

# 9. Sustainable communities in action

*Some real life examples of the principles of sustainable communities being put into practice.*



## Sustainable communities – the vital components

### Active, inclusive and safe

*(a strong and cohesive community, showing qualities of tolerance and fairness, and with plenty of opportunities for shared activity)*

- Lavenham Village Hall – the community of Lavenham in Suffolk has worked tirelessly to create a new £1 million village hall. This award-winning project has involved strong community consultation to deliver a building that really meets the area's needs.
- The SCORE project – provides community-based support for adults with significant learning difficulties in and around Hereford. Participants use sport, arts, leisure and community-based training to move towards employment.
- Gateshead Street Wardens – this service works to reduce and prevent crime and disorder, and to address environmental issues in two key areas of Gateshead.
- Operation Trap – shows that responding to local people's concerns in direct and practical ways encourages them to trust public services. It is based in Aston, Birmingham, and addresses crime and the fear of crime.
- The Papertrail – is a charity that runs a heritage industrial paper mill at the site near Hemel Hempstead where the world's first commercial mechanical paper machine was invented. It also operates as a skills centre and incubator for small businesses.

### Well run

*(effective and inclusive partnership with broad representation and sound leadership)*

- Castle Vale Housing Action Trust – is a major award-winning regeneration project in Birmingham. Originally conceived as just a housing project, it became a model for social, economic and environmental renewal.
- Gateshead Pathfinder – a project led by the Council, working through the Gateshead Health Partnership, to streamline the provision of social care services, reinforce partnership and develop a stronger role for the voluntary and community sector.
- Pride in Camp Hill – is a 10-year redevelopment scheme for a 50 hectare estate in Nuneaton that is home to 5,000 people. The scheme has provided an integrated programme of social, economic and physical regeneration, and improvements to service delivery.
- Barnard Castle Market Town Initiative – this is a dynamic partnership of local organisations that has worked to draw up plans for this small market town in County Durham. The partnership has achieved a number of significant economic and environmental improvements.



## Environmentally sensitive

*(attractive places to live in harmony with the environment)*

- The National Forest – Much More Than Trees – describes the approach taken by the National Forest Company when assessing the potential social and economic impacts of new forestry development in the West Midlands.
- Sensory Park – located in the Conservation Area of Hunstanton, Norfolk, the park has been designed to appeal especially to the elderly.
- Rising Sun Countryside Park – a project in North Tyneside that has developed a sustainable countryside centre that includes community facilities for local residents and schools.
- Black Country Investment – Opus 9 – a project that added to the understanding of local history by funding an archaeological dig to discover the remains of the area's forging industry.
- Fuelling Kielder's Sustainability – a pilot project which demonstrated how local resources could be used to promote economic activity and sustainable development in this remote part of rural Northumberland.
- Quayhead Square – located by the River Severn close to the historic core of Worcester, this project provides an attractive outside venue and meeting place in a landscaped setting.
- St Peter's Riverside – located on the River Wear in Sunderland, this project was designed to transform derelict land through landscaping and public works of art.
- Bryce Road Eco Home project – at Brierley Hill in the West Midlands – has demonstrated that it is possible to design-in and retrofit features that save energy and other resources as well as lowering running costs.

## Well designed and built

*(a high quality of natural and built environment)*

- Accordia – is an award-winning development to create 380 homes on a 12 hectare site next to the Botanic Gardens to the south of Cambridge city centre. The high density development has a strong focus on the environment.
- The Sage Gateshead – winner of the RIBA Inclusive Building of the Year Award in 2005, this iconic building was designed to house live music, musical learning and participation.
- Brindley Place – located in the heart of Birmingham, the project was designed to provide a commercial development on a complex, contaminated site. It pioneered Birmingham City Council's urban design principles.
- Jaywick Sands – located to the west of Clacton in Essex, this project comprises 40 low maintenance homes for families rehoused from a deteriorating estate of prefabs.



