

Local Agenda 21 strategy update 2003

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Executive Summary

Air quality in Gateshead continues to be well below the current air quality standards, however, as the standards are going to be tougher by 2010 we will need to assess whether these new standards will be breached over the next 7 years.

The Council is continuing its tradition of restoring habitats and derelict land at Burdon Moor, Wardley Manor and developing new habitats at Lamesley. The Next to Nature project in urban east Gateshead has involved designation of new Local Nature Reserves and increased engagement of local communities, particularly at Windy Nook.

The main focus of the Council's efforts in energy efficiency has been in the domestic sector. We have been successful in the last 12 months in obtaining significant funds for energy efficiency measures in the both the private and public sectors. We are currently in discussions with a major electricity and gas supplier to provide resources for housing in Gateshead. The Council together with its residents is also considering whether to set up an Arms Length Management Organisation and if successful energy efficiency measures will be part of the refurbishment programme.

A significant amount of the electricity used in Gateshead Council buildings comes from renewable sources.

The Council has progressed considerably over the last few years in promoting the purchase of environmental friendly goods and services used by its clients. Each year the value of environmental friendly goods bought through Gateshead stores has increased.

The review of the Unitary Development Plan includes a 'Sustainability Appraisal', which looks at how sustainable development, and LA21 is integrated into the plan. The next stage of building in sustainability into construction is to engage with private developers to encourage them to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Both of these issues have a great influence on land use planning.

There are many transport projects in progress, some are still in the planning stage. The Council is working with schools, the private sector, bus companies, Nexus and other local authorities in various partnerships. The Council is also looking at its own impact as an employer and provider of services on the transport system.

The introduction of the kerbside recycling system is a major step forward for the Council in increasing the amount of waste that is recycled. It will help the Council achieve the target of 18% recycled material by 2005 set by the Government.

A Waste Education Support Programme bid has been successful and will enable the schools involved to raise awareness of waste issues in the school as an educational centre and as an operational building.

Eco schools continues to make progress with two schools obtaining Gold status (Kibblesworth Primary and Cedars Special School and 3 others obtaining silver and bronze awards. The Schools Environmental Challenge will move into its second year in 2003/4.

A major community environmental grants scheme has been set up to encourage communities to take action to protect and enhance their local environment and to carry out projects with grants up to £5,000 from the Council.

A report on the effects of climate change on the local community has been circulated for consultation and a final report will be published in 2003/4.

Introduction

This is the third 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 with 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.

The Council's policy document Towards 2010 has a vision for Gateshead where communities who live in and contribute to a clean, pollution free, attractive and sustainable environment.

The Local Agenda 21 strategy is designed to help deliver these aims and at the same time contribute to the UK Strategy on Sustainable Development and to the UK commitment to the Kyoto Protocol.

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 contains 4 sections:

- Key actions for 2002/3
- Progress against the Action Plan and the Key actions for 2002/3
- The indicators used to measure progress and the current performance in some of the areas of work
- Key actions to be undertaken in 2003/4

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

The LA21 Objectives for air quality and noise management are:

- 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.

This means that we aim to improve the air we breathe and to control noise from commercial premises and from noisy neighbours.

Key actions for 2002/2003

In the last LA21 update in 2002 we said we would continue to monitor air quality, report the results from the local monitoring at Birtley and continue to monitor the neighbourhood mediation service and report the results.

Action Plan Progress 2002/2003

The Council continues to check air quality by measuring levels of Nitrogen Dioxide, and dust in the air (PM10 – particulate matter above 10 microns).

A local monitoring station was set up in Birtley for Sulphur Dioxide, Nitrogen Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide and PM10s. The results of that monitoring for April to November (including November 5th 2002) for SO₂ were - Average 0.2 parts per billion (ppb). The maximum level was 23.8 ppb. The limit for SO₂ emissions is 100ppb.

The Nitrogen Dioxide average level was 15.8 ppb. The maximum level was 72.7 ppb. The limit for Nitrogen Dioxide emissions is 105 ppb. For Carbon Monoxide an average of 0.3 ppm was found. CO levels should not exceed limit 8.6 ppm. The maximum level recorded was 5.6 ppm on bonfire night.

PM10's were also measured. These are fine dust particles and the average level was 28.2 microgrammes per cubic metre (mcgms/m³). The average limit is 40 mcgms/m³. A maximum level of 64.6 mcgms/m³ was recorded on bonfire night. The peak limit for PM10's is 50mcgms/m³. In the 6 months of recording this limit was exceeded 8 times. The national limits allow the limit to be exceeded 35 times before action needs to be taken.

