

da21

Working for sustainability in Dorset

Business and Delivery Plan

2008 - 2012



Dorset Agenda 21

**PO Box 5789
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 8ZR**

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Executive Summary

Dorset Agenda 21 (da21) is an independent Dorset charity that acts as both an entry point and an enabling organisation for sustainability in Dorset. Over the past ten years it has worked with a network of partners including both statutory and third sector organisations to foster a sustainable Dorset.

This business and delivery plan sets out the priorities for action for a four-year period starting in January 2008. It gives an overview of the organisation, its aspirations, and the focus for future development and project work.

Central to its work is a holistic approach to the challenges facing Dorset that arise from climate change and diminishing supplies of fossil fuels. It is therefore concerned to facilitate the delivery of alternative strategies that address renewable energy, fuel poverty, transport, food production, waste reduction and recycling.

Vision

The county of Dorset will have a thriving, locally based economy managed in a holistic manner, within the limits of the ecosystem that is of benefit to its community.

Mission

da21 aims to promote sustainable living in Dorset by encouraging the most effective use of all resources by the local authorities, businesses, communities and families.

Main Outcomes:

- the leading sustainability hub in Dorset
- successfully promoting sustainable living in Dorset
- the centre of a network of organisations in Dorset both influencing and raising awareness of sustainability issues
- inspiring individuals, businesses, communities and families to adopt sustainable living strategies

Context

The main driver for the work of da21 is the impact on the climate and environment of the worldwide use of fossil fuels for industrial, agricultural, transport and domestic purposes. The fact that we have almost reached peak oil production means we will be faced with a diminishing source of primary energy and rising fuel prices. Reversion to coal as an alternative source of energy is increasingly unacceptable as the impact of rising concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere is recognised. There is an urgent need to find and develop cleaner alternative forms of energy and reduce its consumption.

These factors are central to da21's strategy for addressing sustainability in Dorset. There is scope for virtually all organisations, communities and households to reduce their consumption of energy by better insulation and the use of more efficient electrical equipment. There is also potential for some households and communities to reduce their dependence on gas, oil and electricity by adopting renewable energy from solar power, wind or water turbines, heat pumps or biomass boilers. Transport solutions such as car sharing schemes will play an important part in a sustainable Dorset, as well as an effective integrated public transport system. Finally, more emphasis on food production and marketing on a local scale will contribute to the prudent use of essential resources for the well-being of the local population.

da21 has a role to play in facilitating the necessary changes in the lifestyle of Dorset's population as it adapts to the dual pressures of energy reduction and climate change.

Furthermore, da21 has a successful track record of working with communities in Dorset to promote sustainable living. It is therefore well placed to enable the people of Dorset to achieve this aim, particularly through its work with third sector and statutory organisations.

da21's Principles of Sustainable Development

da21 works with local people and communities, the voluntary sector, statutory organisations and businesses to encourage and support sustainable living across Dorset. Its objectives are to promote sustainable development, the prudent use of natural

resources and the protection of Dorset’s environment, as well as advance education and research in these areas. It does this by raising public awareness and understanding about the issues of sustainability; supporting or initiating projects which demonstrate sustainability; and by seeking to influence local authorities to take sustainability into account in all their decision making processes.

da21 adopts the principles of the UK’s sustainable development strategy as outlined in the government paper of 2005, “Securing Our Future”.