- The Quadrus Centre – located on Boldon Business Park in South Tyneside, the striking building houses managed office accommodation for small businesses on a lakeside site.
- Route to Health – a 2 kilometre long community arts trail in Cannock Chase which encourages people to enjoy the creativity whilst developing their understanding of the importance of a healthier lifestyle.
- BALTIC – this striking centre for contemporary art is located on the River Tyne in central Gateshead. It occupies the revitalised landmark grain silos.
- Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital – this new 953 bed hospital is located on the south side of Norwich at the heart of a 25 hectare medical campus. The building has been designed to grow and adapt as needs change.
- Grainger Town – located in the historic core of Newcastle upon Tyne, the project has transformed Grainger’s classical legacy of 244 Listed Buildings into a vibrant mix of city centre uses.



## Well connected

*(good internal and external transport and communications)*

- Durham Park & Ride – this recent scheme forms part of the plan to reduce and manage traffic in this historic urban centre with its World Heritage cathedral and castle.
- Sustrans – the sustainable transport charity is working in a model partnership with the public sector and local communities to create a new cycle route through Luton and the surrounding area.
- Wheels 2 Work – this project, developed by Telford and Wrekin Borough Council, assists people living in rural areas and who are disadvantaged in the labour market because they find it difficult to access public and private transport.
- Bus and workplace travel plans – Cambridgeshire County Council has achieved an increase in bus passengers using the route to Addenbrooke’s Hospital by working with partners and developing an effective travel plan.
- Craghead Youth Group community website – a project demonstrating how young people can be engaged in their community using local web resources, and can develop their computing, photography and writing skills.



## Thriving

*(a flourishing and diverse economy)*

- Steps to Work Walsall Ltd – is a social enterprise set up to provide advice, support and training for Walsall’s unemployed.
- Silicon Alley – an ‘urban televillage’ incubator facility for small enterprises in Newcastle upon Tyne, providing e-business support at an affordable cost.
- Coventry and Warwickshire Construction and Employment Unit – is a not-for-profit organisation which provides a high quality recruitment service matching local people with the needs of construction companies.
- South Tyneside Spirit of Enterprise – a successful bid under the Local Economic Growth Initiative, designed to boost entrepreneurship and self-employment among the most under-represented groups.
- Q Awards – Oswestry Borderland Tourism – is a resource for local tourism providers, linking them to guidance on legal requirements and other information, and offering training whilst providing an opportunity to network.
- The EMERGE project – developed by Derwentside District Council, this project offers cash incentives and a complete support package to local people wishing to start a business. Three-quarters of these businesses are started by residents of deprived wards.



## Well served

*(accessible public, private and voluntary services)*

- OWN – Opportunities for Women in Northumberland – is a project to enhance the quality and standard of training for women. It includes an interactive database and distance learning opportunities for women returners.
- Children's services in Shropshire – based on a robust assessment of needs, Shropshire County Council and its partners have developed an infrastructure of strategically located multi-agency teams and children's centres.
- Cannock Chase healthy community – the District Council and Primary Care Trust have worked in partnership to develop innovative approaches to the promotion of healthy living. Overlapping directorships and capacity-building measures for staff are key factors in its success.
- Action Team for Jobs – a project aimed at removing the barriers to employment and improving the employability of disadvantaged residents of Wansbeck, Northumberland.
- Durham linking learning – an initiative in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, which provides health, social and other services on school sites in a way that is inclusive and empowering.
- Effective environmental health in Coventry – including comprehensive advisory services and strong performance management – make Coventry City Council's approach innovative and effective.
- Job Linkage – a project in Sunderland that helps people to find employment. Local access and the voluntary nature of the scheme are key success factors.

## Fair for everyone

*(conscious of people's rights, responsibilities and aspirations; and the needs of future generations)*

- BECOME – this project, run by Greets Green Partnership, takes a holistic approach to tackling the problem of local unemployment. Clients receive an integrated and comprehensive package of support.
- Improving Croft and Cowpen Quay – this project involved a survey to identify the needs and aspirations of black and ethnic minority residents of this area of Blyth, Northumberland.
- Aim Higher – a project to raise the level of educational attainment in schools in Easington, Seaham and Peterlee and help the area to meet government targets.
- Positive Futures – a sports-based programme for young people in the Wear Valley area of County Durham at risk of social exclusion because of their antisocial behaviour or drug abuse.

More detailed examples and case studies can be found on the websites of the Academy for Sustainable Communities and the Regional Centres of Excellence for Sustainable Communities (see Section 11).

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