



## Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

### 1. Introduction

This Strategy and Action Plan document sets out Gedling Borough Council's overall aims and objectives for the Council and the Borough to be more sustainable and practical actions that the Council aims to deliver over the next five years to achieve those aims.

Sustainability is a long-term issue, with long-term implications. But it is also an issue that needs pragmatic and practical short-term action to allow for early essential progress to be made. This document therefore sets out the overall direction the Council will take in addressing sustainability in the years ahead, as well as outlining practical actions to be taken in the short, medium and long term.

The Strategy and Action Plan is fundamental in taking forward the Council's objective, set out in the 2012/13 Council Plan, to ***"reduce the Council's and the Borough's carbon footprint and energy usage"***. It delivers the specific commitment in the Council Plan ***"to develop and implement a sustainability action plan"***.

There is much the Council can do to improve its own sustainability performance and actions to progress this are included in the Action Plan. But, to be truly successful in making the Borough more sustainable, the Council needs to reach out to communities and partners to support and encourage more sustainable lifestyles and behaviours. Only then will the Borough as a whole genuinely become more sustainable.

The Strategy will include challenging targets, so that progress can be measured towards agreed objectives. Targets have been included wherever measures are available but in some areas, suitable measures and targets need to be developed. In all cases, targets will be kept under review and progress will be managed through established and robust performance management arrangements.

The Strategy is being developed in challenging economic circumstances, for the Council and the wider community. Actions proposed reflect this – with a strong emphasis on activity that also delivers economic benefit for the Council and the community, and a particular focus on energy-related improvements which have both financial and climate change advantages. Resources for project delivery will in most cases be tied to clear business cases.

Good practice in sustainability is constantly changing, and new opportunities will arise as the Plan is taken forward. The Strategy and Plan will therefore be kept under constant review, with new initiatives added where they contribute towards the Strategy's objectives and for which a clear business case can be made.

There has been much debate in recent years about the scope of sustainability, the science of climate change and how the issue should be taken forward. There is clearly still a place for such debate – but the key principle that underlies this Strategy and Action Plan is that, whatever individual views are on these major issues, the combination of social, environmental and in particular economic factors we face today mean that the need for early action is unarguable.

Sustainability's time is now and these plans will take it forward.

## **2. Baseline and Achievements to date**

Over the years, the Council has consistently progressed sustainability based projects. So this strategy does not imply we are starting from a nil baseline. Much has already been achieved and this strategy aims to build on those achievements, but with a sharper focus.

Below is an outline of some of the notable sustainability achievements of the past few years;

### **Energy**

- 3 planning permissions granted for wind turbines
- Solar PVs installed on Civic Centre, Jubilee and Depot to attract a 25 year Feed In Tariff
- Active promotion and implementation of the Warm Streets project
- Installation of new motion sensitive lights throughout most Council sites
- Worked out the Borough carbon footprint
- Installed a voltage optimisation unit at Richard Herrod Centre
- Implemented server virtualisation for ICT systems
- Established the Members Eco-Team

### **Transport**

- Free bicycle servicing by Dr Bike
- Eco Stars Fleet Programme (which reaches out to wider business community)
- Procurement of an electric vehicle approved
- Reduced car mileage payments
- Facilitated the employee cycle loan scheme

### **Waste**

- Promoted recycling and achieved a 38% recycling rate
- Improved our waste minimisation achieving a significant reduction in waste per head in 2011/12
- Introduced the residents paid-for garden waste collection service

## Biodiversity

- Contributed to Aligned Core Strategy policies
- Signed up to Biodiversity Offsetting Pilot project
- Installed bird boxes in Arnot Hill Park
- Established “Friends of Park” groups
- Investigated the potential opportunities for establishing Nature Reserves within the Borough

## Climate Change

- Made Climate Change policy one of key policies in Aligned Core Strategy
- Signed up to the Nottingham Declaration in 2006

Gaps do however remain in terms of both the availability and reliability of data to measure progress. The strategy will seek to fill those gaps and improve performance data wherever possible. However, the lack of available data will not deter progress of projects where the evidence suggests that delivery will be a “good thing” and result in sustainability benefits consistent with the objectives.

## 3. Policy Drivers

Sustainable development is now a global aspiration. From as early as 1972, nations have been coming together at global conferences to find solutions to safeguarding the planet for present and future generations. The latest summit was the just ended Rio+20 Earth summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012. A summary of key developments since the first summit is outlined in Appendix 1.

