

A strategy for sustainable development

Approved in principle for consultation with partnership bodies
Community Safety Committee 29 November 2005

What is sustainable development?

- ensuring that economic, social and environmental objectives are met simultaneously
- development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- treating the Earth as though we intend to stay, by conserving its natural resources

Why do we need a strategy?

- to reduce our use of natural resources and costs and play our role in responding to the issues associated with climate change which threatens the quality of life
- to influence others through our policies, actions regulatory roles, education and partnership working
- to drive integrated action with our partners and support local communities on local economic, social and environmental needs

Our vision

To provide an improved quality of life for all in West Lothian, now and in the future, by:

- placing sustainable development at the centre of all policy-making to optimise and balance economic and social well-being and environmental protection
- setting and meeting local sustainable development targets.

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SUMMARY

Sustainable development is important because economic growth, whilst spreading prosperity and well-being to many, does not benefit everyone equally and can also be harmful to the environment. We need to improve quality of life by ensuring that we integrate our economic goals with work on social inclusion and environmental protection while also responding to European, UK and Scottish legislation and policy.

Local authorities have a lead role to play in promoting sustainable development, through strategic planning, transportation, regulation, use of property, construction, enforcement, community planning and education.

Adopting sustainable development practices can also help us to provide best value, as there are significant savings to be made by, for example, implementing energy efficiency measures (particularly in the context of increasing energy prices at rates well above inflation) and reducing and recycling waste to avoid landfill tax.

Sustainable development has become a mainstream policy priority across the world. In Europe and in the UK we are likely to have to meet increasingly challenging targets in relation to energy efficiency, waste and climate change. Sustainable development is, therefore, a priority that local authorities cannot ignore. It requires

concerted effort across the whole authority and from all members of staff and includes a significant public education role.

West Lothian Council has already made progress in a number of areas and is committed to sustainable development objectives in both its corporate plan and the community plan. Through this strategy, there is an opportunity to build on our strengths and improve the overall quality of life in West Lothian, particularly through the lead role of the council in the community planning process and the need to work closely with, and influence our partners.

Our vision is to provide an improved quality of life for all in West Lothian, now and in the future, by:

- placing sustainable development at the centre of all policy-making to optimise and balance economic and social well-being and environmental protection; and
- setting and meeting local sustainable development targets.

The purpose of the strategy is, therefore, to:

- address our own economic, social and environmental performance.
- influence others to adopt sustainable development practices through planning policies and processes, our regulatory role, education and partnership working.

- work with our partners and support local communities to ensure integrated and complementary action to support local economic, social and environmental well being.
- reduce our use of resources in-house through action on waste, energy, travel, use of property, construction and procurement.

A forum comprised of council representatives and external partners will be established. It will have a consultative role and will focus on partnership working, sharing and enhancing good practice, particularly where there may be conflict between local and global sustainability considerations, and advising on the implementation and future development of the strategy as an ongoing need.

Within the council, the strategy will be implemented through our existing approach to corporate and service planning and the adoption of sustainable development policies, the West Lothian Assessment Model, Charter Mark and best value reviews. Guidance and training for staff and a communications campaign targeting the public and our own staff are also needed.

A working group comprised of key players from a broad range of services will be established to co-ordinate and monitor implementation of the strategy.

1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – THE POLICY CONTEXT

International

The rationale for sustainable development is derived from evidence of the depletion of the earth's natural resources and the environmental consequences of this (Appendix 1). In response to the global nature of the problem any of the sustainable development policies in the UK are driven by International or European directives, such as the EU directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Kyoto protocol, which commits signatories to act on climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

UK Government

In March, 2005 the UK Government published a UK strategic framework for sustainable development, *One future – different paths*. This provides a framework for separate strategies and action plans in each part of the UK. The Scottish Executive, after consultation, will be updating its statement on sustainable development published in 2002, by the end of the year.

Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive identifies three main priorities for sustainable development: resource use, energy and travel. It has adopted 24 sustainable development indicators to measure

progress. It also links sustainable development to policies on social justice and health and the concept of environmental justice: the right to a clean, safe and healthy environment.

In addition the Scottish Executive is driving the sustainable development agenda through legislation, policies and strategies on climate change, energy efficiency, public transport, waste, buildings, planning and SEA. Many of these will force or encourage local authority action via target setting, financial incentives or penalties (for example landfill tax) and inspection regimes.

The introduction of the process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Scotland, for all strategies, plans and programmes, will have a major impact on local authorities. From July 2004, all development plans are to be subject to environmental assessment. However, the Scottish Executive has announced its intention to widen the scope of SEA to apply to **all** public sector strategies, policies and programmes.

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Bill, introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 2 March 2005, is expected to be enacted early in 2006.

Local Government and Best Value

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to secure best value and provides an overarching development framework for community planning. Community Planning, along with

the power to advance well being, is enabling local authorities and their partners to work together in a way which supports sustainable development. The Community Plan for West Lothian, *Shaping the Future (2000 – 2010)*, recognises the importance of sustainable development. The principle of sustainability underpins all aspects of community life and this cross cutting theme is regarded as an integral part of all the themes within the community plan.

Also included within the Act is a requirement to demonstrate a contribution to sustainable development. The associated statutory guidance to local authorities includes recommendations to develop a procurement strategy which takes into account sustainable development requirements and a systematic approach to the management of resources which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

2. POSITION STATEMENT

All of the policy initiatives described above indicate that sustainable development has become a mainstream policy priority for local authorities. Indeed, it was one focus of the council's Best Value audit early in 2005. Legislation and policies at international, European, UK and Scottish levels will ultimately cascade down to the local level and local authorities will have to play their part.

In developing this strategy we have consulted internally with a number of key officers and councillors and conducted a review of our current position. Our intention now is to build on and strengthen our existing work.

Our key policy documents already state our commitment to sustainable development goals. In our community plan we have acknowledged the importance of sustainable development in our commitment to balancing economic, social, and environmental goals in the context of a growing and changing community.

In the *West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2003-7*, we announced that we would develop an environmental strategy. We have decided to change the name to a 'sustainable development' strategy because the term sustainable development better reflects our commitment to integrating all three priorities: economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. Many of the

objectives we set out in the corporate plan are linked to sustainable development.

We have made considerable progress, and in some cases been a leading local authority, on a number of sustainable development priorities, including, waste, energy use, planning and transport, housing, biodiversity, countryside management and influencing others. Some examples are outlined below.

Planning and transport

- The West Lothian Local Plan incorporates sustainable development objectives and these have been instrumental, for example, in planning for the proposed development of 7000 new houses in West Lothian.
- Large employers located in West Lothian, including West Lothian College, Sun Microsystems, Sky and Intelligent Finance, have been required to provide 'green travel plans' for staff commuting.
- Car parking facilities at railway stations are being doubled in capacity.
- The Bathgate to Airdrie railway line is re-opening.
- The Bathgate Area Local Plan was the first in the UK to include policies to require sustainable urban drainage measures to treat urban water run-off and this policy is now applied to all development in West Lothian.

Waste

- We have piloted a three-bin system for household waste which now serves 92% of all households. As a result the volume of waste recycled has increased from 5% before the system was introduced to 19% now.
- 85% of all waste collected in blue bins (including plastic and metal) and from our kitchen and bathroom replacement programme is recycled.
- Staff at our community recycling centres (previously called civic amenity sites) now greet customers, establish what waste they have, and help them to separate it for recycling.
- We have appointed a new, enhanced team of waste officers, partly funded by the Scottish Executive Strategic Waste Fund, to focus on waste minimisation, collection, recycling and public education.
- We recycle and re-use all waste road materials from road maintenance and green waste from grounds maintenance.
- Planning permission has been granted for an Integrated Waste Processing Centre in West Lothian, which will increase recycling efficiency and reduce the need to transport waste.