Indicators of performance

The current national air quality objectives for NO₂ are 105 parts per billion (ppb) measured over 1 hour and is not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year. This should be achieved by the end of 2005. The annual mean limit of 21 ppb should be achieved by the end of 2005

In 2002 the hourly mean was not exceeded at all during the year and the annual mean at the three measured sites was 15.8, 16.2 and 11.1 ppb

There are two objectives for PM₁₀. The first is a 24 hour mean of 50 microgrammes per cubic metre which should not to be exceeded more than 7 times per year by the end of 2010. The second is an annual mean of 20 microgrammes per cubic metre which should be achieved by the end of 2010.

In 2002/3 the current 24-hour mean limit of 35 mcgms/m³ was exceeded on 36 days during the year and the annual mean at the three sites was 28.2, 24 and 25.5 microgrammes per cubic metre. The current limit is 40 mcgms/m³.

Monitoring for dust will continue to be carried out and will focus on busy roadside locations to assess whether there will be any breaches of the proposed stricter standards for 2010. A detailed assessment report will be submitted to DEFRA in April 2004 identifying any breaches of air quality standards and the resultant action that is to be taken to meet the objectives.

Key actions for 2003/2004

In 2003 and 2004 the Council will continue to monitor air quality and the network will to be expanded to include additional monitoring of NO₂ at busy road junctions using diffusion tubes, and 2 new NO_x real time monitors. We will also carry out the second review and assessment of air quality in Gateshead by end April 2004, with an Updating Screening Assessment being submitted to DEFRA by end May 2003. A Tyne & Wear air quality website will be created to provide on-line monitoring data from across the area, and also contain air quality forecasts. The website will be set up by end March 2004.

Conclusion

The air quality in Gateshead continues to be well below the current air quality standards, however, as the standards are going to be tougher by 2010 we will need to assess whether these new standards will be breached over the next 7 years.

Glossary

SO₂ – Sulphur Dioxide

NO₂ – Nitrogen Dioxide

CO - Carbon Monoxide

PM 10 - small particles of dust matter

Greenhouse gases - gases emitted from fossil fuels which are responsible for global warming and the changing climate.

Biodiversity

Objectives

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. The LA21 objectives for Gateshead are:

- 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

By this we mean that we will protect and try to enhance the area's habitats and the plants and animals who live in them. We also want to make people more aware of the natural environment and help them appreciate the environment we live in.

Key actions for 2002/2003

In 2002 we said we would begin implementation of the Next to Nature Project including the designation of three new Local Nature Reserves in east Gateshead and the development of a programme of community activities based around these sites. We hoped to continue implementation of the Bringing Back Burdon Moor Project and work in 2002/2003 would 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.

We also said we would begin implementation of the Lamesley Pastures Project, as part of the River Team Revival Project with work in 2002/2003 to include habitat creation, new access provision and site interpretation.

As a long-term aim we would continue implementation of work to support delivery of the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan.

Action Plan Progress 2002/2003

Over the last year in the Next to Nature project, the Community Wildlife Officer started the project in February 2002 and community outreach and site development work is now in progress. Five new Local Nature Reserves have been designated. They are Cross Lane Meadows, the Kittiwake Tower, Norwood Nature Park, Pelaw Quarry Pond, and Windy Nook Nature Park.

In the Bringing Back Burdon Moor project ground preparation works have been completed. Countryside Agency funding has allowed the artistic waymarking project, linking the site with Kibblesworth Environment Centre and Watergate Forest Park, to be completed.

The Lamesley Pastures project was officially launched in November 2002. Habitat creation and access works are now in progress and opportunities to extend the project are now being explored.

The third tranche of the plans for Durham Biodiversity Action Plan have been completed and were launched in March 2002. Work is now in progress on implementation of targets where relevant to Gateshead. Species work includes identification of areas used by otter and water vole, seeking to ensure their long-term protection. Other work is progressing on Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Grass Snake, Great Crested Newts and Wood Barley.

The project officer for the River Team Revival Project has prepared an initial report. A bid for European funding was successful and will provide environmental improvements in the catchment area involving the local community.

The first winter and summer bird surveys for Gateshead are now complete. Further information is included in the feature on the inside back cover.

The first 5-year management plan for Gateshead countryside sites has been implemented.

In Saltwell Park, a Biodiversity Action Plan for the park is being implemented as part of the Restoration Plan. Countryside volunteers installed a bird box scheme in the early summer.

A draft Countryside Strategy has been prepared and consultation was completed in May 2003.

A restoration project has been started at Wardley/Red Barns. A strategy for the creation of a country park here was adopted by the Council in December 2002. It's implementation will start during 2003.

For red squirrels, the current focus is to enlist more widespread support from non-public landowners to support the project. A report on the implementation of the project has been submitted to the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan implementation officer.

The Great North Forest is in the 12th year of a 40 year programme and annual targets continue to be met. The Council is working closely with GNF to achieve mutual targets with a new Forest Plan being launched in April 2003. GNF has now linked with the Tees Forest to form the North East Community Forests to spread the approach more widely in the region. A major public transport promotion with Nexus and the Countryside Agency to encourage access to the countryside by bus and Metro was also launched in April 2003.

