

Introduction

This is the second annual update of the Local Agenda 21 strategy Here today HERE TOMORROW which was published in April 2000.

The main purpose of the strategy was to set in place a framework on which to continue and, in some cases, introduce the principles of sustainable development into the day to day working of the Council and its partner organisations.

This update report reviews what has happened locally over the last year in working towards the objectives set by the LA21 strategy for Gateshead. It also sets out some of the key actions that will be taken forward over the following year.

The update is divided into the seven objectives and each will contain 4 sections:

- Key issues for 2001
- Progress against the Action Plan and the Key issues for 2001
- The indicators used to measure progress and the current performance in some of the areas of work
- Key actions to be undertaken in 2002

If you have any comments on the LA21 strategy or this annual update please contact Tim Deveaux on 0191 4333512 or by e-mail timdeveaux@gateshead.gov.uk

Air Quality and Noise Management

Objectives

- To reduce or control levels of air pollutants
- To protect the people who live or work in the borough, or are visiting, from unnecessary exposure to noise
- To seek to reduce ambient noise levels where it is reasonable to do so.

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Complete the consultation on the Review and Assessment of Air Quality in Gateshead
- Continue to monitor key air pollutants and report levels on the website
- Develop the Mediation service to deal with noisy neighbours

Action Plan Progress 2001/2002

- One of the air quality monitoring mobile units was used throughout the year to monitor traffic pollutants on the A1 North Dunston slip road . The other Council unit was used to monitor traffic pollutants on the A167 southern approach to the Tyne Bridge for most of the year, then relocated to monitor an industrial process for fine particulates. Late in the year the unit shared with 3 of the other Tyne and Wear authorities was set up to monitor traffic pollutants on the A167 through Birtley.
- The consultation on the first round of review and assessment of air quality in the borough was completed. No responses were received.
- All monitoring data from the air quality monitoring units is now placed on the Council's website and is updated regularly.
- One member of staff was trained in mediation. The Mediation Service was launched on 1 November 2001 and deals with issues between neighbours in Council housing.
- An Intruder Alarm Registration form has been placed on the Council's Website. Links have been made with Community Based Services who will issue alarm registration forms when houses are rewired incorporating intruder alarms.
- A Leaflet has been prepared on how to deal with intruder alarms. It is also available on the Council's website.

Indicators of performance

The current national air quality objectives for NO₂ are:

- 200 microgrammes per cubic metre - 1 hour mean not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year - by the end of 2005
- 40 microgrammes per cubic metre - annual mean by the end of 2005

In 2001 the hourly mean was not exceeded at all during the year and the annual mean at the two sites was 13.9 and 17.2 microgrammes per cubic metre

The objectives for PM₁₀ are:

- 50 microgrammes per cubic metre - 24 hour mean not to be exceeded more than 35 times per year - by the end of 2004
- 40 microgrammes per cubic metre - annual mean - by the end of 2004

In 2001 the 24-hour mean was exceeded on 12 days during the year and the annual mean at the two sites was 22.6 and 25.8 microgrammes per cubic metre
For comparison purposes, the national average in urban areas in 2001 was 21 days per site recorded as higher or moderate air pollution.

Key issues for 2002/2003

- Continue to monitor air quality.
- Report the results from the local monitoring at Birtley.
- Continue to monitor the mediation service and report results.

