

Dorset in the
21st Century:

an **Agenda** for action



Dorset Agenda 21 Forum

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Published by the Dorset Agenda 21 Forum
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Foreword

**by Dr Malcolm Macleod OBE,
Chairman of the Dorset Agenda 21 Forum**

A key constituent of the process of putting the principles of Rio into action in our communities in the 21st Century is the production of a strategy that people can support and follow.

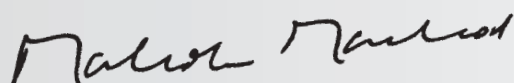
The Forum, of which I have had the honour to be Chairman for two years, has been engaged in planning, discussing and consulting across the spectrum of Agenda 21 issues and amongst you, the public, for four years; and it is you to whom I commend this strategy and for whom it has been written.

The route to this document has not always been smooth, but it has been paved with resolve, determination and commitment. In particular I must pay tribute to the work of my predecessor, Dave Rickard; to the members of the various working groups that put together the first tentative visions; to the members of the Forum; to the Local Authorities that have helped and in particular Dorset County Council without which we would not have been able to start; and the greatest tribute of all reserved for Richard Hands whose dedication and belief in all that this stands for has been, and I've no doubt will continue to be, above and beyond the call of duty.

We all believe that we are at a critical point in time, where the need to progress our societies more sustainably has become absolute. We have been challenged to live in harmony whilst carefully husbanding and managing the earth's resources by designing economic, social and environmental systems that not only minimise impacts on them, but also enhance them.

If our children and grandchildren are to live happy and fulfilled lives in the 21st Century, and contribute globally to lifting poorer states from their abject condition, we must all act to sustain our resources.

The Forum is committed to sustainable development and will facilitate the delivery of Agenda 21 goals across the county of Dorset. Please join us.



1. Agenda 21 and sustainable development

1.1 In June 1992, at the Rio “Earth Summit”, leaders from around the world agreed that the quality of life for future generations was being compromised by our present unsustainable lifestyles. They launched Agenda 21 – a far-reaching plan encouraging co-operation and action, at both global and local levels, towards a sustainable future. A vital part of the agreement was that all local areas should produce their own local Agenda 21 strategies. This has been actively promoted by UK local government associations and was recently underlined by the Prime Minister’s target, that **all local Agenda 21 strategies should be in place by the year 2000**. Most local authorities in this country, including those in Dorset, are taking up this challenge.

1.2 Agenda 21 says that all human concerns are interdependent. Health, poverty, education, social justice, the exploitation of natural resources, environmental quality and many others all underpin our quality of life. Progress must therefore be made on all fronts in an integrated way, with policies and programmes supporting each other and working together, not against each other. Agenda 21 is therefore not about development versus the environment, because people need jobs and a decent standard of living, both now and in the future. It is about shifting to ways of developing which do not overburden our natural life support systems.



“ . . . all local Agenda 21 strategies should be in place by the year 2000 . . . ”

2. Guiding principles

2.1 The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which accompanied Agenda 21, identified 27 principles to protect “the integrity of the global environment and development systems”. Eleven are directly relevant to local sustainable development.

- **People** are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy, productive life.
- **Future generations** must have their interests safeguarded. A long-term perspective must be taken.
- **Environmental protection** should be integrated with the development process.
- **Poverty and social exclusion** must be eradicated.
- **Healthy ecosystems** must be protected and restored.
- **Public access to information**, the decision-making processes and social justice shall be provided.
- **The precautionary principle** should apply. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to the environment, the lack of full scientific certainty should not prevent environmental protection measures.
- **The polluter should bear the costs** of pollution, through the use of economic instruments.
- **Women** have a vital role to play in sustainable development.
- **Young people** should be mobilised in a partnership to ensure a better future for all.
- **Local communities'** identities and interests should be supported.

2.2 These principles are embedded in the recommendations that follow.



3. The Dorset Agenda 21 Forum

3.1

An essential part of the Local Agenda 21 process is wide-ranging participation by local people, to achieve consensus on priorities for local action and to enable local people to have a say in decisions which will affect them and their futures.

The Dorset Agenda 21 Forum was established towards the end of 1995 to support that process at the county level. Over the past three and a half years the Forum – a partnership of organisations and individuals from many different backgrounds and sectors – has built networks, led discussions, organised events and published consultation documents to promote co-operation and debate and awareness of Dorset's sustainability issues.

3.2

In particular, the Forum has organised the following.

- The **Young Voices** conference at Bovington, with 150 young people, aged 8 to 14.
- The **Ideal Dorset Exhibition**, which attracted 2000 people.
- The consultation document **Dorset. Your place, your people . . . your future**, which discussed quality of life issues under ten different headings. These topic areas, each developed by a separate working group, also provide the framework for this report. The document included a public questionnaire, sent to, amongst others, 1000 people randomly selected from the electoral register.
- The two-day **Sustainable Dorset Action Planning Conference**, involving representatives of 120 stakeholder groups from all sectors. The conference used the outcomes of the consultation exercise to develop the finalised visions and programme put forward here.

3.3

The publication of this document effectively concludes the first phase of the Forum's work. The Forum now looks forward to a new phase: that of working with decision-makers and communities to turn ideas into policies and practical action. All sectors have an important role to play, including local government and government agencies, non-governmental organisations, businesses, the educational sector, community groups and the public.

“ . . . We face a huge task. The problems of unsustainable development have built up over a long period, and they will take a long time to put right. All the evidence now shows that the need for action is becoming increasingly urgent . . . ”



4. Priorities and progress

4.1 This report aims to:

- propose a set of visions of the future;
- identify the major issues which need to be addressed;
- suggest indicators to measure whether Dorset is moving towards or away from sustainability;
- suggest a programme of first actions that would help Dorset on its path towards sustainability.