Indicators of performance

A number of indicators are being used for biodiversity.

The first is 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. The latest figures for Gateshead (1998-2000) show that the percentage of rivers of good and fair chemical quality was 87.5% and that for 1999-2001 the biological quality was 62.4%. For comparison purposes 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 second indicator is the net change in quality and/or quantity of locally important natural/semi-natural habitats (e.g. woodland or grassland). This refers to the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI s) in the Borough. This data is collected by English Nature. These figures were first collected and published in 2001 and remain unchanged in 2002. 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 have also now increased the area of Local Nature Reserves per 1000 population from 0.3 hectares to 0.47 hectares as a result of new designations as part of the Next to Nature project. This project has therefore already virtually met the target set of 0.5 hectares per 1000 people by 2005. This increase is in east Gateshead in urban areas. The average nationally is 0.285 hectares per 1000 people. Currently the Sites of Nature Conservation Importance include 1121 hectares of woodland, 283 hectares of lowland meadows and pastures and 22 hectares of ponds.

The third of the indicators is 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. The Winter bird survey feature on the inside back cover also illustrates the occurrence of birds in Gateshead.

Another indicator of natural environment quality is 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 5.97 in 2003. Nationally, the average is 4.90 hectares per 1000 population.

Key actions for 2003/2004

In 2003 and 2004 we will continue implementation of the Lamesley Pastures Project, as part of the River Team Revival Project. Work in 2003/2004 will include habitat creation, new access provision and site interpretation. Opportunities to extend the project through additional land acquisitions will be explored.

The Next to Nature Project will continue work and will include the development of a programme of community activities based around the urban Local Nature Reserves which form a key part of the project. We will also seek to secure funding to extend the life of this 3 year project.

We will continue implementation of the Bringing Back Burdon Moor Project with work in 2003/2004 including additional interpretation, habitat creation and management. Other work to support delivery of the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan will continue to be included in the Council's work programmes.

The Council will assist the Environment Agency in the implementation of the River Team Revival Project Plan.

The Countryside Strategy will be completed and an agreed strategy for Gateshead's countryside will be launched.

Work on the Wardley Manor strategy will continue to be implemented to begin the creation of the Wardley Manor Country Park.

Next year will be the first year of the reintroduction of the Red Kite to the North East. This 5 year project is being lead by English Nature/RSPB with Gateshead as one of the partners and is to be undertaken in the Derwent Valley. This globally threatened bird has been identified as one of the key species for positive conservation measures in the national biodiversity plan.

