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Guidance for community sustainable development

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 December 2011. It was prepared by Subcommittee SDS/1/4, *Sustainable communities*, under the direction of SDS/1, *Sustainable development co-ordination committee*. A list of members of this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Information about this document

The start and finish of text introduced or altered by Corrigendum No. 1 is indicated in the text by **Ⓒ₁** **Ⓒ₁**.

Presentational conventions

The provisions in this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

This British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. Therefore, it should not be quoted as if it were a specification to which compliance could be claimed.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

0 Introduction

0.1 Information about this document

There has been growing interest in the concept of “sustainable communities”. Communities are the bedrock of sustainable development. This guidance will help interested parties to define what sustainable development is in their communities.

Understanding the link with the term “sustainable development”, or its short-hand reference “sustainability”, is vital because the concept is underpinned by an important set of principles, and processes. These integrate economic, social and environmental concerns. Sustainable development was framed and endorsed internationally by governments through the United Nations (UN) at the first Sustainable Development Summit (see Annex A). The next UN Summit will be the Rio+20 conference in June 2012. *Greening the local economy* is one of the core themes for this sustainable development summit.

Given the core role local communities play in helping to practically achieve sustainable development outcomes, the interest in sustainable communities and this British Standard is as an alternative framework for advancing sustainability more widely (alongside those aimed at organizations and businesses). This standard is also a result of the recognition of the economic and social importance of fostering and protecting robust and prosperous communities, particularly where pressures on community life and shared values appears to be increasing.

Reflecting the UN sustainability principles, Table 1 (3.1.3) demonstrates how these can be usefully interpreted and applied to be locally resonant and relevant.

This standard is in the BS 8900 series of sustainable development standards and follows the template and approaches set out in BS 8900:2006, *Guidance on managing sustainable development*. This is the first standard of its type and BSI's decision to develop BS 8904 is a step in offering leadership and enabling wider engagement both in the UK and internationally.

Standardizing an approach is challenging given the diversity of contexts and possible applications. This standard has been developed with communities in mind that are primarily based on a “place”, but the principles can be extended to those communities with different, more diverse forms. Different communities have differing needs and expectations. However, this standard attempts to give a sequence of steps to improve community sustainability and for the community to assess the support provided by relevant authorities and other parties.

This standard has been drafted on the following principles.

- a) The users of this standard start by identifying the community it aims to serve, the possible benefits and desirable outcomes of community based sustainable development.
- b) The aim is to embed sustainable development in everyday community life, which is necessarily challenging, provoking and continually evolving.
- c) The process can either be driven from the grassroots or by key community stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, schools).
- d) Building confidence in processes and sustainable outcomes is an important part of the process and some communities might wish to use some form of verification, although this standard does not point users toward any particular auditors or certification bodies.
- e) A development or maturity matrix is provided as a way of assessing progress, clarifying next steps and combining the principles underpinning sustainability with practical implementation.

There are many other helpful and relevant texts, conventions, codes and case studies available; this standard acts as a guide to make sense of these many and varied sources.

0.2 Framework

The concept of sustainable development provides a framework for building thriving, vibrant communities that ensure economic, social and environmental well-being for all, both now and in future. For the purpose of this standard we adopt the BS 8900 definition of sustainable development:

an enduring, balanced approach to economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress.

A sustainable community is:

a place where people want to live and work now and in the future.

Such a community limits its impacts on the local and global environment, is fair, well governed and inclusive, and allows good opportunities for a flourishing local economy. The idea of a sustainable community enables us to conceive of sustainable development in a more tangible way, manifesting it in a specific place or community of interest. Through the actions of government, business and civil society, communities are ultimately where sustainable development will or will not be realised and as such we deliver sustainable development through delivering sustainable communities.

Communities in our definition can be of any size and dimension, although, this standard will be most usefully implemented in communities that already have a degree of cohesion and momentum to facilitate continuing participation. Indeed a successful approach to creating and fostering a sustainable community depends upon the empowerment, ownership and engagement of those who are and will be affected. Consequently, this standard recommends the active involvement and ongoing commitment of community members, as well as offering advice on how this can be achieved.

The long-term success of any community will also depend on its flexibility and readiness to adapt to change, its ability to absorb "shocks" or mitigate risks and its strength of vision and guiding principles. Key to its robustness is an understanding of and responsiveness to the dynamics of economic, environmental and social dimensions. Therefore balancing the need for structure whilst enabling innovation from within the community has an important part to play.

What matters to local communities, how they agree and prioritize what needs to be done, and how they can be empowered in ways to meet their basic needs (food, shelter, and health) and to safeguard a decent and fulfilling quality of life, is central to "sustainability". This is about securing a long-term quality of life, but that accepts that local solutions must help lower our individual and collective "ecological footprint", that is the amount of what we consume (water, land, food, etc.). It is about sharing, and issues of equity both within and between communities and across generations

0.3 The need for community guidance

The nature of society is that we as individuals and as communities are interdependent with others, and the actions we take in our place, have an impact on other places and people. Even if the case is unproven regarding “limited resources” and a global “entitlement” to a fair share of what each of us need to get by, sustainable development demands that we reduce wasteful and polluting ways of living. This can take place at an individual, community or corporate level. Initiatives such as Action for Market Towns [1], Big Lunch [2] and Transition Town [3] show that communities want assistance with how to carry out development in line with sustainable development principles. This guide is seen as a realistic response to redefining the term “progress”, so that it re-balances financial wealth creation and the owning of more material goods, with measures of fairness and distribution, so that gross domestic product (GDP) becomes a more meaningful measure as in Stiglitz et al [4].

Issues of risk and resilience, particularly related to food and fuel security, are rising in importance for communities in all parts of the world. Greater self reliance and self sufficiency is what many sustainable communities are gearing up to, so they are able to get through times of financial and economic stress, and are able to withstand natural and physical disasters. Whilst prosperity is usually defined by financial wealth and growth, increasingly sustainable communities will be concerned on overcoming vulnerability, and achieving and maintaining stability, in order for them to thrive and flourish.

What kind of quality of life communities living today pass onto future generations, with suitable ways and means to take care of themselves whilst respecting the “eco-systems services” on which we all depend, is shaped through decisions and actions being taken now. Technology can help but cannot provide the total solution. It is people that *“are the difference that make the difference”*.

There is a clear need for a framework to guide communities in balancing increasing and often competing challenges to living sustainably. There is also a desire among businesses and public authorities to share some common understanding of what is required to get there.