Biodiversity

Objectives

- To maintain, enhance and re-establish the variety of animals and plants in Gateshead
- To maintain and improve semi-natural habitats and protect species
- To generate awareness of and involvement in wildlife conservation
- To improve access to wildlife habitats, where appropriate
- To work with agencies and communities to ensure that good river and pond water quality is maintained

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Launch Bringing Back Burdon Moor Project in September 2001
- Seek to include Shibdon Landfill site in the Shibdon Pond Local Nature Reserve
- Implement the Saltwell Park Biodiversity Action Plan
- Complete the purchase of Lamesley Pastures as part of the River Team Revival Project
- Implement actions to contribute to the second tranche of action plans in the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan

Action Plan Progress 2001/2002

- Durham Biodiversity Action Plan - third tranche action plans completed and launched March 2002. Work is in progress on the implementation of targets which are relevant to Gateshead. Species work includes identification of areas used by Otters and Water Voles and seeking to ensure their long term protection.
- Bringing Back Burdon Moor - this has a long term implementation timescale of about 25 years. The work programme is in progress. The project was launched in September 2001. Countryside Stewardship funding has been secured for 10 years. The initial stages of the work programme are now in progress (ground preparation works) and community outreach work is underway. This 15-hectare site will be developed into an area of lowland heath, with associated grassland and wetland habitats and managed public access.
- Lamesley Pastures - this land acquisition, with Heritage Lottery funding, has now been completed. Countryside stewardship grant aid has also been secured for 10 years. An 18 hectare site, on which grasslands will be enhanced and wetlands created, with managed public access.
- Next to Nature Project - Successful application was made by the Council to English Nature for New Opportunities Fund grant aid (under the Wildspace! programme). This will involve existing and proposed Local Natures Reserves in east Gateshead. A Community Wildlife Officer has been appointed - the project commenced Feb 2002.
- River Team Revival Project - The environment Agency has taken the lead in establishing a partnership to improve the environment in the River Team catchment area. The Project Officer has prepared a scoping report. Assistance from the Council includes the purchase of Lamesley Pastures and its enhancement as a wetland area. A Promotional industry day was held in Nov. 2001. The Council supported a bid for future project funding through the European INTERREG programme.
- The Shibdon landfill site has now become part of the Shibdon local nature reserve. This brings the site to a total area of 20 hectares. The Council has applied for a grant from English Nature to further develop the reserve to improve the habitats for wildlife.
- Saltwell Park biodiversity action plan - The Biodiversity Plan was adopted by the Council in November 2000. It is used to guide the design of the landscape elements of the Restoration Plan - over 20,000 trees and shrubs have been planted since its adoption - and will be incorporated into the Management Plan for the Park which is being prepared for adoption during 2002/03.

Indicators of performance

The following indicators are being used for biodiversity

- ◆ The percentage of length of rivers and canals falling into the good and fair quality grades of the Environment Agency Chemical and Biological General Quality Assessment. In Gateshead during 2000 the percentage of rivers of good and fair chemical quality was 88.9% and for biological quality it was 62.4%. In the whole of England, the percentage of rivers of good and fair chemical quality was 94% and for biological quality it was 64%.
- ◆ The net change in quality and/or quantity of locally important natural/semi-natural habitats (e.g. woodland or grassland).
This means the number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). 2001 was the first year for collecting and publishing this information. In Gateshead we have 8 SSSI's with an area of 151.5 hectares. 94.4% of this area is in either favourable condition or unfavourable recovering condition. Nationally, the average is 62% in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition.

We also have 0.3 hectares of Local Nature Reserves per 1000 population.

The Next to Nature project has set a target of 0.5 hectares per 1000 people by 2005. This increase is likely to be east Gateshead in urban areas. The average nationally is 0.285 hectares per 1000 people.

The latest information we have on Sites of Scientific Conservation Importance comes from a survey done in 1996. A further survey was held in 2001 but the results are not yet available.

The area of woodland in the borough - 1121 hectares

The area of lowland meadows and pastures - 283 hectares

The area of ponds - 22 hectares

- ◆ The occurrence of one or more characteristic species
For example: the Otter is present on the Rivers Tyne and Derwent and the Water Vole has reappeared on the River Tyne and near Sunnyside.
Birds of Conservation concern - Song Thrush, Skylark, Linnet, Grey Partridge. The numbers of these and other birds are currently being surveyed through a winter birds survey and Summer breeding birds survey. The results will be available later this year.
- ◆ The number of Hectares of publicly accessible green spaces - open spaces/parks - per 1,000 population.
In 2000, there were 5.64 hectares per 1000 head of population of accessible green space in the whole of Gateshead borough. This increased to 5.81 in 2001. Nationally, the average is 4.90 hectares per 1000 population.