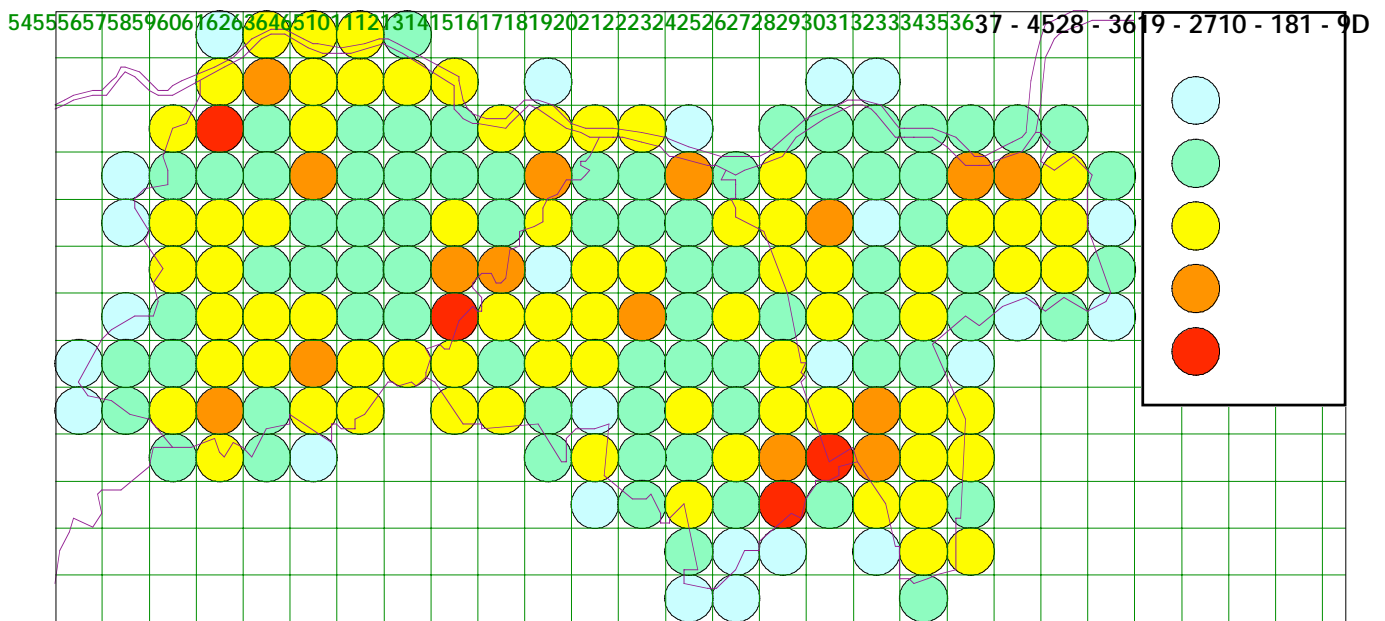
Conclusion

The natural environment of Gateshead is one of the best of any metropolitan Boroughs in the country. The quality of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest is very high and the restoration of previously derelict land at Derwenthaugh and Watergate is starting to mature. We are continuing this tradition at Burdon Moor, Wardley Manor and developing new habitats at Lamesley. The Next to Nature project in urban east Gateshead has resulted in the designation of five new Local Nature Reserves and increased engagement of local communities, particularly at Windy Nook. We must continue this good work, protect what we have and seek out other areas where we can enhance the local environment.

Feature

Gateshead Winter Bird Survey

During the winter of 2001/2 about 25 volunteers, helped by staff from Learning and Culture's Countryside Management Team surveyed all the 191 1km squares (or part squares) in the Borough of Gateshead. The 1km squares are those on the Ordnance Survey maps. Most of the information is derived from one hour timed counts in each square taken between 15 November 2001 and 28 February 2003. The main purpose of this survey is to give us baseline abundance and distribution data for all species in the Borough, especially Species of Conservation Concern (SoCC). As we have a set of data from timed counts this survey can be repeated in the future and produce



comparable data. When the new biological database 'Recorder 2002' is available a similar survey will be carried out for breeding species.

The information gathered highlighted how important and diverse Gateshead is for birds. 106 species were recorded during this winter period, a figure which compares favourably to any inland area in Britain and reflects the variety of natural habitats in Gateshead. The map above shows the number of species found in each square during the timed counts. Areas with the greatest diversity all included areas with wetlands and woodlands. The Derwent Valley and the Team Valley can be seen to be more diverse on the map. When all records from the winter were examined, the two squares with the greatest number of species were Shidbon Pond (75) and Lockhaugh, near Rowlands Gill (67).

The most widespread birds were Blackbird (93% of squares), Blue Tit and Magpie (89%). These species are found in urban and rural habitats. Species with restricted range (found in only one 1km square) included Firecrest, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Long-eared Owl, Corn Bunting and Whooper Swan. The most numerous, extrapolated from the timed counts are Starling (estimated population of 18,000), Black-headed

Gull (9000) and House Sparrow (7000): all are urban species and two (Starling and House Sparrow) are red listed Species of Conservation Concern.

Energy Conservation

Objectives

The energy conservation objectives for LA21 are:

- 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

Our aim is to reduce the production of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and to protect water quality.

Key actions for 2002/2003

In 2002 the main issues for energy conservation were firstly to work in partnership with the service utilities to deliver energy efficiency measures in households throughout the Borough, regardless of tenure. We would also 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. The third issue was to publish an energy and water strategy for Gateshead.

Action Plan Progress 2002/2003

The Fuel Poverty Strategy was reviewed in light of the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy which was published in November 2001. Warm Front grants were advertised by sending a leaflet to 5,000 people on benefits. An energy efficiency discount scheme was set up with KNW/Scottish Power. 7,000 private home owners were circulated in priority neighbourhoods. The Healthy Communities Collaborative has distributed 1400 EE lightbulbs and Warm Front leaflets to elderly people. The Council distributed 11200 low energy light bulbs and 1300 low energy kettles to people on low incomes through social organisations. They were supplied by Npower and Scottish power respectively.

The Council has begun discussions with energy supply companies to obtain significant resources for energy efficiency measures throughout the Borough.

Indicators of performance

The home energy efficiency saving for 2001/2002 was 2.17% and the total savings since 1 April 1996 is 10.2%. The target is energy efficiency savings of 16% by 2006.

The average water use per person per day in the Northumbria Water area in 2002 was 146.5 litres per day compared with 148 the previous year. Total use in the Northumbria Water area during 2001/2002 figure was 164 megalitres /day. The target for 2002/3 was 163 MI/d

Targets for renewable energy and household energy and water use will be considered in the overall energy strategy due to be published in Summer 2003.

Key actions for 2003/2004

In 2003 and 2004 the Council and its partners will work with the service utilities to deliver energy efficiency measures in households throughout the Borough, regardless of tenure. The Council will 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.

The Council will publish an energy and water policy for Gateshead and develop an action plan for the implementation of the energy and water policy and introduce actions in it's work programme.

We will consider the adoption of a community energy partnership approach to deal with fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency and engage partners.