4.2 With such an all-encompassing concept as sustainable development, it does not attempt to be detailed in its recommendations. That would not be possible, or even appropriate. What is offered here is a broad framework, developed by Dorset people, which needs translating into detailed programmes and targets by the relevant bodies working together with their communities.

4.3 It complements work being carried out at other levels. The Local Government Management Board (now the Improvement and Development Agency), for example, has been giving encouragement and support to local authorities for several years. The recent Government White Paper “A Better Quality of Life – a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom” sets a clear vision and action plan for the national level. The Forum welcomes the White Paper and commends it to all organisations with a role in delivering sustainable development. It identifies seven priorities for action at the national level:

- investing more in people and equipment for a competitive economy
- reducing levels of social exclusion
- creating a transport system which maximises choices and minimises environmental damage
- making towns and cities better places in which to live and work
- promoting agricultural practices which protect and enhance the countryside and wildlife
- improving energy efficiency and tackling waste
- working with others to achieve sustainable development

At the local level, in Dorset’s towns and parishes, a number of excellent initiatives are already generating ideas and actions. Local food links projects, country town forums, village appraisals, parish maps and others are all contributing to the body of knowledge on how a sustainable Dorset might be achieved.



- 4.4** The recommendations that follow are grouped under broad topic headings, such as Built and Local Environment and Fair Society. Within each topic area, however, they are sub-divided into four. Environmental, social and economic categories continually emphasise the cornerstones of sustainable development and show the cross-cutting nature of all topics. Actions related to process then suggest changes to the ways in which decisions are made and strategies are developed.
- 4.5** Indicators will be important, both to measure progress and to raise public awareness. Forty two are suggested in this document, selected on the basis of their relevance to the vision statements, the known availability of information for Dorset and links to national sustainability indicators. The Forum will work with local authorities and other collectors of data to establish an agreed set of sustainability indicators, and will publish regular progress reports on the state of Dorset. As with the topic areas, many indicators are inevitably linked. Housing quality, for example, is linked to energy efficiency, and land-use policies have a direct impact on transport patterns.
- 4.6** The Forum also considers that there may be value in adopting a single-figure index, such as the ecological footprint, to give an overall picture of the environmental burden that Dorset places on the planet. A locality's ecological footprint is the area of productive land required to support its consumption of materials and to deal with its wastes. One aim of a sustainable development strategy could be to ensure that a locality's per capita footprint does not exceed the global per capita area of available productive land.
- 4.7** This report does not cover all aspects of local sustainable development. There is no section dedicated to the economy, for example, although economic issues are introduced through all other sections. Further work is needed to develop this important area, but service deliverers and businesses are urged to build the same principles into economic development and business strategies. This is particularly significant in the context of the emerging regional agenda.

“ . . . here is a broad framework, developed by Dorset people, which needs translating into detailed programmes and targets . . . ”



5. The role of local government

5.1 Local authorities have a crucial role to play in sustainable development because:

- they have a range of important functions through which they may contribute to sustainable development and help to improve the quality of life of their communities – through regeneration, education, social affairs, planning, transport and environmental management;
- they are well placed to influence others to harness the energy and imagination of local communities and to co-ordinate with business, Government and other bodies;
- they are major employers and consumers in their own right, with a responsibility to organise their own business in a sustainable way;
- local government is the pivotal point where the community's views, values, and aspirations can be translated into public sector plans, policies and programmes.

(Source: DETR, 1997)

“ . . . The Forum now urges all levels of local government to work together, and in partnership with all sections of the community, to take steps to bring about sustainability in Dorset . . . ”





6. Built and local environment

6.1 The amount and quality of new development in Dorset is a serious concern. Social changes and population movements, rather than local growth, mean that over 30,000 new dwellings will be needed in the County over the next decade. It is important that enough appropriate housing is provided at the right price and in the right places in order to meet people's needs, but great care is needed to minimise environmental impacts. This not only means protecting the countryside as far as possible, by ensuring the better use of existing buildings and urban land, but also constructing buildings to the highest energy-efficiency standards and linking new development to a properly integrated transport system. It will not be easy to plan for sustainability in respect of future household growth. There are arguments in favour of a range of different land-use planning options, and it is likely that different approaches will be needed in different circumstances.

6.2 Many existing buildings waste far too much energy, causing discomfort and financial hardship for their occupants and increasing fuel consumption and pollution. Over 4.3 million households in the UK are "fuel poor", spending 10% or more of their income on keeping warm. Decent, energy-efficient homes contribute to social cohesion, improved health and better use of resources.

6.3 Authorities and agencies responsible for planning, housing, building control, transportation and social services should seek to sharpen their understanding of sustainable development and implement policies that better reflect sustainability principles.

6.4 Vision

Dorset's built environment should be appropriate to its people's needs. It should provide them with sufficient, well-designed, diverse, safe and affordable buildings and spaces in which they can live, work and play. They should be constructed in a sustainable manner and be in harmony with the character and tradition of the County.



6.5 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Improve energy and water efficiency of both new and existing buildings
- Seek greater use of environmentally friendly materials in construction
- Protect and promote local distinctiveness
- Reduce the need for transport, through both the land-use planning system and through innovative service delivery
- Encourage the re-use of previously-developed (brownfield) land for housing and other development
- Improve the aesthetic qualities of the built environment
- Protect the countryside and open spaces as far as possible

Social

- Provide adequate and appropriate housing stock, including more in the rented sector
- Ensure that sufficient numbers of adapted homes are available to the elderly and disabled
- Develop policies that improve social cohesion

Economic

- Regenerate towns and villages
- Strengthen local economies, particularly by building on local strengths

Process

- Encourage public participation in the development process
- Ensure effective monitoring and review of plans and policies
- Ensure that social infrastructure, as well as physical, is in place for new housing development

6.6 Suggested indicators

Percentage of new homes built on previously-developed land

Percentage of homes judged unfit to live in

Housing need

6.7 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste

7. Education

7.1 We live in times of rapid change. Education should prepare us for our role as active participants in shaping a sustainable future. Many schools and colleges already help their pupils and students to learn about environmental issues and investigate the consequences of human actions. Many also help their young people put conservation into practice in their schools and local communities. Education for sustainability, however, needs to go beyond this, to encourage people of all ages to question our present consumer-orientated lifestyles, to equip them with the attitudes and skills needed to make the changes and to foster “good citizenship” in the widest sense.

