

Council Policy CP-026 Towards Sustainability Policy Framework			
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Review Frequency	Annually	Next Review	2012
Council Resolution number and date			
Mayor's Signature		Chief Executive Officer's Signature	

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a shared understanding and definition that can guide development of policies and strategies, and decisions and actions towards sustainability.

Document Overview

Outlines a visual, textual and tabular representation of the:

- Five dimensions of sustainability for developing policies, strategies, projects and indicators,
- Four guiding questions for each dimension to test if decisions are taking us towards or away from sustainability,
- Associated strategies being developed that relate to that dimension.

Document Audience

The intended audience of this document includes:

- Executive Management Team, and Managers
- City of Greater Geraldton Councillors
- All City staff
- Other agencies, stakeholders and community groups in Greater Geraldton

SCOPE

This framework is applicable to all decisions and activities of Council, employees and those with delegated authority.

This framework will also be the basis for our collaboration with other stakeholders, communities and project partners.

IN SCOPE

All Strategies, Plans, Policies, Guidelines, Concept Plans, Business Cases, Procedures, Processes and Project Templates.

Assumptions in Preparation of this document

- This framework will be the basis for future reviews of the Plan for the Future, where similar sustainability outcomes and values were described.
- This will be the framework within which all future council policies, strategies, guidelines are to be developed.
- The Built Environment is sometimes identified as its own separate dimension of sustainability, but in this framework it is presented as a subset of the broader Environment, with associated policies and strategies to be developed across Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic dimensions.
- Specific recognition of Culture as a dimension of sustainable is required to: recognise and celebrate Aboriginal cultures, regional and city heritage, shared meaning and values, and our communities' non-material aspirations.
- The definitions of Sustainability and Sustainable Development in 'definitions' section 1.6 are expanded in the document due to their importance.

DEFINITIONS

CEO: Means the Chief Executive Officer of a local government;

Councillor means a person who holds the office of councillor on a council;

Mayor means a person elected by the electors to hold the office of Mayor.

Employee means:

- a) A person by whom work is done under a contract of employment;
- b) An apprentice; or trainee;
- c) Person employed as a contractor.

Listed here are the definition of terms, acronyms or abbreviations used in this document.

No.	Term or Abbreviation	Definition
1	Development	A process in which our City-Region improves by degrees to a more advanced stage and improved state. The stage and state may be measured objectively (e.g. economic development) or subjectively (e.g. increased self-reported happiness of residents).
2	Sustainability	The ability of our city-region's environmental, social, governance, economic and cultural systems to maintain their health and resilience in perpetuity.
3	Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Towards Sustainability Policy Framework

Objective and Scope

To establish a shared understanding of sustainability and sustainable development that can guide policies, strategies, decision-making and operations. This framework is applicable to all decisions and activities of Council, employees and those with delegated authority.

Definition and Vision

Sustainability is the ability of our city-region's environmental, social, governance, economic and cultural systems to maintain their health and resilience in perpetuity. Sustainable development is 'development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'¹. The City of Greater Geraldton recognises that city-region's development is currently compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and that our systems are declining in their health and resilience. The City of Greater Geraldton has defined a vision for change and is committed to the vision of "a *creative city-region which has a prosperous, diverse and sustainable community within an attractive Western Australian setting*"².

The City of Greater Geraldton Contribution

The definition and vision of sustainability are aspirational value statements. To make decisions and take strategic action towards that vision we need to 'backcast'³ using a precise, and science-based framework. This policy framework identifies **FIVE DIMENSIONS** of sustainable development, and for each dimension the City of Greater Geraldton will establish goals, create strategies, grow our expertise and take proactive action.

The five dimensions can be related through the following logic:

- **ENVIRONMENTAL** systems and services from our ecological and built assets are not systematically degraded through over-extraction, pollution or physical degradation⁴ such that we can have a safe and healthy...
- **SOCIETY** where services are resilient to change and able to meet fundamental human needs. Increasing our effectiveness at meeting those needs within environmental constraints requires effective and transparent....
- **GOVERNANCE** processes and institutions. Our governance must be participatory, inclusive and empower local decision-making and regional autonomy. Regional autonomy will provide the conditions for local...
- **ECONOMIC** development using our assets to support diverse and growing employment opportunities. Attending to these first four dimensions will support an evolving...
- **CULTURE** reflecting community values and aspirations for our human non-material needs such as identity, lifestyle, creativity, and freedom.

¹ The Bruntland Commission, *Our Common Future*, 1987

² City of Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2011- 2021. Online: www.cgg.wa.gov.au

³ Backcasting means, simply, to 'look at our current situation from the perspective of our desired future'.