Key issues for 2002/2003

- Begin implementation of the Next to Nature Project, to include designation of three new Local Nature Reserves in east Gateshead and the development of a programme of community activities based around these sites.
- Continue implementation of the Bringing Back Burdon Moor Project - work in 2002/2003 to include the completion of ground preparation, the commencement of habitat creation and an artistic waymarking project linking the site with Kibblesworth Environment Centre and Watergate Forest Park.
- Begin implementation of the Lamesley Pastures Project, as part of the River Team Revival Project - work in 2002/2003 to include habitat creation, new access provision and site interpretation.
- Continue implementation of work to support delivery of the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan.

Energy Conservation

Objectives

- To reduce energy consumption, ensure energy is used efficiently, and encourage the increased use of renewable energy
- To use water efficiently and with care and work with agencies and communities to ensure good water quality is maintained

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Publish a comprehensive Energy Strategy for Gateshead
- Complete feasibility study for Combined Heat and Power schemes for Gateshead Leisure Centre, Civic centre and Dunston and Felling Swimming pools
- Continue to upgrade Council Houses central heating systems and install Cavity Wall Insulation.

Action Plan Progress 2001/2002

- An internal audit of the top 100 energy and water consumers within the Council has been 95% completed and the information used to assist in targeting improvements, e.g.: All swimming pools have been provided with new covers increasing the energy efficiency of the plant and increasing savings
- A Heating appliance replacement programme for Council houses in 2001/2 targets upgrading old, inefficient systems. Homes benefiting from heating upgrade receive cavity wall insulation where possible. 547 obsolete heating appliances have been replaced with energy efficient appliances. 316 properties have benefited from cavity wall insulation alone. A further 869 properties have been provided with cavity wall insulation and energy efficient appliances. Additional work was carried out to provide an insulated cladding system to 32 non-traditional properties.
- The 2000/01 Fuel Poverty Strategy was completed and sent to the Government.
- An energy and water policy document is in preparation for Council Buildings and a renewable energy policy is also being drawn up.

Indicators of performance

The energy efficiency saving for 2000/2001 was 2.46% and the total savings since 1 April 1996 is 8.22%. The target is 16% by 2006.

The latest figure for the average gas use per household per annum is 73.35 gigajoules per year - 2000

The average water use per person per day is 148 litres - 2000. Across the country, this is 144 litres per person per day.

Targets for renewable energy and household energy and water use will be considered in the overall energy strategy due to be published in Summer 2002.

Key issues for 2002/2003

- To work in partnership with the service utilities to deliver energy efficiency measures in households throughout the Borough, regardless of tenure.
- Continue to minimise fuel poverty and provide advice and assistance, where possible, to those households most vulnerable or at risk of not achieving affordable warmth in their homes.
- Publish an energy and water strategy for Gateshead

Green Purchasing

Objectives

- To encourage individuals and organisations to purchase goods and services which are sustainable
- To reduce wasteful consumption of materials

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Train 50% of purchasing staff in Environmental Awareness
- Publish Strategy for introducing e-commerce into Council dealings
- Check 10% of Gateshead suppliers environmental policies

Action Plan Progress 2001/2002

- In the 2001/2002 catalogue, priority was given to items which have significant environmental impact. The volume of sales of ef (environmentally friendly) items accounts for 25% of all stock sales. The Internet catalogue was launched in Dec 2001 and is available on the Council's Intranet.
- An e-commerce strategy was agreed and includes pilots using, purchasing cards, electronic tendering, NEPO Electronic catalogue, and On-line ordering facility.
- All electricity for Civic Centre is now purchased from renewable sources. Further development is to be included in the Energy Strategy.
- Peat is purchased from an agreed list and we are seeking to increase the use of peat free compost.
- All corporate purchasing staff trained in the Environmental Awareness Level 1