Environment management

- We were the first council in Scotland to publish a local biodiversity action plan. We have revised this for the period 2005-2009 to reflect the executive's biodiversity strategy for Scotland and the council's duties under the Nature Conservation [Scotland] Act 2004.
- The River Almond Catchment Management Plan has created partnership working to improve what was Scotland's most polluted watercourse. Community led projects such as that for the White Burn, Whitburn are improving the quality of the water. Linked to this have come wildlife and public amenity benefits.
- We participate in the Scottish Executive's air quality monitoring and assessment regime and report on six particular pollutants. West Lothian currently meets all the criteria within the scheme and continues implementing the monitoring procedures.
- We work closely with our partners to clean up contaminated land by inspection and remediation of specific sites. We are currently working on sites at Whitrigg, Riddochhill, Candleworks and Eastfield.
- We protect and enhance our environment by enforcing regulations, encouraging action and, where appropriate, lobbying for higher standards on public health and pollution, development and building control, to ensure that sustainable development criteria are met.

Energy use

- We have appointed an energy manager to develop a strategic, council-wide approach to energy efficiency.
- We are developing a corporate energy efficiency strategy with officers throughout the council. The strategy will focus on the areas of energy purchasing and information, energy awareness and training, energy audits and surveys and energy and environmental policies and strategies.
- Most council housing stock is energy efficient due to the installation of insulation, gas central heating and double-glazing.
- We are developing a sustainability policy for buildings and construction for consideration by the council to raise sustainability standards in those areas.
- We have used energy efficient street lighting for many years.
- We are developing a fuel poverty strategy.

Influencing others.

- Influencing others through partnership working, awareness-raising and education is vital to achieving sustainable development objectives. We have a number of programmes in place which help to influence others towards better sustainable development practice.

- The Eco-schools initiative encourages pupils to take practical action on their local and school environment. More than two-thirds of primary schools in West Lothian have registered as an Eco-school, three have achieved the Green Flag status (the top award) and it is expected that 30 will have achieved a Green Flag by the end of 2005. In addition, the application of the national education priority of "Values and Citizenship" is a further important focus on developing sustainable communities.
- The Business Environmental Partnership (BEP) was established in 1998 and is partly funded by West Lothian Council. It offers free assistance to small and medium size enterprises to adopt good environmental management, which has demonstrable effects on energy efficiency and cost savings; and promotes their achievements through Business Environment Awards. Since 1998 the BEP has assisted 170 companies in West Lothian to identify a total of £1 million in cost savings.
- Through the Health Enhancing Physical Activity partnership strategy and with funding from Paths to Health, we are encouraging walking and cycling in West Lothian and establishing links with health professionals to develop this. The safe routes to school project is a further example of

joined-up working in encouraging walking and cycling while reducing traffic, at peak times, and pollution.

In summary, we have made considerable progress on a number of key sustainable development priorities. However, this is only the start and we need to lead by example on all service fronts. This strategy aims to build on our strengths by adopting a corporate approach, to ensure that sustainable development priorities are implemented throughout all services in the council and integrated with best value principles and with strategies for economic development and social inclusion. Our actions will focus on influencing others outside the council, on our direct service provision to the public and our in-house practices and procedures.

3. VISION

Our vision is to provide an improved quality of life for all in West Lothian, now and in the future, by:

- placing sustainable development at the centre of all decision-making to optimise and balance economic and social well-being and environmental protection; and
- setting and meeting local sustainable development targets.

As a local authority we have a lead role to play through our role in strategic planning, education and enforcement.

4. AIMS

Our aims are to:

- reduce our use of resources in-house through action on waste, energy, travel, building design and construction and procurement through our own economic, social and environmental performance;
- influence others to adopt sustainable development practices, through planning policies and processes, our regulatory role, education and partnership working; and
- work with our partners and support local communities to ensure integrated and complementary action to support local economic, social and environmental well-being.

