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## City of Greater Geraldton

# 1.1 TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DECISIONS

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## SUSTAINABILITY THEME

Community

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## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to establish an understanding of the five dimensions of sustainability for developing and making sustainable decisions. Three questions are presented for each dimension to test if decisions are taking the City towards or away from sustainability. Towards sustainable decisions will guide development of future policies, strategies, actions, and operations.

## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is applicable to all decisions and activities of Council, employees and those with delegated authority. The policy will also be the basis for our collaboration with other stakeholders, communities and project partners.

## POLICY DETAILS

### Definition and Vision

The City recognises that development can compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability is the ability of our City of Greater Geraldton's environmental, social and cultural, governance, and economic systems to maintain their health and resilience in perpetuity. The City's Strategic Community Plan is committed to the vision of "a prosperous, diverse, vibrant and sustainable community".

This policy identifies **FOUR DIMENSIONS** of sustainable development that influences sustainable decision-making:

- 1 ENVIRONMENT** Striving for a natural and built environment preserves quality and minimises the negative impacts of development. An effective sustainable environmental system does not systematically degrade the environment through over-extraction, pollution or physical means.
- 2 SOCIETY & CULTURE** Creating a harmonious and inclusive society allows for the development of cultural identity, a sense of place and community values to grow communities and promote stability, diversity, and a high quality of life for all. An effective sustainable society and culture system is where services are resilient to change and able to meet fundamental human needs whilst celebrating vibrant and festive communities, lifestyle, creativity, and freedom
- 3 GOVERNANCE** Providing transparent, collaborative, and inclusive decision-making ensures both representation and leadership are accountable to the community. An effective sustainable governance system is participatory, inclusive and empower local decision-making and regional autonomy.

- 4 **ECONOMIC** Ensuring diversity and local productivity creates a flourishing and diverse economy. An effective sustainable economic system creating conditions conducive to economic development and fostering communities where people want to live and do business.

For each of these four **Dimensions** of sustainability:

**Goals** are set that the City of Greater Geraldton can aspire to achieve;

**Guiding Questions** are presented to test if decisions and actions are actually taking the City of Greater Geraldton towards the sustainability goal.

### **ENVIRONMENT DIMENSION**

**Goal** The rate of regeneration exceeds the rate of degradation in our natural and built environment.

**Guiding Questions:** Will the decision:

- 1.1. Take a precautionary approach by ensuring proponents bear the burden of proving that the action moves us towards sustainability?
- 1.2. Ensure that there is a net benefit to the environment and that any system degradation is minimised?
- 1.3. Increase investment in infrastructure and buildings that are sustainable long-term assets, adaptable for multiple uses, and valued by the community?

### **SOCIAL & CULTURE DIMENSION**

**Goal:** A tolerant, safe society with a strong sense of local and cultural identity, that embraces diversity and creativity. Services are equitably available to satisfy our communities' needs.

**Guiding Questions:** Will the decision:

- 2.1 Provide essential services to our communities in ways that are timely, equitable and recognise our communities' culture, identity and heritage?
- 2.2 Create conditions more conducive to our communities to satisfy their recreation and leisure needs, and enhance wellbeing and quality of life?
- 2.3 Demonstrate a culture of learning and development and contribute to low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour?

### **GOVERNANCE DIMENSION**

**Goal:** Decision-making processes and institutions that are participatory, inclusive and recognise local autonomy.

**Guiding Questions:** Will the decision:

- 3.1 Empower our local government and in-turn empower citizens to make decisions that support our community's vision?
- 3.2 Demonstrate transparent, collaborative and inclusive decision-making?
- 3.3 Build capacity for good leadership, governance and management across all socio-economic and cultural groups?

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## ECONOMIC DIMENSION

**Goal** A resilient local economy with diverse, innovative businesses and employment opportunities.

**Guiding Questions:** Will the decision:

- 4.1 Provide certainty for business and investors through consistent and transparent policies?
- 4.2 Encourage diverse, innovative, and competitive businesses, partnerships and investments?
- 4.3 Reduce our economy's vulnerability to future changes that are beyond our control?

## KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

**Adaptation** means adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

**Adaptive capacity** means the ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes), to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.

**Climate change** means to a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or in its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer). Climate change may be due to natural processes or external forcing, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land-use.

**Resilience** means the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure.

**Sustainability** means the ability of our city-region's environmental, social & cultural, governance, and economic systems to maintain their health and resilience in perpetuity.

**Sustainable Development** means Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Vulnerability** means the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all City staff, and other stakeholders, agencies and community groups involved with the City of Greater Geraldton.

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## WORKPLACE INFORMATION

Local Government Act 1995

City of Greater Geraldton Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

City of Greater Geraldton Employee Code of Conduct OP054

## POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Directorate		Officer	Review Cycle	Next Due
Infrastructure Services		Manager Engineering Services	Biennial	January 2020
Version	Decision Reference	Synopsis		
1.	IS163 23 January 2018	Policy Review		