

DA21 Strategy (2007-2012)

Encouraging climate-friendly and
sustainable communities in Dorset

Final

2 October 2007



1. Context of the Strategy

We live in interesting and yet disturbing times. Hardly a day goes by without a news item about global warming, climate change or damage to the environment appearing in the papers or on TV. We are being encouraged to make changes in our lifestyles to reduce our 'carbon footprint' – a measure of our impact on the environment and our use of energy and carbon-based fuels.

Never before has there been so much public interest about the impact our way of life is having on Planet Earth and its limited natural resources and capacity. This interest is now turning to public concern over the future of our society. Recent advice from many of those working in the field of climate change and natural resources suggests that we need to act more quickly, and make bigger changes in the way we live and do business if we are to tackle climate change in any serious way.

This new strategy for DA21 acknowledges the vital importance of individual and collective action here in Dorset if we are to play our part in looking after our environment, and making sure that it retains its capacity to sustain human life for generations to come.

DA21 believes that everyone should take responsibility for making decisions and taking individual action that will lead towards a sustainable way of living. The purpose of this Strategy is to enable DA21 to provide the support and encouragement to those who want to take such action.

2. History and role of DA21

DA21 grew out of Dorset Agenda 21, one of the Local Agenda 21 organisations set up after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. In the early days, Dorset Agenda 21 was a forum on sustainability, hosted by Dorset County Council. After organizing a number of events, working groups and a large-scale public consultation, Dorset Agenda 21 published 'Dorset in the 21st Century – an agenda for action' in December 1999. In 2004, Dorset Agenda 21 became a registered charity. It is also a not-for-profit limited company. The charity began trading as DA21 in 2007.

3. How DA21 is organized

DA21 is a membership organisation open to any individuals or organisations interested in working towards sustainability in Dorset. Currently (October 2007), there are 81 paid up members and over 900 others receive DA21's Newsletter on a regular basis.

As a charity, DA21 is regulated by the Charity Commissioners and has adopted a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees, who meet formally on a regular basis to oversee the strategic direction of DA21 and attend to any business required. The Trustees also meet informally in sub-groups, to deal with specific matters in more detail and report back to the Board at the next formal meeting. The charity holds the Annual General Meeting once a year, when

members are invited to elect Trustees, to hear the Annual Report presented by the Trustees and can raise any matters of concern directly with the Trustees present.

DA21 can also set up and manage Working Groups to focus on particular issues and these can be an effective way of involving members more directly with the work of the charity.

Volunteers play an important role in the work of DA21, and much of the critical business of running the charity is done on a voluntary basis. At present, the day-to-day management of the part-time staff, the newsletter, accounts and maintenance of the website are all carried out on a voluntary basis. In addition, there is a network of volunteers who represent DA21 on a wide range of partnerships and bodies involved in sustainability issues in Dorset.

The project work done by DA21 over the last five years has been carried out by staff employed for that purpose and often supported by volunteers, or by consultants commissioned for specific pieces of work.

4. DA21's Vision, objectives, activities and values

The Board of Trustees for DA21 has adopted a vision to guide its strategic direction and development over the next decade. This Vision for Dorset's environment, and for the people who live and work here, is based on a series of principles and values which drives the work and aspirations of DA21.

In order to tackle climate change in a meaningful way, the people living and working in Dorset, and the organisations based here, will need to change the way they live so that they minimize their impact on the planet. They will need to be more aware of where the things they use and eat come from and this, in turn, will help them to make choices that reduces their carbon footprint.

DA21's Vision: Sustainable living is the way of life in Dorset

Within the next 10 years, DA21 sees the people in Dorset living and working in buildings that are energy efficient – using less energy, and with more of their energy coming from renewable sources. People will be enjoying more food that is grown locally without the use of harmful chemicals, and more of the things they buy and consume will be sourced locally. They will be creating less waste – using less packaging and recycling more. They will think more carefully about the way they travel, choosing modes of transport that are energy efficient and less polluting.

The purpose of DA21 is to encourage action and changes in behaviour by those living and working in Dorset so that the county can play its part in achieving global sustainability. We believe this will enhance the quality of life in Dorset economically, socially and environmentally – for the county as a whole and for individuals.