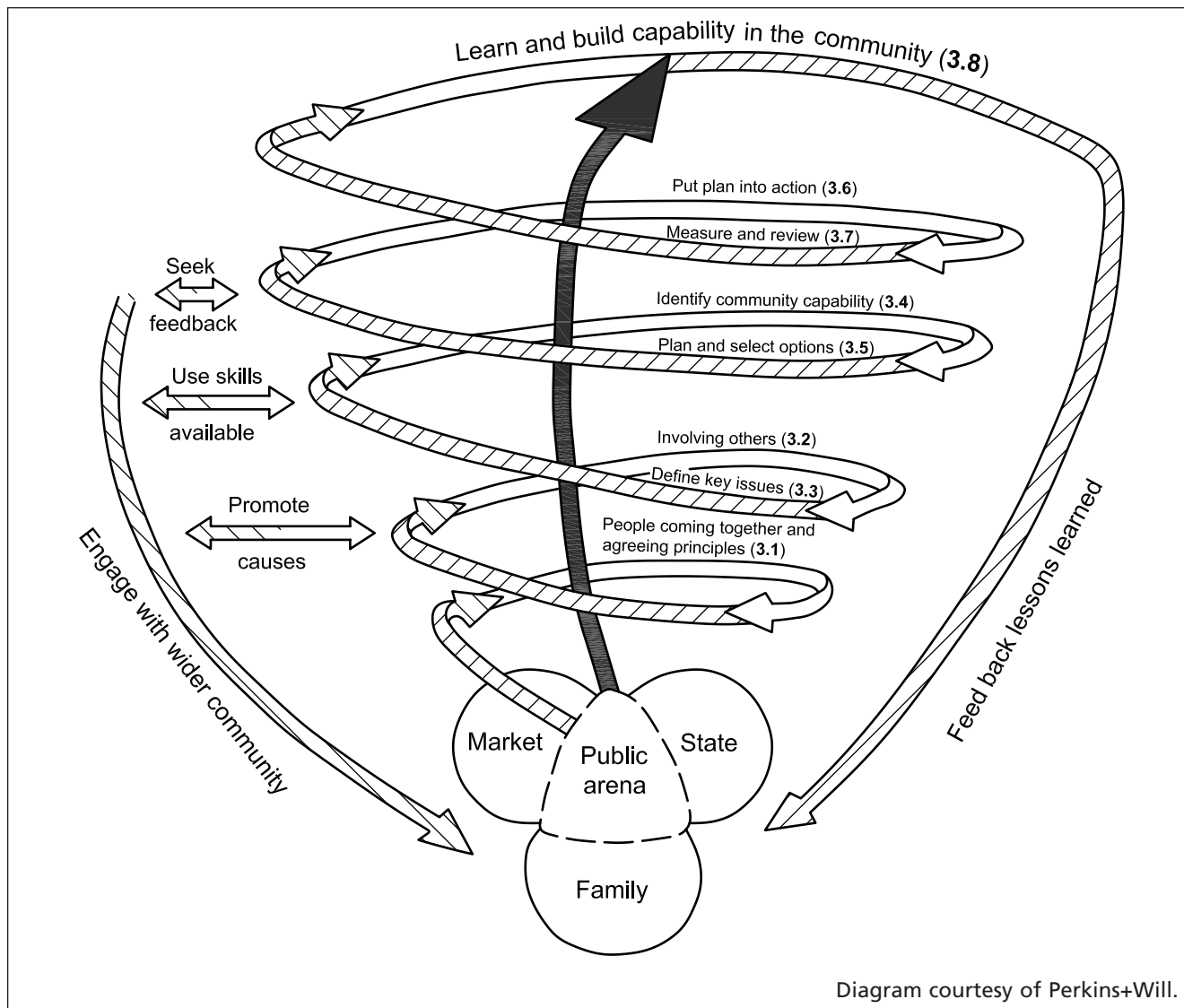
Government, businesses and non-governmental organizations share common interests in sustainable development and in realising sustainable communities. This is the case for Government and non-governmental organizations as they search for more efficient and effective ways to deliver services and address market failures, and for businesses as they increasingly understand how their own viability is intrinsically linked to that of suppliers and customers in a globally interdependent physical, social and economic environment.

Sustainable development is central to effective local planning, strategic decision making, risk assessment and public engagement. This also relates to spatial planning frameworks and this is an area that is under development in the UK.

This standard does not specify performance criteria or explain the specific elements of economic, environmental and social impacts, nor does it prescribe a sequence in which the guidance has to be followed. The recommended steps in implementing the guidance are illustrated in Figure 1: the standards user can start at whichever point seems most appropriate to their community, and may wish to return to certain steps at different times.

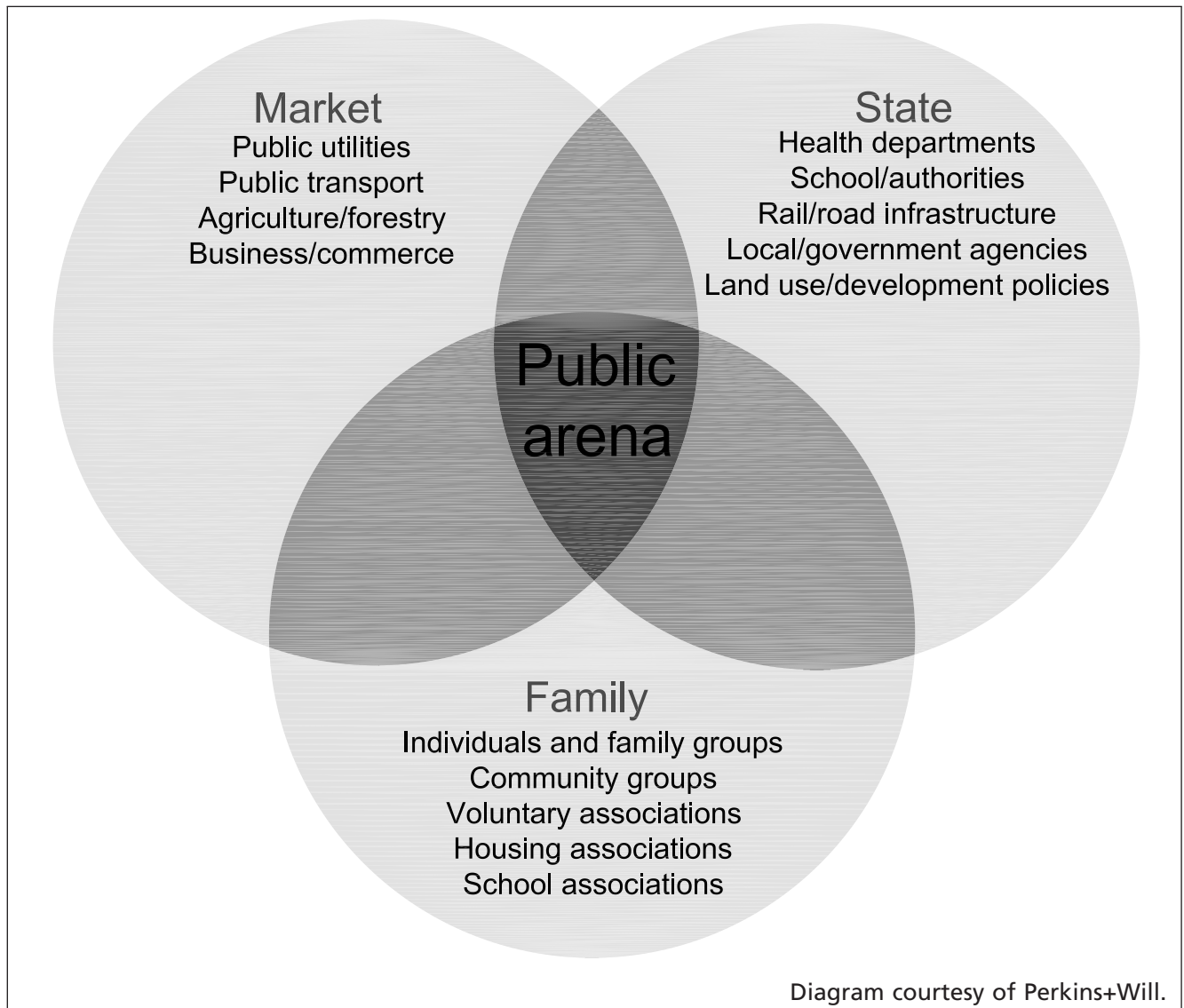
A sustainable community is one that takes charge and determines its own agenda. This includes the wider acknowledged public health benefits. By making the community more socially integrated and secure, community participants will feel an increased sense of well being, be encouraged to walk, enjoy group activities, feel benefits of exercise and fresh air that will ultimately improve health. An additional benefit could be that integrated health and social care becomes more preventive rather than curative with less financial drain on local authority resources with future proposed responsibilities for public health and social care.