In addition, UK governments have been proactive in pushing forward the sustainability agenda in the UK by the enacting several pieces of legislation. Key legislation influencing this Strategy and Action Plan is summarised at Appendix 2.

### The Gedling Vision

The Vision for Gedling is;

***The best place to live and work and the best Council around – best through the eyes of residents and staff***

This vision is central to all our sustainability ambitions. Our overall aim is to take forward projects that will allow for a people centred, prosperous Borough which is sensitive to the natural environment. In particular, we will place great emphasis on sustainable energy use and management. We strongly believe that this is one of the most effective means of saving money for our residents thereby improving their economic wellbeing.

More specifically, the 2012/13 Council Plan includes a range of specific sustainability-related actions in line with this vision. These include actions to;

- Improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of leisure centres
- Extend use of electric vehicles and improve fuel efficiency of council vehicles
- Review the Council's energy plan to establish energy and carbon reduction targets
- Maximise participation in reuse and recycling and Investigate widening the range of materials that can be recycled
- Develop "Love Where You Live" Keep Britain Tidy initiatives including community clean-ups

These build on other recent achievements across the spectrum of sustainability. Where appropriate, these have been built into the Action Plan.

#### **4. High Level Goal and Aims**

The overall high-level goals and aims to be delivered through this Strategy and Action Plan are: -

##### **5.1. Overall Goal**

To facilitate the attainment of more sustainable lifestyles for Gedling residents.

##### **5.2. Aims**

- Reduce the overall carbon emissions of the Borough.
- Continually improve the energy efficiency and performance of the Council's own estate and wider community.
- Continually improve the energy efficiency of the Gedling housing stock and to reduce fuel poverty of residents.
- Increase the proportion of renewable energy generated and used in the Council's own estate and within the Borough.
- Promote a shift to a more sustainable mode of public and private transport system.
- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.
- Protect, conserve and improve the Borough's biodiversity.

- Promote behavioural change towards more sustainable ways of living among staff and members of the public and enabling community resilience to a changing climate.
- Accelerate the shift towards a low carbon economy and facilitate the creation of “green” jobs.

## 5. Key Sustainability Themes

Sustainability is a very broad subject. It is, therefore, important for actions to be focused and related to available resource. The Action Plan, therefore, focuses activity and performance around five main themes understood to be most important for the Borough. These are;

- Energy**
- Transport**
- Waste**
- Biodiversity**
- Resilience and Behavioural Change**

The importance of contributing to future energy security, the impact that energy can have on climate change and adaptation and the wider economic imperatives resulting from increasing energy costs mean that energy is the central theme around which the rest are anchored

## 6. Sustainability Action Plan

Our action plan encompasses both our internal operations as well as reflecting our role as a community leader.

### Timeframes

For the purpose of this action plan, timeframes are;

- Short term                    up to 1 year
- Medium term                1 to 2 years
- Long term                    2 to 5 years

The actions contained herein draw on the recommendations made by the Council's Policy Review Scrutiny Committee. More specific targets will be firmed up as the Action Plan progresses.

## **7. Performance Management**

This strategy aims to make an overall positive impact on the progress that the Council makes in its quest to be a better performing and more sustainable local authority. Our endeavour is to make significant impacts that will contribute to the local, regional and national targets for overall carbon emission reductions.

The targets that we are setting under this strategy over the next 5 years are;

1. Reduce the overall carbon emissions of the Borough to 5% below 2010 levels
2. Reduce energy use within the Council estate by 8%
3. Reduce the overall carbon emissions from the Council estate by 10%
4. Generate at least 7.5% renewable energy for use in the Council's own estate
5. Increase the number of renewable energy generation installations within the Borough by at least 200 yearly
6. Reduce the Council's business mileage by 5%
7. Increase the number of electric and/or hybrid vehicles owned by the Council to at least 5
8. Reduce the amount of waste generated per household in the Borough that goes to landfill from 527 kg to no more than 475 kg

This action plan will be monitored half-yearly to ensure that it is up to date with any new developments or policy directives. The Sustainability Officer Group will be responsible for ensuring that the reviews are timely and robust. On a yearly basis the Sustainability Officer group will review the progress made against the stated actions and report to the Corporate Director for Sustainability.