7.2 Education for sustainability therefore not only needs to address environmental issues, but also social inclusion, social justice world-wide, equitable access to resources, empowerment and democracy.

7.3 The Dorset Education for Sustainability Network is making a vital contribution, and there have been very encouraging responses from Dorset County Council (the Local Education Authority). This progress needs to be built upon to give everyone the opportunity to make informed choices, through processes of lifelong learning and community education. The importance of the role of education in bringing about sustainable development cannot be over-stressed.

7.4 Vision

We should put sustainable development into the curriculum of schools and into the lives of people and communities at home and work, helping to transform world views. We should promote active citizenship and environmental responsibility.



7.5 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Increase awareness of environmental issues and choices
- Seek to build environmental and sustainable development objectives into decision making

Social

- Continue the process of introducing education for sustainability into Dorset schools
- Promote citizenship
- Promote lifelong learning

Economic

- Increase skills and competitiveness through a better-educated population

Process

- Increase participation in decision-making, particularly by young people and the disadvantaged
- Extend democracy

7.6 Suggested indicators

Percentage of schools that have undertaken education for sustainability programmes in the last two years

Percentage of adult population in full/part-time education or training (including evening classes)

Qualifications at age 19

7.7 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste



8. Energy and water

8.1 There is now world-wide consensus that the global climate is changing as a result of human activities, and that the changes will affect us all. The burning of fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) is the main contributor, producing large quantities of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂). Transport is the fastest growing consumer of energy, producing more than a quarter of all Britain's CO₂ emissions, but the demand for electricity – generated mostly by fossil fuel-burning power stations – is also rising sharply. SWEB, for example, sold about 30% more electricity in 1995 than in 1985. In Kyoto, the developed countries, including the UK, made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade. The national target is a cut of 20%. This ambitious aim sets political, economic, technical and social challenges, and decision-makers at all levels – from government to the individual – need to respond. This will be crucial in moving towards sustainability.

8.2 There are some obvious opportunities for progress. The poor energy efficiency of housing in the UK, already highlighted in 6.2, should be a clear priority. Greater efficiency would not only reduce carbon dioxide emissions; it would also help to alleviate fuel poverty, improve housing quality and create healthier living conditions. Elsewhere, the ways forward may be less obvious.

8.3 Water resources must also now be used with much more care. Freshwater is seen as a very important issue in Agenda 21, and water quality is a good indicator of whether sustainable development is taking place. Recent droughts, here in the south of England, have also reminded us that our water supply is increasingly struggling to meet demand, and the ongoing impacts of a changing climate may make matters significantly worse. Whilst river water quality is generally high in Dorset, over-abstraction can cause significant environmental problems.

8.4 Vision

Energy should, where possible, be harnessed from renewable resources. It must be used efficiently by everyone in all situations, minimising waste. The supply and use of water should reflect its vital importance to all life. Water should not be wasted, and sustainable supplies should be established.



8.5 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Reduce the impact of energy-use on global climate change
- Use less non-renewable energy, and extend the use of renewable energy (solar, water, wind, biomass and geothermal)
- Improve efficiency in the use of all energy and water
- Reduce energy demand in transport
- Abstract less water from Dorset's rivers
- Encourage the use of recycled "grey" water and rainwater

Social

- Tackle fuel poverty
- Make access to energy and water more socially-just
- Improve energy efficiency, creating healthier, warmer buildings

Economic

- Invest in energy efficiency, creating jobs
- Encourage more small scale, local energy production to create jobs
- Encourage the development of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies
- Encourage energy crops for biomass fuels, giving local farms opportunities for diversification
- Manage the demand for energy and water through pricing regimes

Process

- Increase public awareness of energy and water issues

8.6 Suggested indicators

Percentage of homes heated to agreed standard for less than 10% of household disposable income

Emissions of carbon dioxide in Dorset (tonnes per capita)

Residential energy consumption (per capita)

Water use (per capita)

Percentage of length of Dorset rivers of good or fair quality

Cost of treating drinking water

8.7 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste

9. Fair society

9.1 Fairness is at the heart of sustainable development, but is also one of its most challenging demands. It is a complex, multi-dimensional issue, and the problems are many. They act together to create a cycle of disadvantage, the effects of which can persist throughout people's lives and from generation to generation.

9.2 Poverty, exclusion and vulnerability are more widespread in Dorset than many people would realise, and should receive new attention. Nearly one in five families in the county relies on income support, for example. Poverty is statistically related to higher rates of physical and mental ill-health, bad housing and becoming a victim of crime, and it affects not only the unemployed. Elderly people, young people, the disabled and single parents are also vulnerable.

9.3 There needs to be a new approach to dealing with the problems of exclusion. A long-term perspective is vital, coupled with actions that tackle the causes of exclusion and not just its symptoms. There must be better co-ordination of policies, and an emphasis on helping people to help themselves.

9.4 Vision

A society which is fair, inclusive, sharing compassionate, and which makes support available in effective ways to anyone who truly needs it. A society in which dependency is reduced.

9.5 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Integrate environmental and social policies. The poor and socially excluded often live in the worst physical environments and the highest pollution levels.