DA21's mission: Encouraging climate-friendly and sustainable communities in Dorset

5. Values and principles used by DA21 in its work

The values and principles DA21 upholds in carrying forward this work are:

- We acknowledge that Planet Earth, the ecosystem and the natural forces that sustain it, are the life support systems for everyone;
- We believe that climate change is currently the biggest long-term threat to the prosperity and well-being of our society, and to the planet on which we live;
- We believe we can live sustainably, and by consuming fewer resources - particularly carbon-based fuels, we can reduce our impact on the planet and can help people achieve a better quality of life;
- We will strive to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to take part in the process of change towards a more sustainable society;
- We believe that everyone should take responsibility for making decisions and taking individual action that will lead towards a sustainable way of living;
- We believe Government and the public sector has a critical leadership role in tackling climate change at a local, national and international level, through its policies and its own actions;
- We will achieve more by supporting grass-roots action by community groups, and by working in partnership with other organisations towards the common goal of a sustainable Dorset.

6. Objectives

DA21 will:

1. Support Dorset's communities as they move towards a sustainable way of living;
2. Provide easier access to practical solutions that help communities sustain the planet by reducing their carbon footprint;
3. Build firm foundations for DA21 to be the leading charity helping Dorset's communities and voluntary organisations to tackle climate change and to reduce its carbon footprint.

7. Broad activities

DA21 will achieve these objectives through activities which:

1. Build the capacity and network of community groups who want to make changes in the way they live and work so they reduce their carbon footprints, and to share good practice with others;
2. Through community groups, raise public awareness, improve knowledge and encourage other people to make changes in the way they live and work which will lead to a reduction in the carbon footprint of Dorset;
3. Demonstrate practical ways to reduce carbon footprints, and the benefits these actions can bring to the residents and businesses of Dorset;
4. Provide education and training opportunities on climate change and reducing carbon footprints in Dorset;
5. Inform and influence decision-makers so they adopt policies and take action which ensures Dorset thrives in the long term by reducing its carbon footprint and prospers within environmentally sustainable limits;
6. Develop and strengthen DA21 as the central focal point for the voluntary and community sector working towards a sustainable Dorset, to secure funding for DA21's core and project-based work and to develop its capacity for meeting new challenges.

8. Key areas for DA21's work in 2007-2012

The broad activities described above will guide DA21's work over the next five years as it tackles climate change and seeks to reduce the carbon footprint of Dorset. These activities will be developed into projects for DA21 to tackle through its Business Plan. DA21 is likely to have limited resources for all this work and so not all of the projects will be worked on at the same time.

DA21 appreciates the enormous scale of the work needed to address sustainability in Dorset over the coming years. It believes this should – indeed must, be done in partnership with the grass-roots community groups, with other voluntary organisations, with the public and business sectors so we are working collectively towards the common goal of a sustainable Dorset.

In view of the profound implications of global warming for all of us, over the next five years DA21 will focus its efforts on actions which build the capacity of communities to tackle climate change and to reduce the carbon footprint of Dorset.

In addition, DA21 will strengthen the voluntary sector working for a sustainable Dorset by supporting an effective and influential network of voluntary organisations and community groups working for a sustainable Dorset. This work would be done through DA21's leading role in supporting the Sustainable Organisations Network.

The following table sets out DA21’s intended actions over the next five years.

Table 1: DA21 planned activities for 2007-2012

Broad activity	How DA21 will carry out these activities over the next five years
<p>1. Build the capacity and network of communities who want to make changes in the way they live and work so they reduce their carbon footprints, and to share good practice with others;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage the development of community groups who want to work together to tackle climate change and to live more sustainably; • Build the capacity of these groups to reduce their carbon footprints collectively, and encourage them to work with neighbouring communities and others to share good practice; • Support an effective and influential network for these community groups to share good practice and to co-campaign for change; • Work with older and younger people who may not be able to see through the changes they wish to make without extra help; • Develop and gain sponsorship for a Sustainable Community Award Scheme for Dorset;
<p>2. Through community groups, raise public awareness, improve knowledge and encourage other people to make changes in the way they live and work which will lead to a reduction in the carbon footprint of Dorset;</p>	<p>Through our work with the community groups working for sustainability across Dorset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and run an extensive outreach programme to inform the public in Dorset about the likely impact of climate change, and the actions needed to tackle this problem; • Encourage people to measure their own carbon footprint and to compare this with a footprint reduced by 30% by 2020; • Develop and maintain an information resource base related to climate change and sustainable living; • Provide information on a range of ways to live more sustainably, with an emphasis on energy savings and efficiency; • Develop an online information base on sustainable living relevant to Dorset;
<p>3. Demonstrate practical ways to reduce carbon footprints, and the benefits these actions can bring to the residents and businesses of Dorset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the carbon footprint of Dorset is known, and how much the domestic, business, public service sectors contribute to this footprint • Organise demonstrations of green products and technologies, and visits to see good examples of good practice • Encourage public and community buildings to become more sustainable and energy efficient
<p>4. Provide education and training opportunities on climate change and reducing carbon footprints in Dorset;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit current involvement on sustainability issues by schools in Dorset • Encourage and help develop a group of leading schools or exemplars that can show good practice to the education sector • Establish and support a network of eco-schools • Help provide training on climate change and sustainability to teaching staff, governors and the whole school community • Establish and train a network of volunteers that can help deliver the sustainability message in schools • Establish and gain sponsorship for a Sustainable School Award scheme in Dorset