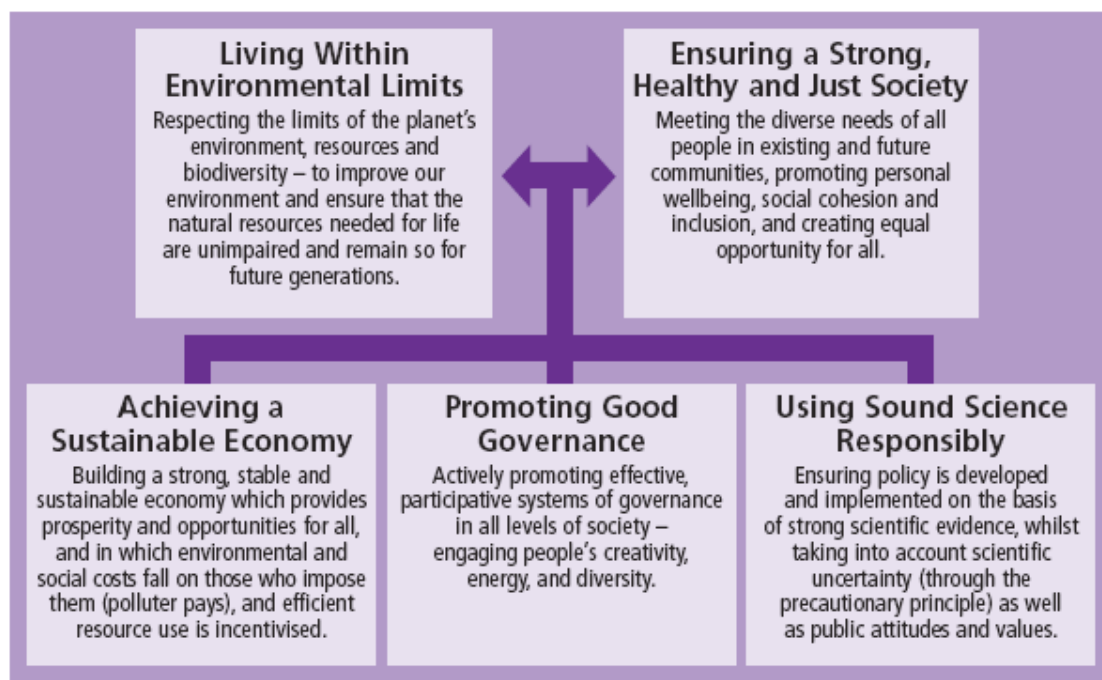


Fig 1 Guiding principles of Sustainable Development

da21’s Organisation

da21 was one of the UK Local Agenda organisations set up after the Rio Earth Summit of 1982. In 2004, it became a registered charity, No.1102528, and a Company Limited by Guarantee, No.49881760. It is a not-for-profit organisation with a paying membership.

As a charity, da21 is regulated by the Charity Commissioners and has adopted a Memorandum and Articles of Association. A Board of Trustees, which meets formally on a regular basis, oversees the strategic direction of the organisation and attends to particular management issues of the charity. The Trustees also meet in subgroups to deal with management issues in more detail such as business planning, fund raising, financial control, human resources, marketing and membership. The charity holds its Annual General Meeting once a year, when our membership are invited to elect trustees, review the Annual Report and raise any matters of concern or debate.

A manager controls the day-to-day management of the charity with the assistance of volunteer trustees and a part-time book-keeper. Volunteers also play an important role in the output of da21. For example, the production of its quarterly newsletter and maintenance of its website are both discharged on a voluntary basis. In addition, there is a network of volunteers who represent the charity's sustainability interests on a wide range of voluntary sector partnerships and statutory organisations.

Much of the project work of da21 over the past five years has been carried out by staff employed for that purpose, often supported by volunteers and consultants commissioned for specific pieces of work. More details can be found in the Annual Reports of the organisation.

Events, both those organised specifically by da21, or those run jointly with other organisations, draw upon the help of its trustees and network of volunteers. For example, most recently, da21 has organised and participated in seminars on solar energy and raising awareness events at the Dorset County Show and "Peat on the Street" in Wareham.

Membership and Supporters

da21 currently has about 1,100 contacts on its data base, of which about 10 per cent are paid up members. These include individuals, businesses and other organisations. Membership will play an increasingly important role in the growth of da21, and a priority within its business plan is to recruit more members and increase the range of events and meetings that members can access. This

expansion in membership participation will be promoted by effective publicity as outlined in the next section.

Marketing and Communications Strategy

1. The context

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The priority outcome of our marketing strategy is:

To promote sustainability across the whole of Dorset and in every aspect of life; among individuals, households, businesses, the community and voluntary sector, statutory bodies and in education;

However, we cannot achieve this without:

Increasing membership

Securing funds

Building our profile

These factors are the context for our marketing strategy

2. The audience

da21 is engaged in delivering a range services and activities to promote sustainable living in Dorset. We have identified the following target groups:

- i) da21's members, volunteers and supporters.
- ii) Businesses
- iii) Individuals, households, schools and further education colleges
- iv) Dorset County and District Councils
- v) Statutory organisations such as Primary Care Trusts
- vi) Dorset Strategic Partnership

- vii) Third Sector organisations such as Dorset Community Action
- viii) Local voluntary and community groups

3. Audience needs and how we will deliver them

We have identified the particular needs for each of our target groups and how we intend to deliver them. In each case we will match the needs of our audience to our strengths as an organisation.

