

*"An integrating tool linking economic and social development with environmental protection"*

Sustainable development is a cross cutting theme permeating through all facets of Government as identified in the Sustainable Development Strategy, NI Assembly resolution (Oct '07), and the draft Programme for Government (2008-2011). This should be used to ensure visible government leadership and support with Ministerial responsibility.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A Northern Ireland Minister for Sustainable Development
- Adequate financial resources for full implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy across all sectors of government and society in Northern Ireland
- Local government must be recognised as a key mechanism for delivery of sustainable development in Northern Ireland
- Structures to mainstream, implement, monitor, and regularly report on progress towards achievements of sustainable development in Northern Ireland

## A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY IN NI:

1. Sustainable Northern Ireland views a sustainable society as one that enables people to **develop skills**, knowledge, innovation and creativity, while **protecting natural resources** and **safeguarding health**.
2. Governments need to demonstrate leadership by **creating frameworks to enable people to act sustainably** – through legislation and infrastructure as well as via the provision of information.
3. Sustainable development is a **tool to integrate and support the implementation of existing Strategies** e.g. food, air quality, health, transport, safety, climate change.

## THE NI ASSEMBLY:

4. The NI Assembly has expressed its **commitment** to sustainable development, now it needs to **demonstrate this** by all its **decisions** and via the **actions taken** by its government departments.
5. To achieve a sustainable society in NI, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Implementation Plan (of the Sustainable Development Strategy) must move beyond individual departments and agencies. It needs to **integrate actions and targets across government and other sectors** including NGOs and district councils.

6. Sustainable development requires **sufficient resources** (time, personnel, cost, knowledge etc.) and must be allocated a central budget for cross-cutting themes.
7. **Sustainable development communication** must be action oriented and carefully targeted to facilitate appropriate behaviour change.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NI:

8. **Effective partnerships are the key mechanism** to integrate sustainable development principles. Local government has had a role in sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit (1992) and this embedded experience must be fully utilised.
9. **Clarity is required** on the 'Duty' and the role of different sectors e.g. central government to set policy and legislation; local government to instigate action; and NGOs to encourage, facilitate and provide knowledge.
10. **Good practice** examples of sustainable development need to be **promoted, replicated and expanded**. Mechanisms for district councils to share best practice should be established.

Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI) produces publications, manages projects, researches best practice and runs events to integrate sustainable development policies and practices through all sectors of government.

SNI is supported by:



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Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the networking and forum body for non-statutory organisation concerned with the environment of Northern Ireland.

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