

Sustainable Development

Local Agenda 21 - Sustainable Development

The Local Agenda 21 initiative stems from the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio, when more than 150 nations endorsed Local Agenda 21, a commitment to plan for sustainable development into the next century. Sustainable development has been defined as development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Essentially it can be seen as an approach which recognises the importance and inter-dependence of economic, social and environmental needs in future development.

Local Agenda 21 identifies:

- that local government has a key role 'in thinking globally but acting locally', both in terms of the resources it controls and especially by its leadership as a decision-making institution
- the need for 'social inclusion' that all groups and interests must have a proper say about decisions involving the environment and development;
- and it emphasises personal responsibility for the environment and the realisation that only by the wise-use of resources can we build a better future.

It is important to recognise that Local Agenda 21 is not something that can be delivered all at once. It is about translating action for sustainable development at the local level. The Council is committed to incorporating the Sustainable Development Principles outlined in Local Agenda 21 into the current [Programme for Administration](#).

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

[Biodiversity](#) simply means the enormous variety of the natural world, and the diversity of species and habitats. It is an important and relatively new concept, which recognises that natural systems are at the heart of many of the processes that maintain humanity. Another result of the 1992 conference at Rio was a Convention on Biodiversity, as a signatory the UK has pledged to take a range of steps to support its commitment to the Convention and these are outlined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. One commitment is to develop local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs). These provide a local audit of vulnerable and threatened species present in an area, recognise those of special local importance, determine what local action is necessary to promote their conservation, and set targets to measure the success of subsequent action. Local BAPs, are closely linked to the wider Local Agenda 21 process, and again considerable emphasis is placed on community involvement.