Table 1: DA21 planned activities for 2007-2012 (continued)

Broad activity	How DA21 will carry out these activities over the next five years
<p>5. Inform and influence decision-makers so they adopt policies and take action which ensures Dorset thrives within environmentally sustainable limits;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an evidence-base of changes needed in local/central government policy and spend in order to progress sustainable living at a local level • Inform and lobby decision-makers in Dorset to ensure they play their part in adopting policies and take action on key matters regarding the sustainable future of the county
<p>6. Develop and strengthen DA21 as the central focal point for the voluntary and community sector working towards a sustainable Dorset, to secure funding for DA21's core and project-based work and to develop its capacity for meeting new challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the existing network of voluntary organisations involved in the sustainability sector in Dorset • Maintain and support an effective network of volunteer representatives who are willing to be ambassadors of DA21 at meetings with partner organisations • Investigate and secure funding from a range of appropriate sources including national and local grant schemes, in return for providing services to the public sector, from charitable and other trusts, and sponsorship from business for specific projects e.g. the proposed Award Schemes • Seek accommodation for DA21 which demonstrates sustainability in action, and acts as a focal point for volunteers and the Working Groups

This Strategy for DA21 will be supported by a two year Business Plan which is reviewed by the Trustees and then rolled-forward in autumn each year. The Business Plan will set out how DA21 will carry out its planned activities and how it will secure the resources to implement its work programme.

9. Measures of success

The Trustees of DA21 have adopted a variety of measures to check if its Strategy is working and is successful in the overall aims of tackling climate change and reducing the carbon footprint of Dorset. These measures will be used periodically to review the effectiveness of the Strategy so that it can be kept up-to-date and relevant to the needs of Dorset.

Table 2: Measures of success for the DA21 Strategy

Broad activity by DA21	Measures of success
<p>1. Build and strengthen the capacity within Dorset's communities to tackle climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An influential network of at least 18 community-based groups actively involved in sustainability matters by 2012 • At least one successful project working with older or younger people to tackle climate change • A Dorset Sustainable Community Award Scheme established successfully

Broad activity by DA21	Measures of success
2. Raise public awareness, improve knowledge and encourage everyone to make changes for sustainability in their lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 targeted campaigns or roadshows/year (i.e. one per community group) • 1500 people/year attend DA21 events or roadshows who measure their carbon footprint and pledge to make at least one change to live more sustainably
3. Demonstrate sustainability in action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with our partners that Dorset should seek to reduce its carbon footprint by 15% by 2012 • 8 demonstration events or information seminars held each year
4. Provide education and training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A network for sustainable schools actively supported by six schools • Eight events held in schools/year • 12 training sessions/year of training on sustainability provided • Dorset schools applying for awards under a national Sustainable Schools Award Scheme
5. Inform and influence decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham Declaration on climate change adopted by all local authorities in Dorset • Third Sector Declaration on climate change adopted by 12 leading voluntary sector organisations in Dorset • Annual meeting with representative/s of Dorset Business [formerly the Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry]
6. Develop and strengthen DA21 as the central focal point for sustainability in Dorset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active support networks of sustainable community groups, and of other organisations working in the sustainability sector in Dorset • 100% increase in the number of members of DA21 by 2012 • Office space secured for DA21, and used to demonstrate good practice • Core funding sufficient to maintain office and to employ a Manager and an Administrator

10. Monitoring and reviewing the Strategy

The Trustees will report on the progress in delivering the Strategy through its Annual Report and the AGM each year. The Strategy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.