Social

- Seek effective, efficient and co-ordinated policies to build thriving communities in which everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life
- Ensure support for those who need it
- Promote social justice
- Promote social inclusion
- Tackle poverty



- Provide adequate and appropriate housing stock, particularly in the rented sector
- Ensure that access to transport is available to all, and not restricted to those who have the use of a car
- Encourage the use of advocacy

Economic

- Improve training to raise the level of skills in the Dorset economy
- Enable people to arrange childcare by offering flexible working hours and creche facilities
- Regenerate towns and villages
- Help community enterprise, Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS) and credit unions
- Promote fair trade and ethical investment

Process

- Develop an anti-poverty strategy
- Extend public participation in the decision-making processes, paying particular attention to groups that are currently poorly represented
- Re-examine service delivery, to ensure that it is as user-friendly as possible
- Assess the impacts of corporate activity and policy on poverty
- Work in partnership with other agencies with similar objectives
- Increase public awareness of the problems of poverty and social exclusion
- Make information easily available to those who need it

9.6 Suggested indicators

Level of community well-being (by local survey)

Percentage of households claiming benefits

Social support (informal neighbour or community support)

Percentage of households disconnected from electricity supplies

Percentage of public buildings with disabled access or facilities for the physically impaired

Number of people in work

9.7 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste

10. Food and agriculture

10.1 Intensive agriculture has become the norm as successive governments have encouraged greater production through subsidies. This in turn has led to the widespread use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, which have had major implications for water quality, the landscape, ecology and food safety. Consumer demand for organically-produced food demonstrates that rapidly-increasing numbers of people are concerned about the effects of intensive farming, but much of the organic produce sold in the UK has to be imported.

10.2 Sustainable agriculture would produce affordable, high quality food to the best environmental and animal welfare standards. This can be achieved through support for farming communities and an appropriate taxation and funding system. Much therefore rests on action by the EU and the UK Government, but there are opportunities locally. The County Council owns about 100 farms, and there has been some welcome progress on converting to organic production. This estate represents a major resource, however, and a significant opportunity to encourage best environmental practice.

10.3 Vision

Everyone in Dorset should have access to safe, nutritious, unadulterated and affordable food, locally produced as far as possible by an independent, viable industry within a healthy and sustainable environment.

10.4 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Support sustainable farm practices
- Promote agri-environment schemes and farm conservation plans
- Encourage landowners to use fewer pesticides and synthetic fertilisers
- Promote opportunities for farmers to enhance the landscape
- Reduce “food miles” and cut the impacts of transporting food
- Adopt the precautionary principle

Social

- Support whole rural communities, to stem the loss of young people from agriculture
- Strengthen communities by promoting local food links
- Provide the public with greater access to fresh food
- Give the consumer informed choices, through better labelling



Economic

- Increase the number of jobs in agriculture through reduced intensification
- Extend organic food production
- Buy locally – keep money in the local economy to support local jobs
- Extend farmers' markets
- Encourage community and farmer co-operatives
- Encourage rural skills and trades
- Re-build consumer confidence in home-produced food
- Trade fairly and ethically

Process

- Promote public awareness of food and agriculture issues and of opportunities to buy local food

10.5 Suggested indicators

Percentage of land area farmed organically

Percentage of shops selling locally-produced food and wood products

Number of farmers' markets held

Number of jobs in agriculture

10.6 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste



11. Natural environment

11.1 Dorset has one of the richest and most varied natural environments of any county in Britain – a fragile inheritance to pass on to future generations. The effects of recent agricultural change, urban expansion and neglect have been dramatic, however. Areas of chalk grassland, unimproved neutral grassland, heathland and traditional hay meadows have been greatly diminished, both in extent and quality. What remains is now of national importance, providing habitats for some of Britain's rarest animals. The natural environment, as well as providing us with the vital life-support systems, is also an integral part of the broader concept of quality of life.

11.2 Many good initiatives are underway, however. The Dorset Coast Strategy, for example, is an excellent local example of partnership working and integrated management of an internationally-renowned natural resource. Countryside Stewardship, one of the Government's agri-environment schemes, is successfully reversing some of the damage to habitats and landscapes and deserves more support. Many species also depend on areas outside protected sites, where there has been a severe decline in biodiversity.

11.3 Vision

We should enhance Dorset's natural environment to attain a high quality of life for its people and wildlife, and so contribute to the maintenance of healthy global ecosystems. This should be achieved by preventing loss, damage and fragmentation of habitats, by sensitive management and stewardship of our natural resources, and by involving all sections of society.

11.4 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Consider the environmental impacts of all developments
- Institute measures to protect and improve Dorset's threatened habitats
- Establish priorities for the protection of threatened species
- Conserve water and minimise pollution
- Promote environmental action and awareness at all levels



Social

- Recognise that biodiversity is a vital aspect of our quality of life and of the distinctiveness of Dorset
- Enable all sections of society to play their part in conserving the natural environment

Economic

- Integrate environmental and economic strategies
- Recognise that a good environment is good for business in Dorset
- Build environmental criteria into trade and purchasing
- Lobby government to improve the subsidy schemes for organic farming and to reform the Common Agricultural Policy

Process

- Encourage widespread public participation in the identification and implementation of actions
- Promote education for sustainability at all levels and support it with adequate resources
- Support local environmental groups
- Adopt environmental policy statements, making commitments to valuing biodiversity
- Work in partnership with other organisations to safeguard and improve habitats and biodiversity

11.5 Suggested indicators

Populations of wild birds

Percentage of farmland covered by farm conservation plans

Area of heathland recreated

Biodiversity index

11.6 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste

12. Public health and safety

12.1 The vital importance of ensuring people's health and safety is underlined in virtually every aspect of Agenda 21. Much has been done this century to improve public health and safety, but health inequalities have grown in the last two decades and air pollution – much of it due to road traffic – still claims 24,000 lives a year in the UK.

