



North West Regional Assembly

The North West Regional Assembly is using its regional sustainable development framework as a vehicle for ensuring that community strategies properly integrate sustainable development. They have also created a computer package – ‘planitnorthwest’ – to assist in the integration of sustainable development into the work of LSPs and into community plans and other strategies

The North West Regional Assembly has undertaken work with 10 local authorities, using the regional sustainable development framework to assess each strategy in order to identify gaps, compatibilities and issues relating to sustainable development which could feed into the development of many local plans especially community strategies. One example of an issue was an authority that had identified the tourism opportunities of an important local river, but had not addressed the issues of water quality and pollution within their strategy.

The results of the pilots fed into a toolkit from the NWRA on community strategies which covers issues such as:

- Ways to integrate national and global issues into community strategies
- Community strategies taking account of environmental issues as well as social and economic ones
- Participation and consultation processes, building on the lessons learnt from Local Agenda 21
- Ensuring that community strategies are compatible with regional sustainable development frameworks
- Assisting in the joined up approach to modernising local government.

The toolkit has proved to be a great success, being adopted in the development of not only community strategies but increasingly with other strategies such as those on economic development and housing market renewal.

Funding has now been provided by the NW Regional Development Agency to undertake a sustainable development training programme with all LSP Boards in the North-West, helping in the integration process.

In addition, a computer programme – *Planit NorthWest* – has been developed to help identify where in the decision making process sustainability issues need to be developed.

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