5. PRINCIPLES

We have set out the values and guiding principles which underpin all our work in our corporate plan. These are:

Council values

- Focusing on our customers' needs.
- Being honest, open and accountable.
- Providing equality of opportunities.
- Developing employees.
- Making best use of resources.
- Working in partnership.

Guiding principles

- A corporate council.. that knows where it's going.
- A connected council.. at the heart of a network of partners.
- A customer focused council.. organised around the needs of the citizen.
- An adaptive council.. operating in a responsive positive culture.
- A best value council.. delivering high quality integrated services.
- An e-council.. enabled by technology.

Sustainable development principles

In addition to the above council values and principles, our work on sustainable development will be guided by the following principles:

Leading by example – putting our own house in order at the same time as influencing others

Taking a long term perspective – protecting the interests of future generations by considering the long-term impact of our policies

Integrating policies and actions – looking at the whole picture and linking environmental, social and economic concerns

A precautionary approach – where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, a lack of scientific certainty will not deter us from taking cost-effective action to prevent it

Making the polluter pay – those responsible for environmental threats or damage should pay the cost of preventing damage or putting it right

Thinking globally, acting locally – by taking local action we can have an impact on the global environment

6. OBJECTIVES

The council's corporate plan for 2003 to 2007 contains over 300 actions, including a large number related to sustainable development issues.

The council's contribution to this strategy does not seek to replicate work already going on, but to draw together and focus attention on the key areas where the council needs to do more, to achieve an enhanced cross-service response and to maximise best value.

Aim: *To reduce our use of resources in-house through action on waste, energy, travel, building design and construction and procurement through our own economic, social and environmental performance.*

- Develop and implement "The In-House Recycling Project Plan" for the council's own waste which sets and meets challenging targets for minimising and recycling our waste.
- Develop, implement and monitor a corporate energy efficiency strategy which sets and meets clear targets for reductions in non-renewable energy use.
- Pilot solar powered street equipment.
- Prepare a staff travel plan for the proposed Civic Centre.
- Develop and implement a corporate water use strategy which adopts and meets clear targets for reductions in water use.
- Develop and implement a sustainable procurement policy for all council procurement which bases procurement decisions on whole life costs, energy efficiency and primary resource sustainability and provide staff training to enable this.
- Lead, by example, in the use, design and construction of all its buildings, including the proposed Civic Centre.
- Ensure that sustainable development principles are built into the Behavioural Framework, based on the council value of making best use of resources.
- Assess and meet training needs to support the sustainable development strategy, ranging from basic induction to specialised training (for example working with developers on whole life costing).
- In conjunction with energy and waste managers, prepare and co-ordinate a communications and events programme to support the sustainable development strategy by informing staff and encouraging them to play their part and giving them feedback on what has been achieved.
- Develop and promote energy awareness and efficiency in schools, at staff and pupil levels.
- Prepare guidance for staff on how they can meet the sustainable development requirements of the West Lothian Assessment model, best value and implementing SEAs.

- Include a new category of Celebrating Success in the next awards round, focusing on making best use of resources through sustainable development practices.

Aim: *To influence others to adopt sustainable development practices, through planning policies and processes, our regulatory role, education and partnership working*