Conclusion

The main focus of the Council's efforts in energy efficiency has been in the domestic sector. We have been successful in the last 12 months in obtaining significant funds for energy efficiency measures in the both the private and public sectors but we still have a long way to go. We are currently in discussions with a major electricity and gas supplier to provide resources for housing in Gateshead. The Council together with its residents are also considering whether to set up an Arms Length Management Organisation and if successful energy efficiency measures could be available.

The generation and use of renewable energy in Gateshead is being investigated and any developments will be reported. However, it must be noted that a significant amount of the electricity used in Gateshead Council buildings comes from renewable sources, for example, the Civic Centre, all Secondary schools and the Millennium Bridge.

Green Purchasing

Objectives

For the purchase of goods and services which are regarded as environmentally friendly the LA21 objectives are :

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

Key actions for 2002/2003

The key actions for 2002 and 2003 were to implement a Council e-commerce strategy following completion of a pilot and also to develop with NorthEast Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) authorities strategy for the procurement of "green energy". We would continue to promote and encourage use of "environmentally friendly" (ef) goods through the NEPO catalogue.

The Council set a target to achieve 23% of the value of goods sold through the Gateshead stores identified as being environmentally friendly by March 2003

Action Plan Progress 2002/2003

Over the last year the Council has started pilots for the use of purchasing cards, electronic tendering, NEPO electronic catalogue and on-line ordering facility. All electricity for Civic Centre, 10 Comprehensive Schools, 5 Leisure Establishments, The Central Library, 4 Council Offices, 2 Local Environmental Services Depots, The Millennium Bridge, 1 Adult Learning Centre and 6 Police Stations is purchased from renewable sources.

The 2002/3 catalogue was published with an electronic version being available on-line. The volume of sales of stock ef items was approx. 20% of sales.

A new contract for Council photocopiers has been awarded. They have the capacity to be used as printers and can print double sided. Investigations have concluded that considerable savings can be made by increasing the use of photocopiers instead of printers.

Indicators of performance

The Council set a target of 23% for the value of goods sold through the Gateshead stores identified as being environmentally friendly by March 2003 – we achieved 31%
The Government have set a target for all local authorities and government to have 100% of dealings dealt with electronically by 2005. The Council is currently working towards this target by investigating the measures needed to achieve it.

Key actions for 2003/2004

In 2003 and 2004 the Council will continue to implement its e-commerce strategy following completion of the pilot. We will continue to develop with NEPO authorities strategy for the procurement of "green energy" and continue to promote and encourage use of "environmentally friendly" goods through the NEPO catalogue. The Council wants to achieve 32% of the value of goods sold through the NEPO stores for Gateshead identified as being environmentally friendly by March 2004.

Conclusion

The Council has progressed considerably over the last few years in promoting the purchase of environmentally friendly goods and services used by its clients. Each year the value of environmentally friendly goods bought through Gateshead stores has increased. More work is needed on this and a considerable amount of work is being done to achieve the target of all of the Council's dealings becoming electronic by 2005. Electronic systems will reduce the amount of paper used and be more economic and efficient.

Land Use Planning

Objective

The LA21 objective for the use and development of land is:

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

This means that all development should be sustainable and either maintain or improve the quality of the human and natural environment.

Key actions for 2002/2003

The actions that were identified for 2002 were to publish and distribute an information pack on sustainability for developers and progress the review of the Unitary Development Plan by publishing and consulting on proposals. We also promised to complete surveys on housing needs, shopping needs, car parking and private sector housing condition and implement the Contaminated Land strategy.

Action Plan Progress 2002/2003

During the past year Durham County Council sponsored by Sustaine and many other north east organisations published Building-in Sustainability: A guide to sustainable development in the North East. This is regional guidance and the Council has adopted it as guidance for the it's own buildings and development and will encourage developers to adopt the practices and procedures of the guidance.

The issues and options paper for the Unitary Development Plan was published in March 2003.

Housing needs, Shopping needs, Car parking and Private sector housing condition surveys have been completed and the information obtained from them is being used to draw up relevant plans for regeneration and development of the Borough.

Resources have been identified for the implementation of the Contaminated Land strategy in 2003/4.

Indicators of performance

There are 2 indicators for land use planning. The first is the proportion of land stock that is derelict. In Gateshead this is 2%. This has not changed from the 2001 figure. The second is the percentage of new homes built on previously developed land. The target for 2002/2003 was 57%. Gateshead achieved 53%. For comparison, nationally, the rate in 2002 was 61%.

Key actions for 2003/2004

For the next year or so up to the end of 2004 the first key action in this area is to deposit the first draft of the Unitary Development Plan by winter 2003. We will implement the Building-in Sustainability guide and if possible carry out the refurbishment of a building or construction of a new building using the sustainable construction guide to demonstrate the benefits and difficulties of applying the standards in the guide.

The Council will start a survey of the Borough to identify contaminated land.

Conclusion

The review of the Unitary Development plan includes a 'Sustainability Appraisal', which looks at how sustainable development, and LA21 is integrated into the plan. The next stage of building sustainability into construction is to engage with private developers to encourage them to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Both of these issues have a great influence on land use planning.