Figure 1 Schematic diagram of recommended steps in implementing guidance for community sustainable development



The interrelationship of elements in the public arena is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Interface of market, state and family



1 Scope

This British Standard provides a framework as recommendations and guidance that assist communities to improve their sustainability. The recommendations and guidance are intended to be applied by communities of any size, structure and type. Structures, processes and themes are described to help to get people involved in what can be, at least initially, diffuse and disparate ideas. To provide coherence and make these elements easier to understand, this standard is based around a series of steps.

The aim is to provide clear, practical guidance to support the cost-efficient and effective organization and development of communities of all types and sizes working to sustainable development principles.

2 Terms and definitions

All terms are explained within the text or carry their normal dictionary meaning.

3 Steps towards a sustainable community

3.1 Step 1 – People coming together and agreeing principles

3.1.1 General

People are most likely to get together when they recognize an issue or series of issues that affect them all, which they see as relating to the sustainability of their community.

3.1.2 Bring people together

Once the need for community organization has been identified, community members should be invited to get people together for initial discussion and brainstorming. Individuals with meeting facilitation skills can help make such a meeting more focused and welcoming.

This might seem to be very basic, but in practice it can be difficult and deserves more consideration than might initially be apparent. It is often difficult to achieve complete consensus so the methods used to deal with differences can be as important as the differences themselves.

3.1.3 Agree the principles and purpose for the community

A community's ideas of sustainability can perhaps best be expressed by establishing a series of common principles, which if applied singly or together help to define whether an activity or decision might be more or less sustainable (see www.futurecommunities.net).

A community's principles of sustainable development should be informed by the community's values and its context and activities. In other words, the community should select its own principles but some examples are given in Table 1, grouped by similarity, along with explanations of what those principles mean and what they could mean when put in practice.

Table 1 Example principles of sustainability (also see Annex A) (1 of 3)

Principles	Example outcomes
<p>Mutuality is derived from the fact that a group of people, through co-operation, are better able to act for their mutual benefit than if acting alone. From this simple but central tenet, comes the overarching objective of mutuality: namely, that mutuals seek to benefit their members quality of life rather than maximize profit.</p>	<p>Not for profit schemes/credit unions.</p> <p>Respect for all members in the community, where irrespective of age, background – physical and social mobility – all are considered and treated with dignity and given the chance to belong and participate. Collective grassroots initiatives.</p>
<p>Shared external relationships make a community open to outside ideas, people and contributions whilst balancing new and existing links and traditions.</p> <p>Responsible relationship to other communities.</p>	<p>Good transport and broadband connections.</p> <p>Community taxis/buses.</p> <p>Care for connected communities – mutual support and altruism.</p> <p>Twin towns</p> <p>Play part in wider community as leader or beacon.</p>
<p>Sense of locality/place implies putting into as well as taking out of the community. This means appreciating what is distinctive and special about the local area, for example landscape, biodiversity, architecture and heritage. Cultural traditions in the area are also important in giving and defining an area's character.</p>	<p>Support local services and producers, e.g. locally produced food, orchards.</p> <p>Joint ventures and local pricing.</p> <p>Local ownership and stewardship of land and assets through local trusts/ Community Interest Companies (CiCs), etc.</p>
<p>Shared use of community space, e.g. playing fields, commons, schools, community buildings and meeting spaces, streets.</p>	<p>Easy way for local people to book use of community space, log of usage.</p>
<p>Connectedness means close interaction between economic, social and environment interests. Having a good understanding of how interdependent all issues are and how problems in one aspect can have knock-on effects. This also allows for finding win-win-win scenarios; achieving economically but at the same time bringing about social progress, that is sensitive to protecting and enhancing (rather than damaging) the environment</p> <p>Activities are progressed in partnership, and collectively towards commonly shared goals.</p>	<p>Empathy and understanding of others' needs and aspirations, limitations.</p> <p>Coherence of identity (overlapping social and economic interactions)</p> <p>Strengthening and promotion of local identity through mutuality and reciprocity.</p> <p>Using local schools, shops, working near-to-home, mutually supportive neighbours, farmers' markets etc.</p>
<p>Engagement and inclusivity – Inclusive participation uses strong democratic principles and good governance – differences are encouraged but are mediated and are resolvable. There has to be accountability to the wider community as well as empowerment to help the community develop confidence in working out what matters to them, their values, and their own capabilities to help find solutions with others.</p>	<p>Informal and formal communications</p> <p>Fora which draw people together so that that they can start having discussions on difficult issues and start to find shared way forward</p> <p>Tolerance and patience to find community based, practical solutions</p> <p>Principled localism “we do what we feel is right for our community” not at any cost in terms of what this might mean in terms of inflicting harm on other places and people, i.e. ensuring environmental and social justice across neighbourhoods as well as nations.</p>

Table 1 Example principles of sustainability (also see Annex A) (2 of 3)