- Implement and develop the waste strategy to ensure we meet national waste targets through waste collection and recycling, education and developing new uses for waste.
- Strengthen the sustainable development criteria in our planning system, which is fundamental to land use and conservation, and ensure their implementation through monitoring and enforcement.
- Implement sustainable planning and transport policies which minimise the need for travel and promote walking, cycling and use of public transport, in conjunction with the health enhancing physical activity strategy.
- Consider the establishment of a monitoring group to advise on and co-ordinate the council's approach to addressing climate change, if required.
- With our partners, sustainably manage our water resources in West Lothian through river catchment plans, urban drainage schemes and action on water quality and conservation.
- Promote a resource-efficient, low waste, competitive economy through our economic strategy and continue to encourage and guide businesses to adopt sustainable development practices.
- Continue to use our advisory, monitoring and regulatory role to protect our environment from pollution and to develop a clean, safe and healthy environment for all.
- Explore the feasibility of extending the Business Environment Partnership model to the voluntary sector, with the potential for savings made to be re-invested within each voluntary organisation.
- Ensure the involvement of community education and leisure and cultural services staff in the implementation of the sustainable development strategy, to promote links between sustainable development, community learning and development, leisure and physical activity and cultural strategies.
- Extend recycling to all schools and council offices.
- Raise awareness through the Bulletin and other means to support the sustainable development strategy by informing the public, encouraging them to play their part and giving them feedback on what has been achieved.

- Investigate a one stop shop for information, advice and grants, using the existing Council Information Service offices.
- By our actions in designing and constructing new buildings, lead on and demonstrate the practicality of sustainable development.

Aim: *To work with our partners and support local communities to ensure integrated and complementary action to support local economic, social and environmental wellbeing.*

- Work with our partners and community groups to protect and conserve our environment and to increase the public's use and appreciation of our countryside and heritage, prioritising areas of greatest environmental degradation.
- Invite partners to participate in a sustainable development forum whose role will be to advise the council on its strategy, develop and share good practice and implement partnership projects.
- Involve officers from across the council and partners in locality planning, area co-ordination, regeneration and intervention strategies to ensure that local environmental, economic and social needs are balanced and addressed.
- Through our community learning and development role and partnership with the voluntary sector, build the capacity

of local community groups to conduct environmental audits, take action on local environmental issues and influence decision-making.

- Develop and support partnership events to promote sustainable development in West Lothian.
- Continue to promote high quality, energy efficient housing and pilot a new sustainable and affordable housing development.
- Implement the biodiversity action plan through partnership working.

7. IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

After adoption by the council, a series of consultations will be held with our partners, to enable them to contribute their views to the strategy. In the short term there are a number of actions which will be underway whilst this next phase of consultation is undertaken (Appendix 2).

In order to ensure effective working with our external partners, a sustainable development forum should be established to promote consultative partnership working on the strategy and influence practice. This forum should include, for example, representatives of SEPA, Scottish Water, the Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, the health service, West Lothian College, the business community and the Central Scotland Forest Trust.

The role of the forum would be to:

- provide advice and guidance to the council on integration and delivery of its sustainable development strategy;
- encourage and promote partnership and community based projects;
- identify funding sources for local projects;
- share good practice;
- report to the community plan partners group;
- provide a mechanism for community engagement in relation to the strategy; and
- ensure that the strategy is an ongoing process.

There will need to be discussion within the council and with our partners to decide how the forum should relate to the other community plan partnership groups.

Internally, in order for sustainable development to be successfully implemented throughout the council, it is essential that it is fully incorporated into the West Lothian Assessment Model, best value reviews and the council's planning cycle, via the corporate plan, service plans, team plans and personal development plans. Resources to support the strategy should also be identified. Appendix 3 gives details of some external funding sources.

Although sustainable development features in the West Lothian Assessment Model, there is a need for guidance and training for teams, to assist them in fully understanding sustainable development and how they can contribute to it.

Similarly, whilst there is guidance on best value and sustainability which recommends a whole-life costing approach to procurement, consultation with managers indicated that this approach is not fully understood and further guidance or training may be required. In the future any investment proposal for capital bids should include a financial appraisal which incorporates full life costing and the council will investigate this.

The extension of SEA to **all** public sector policies, programmes and strategies will require

all managers in the council to be aware of the sustainable development implications of their plans. This includes the likely impacts on biodiversity, population, human health, flora, fauna, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape and the interaction of these. A SEA working group of officers from across the council to advise on and co-ordinate our approach to meeting the requirements has been set up to assist service areas.