## **8. Resources**

The Council has invested in a dedicated Sustainability Officer to drive forward this strategy and action plan. His role will be to lead delivery of a wide range of projects, to work with communities to progress others and to seek out funding opportunities to take forward projects for which funding is required.

The Council is also ready to invest further revenue and capital funding in projects that have a clearly established business case – it has, for example, recently invested £300,000 in the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the roofs of some of its buildings, reducing ongoing energy costs and carbon emissions and increasing the proportion of renewable energy it uses.

The case for further investment in projects included in this Action Plan and for further future projects will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis. The Council is likely to look favourably on projects for which a strong business case can be put forward.

draft

## Sustainability Action Plan (2012 – 2017)

Key Strategic Theme	Key Strategic Aim	Actions	Timeframe	Responsible Officer
<b>Corporate Arrangements</b>	To have a functional and effective system in place to oversee the implementation of this plan	1. Identify and co-opt Managers/Officers from key service areas to form a senior level Sustainability Officer Group (SOG)	Completed – Sept 2012	Sustainability Officer
		2. Redefine the remit of the Environmental Steering Group to complement and support SOG and to allow for the group to be effective in its operations	Short – Mar 2013	Sustainability Officer
		3. Use a sustainable procurement framework for all major Council purchases	Medium	Procurement Officer
		4. Promote and raise profile of sustainability as a corporate issue requiring every service area to incorporate sustainability issues in their operations and service planning	Medium	Corporate Director
		5. Identify suitable measures and indicators and set targets to manage the effectiveness of the Action Plan (where not already identified)	Completed- Dec 12	Sustainability Officer
<b>Energy</b>	To improve the energy efficiency and performance of the Council's own estate	1. Investigate opportunities for further improving the efficient use of buildings occupied by and/or owned by the Council	Long/ongoing	Service Manager – Asset Management
		2. Carry out a comprehensive energy audit of all Council buildings and where applicable, have Display Energy Certificates (DECs) to show environmental performance of Council buildings	Medium – long	Facilities Manager/ Sustainability Officer
		3. Carry out an energy efficiency awareness campaign for staff members targeted at and	Short – Mar 13	Sustainability



		<p>tailored to individual services and sites</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Roll out voltage optimisation across all suitable Council Buildings</li> <li>5. Investigate alternative and/or more efficient means of heating Council buildings and bring forward appropriate recommendations to take forward</li> <li>6. Explore opportunities for using IT to further improve management of energy consumption and bring forward appropriate recommendations to take forward.</li> <li>7. Review the Carbon Trust's energy survey report of leisure facilities (2008) and assess with a view to progressing/completing implementation of the outstanding recommendations that remain relevant and rejecting those no longer applicable.</li> </ol>	<p>Short – Sept 13</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Short - Medium</p>	<p>Officer</p> <p>Facilities Manager</p> <p>Facilities Manager</p> <p>Service Manager – Customer Services and IT</p> <p>General Manager – Leisure Centres</p>
	To improve the energy efficiency of the Gedling housing stock and to reduce fuel poverty of residents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advise members on the approach the Council wishes to take regarding the Green Deal</li> <li>2. Implement the Council's agreed approach to Green Deal</li> <li>3. Work in partnership with social housing organisations in the Borough to make meaningful gains in reducing fuel poverty in Gedling</li> <li>4. Investigate the setting up of a scheme to allow Gedling residents to sign up to community energy bulk buying or switch energy suppliers and implement if appropriate</li> <li>5. Ensure the Council has clear signposting to home</li> </ol>	<p>Short – Jan 13</p> <p>Medium and ongoing</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Short – Jan 2013</p> <p>Short – Feb 2013</p>	<p>Corporate Director</p> <p>Food, Health and Housing Manager</p> <p>Service Manager – Housing and Localities</p> <p>Corporate Director</p> <p>Food, Health and</p>