12.2 As with other topics discussed in this document, public health and safety cuts across all themes, with decent accommodation, social inclusion, access to resources and facilities, lower crime levels, less pollution, improved physical health and diet as just some of the elements. Agreed and resourced partnership programmes, involving a wide range of agencies, will therefore be needed to co-ordinate action. Community motivation and mobilisation will also be crucial and will require facilitating, and communities should be empowered to make changes through access to networks, lobbying groups and funding.

12.3 Vision

Healthy communities where everyone can live, work, rest and play in safety and harmony.

12.4 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Recognise the links between environmental quality and health
- Strive for cleaner air and water

Social

- Adopt community safety strategies
- Promote social inclusion
- Promote road safety and safe routes to school
- Provide good quality, affordable housing

Economic

- Ensure healthy and safe working environments



Process

- Improve co-ordination and communication between agencies
- Develop agreed and resourced partnership programmes
- Empower communities to lobby and fundraise, through networks and capacity building
- Lobby government directly on community health and safety issues
- Provide communities with easily-understood information, including indicators
- Counter apathy, by motivating and mobilising communities into action
- Create more transparent decision-making processes

12.5 Suggested indicators

Incidence of asthma

Number of deaths and serious injuries by road traffic accidents

Violent crimes per 1000 population

Burglaries per 1000 population

Number of fires requiring Fire Brigade assistance

12.6 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste



13. Shopping and consumerism

13.1 The things we buy have a huge impact on the environment, both in Dorset and the rest of the world. Recent years, for example, have seen big increases in the distances food is transported (“food miles”) and in wasteful packaging. Indeed, waste disposal is a particular concern in Dorset. There are growing concerns about how ethical our trading is, not only in environmental terms but also in terms of the conditions of workers producing the things that we buy. The true environmental and social costs of our goods and services, therefore, are often not being met. There is also a worry in Dorset about local shops closing, particularly in rural areas, and about the dominant position of national retailers.

13.2 The power of consumers – including local authorities and agencies – to bring about improvements is considerable. Policies should be aimed at keeping money in the local economy as far as possible, and non-cash schemes, such as LETS, should be encouraged. Purchasing should favour local producers and suppliers.

13.3 Vision

Dorset people should have reasonable access to shops and services, which, wherever possible, should be developed within the county and enhance its economy. Consumers should have access to a variety of safe, high-quality and ethically-traded goods at a reasonable price. These should use a minimum of resources, both to make and to distribute. They should use the least possible amount of packaging, which should minimise environmental damage.

13.4 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Reduce the use of agricultural pesticides and fertilisers
- Reduce the amount of packaging, particularly that which is non-recyclable
- Reduce the distances that goods travel from producer to consumer

Social

- Develop local food links between producers and consumers
- Reduce the need to travel to shops and services in rural areas, by supporting village shops and by seeking new ways of providing post office services



Economic

- Introduce ethical and environmental purchasing policies into large organisations
- Buy from local producers and retailers to strengthen the local economy
- Encourage LETS and community enterprises

Process

- Promote awareness of consumerism issues
- Establish a county-wide consumer Forum

13.5 Suggested indicators

Number of villages without shops

Number of LETS schemes or other identified community business

Number of organisations with environmental or ethical purchasing policies

Food miles travelled

13.6 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste



14. Transport and access

14.1 The car has brought many benefits to society, but the ever-expanding amount of traffic on our roads is now imposing considerable costs. Carbon dioxide is adding to global climate change, air pollution is damaging health, people without the use of a car are increasingly being denied access to services, limited public transport is adding to social exclusion and cyclists and walkers are facing dangerous and unhealthy conditions. The development plan and local transport plan processes have prompted considerable debate on transport policy issues in Dorset, and government policy now places much more emphasis on traffic reduction and integrated transport solutions than on road-building.

14.2 Everyone has a part to play. Local authorities clearly have a vital role in delivering a good, sustainable transport infrastructure, including better public transport and more facilities for cyclists and walkers, and better access to services without the need to travel. They can, along with businesses, schools, hospitals and others, also take a lead by adopting green commuter plans to minimise the impacts of their activities. The value of community and voluntary transport schemes, such as the County Council's Country Cars scheme, should also be recognised, particularly for the elderly and disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

14.3 Vision

Everyone in Dorset should have adequate access to all parts of the community and beyond, by means of an affordable, sustainable freight and passenger transport system.

14.4 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Develop better links between land-use planning policies and existing transport infrastructure
- Invest in sustainable transport infrastructure
- Support moves to give walkers and cyclists priority over motorised traffic

Social

- Address social exclusion by providing a transport system that is accessible to all, and that meets the needs of everyone
- Reduce the need to travel through the innovative delivery of public services
- Challenge the car culture, as nurtured by advertising



Economic

- Take the full cost of transportation into account to enable sustainable transport measures to compete on equal terms
- Encourage businesses to adopt green commuting policies
- Support village shops and local economies
- Ensure that Dorset's railways have a secure future, particularly the Weymouth to Bristol line, and that they are used to their maximum potential

Process

- Make the Local Transport Planning process as inclusive and transparent as possible
- Promote public awareness of transport issues and encourage individuals to think about their transport impacts, particularly over short distances

14.5 Suggested indicators

Kilometres of designated cycle routes

Percentage of children who walk and cycle to school

Volumes of traffic by mode

14.6 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste



15. Waste

15.1 Dorset generates more than a million tonnes of solid waste every year, a quarter of it by households. Most is buried in landfill sites. The county is a UK-leader in the field of recycling, with 36% of household waste being recycled, a figure that is being improved upon year on year. Even in Dorset, however, the problem is far from being beaten as more and more waste is being created in the first place. The only long-term solution is to reduce that total by changing our processing, packaging and purchasing practices, and that will be a difficult task. Increased materialism, a throw-away culture and the attraction of “convenience” foods are some of the factors which need to be addressed.