Sustainable Transport

Objectives

The LA21 strategy identified 3 main objectives for transport:

- 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

The main aims of these objectives are to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other green house gases being emitted by vehicles into the air. The reduction of vehicles on roads is also a key aim in that it will reduce congestion and improve the quality of life of many people either using roads or living near them.

Key actions for 2002/2003

The last LA21 update in 2002 identified several key actions for the year ahead. We said that six primary and one secondary school would 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. We would continue to develop Quality Bus corridors across the Borough including them in transport corridor improvements.

We would work towards completion of the CentreLink scheme, between Gateshead Interchange and the MetroCentre, by Spring 2004. Cycling facilities would continue to be developed and improved across the Borough. New targets would be developed as part of a review of the Council's Cycling Strategy. We promised to complete a Travel Plan for Council employees and 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 would continue and we would continue development of innovative forms of transport powered by green fuels, in partnership with neighbouring districts and Nexus.

A Parking Plan for the Borough would be published. This would include proposals to reduce demand for long stay commuter parking. And finally a Transport Strategy Statement would be developed with extensive consultation. This would be set out how the Local Transport Plan will be delivered in the Borough.

Action Plan Progress 2002/03

Over the last year or so there have been many activities in improving transport in the Borough.

Safer Routes to Schools

Six primary schools and one secondary school launched the development of their School Travel Plan in September. At schools with existing School Travel Plans work has begun to identify safe routes to the schools outside their established school safety zones.

Quality Bus Corridors

Bus improvements have been implemented on Old Durham Road and Durham Road, Birtley as part of the Quality Transport Corridor approach.

CentreLink

Work on sections of the scheme at Bottlebank, through Gateshead town centre and on the approaches to the Riverside has been completed. Work on the refurbishment of Gateshead Interchange and the MetroCentre Bus Interchange have commenced. Go-Ahead North East has purchased 4 new articulated buses specifically for the completed scheme and is currently using them on the existing route between Gateshead town centre and the MetroCentre.

Cycling

New cycle lanes have been implemented on Old Durham Road and Durham Road, Birtley as part of the Quality Transport Corridor Approach. Sections of the Keelman's Way and the Bowes Mineral Line have been upgraded. Cycle parking has been provided at 14 new locations. An updated version of the Council's Cycling Strategy has been approved, and new targets have been identified. A programme of works for 2003/04 has been devised.

Travel Plan

Valuable information collected on travel practices, services and facilities has formed the basis of a Draft Travel Plan for Council based on the three busiest Council sites, namely the Civic Centre, Prince Consort Road and Shearlegs Road. Proposals for inclusion in the Plan are being developed and will be discussed by staff, management, Councillors and visitors.

Events

Gateshead co-ordinated the National Bike Week events for Tyne and Wear and also co-ordinated the production of the Tyneside cycle network plan. The Council hosted a regional Department for Transport seminar highlighting good practice in promoting walking.

Quayside Transit (Clear Zones Trailblazer Scheme)

A section of highway works for the scheme at Mill Road has been completed. Works at Oakwellgate and the detailed design of stop locations has started. A Real Time Information system for the project is under test.

Green Fuels

A low-emission cleansing vehicle, powered by liquid petroleum gas (LPG) has been purchased for the Gateshead Quays as part of the Quayside Clear Zone Initiative. The use of Biodiesel is being piloted for Local Environmental Services vehicles.

Parking Plan

The background work needed to establish a Parking Plan for Gateshead has been completed.

Gateshead Transport Strategy Statement

Work has started on developing a Transport Strategy Statement for Gateshead, with Councillors identifying priority issues. A draft for consultation is nearing completion.

Indicators of performance

Length of Cycle Ways

The length of cycle routes has risen from 6.16 km per 100km of principal and other local authority roads in 2001/02 to 6.96km in 2002/03.

Travel to School

Travel surveys are undertaken with parents at schools about to commence their involvement in the School Travel Plan programme to establish baseline data. Three schools, representing a cross-section of baseline data for car use and walking, have been chosen to provide information for this indicator.

Baseline Data:

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Walk	60%	13%	45%
Car	27%	67%	42%
Cycle	0%	0%	0%
Bus	7%	13%	1%
Other	0%	1%	0%
More than one mode	7%	6%	12%

Parents will be surveyed again in Oct 2005 to assess progress against the programme target. Indicative pupil surveys will be carried out in Oct 2003 and Oct 2004.

Traffic Flow

The annual average flow per 1000km of principal roads in the Borough is :-

1996/97	113.8
1998/99	117.0
2000/01	118.6

The results for the next survey for the period 2002/03 will become available in 2004.

Key Actions 2003/04

For this year and next year there are several key actions for the transport objective of LA21.