Principles	Example outcomes
<p>Co-operation means a shared experience of education establishments (e.g. walking to schools, community use of school buildings, adult education), working life, family, interests and values brings common memory, activity, support and fulfilment/fun, evaluation.</p>	<p>Life-long learning, clubs, societies, museum, e.g. sports clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations.</p> <p>Common celebrations</p> <p>Pride/demonstration of success/ validation</p>
<p>Intra-community equity is the principle of equity between and within different communities and groups. It implies that consumption and production in one community should not undermine the ecological, social, and economic basis for other communities to maintain or improve their quality of life.</p>	<p>Providing affordable housing, diversity of employment, flexible and inclusive service design which meets the needs of all consumers, regardless of their abilities.</p> <p>Reinforcing health and individual and community well being</p>
<p>Intergenerational equity is the principle of equity between people alive today and future generations. Unsustainable production and consumption by today's society will degrade the ecological, social, and economic basis for tomorrow's society, whereas sustainability involves ensuring that future generations will have the means to achieve a quality of life equal to or better than today's.</p>	<p>Planning for the long term</p> <p>Environmental stewardship schemes</p> <p>Use of renewable energy</p> <p>Land and building re-use</p>
<p>Quality of the environment at the local level is mapped, protected and improved. Local planning decisions reinforce environmental quality and protect biodiversity "goods".</p>	<p>Existing green spaces and open spaces are enhanced and new spaces created.</p> <p>Woodland is protected and new planting of trees, especially native trees, indigenous to that area are encouraged. Ponds and watercourses are protected and maintained.</p>
<p>Environmental limits forms a core principle of sustainability. It means that ecosystems around us can be irreversibly changed if certain thresholds are exceeded and those changes can impact upon communities. A functioning environment provides clean air, water and fertile land supports communities.</p>	<p>Local nature reserves, healthy rivers all form part of what makes a good quality environment.</p> <p>As citizens, businesses and consumers we accept we need to be less wasteful, be more resource efficient, reduce our consumption. This will help ensure sufficient resources, especially natural and non renewable ones are available for future generations.</p>

Table 1 Example principles of sustainability (also see Annex A) (3 of 3)

Principles	Example outcomes
<p>Resilient and adaptable communities are capable of bouncing back from adverse situations and changing the way things are done to respond to the changing circumstances. It means not only protecting against negative impacts, but also making us better able to take advantage of any opportunities. When times are bad they can call upon the myriad of resources that make them a healthy community. A high level of social capital means that they have access to good information and communication networks in times of difficulty, and can call upon a wide range of resources</p>	<p>Thriving economy, diverse training, skills and job opportunities. For those who are unable to gain paid work, being meaningfully engaged and fulfilled contributing to society in their local neighbourhood, through voluntary and community informal activities.</p> <p>Designing homes and spaces for “lifetime” needs reducing the need to move. Consideration of co-housing for existing and new developments, intergenerational, young and old interacting and supporting each other more.</p> <p>Resilient to difficulties and threats eg economic downturn and natural disasters, such as flooding, droughts, fires, disease, scarce and limited access to food and fuel.</p> <p>Capacity and capability in knowledge and know-how and skills that is shared and extended within and across neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Capability, and competence audit and shared. Collective values are shared and communicated with, learning and broader community education and empowerment of the community.</p>

*Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
Do your chosen principles address the pressing issues for the community (3.4)?*

3.2 Step 2 – Involving others

3.2.1 Community engagement

The earlier steps are based on the assumption that a small group will come together to form an initial starting point from which more fully developed activity could grow. At the earliest stage, it is essential to get as many members of the community as possible involved and to build engagement and ownership.

Ongoing, systematic engagement is intrinsic to sustainable development and means, for example:

- a) members of the community should have an opportunity to get involved and/or express views about relevant issues and about their relationship with the community;
- b) communities should give feedback on how stakeholder contributions were incorporated;
- c) commitment from all involved to learn and develop within the process should be encouraged.

The method of engagement is similar to that for stakeholders (see 3.2.3).

3.2.2 Identifying and engaging all stakeholders

The community should identify and manage its relations with its stakeholders. The main mechanism should be through direct engagement. A stakeholder is:

any individual or group which affects, or is affected by, the community and its actions.

All communities should undertake some form of stakeholder engagement, even if at a basic level, e.g. public meetings, social media, newsletters or emails to community members.

The community should define and identify stakeholders and their representatives. This process should firstly identify the different stakeholders and secondly clarify their interest and relationship with the community.

Stakeholder identification should take the following into account.

- a) Some stakeholders are essential to a community for it to perform its activities, e.g. specific employees, customers/clients and suppliers of goods or services. Other stakeholders have a relationship with the community that is more strategic in its nature, e.g. special interest groups and government agencies.
- b) Stakeholders are specific to the scale, nature, spatial and temporal aspects of activities. For example, the stakeholders in the community as a whole are likely to be different but not mutually exclusive from those in a specific activity such as establishing a new plant or project within a specific geographical region.
- c) Those individuals who are identifying the stakeholders in the activity will differ in their view on who to include as a stakeholder. This is dependent upon aspects such as their role within the community, their education and experience.
- d) The precision with which stakeholder identification is carried out will have a considerable effect upon the ability of a community to engage and develop relationships. For example, neighbouring communities may be identified as being important. However, knowing who the individuals are within that group is more likely to lead to a quality relationship being developed and maintained.
- e) Some stakeholders might identify themselves. The community should consider items a) to d) in terms of the legitimacy of their claim and be transparent in that process to ensure accountability for its decisions.
- f) Extra effort should be made to reach stakeholders that might not feel comfortable participating, might be underrepresented within community organizers, might be cynical about the process of sustainable development or who might not have much time to participate or contribute. Further guidance that might be helpful in some circumstances is available from the Equalities Commission (website).
- g) If activities are likely to be subject to statutory planning considerations, it is important to engage early with the local planning authorities.

Some stakeholders might have legal or moral entitlement to consultation. The precise form of stakeholder identification and engagement depends on the size and complexity of the community, and its context at a particular time.

3.2.3 Getting stakeholders involved

The community should engage with its stakeholders and their representatives to understand the economic, environmental and social impact of its activities, products and services and the risks involved.

When engaging with stakeholders, the community should take the following into account.

- a) The method of engagement should be commensurate with the importance of the stakeholder and the issues identified to the community.
- b) The aim at all times should be to develop trust between the community and its stakeholders. Trust is developed through a combination of performance and transparency and is, therefore, a test of the integrity of the community.
- c) The community should be transparent and accountable in how they make decisions.
- d) Meaningful engagement with stakeholders is not simply an isolated activity; it is a decision-making method that may involve a degree of cultural and procedural change within a community.
- e) Stakeholder engagement is a continuous process. There should be a constant cycle of dialogue and feedback between the community and its stakeholders. The community should be in a position in which it is abreast of its risks.
- f) Stakeholders should be in a position, through feedback, to understand how the community has responded to their views. The community should keep appropriate public records and feedback.

