

Extract from the Notes of the Environment Policy Development Group meeting held on 29th November 2006**Progress on Work Programme:**

The Draft Sustainability Statement (attached) was discussed.

This is the latest version which is intended to be matched against each of the council's policies. It was agreed that this should go to Cabinet as soon as possible. ***(It was agreed that this should go to Council under the Policy Development Group Protocol)***

Several amendments were agreed and the revised Statement is set out below:

Sustainability Vision Statement

A sustainable way of life is one that can continue to be enjoyed indefinitely. It must neither exhaust resources nor cause levels of pollution that would degrade the quality of life of future generations.

Although progress has been made locally in many areas, notably recycling, the overall impact of the way our society is organised in Essex means that if everyone on the planet lived the same way, it would take 3 Earth's to support us. This is not sustainable in the long term.

Sustainability is a vital element in the development of all of the Council's Strategies and Policies. Braintree District Council will organise its own operations to:

1. Minimise the use of fossil fuel and other non sustainable natural resources;
2. Improve energy efficiency and reduce energy wastage;
3. Minimise pollution, including reducing CO₂ emissions and other materials which cause climate change or damage health;
4. Minimise waste production and maximise re-use and recycling;
5. Protect the landscape and wildlife;
6. Conserve water resources.
7. Promote green travel plans

The Council will also encourage residents and businesses to act sustainably through education and by the enactment and enforcement of regulations.

The principle of Sustainability is necessarily a major feature of the Local Development Framework and of Housing, Waste, Transport and Economic Development Strategies. It is also important in many other council policies.

Our Strategies and Policies will be focussed externally to:

- Reduce the need to travel and encouraging the use of public transport;
WALKING AND CYCLING
- Create a better balance between housing and local employment;
- Design new development so that housing, shops, schools, hospitals and public facilities are integrated with the public transport system;
- Co-ordinate private and public transport links [park and ride into town centres and parkway stations];

- Encourage the use of local supplies and services;
- Allow for solar capture when siting buildings and setting development densities;
- Require high standards of energy efficiency in new buildings through insulation, and efficient heating and ventilating systems;
- Improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings and reducing energy wastage (including light pollution);
- Require and encouraging energy capture including active solar heating systems, photo voltaic and wind generation;
- Encourage the use of local Combined Heat and Power schemes where suitable;
- Conserve water resources;
- Improve biodiversity;
- Encourage the sourcing of goods and materials from more local, more ethical and more sustainable sources;
- Maximise RE-USE AND recycling from households and businesses, minimising waste and providing safe disposal, and/or recovery, of dangerous materials;
- Encourage citizens, businesses and developers to act sustainably by providing information and incentives;
- Encourage recreational activities which do not place an unacceptable burden on the environment;
- Use all these measures to bear down on impacts which adversely affect people's health including air pollution, environmental stress (such as noise and traffic) and road and transport safety.
- Actively resist developments or activities that have a demonstrable significant negative impact on these stated aims.

The Council will work with partners to promote a sustainable future. In January 2006, the Council committed itself to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in a joint signing with Uttlesford District Council. The Council has also adopted a new policy and action plan in its Sustainable Energy Strategy.

Note:

The single greatest threat to the quality of life is climate change. Emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide (CO₂), are changing the composition of the Earth's atmosphere, causing surface temperatures to rise and causing the climate to change. In Essex the likely impacts are increasingly hot, dry summers, increased extreme rainfall events, more violent winter storms and accelerating sea level rise. These impacts will lead to increased environmental stress, including drought leading to water shortages and damage to wildlife, local flooding in historic town and village centres and increasing risks of catastrophic coastal flooding due to the large areas of low lying land behind the sea walls.

Reducing fossil fuel use is vital to help reduce the extent of climate change, but by developing sustainable systems will also help to combat fuel poverty, improve local security of energy supplies, reduce local air pollution (and so improve health) and provide local employment in the new businesses that will support the new systems.