Indicators of performance

- The target was 20% of the value of goods sold through the Gateshead stores identified as being environmentally friendly by March 2002 - we achieved 32%
- 100% of dealings dealt with electronically by 2005 - this is currently being worked on.
- We also said we would train 50% of corporate purchasing staff in environmental awareness. We actually trained 100% of the corporate purchasing staff in 2001 at total of 44 people.

Key issues for 2002/2003

- Implement council e-commerce strategy following completion of pilot
- Develop with NEPO authorities strategy for the procurement of "green energy"
- Promote and encourage use of "environmentally friendly" goods through the NEPO catalogue
- Achieve 23% of the value of goods sold through the Gateshead stores identified as being environmentally friendly by March 2003

Land Use Planning

Objective

To create a sustainable pattern of development, and thereby integrate planning with sustainable development principles, particularly in relation to the environment

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Publish Issues report for the Review of the Unitary Development Plan
- Publish the Contaminated Land Strategy
- Publish a Strategy for Underused and Empty Buildings

Action Plan Progress 2001/2002

- A Contaminated Land Strategy was agreed in Dec 2001
- The survey for the Urban Housing Capacity Studies was completed and analysis is in progress.
- Several surveys were prepared to assist in identifying issues for the review of the Unitary Development Plan.
- The Council gave priority to dealing with vacant properties in the King street and Sunderland road areas.

Indicators of performance

There are 2 indicators for land use planning:

- The proportion of land stock that is derelict. In Gateshead it is 2%.
- The percentage of new homes built on previously developed land. The target for 2001/2002 was 56%. Gateshead achieved 48%. Nationally, the rate in 2000 was 57%.

Key issues for 2002/2003

- Publish and distribute an information pack on sustainability for developers
- Progress the review of the Unitary Development Plan by publishing and consulting on proposals
- Complete out surveys on Housing needs, Shopping needs, car parking and Private sector housing condition.
- Implement the Contaminated Land strategy

Sustainable Transport

Objectives

- To reduce car usage, increase the quality and attractiveness of public transport, and promote transport alternatives
- To improve public access to amenities and services, with less need to travel
- To reduce the amount of travel by motorised means through the provision of genuine alternatives which are less damaging to the environment

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Approximately 10 schools to be included in the Safer Routes to School scheme each year in a ongoing programme from 2001/2002 onwards
- Work towards creating six quality bus corridors by 2005
- Work towards creating a 'bus only' route between Central Gateshead and the metro centre along the riverside by 2002/2003 - CentreLink
- Complete the bus interchange at Ryton
- Work towards improving or build five new cycling routes by 2005
- Work towards developing a Green Travel plan for Gateshead Council employees by September 2002
- Continue to evaluate performance of alternative fuel vehicles. Work towards replacing or convert all light vehicles by 2007 or when appropriate and as resources permit. Work towards replacing or convert all heavy vehicles within 10 years