Communicating sustainable development performance allows a community to demonstrate its progress towards meeting objectives. Although common, reports on progress towards sustainable development should not be seen as the only method of communication. They should be an update on, and not the sole outcome of, the progress towards sustainable development within the community.

Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
Can the community tap into its stakeholders as a resource for learning (3.8)?

3.3 Step 3 – Define key issues

The community needs to define the key issues for the short, medium and long term. These may include some difficulties it faces or opportunities to develop. The following examples relate to specific problems and opportunities.

- a) Development of a building to serve the communities local needs whilst demonstrating the practical application of low carbon technologies.
- b) Development of sustainable/low environmental impact farming and land – how do we ensure traditional farming methods and skills are maintained while also developing new farming practices?
- c) Development of social frameworks and social gatherings – how are these to be managed in the best possible way for the community and those coming from outside? Is it possible to build an integrated way of managing public facilities whilst safe guarding the groups who currently use them?
- d) Development of services such as health, education and life-long learning – how is it possible to retain all the strengths of current services and add value to the community if new resources and opportunities emerge?
- e) Retrofitting of existing housing, including social housing and rented properties, owner-occupied housing, ideally street by street, to improve

energy efficiency and end fuel poverty. Encourage training to develop an infrastructure of worthwhile careers, jobs (that are relevant for future scenarios)

- f) Cost of living – how can the daily costs of living be managed and affordable? How can public transport be made available for working people and families? Are local shops and amenities affordable? Are local producers and growers being supported?
- g) Safety and security – how can the elderly remain within the community if in need of care, i.e. support in the home, sheltered accommodation, care home?
- h) Development of a diverse employment base not dependent on one or two industries/sectors – how can this be attracted and managed in a way that is sympathetic to the current inhabitants and firms?
- i) How can planning policies balance the needs of the community with commercial development, i.e. the balance of local employment and local services with impact on “green” open space, noise/visual intrusion, traffic generation, etc.?

Further guidance on possible community issues, examples of sustainable activities and possible outcomes from sustainable development are given in Table 2.

*Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
How will addressing our issues affect those around us (3.2)?*

3.4 Step 4 – Identify community capability

NOTE Often this process is iterative with groups needing to assess their strengths and weaknesses, identify their local needs, plan their priorities and assess their risks. Then following further engagement revisiting their priorities and consequently reassessing their needs.

3.4.1 General

In order to engage successfully with the process of encouraging sustainable development, communities should harness the resources that are available to them. Such resources include those offered by local people, organizations, and infrastructures and those inherent in the culture of a community. It is essential to think about the capacity of the community concerned, during the process of improving community sustainability, as this allows for an identification of the strengths and weaknesses of a community. It might also save time, as potential barriers and opportunities are identified before they take shape. This could consist of a community “mapping” exercise, in which the various aspects of capacity are considered one by one.

The following questions may be used as a starting point for mapping community capacity.

- a) *What resources do local people have to offer?*

Is there a tradition of volunteering in this community, or might people be happy to give of their time voluntarily?

Is there anyone who already takes a stand on sustainability issues who might like to join in?

Are local people wealthy or not, and what are the implications of this?

Are there opponents to sustainable development issues that are particularly vocal in the community? How might they be brought on side?

- b) *What resources exist in the community organizations?*

What organizations exist in the community that might have a stake in action on sustainable development?

Are there organizations that are particularly successful in the community? Can they be involved?

Do these organizations have experience in working with the community that can be shared? Do they have any other resources to share?

c) *How conducive is the local infrastructure to achieving sustainable development?*

Are there local businesses that supply sustainable products or encourage sustainable living among their employees and customers?

What infrastructural resources does the local authority provide for sustainable development?

If this is a community place, what are the opportunities and barriers to sustainable living in the community that result from its physical characteristics?

d) *How conducive is the local culture to achieving sustainable development?*

Is there a tradition of action on sustainable development in the community, or other traditions and beliefs that might link into sustainable development?

What is the history of the community, and are there any opportunities for linking this with the goals of sustainable development?

3.4.2 Risk map

For all communities the issues associated with sustainable development present both opportunities for innovation and development as well as potential risks. In order to maximize opportunities and minimize risks an assessment should be undertaken which:

- a) identifies potential issues and impacts, both positive and negative, direct and indirect, and analyses key risks and opportunities (in terms of impact and likelihood) to establish their significance;
- b) prioritizes actions and allocates resources to maximize opportunities and minimize risks, to achieve the community's sustainable development objectives.

The results of the risk assessment should be shared with relevant stakeholders and used to establish sustainable development objectives that are informed by the community's vision and its sustainable development principles.

Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
What capabilities are the community likely to need as sustainable development becomes embedded (3.7)?

3.5 Step 5 – Plan and select options – Applying sustainable development principles

How sustainable development is applied to specific choices and contexts is a core challenge. The principles defined in 3.1 should offer criteria and a challenging process to ensure that each stage of the planning and implementation is sustainable.

The community should identify outcomes and actions. It is important that the objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) and that they align the principles defined under 3.1.

SMART objectives should be identified by mapping out the process that the community intends to follow in order to reach its foreseeable outcomes. As such, each year's objectives are dependent on the previous year's achievements and form the foundation for the following. For example, money might have to be raised before starting on a particular stage or project.

Key (or significant) issues can be identified by applying the following criteria to the sustainability issues identified:

- a) *the magnitude of effects*: i.e. the size and severity of the effects;
- b) *the time period over which the effects occur*;
- c) *whether the effects are permanent or temporary*: for example, loss of green space or habitat through permanently altered land use, compared to damage or disruption to habitat from erecting temporary structures;
- d) *whether the effects are positive or negative*: although identification of issues generally tends to identify negative consequences of activities, it is also important to appreciate that activities can also generate positive effects;
- e) *whether there are cumulative effects*;
- f) *whether there are secondary or indirect effects*;
- g) *whether there are synergistic effects*: for example using a heat exchanger to heat a swimming pool and freeze an ice rink;
- h) *the probability of the effects occurring*; and
- i) *the frequency of issue occurrence*.

There might be other dependencies that should be identified when mapping and planning for future action. In seeking to build confidence in the management of sustainable development, the two key questions asked in Table 2 should be considered. Table 2 also contains some useful pointers to answer these questions.

When and how these questions are asked is a matter to be resolved carefully but they may be raised under a standing agenda item at a committee or planning meeting, for example.