i) We are currently reviewing our membership and will set targets to increase individual and business subscriptions. We aim to do this through our presence at local fairs and relevant events, such as Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival, items in the media, such as the Dorset Green Guide, and word of mouth from existing members and supporters. We have identified an opportunity in expanding business membership and will be approaching selected Dorset businesses directly. Experience suggests that local businesses are happy with the PR that comes with belonging to a high profile sustainability organisation such as da21 and we will be emphasising our track record in this area. Individual members, however, might expect something in return for their subscriptions, and a sub-group of the trustees is currently developing an improved membership package as a priority, due to be finalised by autumn 2009. This is likely to include, among other things, free or concessionary entry to specialist talks, advertising space on our newsletter / website, workshops, such as 2009's highly successful Transition training, and other events organised by da21 and our partners

ii) There is a huge desire among individuals and households for accurate information on sustainable living. And the more local and specific the information, the more accurate it tends to be (help finding a reliable insulation contractor, for example). da21 will play to this local strength as it continues to promote sustainable living through specialist events (such as expert talks we have organised on wood fuel and renewable energy), information leaflets, the newsletter and its website. We have recently secured funding to develop the website further and will be promoting this through press releases to local media and partners when it is finished in 2010. We have included schools and colleges in this target group whom we intend to reach through individuals via the avenues

outlined above. At the moment we do not have the capacity to directly engage with schools (visits, for example) or develop partnerships

iii) We will continue to build our brand through our good relationships with Dorset County Council (DCC) and the district councils. This is thanks to ongoing staff and trustee relationships with specific officers, and input to relevant groups such as the Dorset Energy Group and Dorset's Strategic Partnership (DSP), where we sit on the Environmental Theme Group. Our aim is twofold.

Firstly, we want to ensure that da21 has input into the decision making process at a local level.

Secondly, we want to convert our high standing with the DCC and DSP into funding, both for core costs and for specific projects. Independent research commissioned by DCC (Red Report, June 2009) recommends that da21 receive core funding from the Council. Meanwhile, new Local Area Agreement targets include three of direct relevance to da21's vision.¹

iv) As well as the general promotion of sustainability across Dorset, da21 works with other the third sector infrastructure organisations and works alongside them as a specialist sustainability hub. These organisations are an important conduit for us, both for potential partnership working and in terms of maintaining our profile as a key player, in moving Dorset to a more sustainable future. We will build on this with, among other things, improvements to our website, which we intend to launch in the media. We intend to improve the distribution of our newsletter, so that there is a consistent delivery to all parts of Dorset. This will be achieved by better coordination between the newsletter editors and our network of supporters. Finally, as one of the organisations delivering the BASIS project in Dorset, we will have a growing number of opportunities to build our brand in groups across the whole of the county.

4. At a glance: how we communicate our work

¹ National Indicators 188. 186 have been included as priorities in the LAA. N.I 185 is a local priority.

Representatives on county council and strategic partnership groups
Membership network
Newsletter
Website (www.da21.org.uk)
Magazines, newspapers and broadcast media
Expert talks
Events

5. Monitoring and evaluation

A sub group of trustees is responsible for the delivery of our marketing and communications, and these are regularly reviewed at board meetings.

Key Partnerships

As a sustainability hub for the community, da21 works with a range of Dorset organisations to deliver effective services. It achieves this by working with Dorset County Council, third sector infrastructure groups and local community groups, brief details of which are listed below.

- Dorset County Council (DCC)
da21 has representation on the council's Energy Group Executive, and on its subgroups concerned with energy efficiency, renewable energy and bio-energy sources.
- 3rd Sector Infrastructure Group (3SIG)
3SIG is a partnership of those organisations that support smaller community groups. Its members include DA21, Dorset Community Action (DCA), Dorset Youth Association (DYA), Dorset Race Equality Council, Dorset Citizens Advice Bureau and the Volunteer Centre.
- Dorset Strategic Partnership (DSP) Theme Group
DA21 has representation on the DSP's environmental theme group – working with other partners such as DCC, Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT), Natural England and others to foster an action plan to deliver sustainability within a community strategy.

- Sustainability and Environment Forum
DA21, in partnership with DCA, has set up the Sustainability and Environment Forum. This has elected representatives to key DSP theme groups.
- Dorset Climate Change Coalition (D3C)
DA21 is a founder member of D3C and is currently its secretariat. Its aim is to communicate the urgency of climate change to the people of Dorset, and facilitate action to reduce their carbon footprint. The coalition comprises a partnership of 12 organisations.

da21's role in Dorset's Sustainability Strategy

Dorset's aims for increased sustainability are embraced within the County Council's strategy document "Shaping our Future – a Community Strategy for Dorset 2007-16". This includes objectives related to its economy, housing and demographic needs. Dorset also aims to achieve a step change in its environmental performance, including efficient energy and water use, effective waste disposal and recycling. Additionally, Dorset sees climate change as priority area and the County Council is addressing both energy efficiency and renewable energy through its energy groups. There is therefore ample opportunity for da21 to contribute to Dorset's Sustainability Strategy.