Action Plan Progress 2001/02

- Safer Routes to Schools – School Safety Zones were completed at 11 schools with an additional 7 to be completed early in 2002/03
- Quality Bus Corridors – Proposals were completed on Durham Road. Proposals have been developed on Old Durham Road to be implemented in the first part of 02/03. Proposals have also been developed for Durham Road, Birtley.
- CentreLink – Scheme design has been developed. Planning consent has been received for non-public highway sections of scheme and construction started on phase one. Redevelopment of Gateshead Interchange has also started.
- Ryton Interchange – Mini-hub facilities were completed and services are operational. Nexus has installed new shelters in Rowlands Gill. Real Time Information system is now operational.
- Cycle Routes – Improvements have been made to the surfacing of Keelman's Way. Improved signing and kerbworks provided on National Cycle Network Route 14 (Keelman's Way/Derwent Cycle Way). Improved cycling facilities have been included in Old Durham Road scheme. Access to the Town Centre also has been improved. A programme of measures has been identified for 2002/03.
- Green Travel Plan – Post of Green Travel Plan Co-ordinator was filled in August 2001. The preparation of the Green Travel plan is in progress.
- The Council now has 49 light vehicles which are powered by LPG. This is 10.5 % of the vehicle fleet.
- Gateshead Millennium Bridge – Opened on 17th September 2001
- Promotional Activities – The Council took part in the SWITCH European Integrated Transport project at Heworth Interchange, the Millennium Festival of Cycling, the Don't Choke Britain regional event and joined the national Travelwise campaign.
- Quayside Transit (Clear Zones Trailblazer Scheme) – DTLR funding has been secured for the project. Consultation brochure produced and internet site established. Expressions of interest sought from low/zero emission vehicle manufacturers. Discussions have been held with operators.

- Tyne and Wear Innovative Green Fuel Transport Project – A workshop involving Transport Planning, Fleet Management, Environmental Health, LA21 and Taxi Licensing officers was held in September 2001. The Local Transport Plan Environmental Protection and Improvement Group is investigating costs for a number of green fuel initiatives.

Indicators of performance

This is the first year that these indicators have been reported.

In 2000/2001 the annual average traffic flow per 1000km of principal roads was 132.6. Nationally the average is 66.39.

The second indicator is the percentage of children travelling to and from school by different modes. The following figures are based on Gateshead primary schools only.

Travel to/ from school	To	From
Walking to school	48%	46.7%
Cycle	0.1%	0.2%
School bus	0.7%	5.1%
Other bus	4.4%	4.9%
Train	0	0
Car	44.6%	40.7%
Other	1.9%	1.7%

The following table shows the national average percentage of school children travelling to and from school.

Travel to/ from school	To	From
Walking to school	51.2%	48.7%
Cycle	1.3%	1.7%
School bus	4.5%	2.3%
Other bus	5.2%	6%
Train	0	0
Car	34.2%	32.1%
Other	0.9%	0.9%

The last indicator we have measured is the length of cycle paths – 6.16 Kilometres of dedicated cycle routes per 100km of principal and other local authority roads.

These indicators are in the pilot stage at present, so there may be changes in the specific indicators and the range of indicators used.

Key Issues for 2002/03

- Six primary and one secondary school are to be added to the Safe Routes to Schools programme, with the aim that 50% of schools being involved in the development of a School Travel Plan by 2006. Schools in the programme should see a 10% reduction in travel to school by car within 3 years of developing a School Travel Plan
- Continued developments to Quality Bus corridors across the Borough will be included in transport corridor improvements.
- Work towards completion of the CentreLink scheme, between Gateshead Interchange and the MetroCentre, by Spring 2004
- Continue to develop and improve cycling facilities across the Borough. New targets to be developed as part of a review of the Council's Cycling Strategy.
- Complete a Green Travel Plan for Council employees.

- Continue to take part in events promoting sustainable transport, including National Bike week and the Europe-wide 'In Town Without My Car Day'.
- Work towards the completion of the Quayside Transit scheme in 2004.
- Continue development of innovative forms of transport powered by green fuels, in Partnership with neighbouring districts and Nexus.
- Parking Plan for the Borough to be published. This will include proposals to reduce demand for long stay commuter parking.
- Transport Strategy Statement is to be developed with extensive consultation. This will set out how the Local Transport Plan will be delivered in the Borough.