In time an officers working group of those that lead supporting strategies, such as waste and energy, should be established to co-ordinate the strategy, and assess the need for guidance and training and prepare (or commission) guidance for staff. This working group would also oversee awareness raising to ensure that clear, consistent and succinct messages are given to staff and the public.

In order to ensure the integration of environmental, social and economic goals, the working group would include officers from the following services:

- Waste.
- Energy.
- Strategic Planning.
- Transportation.
- Procurement.
- Environmental Health
- Social Policy – health, regeneration, housing policy.

- Housing and customer services.
- Business support – human resources, communications, community planning.
- Economic Development.
- Construction.
- Education – schools, community education and leisure and cultural services.

Both the working group and the forum will have a role to play in keeping abreast of developments in sustainable development policies at international, European, UK and Scottish levels and good practice elsewhere in order to inform West Lothian’s strategy. Where appropriate they should also have a role in lobbying for higher standards of sustainable development practice.

The proposed structure of the working groups and forum as shown below.



8. MEASURING PROGRESS

Indicators can be useful to raise awareness, improve communication, simplify complicated information and measure progress against targets. The UK Government's strategy for sustainable development, includes the use of indicators. Indicators will continue to be part of both the Scottish and UK strategies. As part of the sustainable development strategy, the council will also need to give consideration to setting, gathering and reporting on meaningful and measurable targets, with a possible performance-monitoring role identified for the forum. In due course, therefore, the council will need to consider this issue with the forum and in line with its other reporting mechanisms. The working group would become responsible for developing and monitoring this process. This will provide for the updating and progression of the strategy in the future.

A useful first step would be to examine the Scottish indicators (Appendix 4) and explore to what extent this information would be available in, and applicable to, West Lothian. Thereafter, baseline data would be gathered against which progress can be measured in future years. It would be helpful to link the use of indicators for sustainable development with those being proposed for community planning. The partnership forum should guide this work and, in particular, the selection of indicators that may be unique to West Lothian

9. CONCLUSION

The council's corporate plan 2003-2007 stated our commitment to developing and implementing a sustainable development strategy. This draft strategy has been prepared following consultation with officers and a review of relevant policy and good practice.

Sustainable development is now a key policy priority at Scottish, UK, European and international levels. This draft strategy updates previous West Lothian Council policies and sets out new priorities for the council.

West Lothian Council has much to gain from implementation of the strategy by improving quality of life locally, making best use of resources and by playing its part in global efforts on sustainable development.

APPENDIX 1. RATIONALE – SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable development is important because there is clear evidence that we are using up the earth's natural resources much faster than the speed at which they can be replenished (see box below).

Whilst economic growth has brought greater wealth to many, the negative consequences of our development to date are growing evidence of climate change, loss of biodiversity and a widening gap between rich and poor.

Some facts and figures on our use of resources

Climate

- The Arctic ice-floe has decreased in thickness by 40% since 1960.
- CO₂ emissions caused by human activities are responsible for more than 60% of the increase in the greenhouse effect.
- The hole in the ozone layer did not exist before 1975. 30 years later, in September 2003, it had spread to a record surface of 28 million km² in the southern hemisphere (more than three times the size of the United States).

People

- 1 out of 5 people on our planet (1.2 billion) does not have access to drinking water.
- Nearly 40 million people in the world are refugees or part of a displaced community.
- Every year air pollution is responsible for 3 million deaths throughout the world.

Living world

- 1 out of 4 mammal species are endangered (plus 1 out of 8 bird species, 1 out of 3 fish species and probably over half of all flowering plants and insects).
- More than 70% of fish stocks are either being exploited up to the limit of their capacity for renewal, are over-exploited, already exhausted or in the course of regeneration.
- Every year, 16 million hectares of natural forest disappear (a surface greater than that of Florida).
- One third (1/3) of all land suffers from desertification.

