

# Sustainable Communities

It is possible to look after the environment for the long-term future, and maintain a good quality of life for people living and working in the District now. This is called 'sustainability'. A lot of research has been done to try to understand what a 'sustainable community' would look like. The following definition is taken from the UK Sustainable Development Strategy<sup>1</sup>.

Sustainable communities:

- balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental components of their community
- meet the needs of existing and future generations
- respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable.

Sustainable communities are diverse, reflecting their local circumstances. There is no standard template to fit them all. But they should be:

**(1) Active, Inclusive and Safe** – *fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities*

Sustainable communities offer:

- a sense of community identity and belonging
- tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs
- friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods
- opportunities for cultural, leisure, lifelong learning, community, sport and other activities, including for children and young people
- low levels of crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing
- social inclusion and good life chances for all

**(2) Well Run** – *with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership*

Sustainable communities enjoy:

- representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations
- effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence
- strong, informed and effective partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)
- a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
- a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride

---

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Securing the Future: UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005 - Annex A

### **(3) Environmentally Sensitive** – *providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment*

Sustainable communities:

- actively seek to minimise climate change, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources
- protect the environment, by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air
- minimise waste and dispose of it in accordance with current good practice
- make efficient use of natural resources, encouraging sustainable production and consumption
- protect and improve bio-diversity (e.g. wildlife habitats)
- enable a lifestyle that minimises negative environmental impact and enhances positive impacts (e.g. by creating opportunities for walking and cycling, and reducing noise pollution and dependence on cars)
- create cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods (e.g. by reducing litter and graffiti, and maintaining pleasant public spaces)

### **(4) Well Designed and Built** – *featuring a quality built and natural environment*

Sustainable communities offer:

- a sense of place (e.g. a place with a positive ‘feeling’ for people and local distinctiveness)
- user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people
- sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market
- appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout, including mixed-use development, that complement the distinctive local character of the community
- high quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible and adaptable buildings, using sustainable construction materials
- buildings and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people feel safe
- accessibility of jobs, key services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

### **(5) Well Connected** – *with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services*

Sustainable communities offer:

- transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars
- facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling
- an appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand
- widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access
- good access to regional, national and international communications networks

### **(6) Thriving** – *with a flourishing and diverse local economy*

Sustainable communities feature:

- a wide range of jobs and training opportunities
- sufficient suitable land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change
- dynamic job and business creation, with benefits for the local community
- a strong business community with links into the wider economy
- economically viable and attractive town centres

**(7) Well Served** – *with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all*

Sustainable communities have:

- excellent local schools, further and higher education institutions, and opportunities for life-long learning
- high quality local health care and social services, integrated where possible with other services
- high quality services for families and children (including early years child care)
- a good range of affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (e.g. retail, fresh food, commercial, utilities, information and advice) which are accessible to the whole community
- service providers who think and act long term and beyond their own immediate geographical and interest boundaries, and who involve users and local residents in shaping their policy and practice

**(8) Fair For Everyone** – *including those in other communities, now and in the future*

Sustainable communities:

- recognise individuals' rights and responsibilities
- respect the rights and aspirations of others (both neighbouring communities, and across the wider world) also to be sustainable
- have due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions

## **Are Winchester's Communities Sustainable?**

Although the Winchester District can boast a very good quality of life for the majority of its current residents, it is clear that in many ways our local communities are lacking some of the important elements described above. Like others all over the world, Winchester's communities need to make changes in order to become more sustainable. This requires a long term programme of activities which links together the work of all relevant organisations with the efforts of local people themselves.

This Community Strategy aims to begin this process and will evolve over time to capture all the important changes required in the different areas of the District, with a view to aligning all our efforts behind the most important priorities over time. The way in which these priorities are identified requires a thorough shared understanding of the circumstances of individual communities within the District. The actions required to improve on our current shared knowledge will form an important part of the action plan for this Community Strategy.