Waste Management

Objectives

- To minimise waste by reuse or recovery through recycling, and to encourage a reduction in the use of packaging materials
- To secure arrangements for the safe management of waste in the most economic and environmental acceptable manner
- To dispose of residual waste in a manner which has a minimal effect on the environment

Key issues for 2001/02

- Publish waste and recycling strategy
- Prepare for the implementation of key elements of the waste and recycling strategy
- Launch Schools Waste Action Clubs

Action Plan Progress 2001/02

- The draft Waste and Recycling Strategy agreed by the Council and has been subject to extensive public consultation.
- The Council has completed a review of its current waste disposal arrangements and has decided to embark on the development of a new waste management contract.
- An application for a green waste recycling pilot project in Gateshead has been approved in principle by an Environmental Trust for funding from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme
- The home compostor scheme was expanded, with a further 450 units going into service
- A bid for funding by Wastewatch for the introduction of Schools Waste Action Clubs in Gateshead from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was unsuccessful. Wastewatch will submit a further application to different Environmental Trust.

Indicators of performance

The target for 2001/2002 for recycled household waste was 4%, we achieved 3.25%.

For refuse going to landfill, it was 96%. 95.19% was sent to landfill.

We aim to decrease the overall amount of refuse being generated, decrease the amount of refuse going to landfill and increase the amount of refuse recycled.

A third indicator included last year was kilograms of household waste per head. The target was 505KG. We reached 534.95 Kg. The national average in 1999/2000 was 496 kg per year. This indicator has been removed from the national indicator list and will not be available next year.

Key Issues for 2002/2003

- Development of ways to minimise waste - recycling; reducing landfill; composting etc.
- Improving communications on key points of the waste management service to residents.

Education, Awareness, Publicity

Key issue for 2001/2002

- Increase the amount of publicity devoted to Local Agenda 21 in all types of media.
- Develop Citizenship as part of the curriculum in primary, secondary and special schools

Action Plan Progress 2001/2002

- Currently 17 schools are working towards the Eco Schools award. An Eco School support group meeting held Wed 23 Jan 2002.
- A Local Agenda 21 seminar for Head Teachers and staff responsible for environment issues and Citizenship was held on 19 March 2002. A LA21 Resource box was provided for every school in the Borough.
- Structured support for schools is being provided through curriculum study groups, newsletters, directory of resources and conferences. Individual support for schools on a request basis
- A further 15 key officers were trained in Environmental management.

Key issues for 2002/2003

- Implement an environmental awareness programme for primary schools
- Developing and implementing a publicity strategy
- Rolling out awareness training for employees

Consultation, Participation

Key issues for 2001/2002

- Develop the activity of Community groups in all aspects of Local Agenda 21

Action 2001/2002

- A Local Agenda 21 Focus group was set up and met twice in January and March 2002.
- A Business focus group is being set and will meet in June 2002 for the first time.
- A Full time Local Agenda 21 officer has been appointed.

Key issue for 2002/2003

- Developing LA21 with young people and local communities

Other activity

The Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change on 19 September 2001. The declaration commits the Council as follows:

We acknowledge that

- Evidence continues to mount that climate change is occurring.
- Climate change will have far reaching effects on the UK's economy, society and environment.

We welcome the

- Social, economic and environmental benefits which will come from combating climate change.
- Recognition by many sectors, especially government and business, of the need for change.
- Emissions targets agreed by central government and the programme for delivering change as set out in the Climate Change – UK Programme.
- Opportunity for local government to lead the response at a local level and thereby play a major role in helping to deliver the national programme.
- Opportunity for us to encourage and help local residents and local businesses – to reduce their energy costs, to reduce congestion, to improve the local environment and to deal with fuel poverty in our communities.
- Additional powers to address the social, economic and environmental well-being of our communities contained within the Local Government Act 2000, which will assist in this process.

We commit our Council to

- Work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK climate change programme.
- Prepare a plan with our local communities, by December 2002, to address the causes and effects of climate change and to secure maximum benefit for our communities.
- Publicly declare, within the plan, the commitment to achieve a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from our own authority's operations especially energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal and the purchasing of goods and services.