SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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1 Introduction

The importance of sustainable development is seen across all areas of public and private life, nationally and internationally. Sustainable development can be defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. (Bruntland Commission, 1987). In other words creating a society in which we make prudent use of, conserve and invest in our most important resources- people and our natural environment.

Sustainable Development is simply using resources efficiently, living within the earths limits and using our resources in a manner that ensures a decent quality of life for us and our children.

This Strategy sets out the Public Health Agency’s (PHA) commitment to sustainable development and demonstrates a desire to continually improve its performance in environmental, social and economic sustainability.

2. Context

The NI Executive Sustainable Development Strategy “Everyone’s Involved” ¹ was published in May 2010, setting out a vision for a peaceful, fair, prosperous and sustainable society. The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly
- Promoting opportunity and innovation.

The principles were subsequently translated into the more practical, “Focus on the Future – Sustainable Development Implementation Plan 2011 – 2014” ² setting out each Department’s actions. It identifies six priority areas for action:

- Building a dynamic, innovative economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift communities out of poverty;
- Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone;
- Driving sustainable, long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development;
- Striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment;

¹ NI Executive, ‘Everyone’s Involved’ Sustainable Development Strategy May 2010
• Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint;
• Ensuring the existence of a policy environment which supports the overall advancement of sustainable development in and beyond government.

“The DHSSPS Departmental Sustainability Statement\(^3\) sets out its commitment, as follows:

The Department will, in the exercising of its functions, demonstrate:
• Increased departmental awareness and sustainable development intelligence building;
• Robust governance structures for monitoring and reporting sustainability performance;
• Relationship/partnership building to support delivery of Sustainable Development Strategy priorities;
• Mainstreaming of sustainable development into decision-making processes and;
• Efficiencies achieved through the application of the principles of sustainable development.

3 Aims

The PHA is committed to the principles of sustainable development and will endeavour to integrate these principles into its daily activities. It will seek to increase awareness of sustainable development within the PHA generally and to ensure that wherever possible its overall business activities support the achievement of sustainable development objectives.

4 Strategic Objectives

The PHA will seek to meet its aim, through adoption and translation of those NI Executive priority areas for action that are applicable to the PHA. These are set out in the following objectives:

To encourage energy and resource efficiency in all our offices [link to priority area 1 and priority area 6], through:
- Working with landlords to maximise energy efficiency where possible;
- Reminding staff to turn off lights, computers and other electrical equipment when not in use;
- Where possible reduce the amount of printing;

As and when appropriate disseminate sustainable development best practice guidelines to staff.

To promote and support a sustainable community, through our work to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities [link to priority area 2]

To use our natural resources responsibly, [link to priority area 4] through
  o Using recycled materials where possible;
  o Promote recycling of appropriate waste

To reduce our carbon footprint through how we work [link to priority area 5], in particular through:
  o Promoting the use of tele-conferencing and video-conferencing to reduce travel;
  o Supporting the use of travel smart schemes to promote the use of public transport;
  o Support the cycle to work scheme.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 PHA board

The overall responsibility for sustainable development issues and ownership of this Strategy resides with the PHA board.

5.3 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is accountable to the PHA board for the overall implementation, monitoring and revision of this Strategy.

5.4 Directors

Directors, along with Senior Managers and Line Managers, will be responsible for the day to day promotion of sustainable development arrangements within their own department by ensuring the consideration of economic, environmental and social factors in its decision making processes. They should also ensure that all their staff are aware of this Strategy.
5.8 **Individual Staff**

All staff have duties and responsibilities in relation to working towards sustainable development. As the title of the Northern Ireland Executive’s Sustainable Development Strategy, “Everyone’s Involved” suggests, all staff throughout the course of their daily work have a responsibility to do their part to contribute to promoting the concepts of living within environmental limits, while ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. As such, all staff should be aware of and comply with the requirements of this Strategy.

5.10 **Non Staff/Contractors**

All personnel employed by or working on behalf of the PHA must recognise an obligation to comply with this Strategy where applicable.

5.11 **Tenants within PHA premises**

Tenants within PHA premises should ensure that they are familiar with their duties and responsibilities in respect of sustainable development and that they comply with this Strategy where applicable.

6 **Equality and Human Rights Considerations**

6.1 This strategy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75, Schedule 9, of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Guidance states that the purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to them.

6.2 Using the Equality Commission’s screening criteria, no significant equality implications have been identified. This strategy will therefore not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

6.3 This strategy has been considered under the terms of the Human Rights Act, 1998, and was deemed to be compatible with the European Convention Rights contained in that Act.

6.4 This strategy will be included in the PHA’s Register of Screening Documentation and maintained for inspection whilst it remains in force.
6.5 This document can be made available on request in alternative formats and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

7.0 **Review of Policy**

7.1 The PHA is committed to ensuring that all policies are kept under review to ensure that they remain compliant with relevant legislation.

7.2 This Strategy will be reviewed by the Director of Operations by 1 April 2019, or earlier if relevant guidance is issued. That review will be noted on a subsequent version of this Strategy, even where there are no substantive changes made or required.
NI Executive Six Priority Areas
(with sub-sections relevant to PHA)

Priority Area One – Building a dynamic, innovative economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift communities out of poverty

1.2 Increase the energy efficiency and resource efficiency of businesses
1.3 Ensure that our provision of learning and skills responds to the needs of the low-carbon economy.

Priority Area 2 – Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone

2.1 Reduce deprivation and the incidence of social exclusion and poverty, especially child poverty and increase opportunities for all children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, to reach their full potential;
2.3 Promote and improve the health and well-being of the whole population through the effective implementation of current and planned supporting strategies and partnership working
2.5 Improve quality of life through experiencing, participating in and accessing cultural and sporting pursuits
2.6 Increase volunteering within communities
2.7 Improve community cohesion, sharing and integration and increase the proportion of the population reporting a positive perception of the community in which they live.

Priority Area 3 – Driving sustainable, long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development

3.1 Ensure that all of our activity in physical regeneration and new infrastructure investment meets sustainable development objectives
3.4 Provide an infrastructure capable of facilitating the delivery of modern, sustainable, high-quality health and social care services and fire and rescue services.
Priority Area 4 – Striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment

4.7 Reduce the total quantity of waste going to landfill.

Priority Area 5 – Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint

5.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
5.3 Implement energy efficiency measures, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Priority Area 6 – Ensuring the existence of a policy environment which supports the overall advancement of sustainable development in and beyond Government

6.1 Communicate Government policy on sustainable development;
6.2 Operate within identified and agreed best practice guidelines for sustainable development;
6.4 Enable public authorities to take into account sustainable development legislative requirements in the exercising of their functions.