Schools already in the School Travel Plan programme will continue to develop their Travel Plan. Eight new primary schools will launch the development of their plans and will be guided through a new fast-track system that will produce a School Travel Plan within one term of the launch.

We will continue to improve facilities for bus travel across the Borough, both through the Quality Transport Corridor approach and at individual locations identified in partnership with Nexus and the bus operators. A scheme will be implemented on Bensham Road in 2003/04 and schemes will be developed for Sunderland Road and A185 Shields Road for implementation in future years.

The CentreLink route and the MetroCentre Interchange will be substantially completed over the next year with full completion of the refurbished Gateshead Interchange. All works are due to be completed by September 2004.

The Council will continue to develop and improve cycling facilities across the Borough, the Gateshead Council Travel Plan is to be finalised and implementation started and also we intend to establish and adopt a Parking Plan for the Borough.

We will continue to take part in events promoting sustainable transport, including National Bike Week and work towards the completion of the Quayside Transit Scheme in 2004.

Council services will continue the development of innovative forms of transport powered by green fuels in Partnership with neighbouring districts and Nexus.

The Transport Strategy Statement consultation will be completed. This will set out how the Local Transport Plan will be developed in the Borough and we will start work on developing the next Local Transport Plan, to be submitted in 2005.

The Great North Forest will be working in partnership with Nexus and the Countryside Agency to encourage access to the countryside by bus and Metro through an extensive public transport promotion.

Conclusion

Sustainable transport is a very important issue. The general public and the Government recognise this. However, dealing with it will take a lot of time and

resources to achieve the aims of LA21. There are many projects in progress, some are still in the planning stage and all are designed with the aims of LA21 at the centre. The Council is working with schools, the private sector, bus companies, Nexus and other local authorities in various partnerships. The Council is also looking at its own impact as an employer and provider of services on the transport system. Results of investigation and discussions will be rolled out over the next year together with relevant proposals.

Waste Management

Objectives

The LA21 strategy identified 3 objectives for the dealing with waste. They are:

- 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 environmentally acceptable manner
- To dispose of residual waste in a manner which has a minimal effect on the environment

Key actions for 2002/03

There were two key actions for the past year. First of all, the development of ways to minimise waste - recycling; reducing landfill; composting etc. and secondly, improving communications on key points of the waste management service to residents.

Action Plan Progress 2002/03

The Council agreed a Waste Strategy in December 2002 and as part of that strategy a scheme for the kerbside collection of recyclable materials began on 3 March 2003. The first of six phases was introduced in Leam Lane, Heworth (part), Springwell & Wrekenton, Felling (part), Windy Nook, Beacon Lough & Low Fell (part). Funding has been obtained through the Waste Education Support Programme (WESP) to train an employee to start work with primary schools in Autumn 2003. This programme aims to raise awareness of waste issues in schools including both the waste the school operation produces and general awareness of pupils in the school.

Indicators of performance

The target for 2002/2003 for recycled household waste was 8%, we achieved 4.8% which was up from 3.25% the previous year. However, the amount of recyclable material collected in the Kerbside recycling scheme in the first phase is encouraging. The Council needs to increase the levels of recycling to meet statutory recycling standards 10% by 2003/04 and 18% by 2005/06.

For refuse going to landfill, the target was 90%. 95% was actually 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.

The third indicator is kilograms of household waste produced per head. The target was 505KG. We reached 534 Kg. The national average in 1999/2000 was 496 kg per year.

Key Actions for 2003/4

Over the next year or so the Council will be focussing on five key actions. Firstly, we will implement an environmental awareness programme for primary schools (Waste Education Support Programme) starting in September 2003.

We will complete the introduction of the kerbside recycling scheme by Autumn 2003. We will also provide facilities at waste and recycling centres to permit residents to segregate green waste and wood waste, and develop suitable outlets to recycle the segregated materials. The target tonnage for this in 2003/04 is 1500 to 2000 tonnes.

The recycling facilities in the Civic centre will be upgraded and finally, we will review the Councils policy and activities in dealing with dog waste which is part of the Streetscene Best Value review.

Conclusion

The introduction of the kerbside recycling system is a major step forward for the Council in increasing the amount of waste that is recycled. It will help the Council achieve the target of 18% recycled material by 2005 set by the Government. There is still a lot of work to do and further improvements in the recycling system will be made as resources allow.

Education of our children on environmental issues is also a major part of the LA21 strategy. The activities of the Waste Education Support Programme will enable the schools involved to raise awareness of waste issues in the school as an educational centre and as an operational building.

Education, Awareness, Publicity

Key actions for 2002/2003

Last year we identified 3 key actions in raising awareness of environmental issues. They were implementing an environmental awareness programme for primary schools, developing and implementing a publicity strategy and rolling out awareness training for employees

Action Plan Progress 2002/2003

Over the last year the Council has continued to support Head Teachers through the Eco schools and Healthy schools initiatives through regular briefings. A resource pack was made available to all schools in the Borough in March 2002 and has been updated several times in the last year. Two schools obtained Gold status (Kibblesworth Primary and Cedars Special School) and 3 others obtaining silver and bronze awards.

