



The Leeds experience: the role of sustainability practitioners

Leeds' LSP, known locally as the Leeds Initiative, has existed for many years, although has only recently been formally accredited as the LSP for Leeds. This history has helped to give the partnership time to establish relationships between partners and also to develop a track record of achievement.

The initiative produced its first vision for Leeds *A strategy for sustainable development* in 1999 and is now embarking on the process for developing phase two. Vision II has three aims:-

- **Going up a league as a city** – making Leeds an internationally competitive city, the best place in the country to live, work and learn, with a high quality of life for everyone.
- **Narrowing the gap** between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the city.
- **Developing Leeds' role** as the regional capital, contributing to the national economy as a competitive European city, supporting and supported by an increasingly prosperous region.

To support these aims, the Initiative has eight main themes which reflect local priorities:

Cultural life

- Enterprise and the economy
- The environment city
- Harmonious communities
- Health and wellbeing
- Transport system
- Learning
- Thriving places

The Environment City team at Leeds City Council (recently incorporated into the new Sustainable Development Unit within the Council's Development Department) plays a leading role in the work of the Leeds Environment City Partnership, one of the six partnership strategy groups of the Leeds Initiative.

Sustainable development is not a separate theme within the Initiative, but is intended to be a core value running throughout the entire partnership. The Environment City Partnership is championing this cause and is making the case for integrating social and economic considerations with environmental issues.

A very recent initiative was a one day conference for representatives from the entire partnership aimed at showing how sustainability considerations could be integrated within each of the six themes. After this conference a local consultancy took on the role of developing a sustainability appraisal tool for the Leeds Initiative which was then employed to review Vision II as it was being developed. This process identified several conflicting issues or omissions within Vision II which have now been addressed in the final document.

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