		energy advice for residents		Housing Manager
	To increase the proportion of renewable energy generated and used in the Council's own estate and within the Borough	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalise Richard Herrod Leisure Centre solar PVC installation and sign up for Feed in Tariffs</li> <li>2. Explore and pursue further renewable energy generation opportunities for all Council buildings</li> <li>3. Explore areas of renewable energy generation potential within the Borough.</li> <li>4. Finalise 'wind generation' opportunities map for the Borough</li> <li>5. Investigate opportunities for combined heat and power (CHP) district heating schemes throughout the Borough.</li> </ol>	<p>Completed – Oct 12</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Long</p> <p>Long</p> <p>Long</p>	<p>Facilities Manager</p> <p>Facilities Manager</p> <p>Service Manager – Planning &amp; Economic Dev</p> <p>Service Manager – Planning &amp; Economic Dev</p> <p>Service Manager – Planning &amp; Economic Dev</p>
<b>Transport</b>	To promote a shift to a more sustainable mode of public and private transport system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate the potential for hosting a public electric vehicle charging point(s) under the Plugged-in Midlands scheme</li> <li>2. Investigate the possibility of expanding the use of electric or hybrid vehicles in Council fleet and opportunities for branding and promoting these</li> <li>3. Carry out a green review of Council fleet including options for a reduction in number of vehicles owned</li> <li>4. Implement agreed recommendations from transport service review</li> </ol>	<p>Short – Jun 13</p> <p>Short – Mar 13</p> <p>Short – Oct 13</p> <p>Medium - Long</p>	<p>Sustainability Officer</p> <p>Transport Services Manager</p> <p>Transport Services Manager</p> <p>Service Manager Asset Mgt</p>

		5. Investigate and implement the most efficient use of Council fleet to reduce overall mileage covered	Long	Service Manager Asset Mgt
		6. Engage the Energy Saving Trust to carry out smarter driving training for Council drivers	Pilot completed – Dec 12 Further roll-out to be explored Jan 2013	Sustainability Officer
		7. Review and improve the Council's Travel Plan with a view to offering incentives for car sharing and cycling and for working in partnership with other agencies and set baselines for future implementation.	Medium	Sustainability Officer
		8. Encourage and promote alternative means of business travel for staff	Medium	Sustainability Officer and Service Manager – Organisational Development
		9. Investigate opportunities for drawing benefits of the Nottingham City Local Sustainable Transport Fund into the Borough	Medium – end 2013	Sustainability Officer
		10. Join Nottingham City Transport's <i>Easy to Commute</i> or similar schemes and encourage staff members to sign up for to the Easy rider Citycard for cheaper commuting fares	Short – Mar 2013	Sustainability Officer
		11. Promote walking and cycling as an alternative to the car and providing facilities and infrastructure for cyclists within the Borough	Short-Medium	Sustainability Officer

		12. Lobby for improved public transport links in the Borough including NET line into the borough	Long	Corp Director + Service Manager – Planning & Economic Dev
<b>Waste</b>	To reduce the amount of waste going to landfill	1. Review garden waste collection	Medium	Service Manager Waste Services
		2. Maintain and or improve current rate (38%) of recycling	Long	Service Manager Waste Services
		3. Explore new waste streams as a means of reducing amount of waste going to landfill	Medium	Service Manager Waste Services
		4. Promote waste minimisation and encourage re-use and recycling of materials	Medium	Service Manager Waste Services
		5. Explore feasibility of partnership working on energy from waste opportunities	Long	Service Manager Waste Services
<b>Biodiversity</b>	To protect, conserve and improve the Borough's biodiversity	1. Explore opportunities for designation of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) in the Borough	Short – Sep 13	Service Manager – P&ED
		2. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a 'Gedling Country Park'	Medium	Service Manager – P&ED
<b>Resilience and Behaviour Change</b>	To promote behavioural change towards more sustainable ways of living and enabling community resilience	2. Sign up to the Climate Local Commitment	Short – Feb 2013	Sustainability Officer

	to a changing climate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Facilitate training of Council and partnership staff members in livelihood courses such as the Live4Less course to help residents live a less wasteful lifestyle</li> <li>4. Continuously send out positive sustainability messages about the Council's initiatives and achievements and engage the public to live less energy intensive lives</li> <li>5. Explore possibilities of influencing planning policy to promote renewable energy generation for new developments as part of planning application approval</li> </ol>	<p>Completed – Nov 12</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Long</p>	<p>Sustainability Officer</p> <p>Service Manager - Communications</p> <p>Service Manager – Planning &amp; Economic Dev</p>
	To accelerate the shift towards a low carbon economy and facilitate the creation of “green” jobs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage the business community to seek ways to produce goods and services with a low carbon impact</li> <li>2. Encourage businesses to carry out energy surveys of their premises to establish ways of reducing their carbon footprints</li> <li>3. Lobby business support agencies to look for opportunities of working with local businesses in greening their activities</li> </ol>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Economic Development Officer</p> <p>Sustainability Officer</p> <p>Sustainability Officer</p>

## Appendix 1 – Historical Background

### 1. Context and background

The first ever global summit on the environment was held in Stockholm in 1972 out of a realisation that the rate at which the human population was utilising natural resources was causing serious damage to the state of the global ecosystems. 20 years later, it was evident that there was need for a rethink of economic development and find ways to halt the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and pollution of the planet. This culminated in the Rio Earth Summit where 172 Governments came together and agreed on the need to redirect international and national plans and policies to ensure that all economic decisions fully took into account any environmental impact.