15.2 Vision

Dorset should be a leader in environmental protection by an effective policy of waste minimisation and the efficiency of its waste collection and disposal. People should be helped by the provision of even better facilities for separation of re-usable materials. Ultimately every household should be responsible for its own waste and also enjoy the opportunity for recycling assistance. Encouragement should be given to composting green waste at source. There must also be a vigorous publicity campaign urging the reduction of waste, especially cutting back on needless packaging at source.

15.3 Key areas for action

Environmental

- Encourage household composting
- Extend facilities for household recycling
- Develop waste minimisation programmes for households and employers
- Encourage shops to reduce unnecessary packaging
- Dispose of waste locally, to reduce the impacts of transporting waste and to minimise the impacts of the disposal of waste on other communities
- Seek ways of reducing the amount of commercial and industrial waste produced



Social

- Support community waste minimisation initiatives

Economic

- Adopt green purchasing policies to encourage the use of recycled products
- Establish a “clean waste” exchange for businesses, such as a Scrapstore
- Support businesses that actively address waste minimisation

Process

- Raise public and commercial awareness of waste issues

15.4 Suggested indicators

Total waste arisings per household

Percentage of household waste recycled

Number of companies participating in waste minimisation schemes

Commercial waste arisings

15.5 Main links to other topic areas

Built and local environment

Education

Energy and water

Fair society

Food and agriculture

Natural environment

Public health and safety

Shopping and consumerism

Transport and access

Waste



16. Making it happen

- 16.1** Although previous sections recommend many practical actions, it must be stressed that, in sustainable development, process is as important as actions. In other words, it is not just what we decide to do, but how we make the decision. Indeed, it can be argued that if the process is right, the right decisions will follow. A number of vital process elements are stated and restated throughout this document, whilst others need to be highlighted for the first time.
- 16.2 Participation.** Many traditional decision-making processes are not well-equipped to deliver sustainable outcomes. The development plan process, for example, follows a “put up a plan and defend it” approach, which is broadly adversarial in nature and is not likely to generate a wide sense of ownership. The Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the White Paper “A Better Quality of Life – a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom” are unequivocal: there needs to be widespread participation in finding a consensus on a way forward on sustainable development. This should attempt to extend to all those who, for whatever reason, are normally excluded from the decision-making processes, including young people. Strategies should not be developed without the participation of the individuals and communities who experience them.
- 16.3 Information and education.** This is clearly linked to the participative principle outlined above, as people need to be aware of the choices that are available to them. Improved awareness of sustainable development can be a powerful tool for change. This area is considered to be of particular importance.
- 16.4 Integration.** Sustainable development should be at the centre of all environmental, economic and social strategies. Ways of testing strategies against sustainability criteria should be developed, perhaps by using the Local Government Management Board’s thirteen “themes of a sustainable community”. Particular care must be taken to ensure that local authority corporate strategies, such as Best Value local performance plans and community plans, are fully in line with sustainable development objectives.
- 16.5 Partnerships.** Local authorities, agencies, businesses and communities should work together to deliver sustainable development. Organisational and institutional barriers need to be broken down to generate innovative solutions to multi-faceted problems.
- 16.6 Improving organisational performance.** Large organisations have a direct impact on their local environments, populations and economies through the effects of their activities. The bigger the organisation, the bigger its “footprint” will be. All should try to minimise their environmental impacts whilst, at the same time, maximising their social and local economic benefits; the so-called “triple bottom line”. Purchasing policies can be adapted to ensure that organisations buy ethically and locally, as well as environmentally. Organisations should also address staff travel issues, minimise waste and save energy and water, and initiatives should be developed with the participation of employees where possible.

16.7 Taking a global view. Some of the world's most pressing sustainability problems have their roots at the local level, in the policies and actions of local organisations and in the day to day lifestyles of ordinary people, particularly in the developed countries. Climate change is a good example. We all contribute to the problem through our use of fossil fuels, particularly by our ever-increasing use of the car. Social equity and exclusion, already profoundly affecting billions of people in the developing world, are also exacerbated by trade systems which increase inequalities between north and south and degrade the environments of the world's poorest people. Sustainable development therefore requires a momentum for local action to be harnessed to a capacity for global awareness. There are also significant opportunities for education for sustainability. International NGOs such as the World-wide Fund for Nature and Oxfam are in an excellent position to provide educational resources on global issues, and many local authorities have existing links with communities in developing countries.

16.8 Monitoring and reporting. Each section in this report includes a short list of suggested indicators. It is the Forum's intention to collect information and publish findings on an annual basis, to give a broad picture of whether Dorset is moving towards or away from sustainability. This will be in a non-technical, accessible format to engage as many people as possible in the Local Agenda 21 process. All major organisations should consider adopting sustainability indicators to measure both their own performance and the impacts of their policies and programmes.



17. Project proposals

- 17.1** The Sustainable Dorset Action Planning Conference, described in paragraph 3.2, used an innovative facilitation technique to enable delegates to develop and agree an initial programme of 25 suggested project proposals.
- 17.2** This programme, given in summary in the accompanying matrix, should not be seen as a wish-list for the local authorities or as being exhaustive. Many of the projects would, however, need at least some input from local authorities together with contributions from a wide range of other organisations.
- 17.3** No priority has been assigned to the proposals at this stage. The matrix will be further developed by the Forum in a ten-year plan.