Climate change is regarded as probably the biggest environmental threat we face. If emissions of greenhouse gases (especially CO₂) continue to rise, by the year 2100 average global temperatures will have risen by up to 3.5 degrees centigrade and the number of people at risk of flooding due to rising

sea levels will be 118 million. In addition, there is the threat of starvation, drought, migration, conflict and species extinction across the globe. Recent predictions suggest the rate of change may be faster than previously anticipated.

These global facts point to the need for us to adopt more sustainable ways of living, which conserve the earth's natural resources and our local environment. However, the issue is not one of the environment in isolation but one that is influenced by the economic and social interface.

The need for sustainable development has been recognised by many governments of the world. In 1987 a United Nations-appointed, independent World Commission on Environment and Development published its report *Our Common Future*. The report showed that:

- the poorest fifth of the world's population had less than 2% of the world's economic product, whilst the richest fifth had 75%; and
- the 26% of the world's population living in developed countries consume over 80% of the world's non-renewable resources and between a third and a fifth of the world's food products.

A United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 called for international action by governments and for local authorities to develop 'Local Agenda 21' strategies for sustainable development, based on the principle of "thinking globally, acting locally". In common with many other local authorities in Scotland, West Lothian Council appointed a Local Agenda 21 officer in 1997 and considerable progress was made on sustainable development issues, which provide the foundation for this strategy. Local Agenda 21 is now called Local Action 21 and has changed to focus more on strategic responses to the issues. In addition to local authority activities, the UK government and Scottish Parliament have also developed policies and legislation on sustainable development, which are described in section 4 of this strategy.

APPENDIX 2: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Whilst consultation is going on, a number of immediate actions have been identified, as examples, which can make an impact on sustainable development and demonstrate our commitment. These actions primarily relate to our in-house practices. A programme for the longer-term priorities will be developed and co-ordinated by the proposed officers group.

- Waste – establish a cross-service working group to implement the waste strategy and join with other officers to launch a public communications/education campaign
- Energy – develop and implement the corporate energy efficiency strategy
- Travel – explore sustainable alternatives to current staff travel patterns
- Climate change – test all fleet vehicles for fuel efficiency and emissions and take steps to reduce fuel use and harmful emissions
- Procurement – switch to environmentally-friendly stationery products and the use of non-peat based composts and generally promote the use of recycled materials
- Prepare and implement ‘green office plans’ for council HQ buildings
- Prepare a sustainable design and construction strategy for council buildings
- Prepare guidance for staff and launch a publicity campaign
- Establish an officers working group to co-ordinate and monitor the overall sustainable development strategy
- Consult with partners and establish a sustainable development forum to achieve integrated performance and delivery of the strategy and targets

APPENDIX 3: EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES

There is a wide range of external funding opportunities to assist with sustainable development projects although the application of sustainable action should actually result in financial savings in the short, medium or longer term. However, the council should nevertheless, aim to maximise income generation for West Lothian by researching and publicising funds available and developing projects which meet the requirements of these funding sources.

A number of funding schemes are co-ordinated by Forward Scotland, an independent company with charitable status which receives development funding from the Scottish Executive to help build a more sustainable Scotland. Forward Scotland manages funds from a range of public and private sources to support practical projects that will improve the quality of life for Scotland's communities.

Some examples of Forward Scotland schemes are:-

(see also http://www.forward-scotland.org.uk/funding/fs_funding.cfm):