The summit culminated in the adoption of Agenda 21, a wide-ranging blueprint for action to achieve sustainable development worldwide. Sustainable development was defined as

*“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*

This gave rise to the concept of sustainability which advocates for development that is considerate of three very important aspects, the social, economic and environmental aspects which have to be addressed in equal measure to achieve sustainable development.

### Agenda 21

Since then Agenda 21 has been the guiding principle for Governments in sustainability although the concept has evolved with subsequent Earth summits in 2002 and more recently 2012. Many Governments advised that local authorities take steps to implement the plan locally as part of the provisions of Agenda 21 in what was known as local Agenda 21.

Gedling Borough Council was involved in Local Agenda 21 and since then sustainability has been a very important aspect of the Council’s way of working. The Council realises that the economic and social well being of Gedling residents is intricately linked to a healthy environment. By working together with residents and businesses in the borough, the Council endeavours to reduce the negative impact on the environment of its operations and the residents’ lifestyle particularly the reduction of carbon emissions that have been proven to alter the earth’s climatic balance and cause global warming and climate change.

### 2. International Agreements

Following the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, a number of international agreements were signed setting targets to reduce emission levels.

#### 2.1 Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

This is a legally binding treaty whose objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

The Convention has three main goals:

2. conservation of biological diversity
3. sustainable use of its components; and
4. fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources

It therefore is seen as the most important treaty with regards to sustainability.

## **2.2 The Kyoto Protocol (1997)**

The Kyoto Protocol was an international environmental treaty aimed at stabilising greenhouse gas emissions at a level that would prevent dangerous climate change. Legally binding targets were agreed upon for industrialised countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 5.2%, compared to 1990 levels by 2012 and European Union countries to reduce emissions by 8%.

## **2.3 The Bali Roadmap (2007)**

This was a set of decisions that represented the various tracks that were seen as key to reaching a global climate deal to ensure “deep cuts” in emissions from developed nations by setting long term global emission targets after 2012. The Roadmap also included provisions for managing deforestation and enhancing forest management.

## **Appendix 2 – Summary of significant sustainability legislation**

### **1. The Energy Act (2011)**

The Act provides for a step change in the provision of energy efficiency measures to homes and businesses, and makes improvements to the country's framework to enable and secure low-carbon energy supplies and fair competition in the energy markets.

One of the most significant provisions of the Act is the Green Deal which creates a new financing framework to enable the provision of fixed improvements to the energy efficiency of households and non-domestic properties, funded by a charge on energy bills that avoids the need for consumers to pay upfront costs.

The act also includes measures to improve energy efficiency and energy security as well as enable low carbon technologies to become more mainstream.

### **2. The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme (2010)**

The CRC is a mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and cutting emissions in large public and private sector organisations, which account for around 10% of the UK's emissions.

The scheme features a range of reputational, behavioural and financial drivers, which aim to encourage organisations to develop energy management strategies that promote a better understanding of energy usage.

Monetary penalties are payable for failure to comply with the CRC, whilst bonuses are available for organisations that excel.

### **3. The Climate Change Act (2008)**

The UK became the first to set long term legally binding emission reduction target of 26% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 below 1990 levels in order to combat the effects of climate change. The Act aims to improve carbon management to help with the transition towards a low-carbon economy and to demonstrate UK leadership internationally, signalling the country's commitment to taking its share of responsibility for reducing global emissions

### **4. The UK Biodiversity Plan (BAP) (1994)**

This was the UK Government's response to signing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

The plan set out a programme for conserving the UK's biodiversity. It also led to the production of 436 action plans between 1995 and 1999 to help many of the UK's most threatened species and habitats to recover. As a result of the BAP, there are currently over 1, 000 species and more than 65 habitats for conservation.

Assessment of progress with implementation of the UK BAP currently takes place every three years.