Table 2 **Pointers for building confidence in the decision-making process**

<i>Where is confidence building needed?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where there is a need to build trust and credibility • Determine what are the nature and levels of stakeholder expectations • Identify where transparency is particularly important • Establish what specific opportunities exist
<i>How will confidence be provided?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the scope of the sustainable development activities • Determine the nature of possible confidence building activities • Establish how confidence building could be integrated into existing processes • Determine what should be done internally and externally to build confidence • Establish how the outcome of the feedback obtained should be managed

Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
Do these objectives align with the principles identified in 3.1?

3.6 Step 6 – Put the plan into action

3.6.1 General

For the principles of sustainable development (see Table 1) to be converted into practice the community requires appropriate resources and a range of competencies.

3.6.2 Resource allocation

The community should allocate appropriate resources to achieve its sustainable development objectives as follows.

- a) Identify the types and levels of resources required.
- b) Use the community's planning and budgeting processes to make these resources available.

Establish responsibilities and authority so that the required responses to activities can be undertaken effectively [see 3.2.3c)].

Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
What does the community need to learn to put the plan into action more effectively (3.8)?

3.7 Step 7 – Measure and review

3.7.1 Measuring progress and managing performance

To achieve sustainable development objectives and measure progress and outcomes in a way which enhances transparency, the community should:

- a) identify those indicators that are key to meeting these objectives;
- b) establish the chosen indicators across relevant parts and functions of the community;

NOTE Information is available from local Observatories (weblink) of relevant indicators and data captured by them, which might be of use.

- c) define effective methods of assessing performance using these indicators, with reference to indicators that may have already been defined by the community itself for other purposes, or by standards or other influential communities;
- d) assign specific responsibilities to record, manage and track actual performance against the chosen objectives and indicators;
- e) ensure the process is comprehensive by embedding and integrating sustainable development objectives in all areas of the community through inclusion in responsibilities;
- f) measure performance equitably.

A community should appraise its current position in respect of each element, noting any which need particular attention to restore balanced progression towards maturity. Specific objectives should be identified and action plans devised to secure both balance and broad general advance.

3.7.2 Review

A periodic review should be conducted of the community's position and of the continued relevance of the elements selected. Adjustments to the resulting maturity matrix (3.7.3 and Table 3) might be required to reflect changing circumstances, stakeholder priorities, regulations, etc.

The position depicted by the matrix (e.g. by shading already accomplished cells) may serve as an input to the community's reports to stakeholders.

The community should keep its strategy for sustainable development under continual review, update it and make it publicly available at appropriate intervals.

The strategic review should include:

- a) relevant stakeholders' issues, and the key impacts the community has on them;
- b) checking that purpose, vision and values are relevant to the community or require revising;
- c) checking that roles, responsibilities and decision-making structure remain appropriate and effective; and
- d) the advancing sustainable development maturity of the community.

3.7.3 Sustainable development maturity matrix

The main tool that may be used to map the development process and keep implementation on course is the development maturity matrix, which essentially considers outcomes and relates them back to the original principles.

Each community should set out a route map of desirable outcomes and, from time to time, determine its position along the sustainable development path. A useful tool for this purpose is the maturity matrix, which is readily constructed and maintained by the community itself.

Typically, the matrix may comprise four or five stages along its horizontal axis and up to a dozen elements along its vertical axis. The elements chosen should be appropriate to the community and its key issues. The stages should stretch as far forward along the path as can be realistically envisaged.

In filling the cells of the matrix, the temptation to set soft and easy targets should be resisted; the entry in each cell should, as far as possible, be of unambiguous, objective and clearly measurable achievements.

An indication of how a matrix might be structured for a community is given in Table 3. The elements and stages shown are intended for guidance and illustration only and are not exhaustive or fixed. Finer detail should be entered where this assists understanding and communication.

The information in the maturity matrix can be analysed using many tools, for example by display as a progress chart such as is shown in Figure 3, which highlights the principles that need most attention.

Other types of community might require a different set of elements, although the stages may be similar. Communities of the same type may choose differing elements and stages, although comparisons will be facilitated where there has been uniformity of choice.

The sustainable development maturity matrix links the principles (in 3.1) with the practice and back to the drivers and desired outcomes set out in the introduction (in 0.1 and Clause 3).

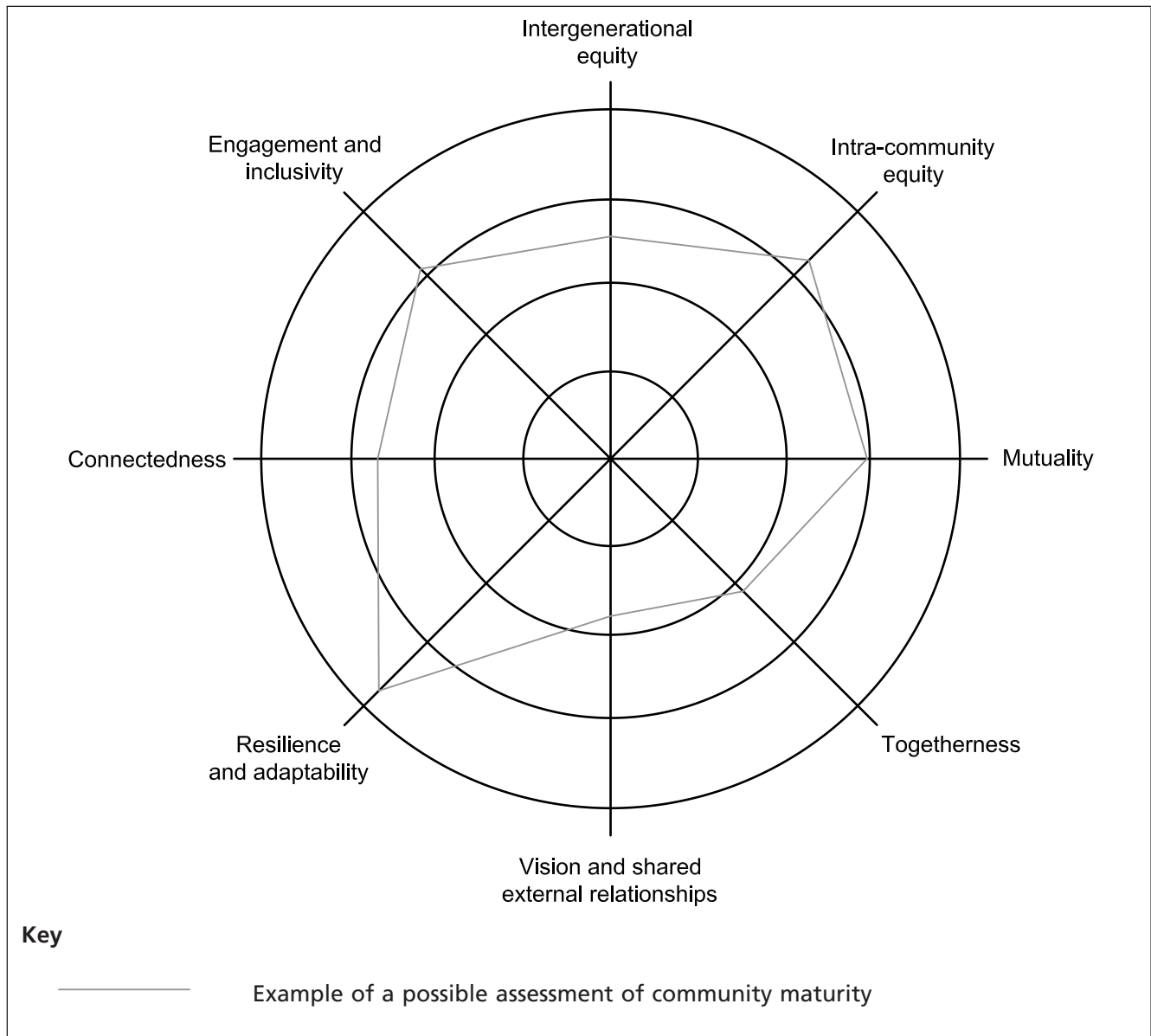
Table 3 Sustainable development maturity matrix (1 of 2)