Vision	Action	Who needs to be involved?	Possible lead	Comments
All visions	Promote the Agenda 21 process at the community level. Develop links, co-ordination and partnerships with villages and communities. Facilitate information sharing and communication. Build on the success of the Piddle Valley Parish Agenda 21 process.	Dorset Community Action, district councils, Dorset County Council, Dorset Agenda 21 Forum, parish and town councils, community groups, schools	Dorset Community Action or district councils	High priority. Needs to build on existing work on Parish Agenda 21, village appraisals, parish maps and village design statements
	Create support for community action, by creating a focus for local action, improving communications and networking, providing “signposting” and strengthening existing resources.	Local authorities, Dorset Community Action	Dorset County Council Social Services	Relates to the above
	General support to the Agenda 21 process, helping to implement, develop and disseminate information, and helping other groups to organise campaigns.	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum	
	Create empowerment, through improved communications from local government and help and education for people who do not normally have the opportunity to express and develop their ideas.	Local authorities	Local authorities	
Built and local environment	Crossways: sustainable community and landscape. Use the opportunities presented by the Structure Plan and West Dorset Local Plan proposals for expansion to develop a sustainable community, encompassing as many of the Agenda 21 principles as possible.	Local authorities, Crossways Parish Council and community, developers and mineral and waste disposal site operators	Crossways Parish Council and West Dorset District Council	
	Integrate sustainability and development, by influencing the development control process to include requirements for sustainable development. Establish information on the current sustainability policies of local authorities and produce a “model” supplementary planning guidance.	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum, local authorities	Dedicated development and sustainability project group	High priority, given housing projections for the current Structure Plan period
	Improve the built environment through sustainable transport, by encouraging the provision of good, sustainable transport infrastructure at the developers’ cost and at the commencement of development projects.	Local authorities, developers	Local authorities	
Education	Promote education for sustainability, by encouraging LEAs to make a commitment to sustainable development and to pass this down to schools. Encourage schools to build sustainable development into schools development plans, and provide training and information. Could link to the collection of data for indicators.	Dorset Education for Sustainability Network, local education authorities, schools	Dorset Education for Sustainability Network	High priority. Education must be a vital element of any strategy for sustainable development

Vision	Action	Who needs to be involved?	Possible lead	Comments
Education <i>(continued)</i>	Training in the concepts of sustainable development. To include a series of formal and informal events on communication skills, creative skills and specific technical skills (eg increasing biodiversity in gardens, energy conservation etc)	Dorset Education for Sustainability Network, LEAs, schools, governing bodies, PTAs, businesses	Dorset Education for Sustainability Network	
	Develop a web directory, to provide links to other sustainable development web sites.	Monkton Wyld Court, all providers of relevant web sites	Monkton Wyld Court	
Energy and water	Improve understanding of the full impacts of energy use and production, through an audit of current available information, and the development of information targeted at elected representatives, the public and schools.	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum, Dorset County Council, district councils	Specialist working group	Links to existing energy awareness work and Home Energy Conservation Act
Fair society	Improve information and communication for the elderly and their supporters, covering transport, energy conservation, housing and a range of other issues. Develop a directory of information, services and voluntary organisations, using a range of existing means of dissemination (parish magazines etc) and ensuring that providers of information are properly trained.	Age Concern, local authorities, Dorset Community Action, parish councils	Age Concern	
	Produce a North Dorset LA21 strategy, meeting social needs, promoting economic success and environmental protection.	North Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council, Dorset Community Action and a range of other organisations involved in sustainability issues.	North Dorset District Council	One of several district council strategies under preparation
	Poverty mapping, by using information gathered by public and other organisations and monitoring over time. Information to be made available to policy makers and service deliverers to alleviate poverty.	Dorset County Council, Dorset Community Action, voluntary sector organisations.	Dorset County Council and Dorset Community Action	Represents the continued development of an existing project
Food and agriculture	Promote farmers markets, by setting up a feasibility study into the establishment of new markets, and to establish a support group to assist.	Local authorities, West Dorset Food and Land Trust, Dorset Community Action, farmers, National Farmers' Union		Farmers markets are developing successfully in various towns, and North Dorset has a developing local foodlinks project.

Vision	Action	Who needs to be involved?	Possible lead	Comments
Natural environment	Produce a nature conservation directory , in ring-binder format, to bring together existing information and to help identify gaps. To include details on organisations and activities, educational facilities, research projects, contractors etc. To be updated regularly.	Conservation bodies, local authorities	A steering group of about five people	
	Lobby national and local decision-makers to raise funds for agricultural conservation measures. Create a directory of lobby groups at the local, national and European levels.	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum, NFU, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, conservation bodies	Specialist sub-group of the Dorset Agenda 21 Forum, with expertise in lobbying	
Public health and safety	Promote long distance trailways , by supporting the Greenways initiative, developing former railways, transferring funds from Highways capital budgets and promoting sustainable transport links between villages and towns.	Government, local authorities, Countryside Agency, English Partnerships, businesses, landfill tax bodies	Dorset County Council	
Shopping and consumerism	Establish a Dorset consumer group , to gather and disseminate product histories, support consumer choice and lobby on consumer issues, with a particular focus on sustainability.	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum	A steering group of about five people	
Transport and access	Better co-ordinate public transport and incentives to use public transport. Investigate current levels of co-ordination, and seek opportunities and resources for improvement.	Dorset Community Action, local authorities, public transport providers	Dorset Community Action	
	Provide cycleways to link villages with towns. Lobby local authorities to transfer resources from roadbuilding to cyclists, walkers and horseriders, to provide safe routes to schools, places of work and shops.	Transport groups, community groups, Dorset Agenda 21 Forum	Dorset Agenda 21 Forum	
	Transport planning. Develop a package of measures to promote sustainable transport initiatives and reduce car dependence. Establish transport forums and surveys.	Dorset County Council, parish and town councils	Dorset County Council	Represents further development of existing work on Local Transport Plans and transport forums
Waste	Develop novel means of waste disposal , through research, incentives and support for innovative solutions as scrapstores.	Business groups, local authorities		Dorset Scrapstore being planned
	Develop networks for rural waste disposal and recycling , in both the domestic and commercial sectors, to encourage self-help, re-use of business waste in the community etc.	Local authorities, businesses, Business Link		

18. The future of the Dorset Agenda 21 Forum

18.1 Throughout the process of developing these visions and recommendations, the Forum has operated as a loose network of relevant organisations and interested individuals, with working groups being formed and disbanded as and when appropriate.

