise and experience wherever it is available to us, including through establishment of a Sustainable Development Forum or Panel made up of experts or stakeholders or both

With communities and individuals

- by informing people about sustainable development to enable them to make informed choices
- by ensuring sustainable development is taught in schools through the national curriculum
- by promoting local projects, recognising achievements and encouraging others to take action

SECTION 5E: Leading by example

5.7 The principles of sustainable development will also apply to the Assembly's internal operations. This will include:

- developing practical options to ensure that Sustainable Development is mainstreamed and promoted within the Assembly's structures
- developing sustainability appraisal tools for staff to ensure that sustainable development is mainstreamed into our work as required by this Scheme
- developing a training programme for decision-makers to ensure they understand what is required of them and are able to use the tools that are developed
- reviewing our green housekeeping policy annually
- developing a green transport plan for the Assembly estate and keeping it under review

SECTION 5F: By setting and using indicators and targets

5.8 The Assembly will:

- set targets in its Action Plan and use them to report progress
- establish and keep under review a set of indicators of sustainable development for Wales, reflecting social, economic and environmental issues, informed initially by the responses to 'A Sustainable Wales - Measuring the Difference'
- use them to gauge progress at the national level
- take action to develop its set of indicators for this purpose, including indicators of less tangible but important things relating to quality of life
- use the indicators to inform the development of its sustainability appraisal tools

SECTION 5G: By monitoring, review, evaluation, reporting, and feedback

5.9 We will

- undertake an initial internal benchmarking exercise which, together with available statistical data, will form the basis of the first annual report on implementation
- report annually referring both to the full range of sustainable development indicators and to actions taken to implement this Scheme
- include an external perspective in our reports, and talk with our partners in compiling them
- use the internet and new technology to gain feedback and publish findings
- be open and honest about our progress and learn from experience.

National Assembly for Wales

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