- **Small grants scheme:** Grants of up to £1000 for constituted groups that wish to pursue an environmental project with wider social or economic benefits. These grants can provide vital support by helping to fund preparatory work for major projects, such as feasibility studies, community capacity building, consultation exercises and publicity.
- **Transforming your space:** This scheme will distribute £4.5 million of the Big Lottery Fund (formerly the New Opportunities Fund) by March 2005. It offers grants from £20,000 to £300,000 for projects improving local environments by making them safer, healthier, greener, cleaner, better-designed, more welcoming and more accessible. The scheme assists some of Scotland's most disadvantaged communities to tackle issues like pedestrian safety, litter, graffiti and pollution.
- **Transforming waste Scotland:** This scheme will distribute £4.3 million from the Big Lottery Fund (formerly the New Opportunities Fund) by March 2005. It offers grants of £20,000 to £300,000 for schemes which divert waste from landfill by expanding community sector waste re-use, recycling or composting in support of national and local area waste plans. Potential projects are likely to include community composting schemes; refurbishment of furniture, computer equipment and white goods; recycling of aluminium cans and other materials; and helping community groups deliver their projects through training for staff and volunteers.
- **Community environmental renewal scheme:** This scheme offers support for projects that will improve the local environment of communities affected by quarrying. CERS offers grants of up to £100,000 to projects that involve the local community and can demonstrate local social or economic benefits.

Other funds include:

- The Scottish Executive Sustainable Action Grants (SAG), were set up under the Environment Act 1990 with the objectives of funding research, demonstration projects and other relevant activities in support of sustainable development in Scotland. Money is given in the form of core funding or grant funding. Core funding is given, with the approval of Ministers, to a range of organisations and projects whose activities support Ministerial priorities. Priorities for 2005 are sustainable development and environmental justice. See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/17108/SAGguidance>
- The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was designed to help mitigate the effects of landfill upon local communities. It encourages partnerships between landfill operators, their local communities and the voluntary and public sectors. The landfill tax credit scheme was introduced with the landfill tax in October 1996 and enables landfill site operators to donate up to 6.5 per cent of their landfill tax liability to environmental projects in return for a 90 per cent tax credit. These projects should conform to one of six objects set for the LTCS
- The Scottish Executive's Biodiversity Action Grants Scheme (BAGS) funds a range of projects that will assist implementation of the aims of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy which aims to protect and enhance Scotland's natural environment. The BAGS scheme is funded from Scotland's share of the Aggregates Levy, with £600,000 allocated over three years (£200,000 a year for 2004-05, 05-06 and 06-07)
- Other examples of funding opportunities are listed on the website of the National Non-food Crops Centre at <http://www.nnfcc.co.uk/funding>.

APPENDIX 4: SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

No.	Indicator name	Measure
1	Sustainable Prosperity	Index of CO2 emissions divided by GDP
2	Work: people as a resource	Percentage of unemployed working age people (Social Justice Milestone 13)
3	Population structure	Proportion of population which is working age
4	Waste: production	Municipal waste arisings in million tonnes of waste
5	Waste: recycling	Percentage of total household waste recycled
6	Waste: landfilled	Biodegradable municipal wastes land-filled in million tonnes
7	Climate change	Million tonnes of greenhouse gases carbon equivalent
8	Air quality	Number of Air Quality Management Areas
9	Water quality	Kilometres identified as poor or seriously polluted
10	Biodiversity	Percentages of Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats which are identified as stable or increasing
11	Sea Fisheries	Proportion of fish stocks which are within safe biological limits
12	Energy: consumed	Electricity consumed in gigaWatt hours
13	Energy: renewable	Percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources
14	Travel: distance	Total vehicle kilometres
15	Travel: industry	Freight intensity (relationship between tonne kilometres moved and GDP)
16	Travel: mode	Percentage of journeys to work not using car
17	Travel: accessibility	Percentage of Scottish households within 6 minutes walk of a bus service
18	Home life	Percentage of children living in workless households (Social Justice Milestone 1)
19	Preparing for Life	Percentage of 16-19 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (Social Justice Milestone 7)
20	Fuel poverty	Total number of people living in fuel poverty
21	Social concern	Number of homeless people entitled to permanent accommodation
22	Crime	Total number of crimes
23	Volunteering	Percentage of people taking part in voluntary activities (Social Justice Milestone 28)
24	Health	Life expectancy at birth