Principles of sustainable development (from 3.1)	Key issues (from 3.3)	Start up	Gaining momentum	Self-sustaining commitment	Leadership and innovation
Mutuality	Building systems that enhance shared benefits and local interaction	Start local producers market (food and crafts, etc.), vegetable swap schemes.	Support local retailers through promotions of local food producers.	Create new infrastructure, e.g. transport sharing schemes.	Embed mutual support, e.g. introduce local "currency"/credits, credit unions. Local finance schemes.
Vision and shared external relationships	Building a shared view of what is possible, open to all suggestions. Seeing beyond the locality and inviting external influences.	Community meetings and events. Local leadership may emerge. Newsletters/website so all can access.	Build local reputation (through press) for sustainable work. Use vision in planning process and local decision making	Build local engagement so it draws in all sectors of the community, e.g. community society.	Beacon to other communities, contributing to their progress. Setting national or local standards.
Shared spaces	Finding common cause through shared use of facilities and land/open spaces.	Community diary/booking of meeting/ sports spaces.	Widening opportunities to meet, e.g. re-use "spare" land as local allotments.	Widening use of facilities such as schools and village halls.	Combining commercial opportunities for start-ups with new facilities.
Connectedness	Seeing connections between people and environment and between communities at all scales.	Protecting biodiversity habitats. Fair Trade town status. Recycling and re-use schemes.	Using local building materials and design strengthens local identity.	Set-aside and other land use management.	Consider international implications of decision. Seeking international ties with other communities.
Togetherness	Valuing what is held in common, developing structures that bring people into regular contact and give meaning to community.	Understanding strength of shared experiences and memories – start local newsletter, social group or event.	Widening involvement in community events eg; fairs, processions, matches. Supporting local museums, libraries, etc.	Community organizing committee/society to co-ordinate community based events and initiatives and source outside support.	Build cultural/faith/arts partnerships to bring creative impetus to community.
Engagement and inclusivity	Facilitating as many as possible using good governance and democratic principles. Good decision-making and governance will embrace peer review to challenge and steer progress	Informal and formal communications open to all interested parties in accessible format.	Good organizational governance along accepted principles of local democracy.	Full accountability for records kept on open access. Wider evaluation of sustainability e.g. community health and happiness.	Engaging in national and international projects on sustainability. Relationships that will help perform critical friend and peer review roles.

Table 3 Sustainable development maturity matrix (2 of 2)

Principles of sustainable development (from 3.1)	Key issues (from 3.3)	Start up	Gaining momentum	Self-sustaining commitment	Leadership and innovation
Intra-community equity	Reducing differing opportunities and environments brought about by place and/or cultural/community grouping.	Being aware of differences – mapping social/economic conditions – and defining benchmarks – forming idea of “equity”.	Identifying key projects that are practical and can make the most impact e.g.: shared child care, work-school partnerships, reclaiming open space.	Working across communities with explicit aims to reduce disequilibria and enhance inter-community contact and co-operation.	Demonstrating cross-community collaboration beyond fixed term projects; locally to internationally. Sharing experiences with other communities. Use town-twinning schemes to share good ideas. Encourage peer review or critical friend input for sustainability measures.
Inter-generational equity	Handing on to successive generations a sufficient, suitable and quality range of resources, services, opportunities and environment.	Carrying out an audit of housing needs and supply. Mapping job opportunities against forecast demography and skills.	Finding ways of protecting affordable housing stock. Securing inward investment schemes/ grants to diversify employment base locally.	Working with developers/councils to increase affordable housing supply. Employers/training working together to offer a range of flexible jobs and training to fit community skill base.	Forming housing partnerships or a Community Interest Company (CIC) to reuse available buildings as starter homes and incubator units.
Environmental limits	Enhancing biodiversity, stewardship of natural resources.	Identifying what parts of the environment are important for the community.	Start projects that illustrate the history of the local natural environment through old maps. Start annual back garden wildlife surveys.	Name local nature reserves and identify volunteer wardens.	Build a partnership with a voluntary organisation and the local council to protect and enhance natural resources.
Resilience and adaptability	Embedding collaboration so that it continues and adapts in times of pressure or complacency.	Increasing diversity of job opportunities, protecting local services and reducing risk, e.g. flood control.	Developing mixed energy sources in a policy that is owned by all.	Developing renewable energy schemes locally eg HEP, ground water, wind, solar.	Share energy sources between neighbours or community and economies of scale. Co-housing becomes a norm.

Figure 3 Spider's web progress chart against sustainable development principles



3.7.4 Changes

The community should assess the following and, where appropriate, make changes:

- how well its performance is meeting relevant stakeholders' expectations;
- what its key impacts, risks and opportunities are, compared with before;
- how appropriate its objectives and targets are;
- whether information gathering and use is effective and efficient and whether competencies are developing in line with needs;
- whether it has allocated the appropriate resources, training and communication to achieve its objectives;
- whether monitoring is an integral part of its internal and external performance reporting.

The community should ensure that processes and resources are in place, and that there is a will and commitment to deal with the findings of these reviews and to implement the changes required for continual improvement. The community should agree timescales and follow these up.

Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
*Are the sustainable development principles selected comprehensive (3.1)?
 How do we maintain interest in sustainable development (3.5)?*

3.8 Step 8 – Learn and build capability in the community

Understanding what matters to people in a community, what's important to them, in terms of meeting their basic needs, as well as what they aspire to that they feel will enhance their quality of life, is fundamental. The experiences and histories of people, their sense of local pride and distinctiveness, their self worth and self-esteem, will influence how they respond to life's challenges that they face as communities, and how they are minded to tackle them (or not).