The first annual Schools Environmental Challenge was launched in October 2002 for completion in April 2003. The launch was held at Kingsmeadow School using the scenario of a news, weather and traffic report in August 2050. This formed the basis of the introduction to the Coping with Climate Change consultation.

A Publicity Plan was drawn up and is being implemented. Regular press releases and other publicity has been produced for example, a regular environmental feature in the Council News. The launch of Lamesley Pastures project, Coping with Climate change draft plan, Environmental Challenge launch and the Kerbside recycling have all featured heavily in the press in January to March 2003.

Currently the Council has trained 34 employees in environmental management covering a wide range of services. An Environmental Management group has been set up to discuss and progress ideas on environmental issues within the Council.

Key actions for 2003/2004

A number of key actions have been identified for the next year or so. We will continue to implement the Environmental Issues Publicity Plan and raise awareness of environmental issues in Council employees. Ensure that at least one person is trained in environmental management in all relevant services.

The second Schools Environmental Challenge for all schools will be held and we will continue to promote and encourage schools to register and work to gain Eco-school awards.

The Council will seek to obtain funding for a Schools Environmental Issues Adviser to begin in September 2003.

We will also look at holding an event to promote LA21 through environmental agencies that can support active citizenship projects in schools and local communities.

Conclusion

Eco Schools continues to make progress with two schools obtaining gold status (Kibblesworth Primary and Cedars Special School) and 3 others obtaining silver and bronze awards. We hope that more schools will commit to becoming an Eco school. The Schools Environmental Challenge will hopefully involve many more schools in its second year. More contact with local communities is necessary to raise awareness of LA21 issues.

Consultation, Participation

Key actions for 2002/2003

There was one key action for consultation and participation in LA21 issues and that was to develop LA21 with young people and local communities.

Action 2002/2003

In addressing the key action a number of actions were carried out. The Local Agenda 21 Focus Group has met every 2 months discussing issues such as Energy Conservation, Climate Change, the Gateshead Strategic Partnership, Sustainable Transport, Biodiversity, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, how Durham County Council does Local Agenda 21, Neighbourhood Management and Community Partnerships. A Business Focus Group met in June 2002 for the first time.

The Local Agenda 21 officer met with the Gateshead Youth Assembly twice during the year discussing LA21 progress and Coping with Climate Change. Plans were drawn up to introduce an environmental grant scheme for local communities and a member of the LA21 focus group is now attending the Gateshead Strategic Partnership steering group representing the environment theme partnership.

Key actions for 2003/2004

During the rest of 2003 and in 2004 we will continue to hold the Local Agenda 21 focus group, and liaise with Gateshead Youth Assembly and other relevant community groups.

We will develop the activity of Community groups in all aspects of Local Agenda 21 and introduce a Community Environmental Grants scheme.

The Council will also promote environmental awareness in Strategic Partnership policy and practice.

Conclusion

The aim of the community environmental grants scheme is to encourage communities to take action to protect and enhance their local environment and to carry out projects with grants up to £5,000 from the Council. The Council hopes that many community groups will be able to take up the offer of these environmental grants.

Other related issues

The Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in September 2001 and committed 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.

A draft report on addressing the effects of climate change was produced in October 2002 and the Local Agenda 21 forum was consulted about its content in November and December 2002.

The Council has embraced sustainable development as a key policy for all its activities and as such is conscious of its responsibilities to the producers and suppliers of the goods that it uses.

Many consumers are aware that wealth is unequally distributed and that products from developing countries are often sold at prices that do not afford their producers a decent standard of living. Fairtrade aims to alleviate poverty and "humanises" the trade process - making the producer-consumer chain as short as possible so that consumers become aware of the culture, identity and conditions in which producers live. This is fundamental to sustainable development. The Council will investigate the potential of Gateshead becoming a Fair Trade town.

The policy of following the principles of sustainable development means that many other Council policies and practices should be influenced by these principles. To establish the extent to which the Council follows its own policies in its day to day activities, it is proposed to undertake a sustainability audit focused on the environment. The conclusions from this audit will form the basis of further work on environmental issues in 2004/2005 and beyond.

Key actions for 2003/2004

Over the next year or so the Council will agree and publish the Coping with Climate Change plan, investigate the potential of Gateshead becoming a Fair Trade town and carry out an Environmental/Sustainability audit of Council policies and practices.

Conclusion

Climate change has been described as the greatest challenge to face the world. The Local Agenda 21 Strategy makes a contribution to reducing the greenhouse gases emitted into the air and the Coping with Climate change proposals will look at the way the local communities in Gateshead can deal with the effects of climate change on the local environment and its communities. We are in the very early years of this challenge and whatever decisions and actions we take now will affect the impact of climate change for many years to come.