

# **What do we mean by 'a sustainable London'?**

**Chris Church**

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**Chair, London 21  
Director, Community  
Environment Associates**

# *Sustainable...?*

- Sustainable Development?
- Sustainable Communities?
- Or simply 'sustainable'?

# ***Sustainable Development***

***– What does it mean globally?***

Many definitions but usually:

- ***“Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”***
- ***Integrating environmental, social and economic priorities***

Now a key strand in national policy

# ***Sustainable Development***

## ***– What does it mean nationally?***

In March 2005 the Government launched its new Sustainable Development Strategy.

This has five principles:

- Living within Environmental Limits**
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society**

And

- Achieving a sustainable economy**
- Promoting good governance**
- Using sound science responsibly**

# ***Sustainable Development***

## ***– What does it mean at a local level?***

Whatever the problems in any neighbourhood, people usually need:

- **a better local environment** – that means green spaces, play areas, no litter, decent houses, less noise and pollution
- **a better local economy** – that means jobs, reasonable prices, no loan sharks
- **better social conditions** – that means good leisure facilities, lots of community groups offering sports and arts, friendly neighbours.

**Genuinely sustainable development is about linking all these three together.**

# ***Sustainable Development*** ***– what does it really mean?***

- Development means change or growth.
- Sustainable means things that last.

**This is about making changes that last,  
about making things better now and in the  
future.**

**It's about Changing what we want to change  
And Preserving (Sustaining) what we want  
to protect**

# ***Sustainable development*** ***– what does it mean in London?***

- A ‘mega-city’ (one of only two in Europe)
- A hugely diverse city
- A city of many different levels
- Who takes decisions and how?

# Working for a sustainable London

- London-wide
  - The Mayor's plans
  - GoL
  - National policies
- Sub-regional development frameworks
- Borough level (LSPs & Community Strategies)
- Regeneration Areas
- Community level

***How do we engage with all these?***

# LSPs and sustainable development

- Government guidance for LSPs specifically asks them to work within regional sustainable development frameworks. To date there is little evidence of such working.
- Few LSPs have a structured approach to sustainable development
- Sustainability issues usually dealt with by an environmental sub-group

## LSPs and sustainable development (2)

- Environmental issues are being dealt with by LSPs, notably 'liveability' issues
- Few links made between these and social and economic issues

An LSP is, by nature of the many disciplines and sectors involved, an ideal framework for such cross-linking.

## Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)

- The Government will introduce Sustainability Appraisals for RSSs and LDFs. Mandatory consideration of sustainable development issues will impact on the work of LSPs.
- This should be taken as an opportunity to increase the level of debate regarding sustainability with the LSP .

# Sustainable Communities?

- The UK 'Communities Plan' – the ODPM project  
Has focused mostly on building....
- The upgraded definition of Sustainable Communities (SCs) is that they “*embody the principles of sustainable development.* (John Prescott at the 'Summit')

# Simply Sustainable?

- Things that last...
- That are well maintained...
- That are adequately resourced....

# A new focus?

- The government talks about *‘reinvigorating community action on sustainable development’*.
- Sustainable Communities Summit: Community Strategies should “explicitly become Sustainable Community Strategies”

# ***Community approaches to SD***

The last ten years has seen a big increase in local action. There are at least three good reasons for this focus:

- The need to improve the places where we live
- The need to ‘operationalise’ sustainable development and make it real
- The need to engage far more people with action on the environment

# Why does this matter?

Local action matters for many reasons. It can:

- deliver change and improvement to people's lives and environments
- get more individuals and communities active and engaged, building longer-term ownership and responsibility build understanding of how local action connects to global issues
- build skills and capacity to tackle other, perhaps bigger, issues
- help meet local targets that complement national ones;
- help remove hostility to environmental change.

# What causes change?

There are three interlinked aspects to delivering change:

- **Legislation and Policy**

The traditional view of change? Most 'NGO' activity is focused here.

- **Infrastructure to support change**

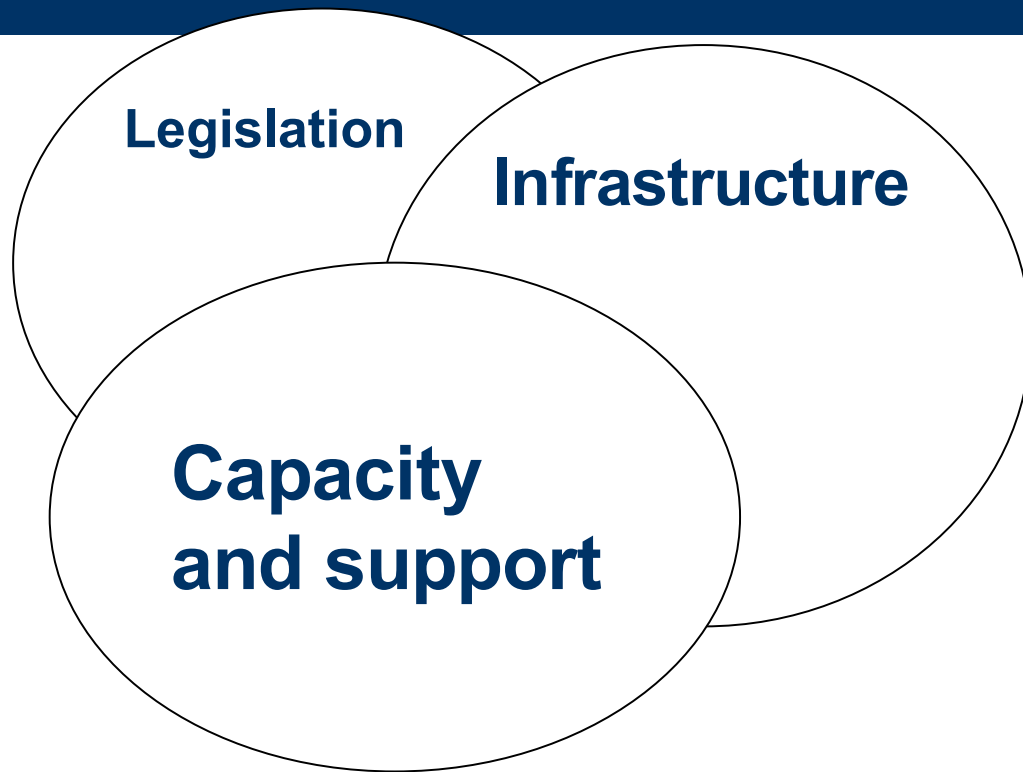
This has been neglected: a major aspect is work by local government through LA21 et al.

- **Popular desire & capacity to make change**

If change is going to work and stick, people need to want (or at least grudgingly support) change, need to understand why it matters, and what they can do.

*Yet grassroots / local action is also central to long-term political change.*

# Legislation, Infrastructure, Capacity and support



***Local action is a central part of building support  
and capacity***

# How does this kind of local work make a difference?

A 2002 report for the Community Development Foundation and JRF looked at the impacts of local activity. The key lessons are that:

- The direct environmental impacts of most local projects are limited.
- The socio-economic impacts of such projects are frequently more significant.
- Local projects have important effects beyond these immediate impacts, including building awareness and engagement.
- The collective impact of such projects on national targets is increasingly significant.

# There is a new agenda

Sustainable development is not going to go away...

- Do we engage with Community Strategies?
- Do we engage with Sustainable Communities?
- Do we focus at a London level?
- Do we go very local?
- Do we do all of these things?

Whatever we do, we need to engage: we need to make London work for us!