Capability may be seen as a fusion of understanding, skills, vision and attitudes, that are underpinned by values. The framing of shared values, in a collective sense and how this is understood within communities, is what will give a sense of momentum and primacy of a need to act, 'call to act'. The emotional hard-wiring of communities is important.

Applying a sustainable development strategy might require acquisition of new knowledge and, to be effective, developing the skills to apply that knowledge practically.

The community should identify the learning and development needs of members and particularly those with special responsibility for improving sustainable development performance, in order to equip them with the tools and capabilities they need to implement community objectives. Some resources and schemes to consider are listed in the Bibliography.

The community might be able to invest time and money to provide appropriate resources for building appropriate levels of competence. The cost/benefit analysis may be linked to the community's case for sustainable development.

The community should review its learning and development to include:

- a) the community's vision and objectives for sustainable development;
- b) sustainable development issues;
- c) development of resources and the community's culture;
- d) competencies required to manage sustainable development.

Considerations from other stages in the sustainable development process
What capabilities are the community likely to need as sustainable development becomes embedded (3.7)? What competencies do you need to put your plan into action (3.6)?

**Annex A
(informative)****Sustainable Development Summits**

In 1992, the first UN-convened Earth Summit, known as the Rio summit laid the foundations of principles of policy and practice of what sustainable development entails and the urgency of the need for action, particularly to address climate change, and our irreversible depletion of finite natural resources (biodiversity). Efforts were reinvigorated through the 2002 UN Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The explicit focus in 2002 was on the need to tackle poverty and for effective partnerships, to be set up and work at all levels.

The next UN Summit will be the Rio+20 conference from 4 June to 6 June 2012. *Greening the local economy* is one of the core themes for this sustainable development summit.

The UN Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 resulted in a framework for action for sustainable development: the so-called "Agenda 21"¹⁾. In addition to the efforts of governments and business, local communities were highlighted as one of the key stakeholder groups encouraged to act and contribute to a local plan (a *Local Agenda 21*). This was about showing through a vision how a more sustainable way of living can be achieved, the practical steps needed to achieve this. These are actions and decisions that consider and protect the quality of life for future generations, into the 21st century, as well as responding to the needs and wants of today's communities. Many communities in England and UK rose to this challenge and the legacy of this work continues.

Local governments internationally signed up to the Aalborg Commitments²⁾ in 2004 supported and championed by non-governmental organizations such as ICLEI – Local Governments for sustainability.

Climate change and the need to adapt and adopt measures to ensure a fair and just transition to a local carbon economy are central to this. The essence of place and sustainable communities therefore become central, as it is at the local level that implementation, practical things happens.

The second UN sustainable development Summit, in Johannesburg in 2002, built on this work and the 2012 Earth Summit³⁾, called Rio+20 will take stock of progress.

**Annex B
(informative)****Further guidance on sustainability issues, implementation and outcomes**

In agreeing the community sustainability issues, there are several concepts to bear in mind and sources of information to consult.

For example, the UK Sustainable Communities Act [5] provides a checklist of possible community issues, including:

- a) provision of local services – the extent to which the volume and value of goods and services that are:
 - 1) offered for sale; or
 - 2) procured by public bodies and are produced within 30 miles of their place of sale or of the boundary of the public body;

C1 Text deleted. C1

- b) growth and marketing of organic forms of food production and the local food economy;

¹⁾ <http://www.ciesin.org/docs/003-312/003-312.html>

²⁾ http://www.ccre.org/bases/T_599_24_3524.pdf and current website signing for the Aalborg Commitments <http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/>

³⁾ Earth Summit 2012 <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/>

- c) reasonable access by all local people to a supply of food that is adequate in terms of both amount and nutritional value;
- d) number of local jobs:
 - 1) jobs in companies or organizations that in the opinion of the appropriate authority will spend a significant proportion of their turnover in the locality of the place of operation; and
 - 2) jobs which are held by people living within 30 miles of that job;
- e) conservation of energy and increase the quantity of energy supplies which are produced from sustainable sources within a 30 mile radius of the region in which they are consumed;
- f) reduction of the level of road traffic including, but not restricted to, local public transport provision, measures to promote walking and cycling and measures to decrease the amount of product miles;
- g) social inclusion, including an increase in involvement in local democracy;
- h) mutual aid and other community projects – “mutual aid” means actions or initiatives by people in the community to improve services or provisions for themselves and other persons in the community;
- i) decrease emissions of greenhouse gases;
- j) community health and well-being – “community health and well-being” means the degree to which persons resident in an area identify with that area and receive an increased quality of life as a result of the nature and the environment of the area;
- k) provision of affordable housing;
- l) use of local waste materials for the benefit of the community.

It is ideal if a clear list can be agreed by the community. One way in which such a list can be generated is by prioritizing the principles (see 3.2) and aspects of sustainability that community members are most inspired by.

Bibliography

Standards publications

For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 8900:2006, *Guidance on managing sustainable development*

 Text deleted. 

Other publications

- [1] Action for Market Towns (<http://towns.org.uk/about-amt/>)
- [2] Big Lunch (<http://www.thebiglunch.com/about/index.php>)
- [3] Transition Towns
(<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/support/what-transition-initiative>)
- [4] Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A., Fitoussi, J-P. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*
(http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf)
- [5] UNITED KINGDOM. Sustainable Communities Act (as amended 2010).
(www.legislation.gov.uk)

Additional reading

Action with Communities in Rural England (<http://www.acre.org.uk/>)

Business in the Community (<http://www.bitc.org.uk/>)

Charity Evaluation Services – PQASSO
(<http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=42>)

Community Land Trust Network (<http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/home>)

Confederation of Co-operative Housing
(<http://www.cch.coop/cch/greenerliving.html>)

Co-operatives UK (<http://www.uk.coop/economy/start-a-co-operative>)

Future Communities – on social sustainability
(<http://www.futurecommunities.net/design-social-sustainability>)

Homes and Communities Agency (<http://www.learnathca.co.uk/>)

Inspire East Excellence Framework
(<http://www.inspire-east.org.uk/welcome.aspx?Area=CONTENT>)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation:

- on community assets
(<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/community-assets-challenges-opportunities-summary.pdf>)
- on community based regeneration
(<http://www.jrf.org.uk/work/workarea/community-regeneration>)
- on sustainable urban neighbourhoods
(<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/sustainable-urban-neighbourhoods>)

Locality (<http://locality.org.uk/movement/>)

NHS Sustainable Development Unit (<http://www.sdu.nhs.uk>)

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