18.2 With the completion of this process, however, and with a view to the future, the Forum has recently reviewed its role and structure. Within the overall framework set by this document, it has agreed that its own priorities should be:

- providing a strategic, co-ordinating role between local authorities, agencies, businesses and non-governmental organisations;
- facilitating and assisting other organisations to implement actions, including by networking;
- promoting education for sustainability;
- collecting data and disseminating good practice;
- communicating information to the public, local authorities and agencies;
- monitoring and evaluating strategies against agreed indicators and targets.

18.3 To deliver this, the Forum will convert to a charitable company limited by guarantee. It will prepare a ten-year plan to guide its work and future development, building on strong links with Dorset County Council, but, equally importantly, fostering closer working ties with the District Councils and other organisations involved in promoting sustainable development. The Forum will, at an early stage, therefore seek agreement with all Dorset local authorities and Dorset Community Action on how their Agenda 21 work may be supported and on how co-operative working may be developed.

18.4 It is also felt that a county-level body will be valuable as a networking mechanism for the growing number of district, town and parish forums in Dorset, and as a link to the increasingly-significant regional level of decision-making.



Appendix 1: Summary of visions

Built and local environment: “Dorset’s built environment should be appropriate to its people’s needs. It should provide them with sufficient, well-designed, diverse, safe and affordable buildings and spaces in which they can live, work and play. They should be constructed in a sustainable manner and be in harmony with the character and tradition of the county.”

Education: “We should put sustainable development into the curriculum of schools and into the lives of people and communities at home and work, helping to transform world views. We should promote active citizenship and environmental responsibility.”

Energy and water: “Energy should, where possible, be harnessed from renewable resources. It must be used efficiently by everyone in all situations, minimising waste. The supply and use of water should reflect its vital importance to all life. Water should not be wasted, and sustainable supplies should be established.”

Fair society: “A society which is fair, inclusive, sharing and compassionate, and which makes support available in effective ways to anyone who truly needs it. A society in which dependency is reduced.”

Food and agriculture: “Everyone in Dorset should have access to safe, nutritious, unadulterated and affordable food, locally produced as far as possible by an independent, viable industry within a healthy and sustainable environment.”

Natural environment: “We should enhance Dorset’s natural environment to attain a high quality of life for its people and wildlife, and so contribute to the maintenance of healthy global ecosystems. This should be achieved by preventing loss, damage and fragmentation of habitats, by sensitive management and stewardship of our natural resources, and by involving all sections of society.”

Public health and safety: “Healthy communities where everyone can live, work, rest and play in safety and harmony.”

Shopping and consumerism: “Dorset people should have reasonable access to shops and services, which, wherever possible, should be developed within the county and enhance its economy. Consumers should have access to a variety of safe, high-quality and ethically-traded goods at a reasonable price. These should use a minimum of resources, both to make and to distribute. They should use the least possible amount of packaging, which should minimise environmental damage.”

Transport and access: “Everyone in Dorset should have adequate access to all parts of the community and beyond, by means of an affordable, sustainable freight and passenger transport system.”

Waste: “Dorset should be a leader in environmental protection by an effective policy of waste minimisation and the efficiency of its waste collection and disposal. People should be helped by the provision of even better facilities for separation of re-usable materials. Ultimately every household should be responsible for their own waste and also enjoy the opportunity for recycling assistance. Encouragement should be given to composting green waste at source. There must also be a vigorous publicity campaign urging the reduction of waste, especially cutting back on needless packaging at source.”

Appendix 2: Summary of suggested indicators

- 1.** Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land
- 2.** Percentage of homes judged unfit to live in
- 3.** Housing need
- 4.** Percentage of schools that have undertaken education for sustainability programmes in the last two years
- 5.** Percentage of adult population in full/part-time education or training (including evening classes)
- 6.** Qualifications at age 19
- 7.** Percentage of homes heated to agreed standard for less than 10% of household disposable income.
- 8.** Emissions of carbon dioxide in Dorset (tonnes per capita)
- 9.** Residential energy consumption (per capita)
- 10.** Water use (per capita)
- 11.** Percentage of length of Dorset rivers of good or fair quality
- 12.** Cost of treating drinking water
- 13.** Level of community well-being (by local survey)
- 14.** Percentage of households claiming benefits
- 15.** Social support (informal neighbour or community support)
- 16.** Percentage of households disconnected from electricity supplies
- 17.** Percentage of public buildings with disabled access or facilities for the physically impaired
- 18.** Number of people in work
- 19.** Percentage of land area farmed organically
- 20.** Percentage of shops selling locally-produced food and wood products
- 21.** Number of farmers' markets held
- 22.** Number of jobs in agriculture

- 23.** Populations of wild birds
- 24.** Percentage of farmland covered by farm conservation plans
- 25.** Area of heathland recreated
- 26.** Biodiversity index
- 27.** Incidence of asthma
- 28.** Number of deaths and serious injuries by road traffic accidents
- 29.** Violent crimes per 1000 population
- 30.** Burglaries per 1000 population
- 31.** Number of fires requiring Fire Brigade assistance
- 32.** Number of villages without shops
- 33.** Number of LETS schemes or other identified community business
- 34.** Number of organisations with environmental or ethical purchasing policies
- 35.** Food miles travelled
- 36.** Kilometres of designated cycle routes
- 37.** Percentage of children who walk and cycle to school
- 38.** Volumes of traffic by mode
- 39.** Total waste arisings per household
- 40.** Percentage of household waste recycled
- 41.** Number of companies participating in waste minimisation schemes
- 42.** Commercial waste arisings