A major way in which DA21 can develop its role as a third sector organisation in delivering its services to Dorset is via Local Area Agreements (LAAs). Local Area Agreements are agreements between central and local government, which depend on a local partnership between a wide range of statutory, business, voluntary and community organisations.

The DA21 Business and Delivery Plan supports the fulfilment of a number of these agreements. This could be very significant for our attempts to obtain support (including funding support) from DCC since the LAAs themselves are linked to significant potential "financial rewards" for local authorities, dependent on the degree to which their achievements can be demonstrated to central government.

The local targets listed by DCC outlined in “An Introductory Guide to Dorset’s Local Area Agreement” could, if achieved, bring in additional funding to DCC of £10.2m by 2010-2011 (“Our Role in Dorset’ - Dorset’s Corporate Plan”). It is important therefore that we try to identify *all* those LAAs to which da21’s activities can be shown to contribute, both directly and indirectly, or to which we could try and link future activities.

Wider Areas where DA21’s work is relevant:

(Ref: “The Community Strategy for Dorset 2007-2016”)

- Developing the economy, where Dorset is aiming for **“sustainable economic development with the minimum use of resources”**
- Housing - **“sustainable housing development”**
- Improving access to services, employment, leisure, for example by **“greater use of alternatives to the car”**
- Safeguarding the environment, using **“a partnership response to the challenges of global climate change”, including a continuing contribution by volunteers**
- Meeting the demographic challenge of an ageing population through **“investment in services promoting the health and wellbeing of older people”** - for example tackling fuel poverty through energy efficiency

DA21 and potential links to Dorset’s Local Area Agreement improvement targets

- Affordable housing: **“tackling fuel poverty”**
- Strong and inclusive: **“Environment for a thriving third sector”; “Participation in regular volunteering”**
- Accessibility: **“Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling”** and also increasing **“local bus passenger journeys”**
- Environment: **“Reducing municipal waste land filled”**
- Young people: to provide **“participation in positive activities”** (this is an area which DA21 could potentially target in the future, relating activities to the environment)

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this Business Plan is to bring the principles of sustainability into concerted and effective action. As part of this process DA21 worked with an external facilitator to focus DA21's vision and aspirations to 2012. These aims and objectives have emerged from this process.

Aims



Figure 2. The three main aims

Create a thriving, sustainable organisation.

Objectives

1. To strengthen the membership base as a method of bringing people together and generating collective action.
2. To be seen as the premier sustainability hub in Dorset with a recognised brand.

3. To maximise the potential of the board of trustees, staff, volunteers and members
4. To secure financial sustainability for the organisation

Communicate effectively with individuals and communities to inspire them to create a sustainable county.

Objectives

1. To communicate clear and relevant messages on sustainability and climate change to the people of Dorset.
2. To provide an effective network of advice, support and access to best practice.
3. To create an effective voice for sustainability in Dorset.

Empower the third sector to take action in Dorset on sustainability.

Objectives

1. To work with third sector organisations in Dorset to support and enable effective action on sustainability and climate change.
2. To lead the Dorset Climate Change Coalition and work effectively with coalition partners.

How we will deliver these objectives is set out in our Delivery Plan.

Delivery Plan

Appendix Statement of Principles

DA21 stands for action on the pressing issues of today such as climate change through implementation of sustainability principles. These should be realised through strategic and locally based initiatives.

The values and principles DA21 upholds in carrying forward this work are:

1 We acknowledge that planet Earth, the ecosystem and the natural forces that sustain it, are the life support systems for everyone.

2 We also acknowledge there are many major problems facing mankind at the beginning of this 21st century. These include reducing our dependency on carbon-based fuels, continued rapid population growth, excessive resource consumption, linear waste management - all of which threaten sustainability and our quality of life.

3 Furthermore, we consider all these problems to be inter-related but consider the need to reduce our dependency on carbon as the most pressing, not only for environmental reasons but also to bring greater security and control over our energy supplies.

4 We believe we can live sustainably, and by consuming fewer resources - particularly carbon-based fuels - we can reduce our impact on the planet and can help people achieve a better quality of life.

5 We recognise that the Government and the public sector have critical policy and leadership roles in tackling our problems but that the third sector must be able to complement these with good practice and exemplary action.

6 We also believe we will achieve more by supporting grassroots action by individuals and community groups, and by working in partnership with other organisations towards the common goal of a sustainable Dorset.

7 We aim to reach people of all backgrounds and at every stage of their lives, including children and young people.