⁴ Holmberg, John, Karl-Henrik Robert, and Karl-Erik Eriksson. 1996. *Socio-ecological principles for sustainability*. In *Getting Down To Earth - Practical Applications of Ecological Economics*, International Society of Ecological Economics, edited by R. Costanza et al. Washington DC, USA. And Daly, 1995

Framework

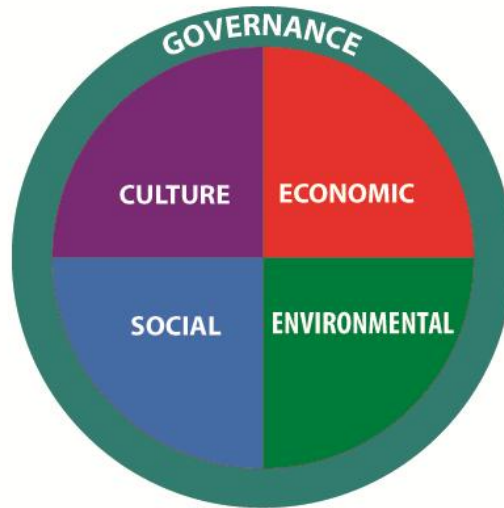


Figure 1 - Five Dimensions of Sustainability

For each of these five **Dimensions** of sustainability, we have defined:

- **Goals** that the City of Greater Geraldton can aspire to achieve
- **Guiding Questions** to test if decisions and actions are actually taking the City of Greater Geraldton towards the goals. These questions can be answered using evidence and indicators that will also be used to measure our progress towards the goal.
- **Strategy** areas for developing and evaluating specific policies, plans, projects and actions.

Environmental

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

Guiding Questions

Does the evidence show this idea or action will:

- 1) Take a precautionary approach by ensuring proponents bear the burden of proving that the action moves us towards sustainability?
- 2) Ensure environmental systems and services are not systematically degraded (through over-extraction, pollution or physical degradation), and are actually enhanced?
- 3) Increase investment in infrastructure and buildings that are long-term assets, adaptable for multiple uses, and valued by the community?
- 4) Encourage our community to act as stewards for the environment locally, and globally?

Policy and Strategy Areas:

- Green Infrastructure
- Materials (Waste)
- Water Planning and Management
- Coastal Management
- Natural Resource Management
- Biodiversity
- Energy
- Towards Zero Carbon
- Integrated Local Transport
- Residential and Rural Land Use
- Built Environment

Social

Goal: A tolerant, safe society where services are equitably available to satisfy our communities' needs.

Guiding Questions

Does the evidence show this idea or action will:

- 1) Provide essential services to our communities in ways that are timely, equitable and culturally appropriate?
- 2) Reduce the barriers to our communities easily satisfying their recreation and leisure needs?
- 3) Contribute to low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour?
- 4) Ensure a range, diversity and affordability of housing that is sufficient to meet demand?

Strategy and Policy Areas:

- Residential and Rural Land Use
- Education
- Community Safety
- Recreation Facilities
- Social and Cultural Plan
- Health
- Population and Demographics
- Civic Precinct

Governance

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

Guiding Questions

Does the evidence show this idea or action will:

- 1) Empower our local government and in-turn empower citizens to make decisions that support our community's vision?
- 2) Recognise City-Region identity, autonomy and capacity for leadership?
- 3) Demonstrate transparent, collaborative and inclusive decision-making?
- 4) Build capacity for good leadership, governance and management across all socio-economic and cultural groups?

Strategy and Policy Areas:

- Identity and Regional Empowerment
- Portfolio, Program Management
- Sustainable Future City Region Governance Alliance
- Community Visioning, Engagement
- Community Champions Program

Economic

Goal: A resilient Local economy with diverse, innovative businesses and employment opportunities.

Guiding Questions

Does the evidence show this idea or action will:

- 1) Provide certainty for business and investors through consistent, transparent policies?
- 2) Encourage diverse, innovative, and competitive businesses, partnerships and investments?
- 3) Contribute to more equitable wealth distribution and reduce systematic disadvantage?
- 4) Reduce our economy's vulnerability to future changes that are beyond our control?

Strategy and Policy Areas:

- Science and Innovation
- Economic Development
- Regional Energy
- Land Use
- Commercial Activity
- Population and Demographic
- Industry Diversity

Culture

Goal: A culture with a strong sense of local identity, that embraces diversity and creativity, and which is celebrated through the arts and events.

Guiding Questions

Does the evidence show this idea or action will:

- 1) Recognise and celebrate our communities' culture, identity and heritage?
- 2) Demonstrate a culture of learning and development that will move us towards our vision?
- 3) Address issues of social inclusion, diversity and equity?
- 4) Create conditions more conducive to wellbeing and a high quality of life?

Strategy and Policy Areas:

- Heritage
- Arts
- Culture
- Education
- Civic Precinct Master Plan
- Tourism

Implementation

This Policy Framework will guide future policies, targets, strategies and indicators for each of the five dimensions of sustainability. The Policy Framework is adopted by the City of Greater Geraldton as its overarching corporate and community framework for sustainability. The Policy Framework will be used as the basis for the 2029 and Beyond Project, Annual Report, Plan for the Future and as a basis for providing advice to council through Council Agendas.

The Policy Framework will be used as the basis for policies in each of the dimensions e.g. Energy, Culture, Heritage, Recreation. Strategies will be developed to achieve the goals outlined in each policy. Executive Guidelines, Tools, Templates (e.g. for Sustainability Impact Assessment) and Procedure Manuals will support implementation, where appropriate.

The Framework's relationship to policies and guidelines is show in pictorial form in Appendix 1.

The scope and content of each of the policies and strategies will follow a consistent, logical approach, addressing the following elements:

- **Outcomes** – Outcomes are the 'Vision for Success'. The definition of an explicit goal or change state and the timeframe, including articulation of critical success factors (CSFs). Outcomes will be the focus of policies. *For example, to be a carbon neutral city by 2020.*
- **Outputs** – Outputs are explicit deliverables (works, products, services) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that take us towards a specific outcome. KPIs will be relevant, measurable and auditable, with a causal relationship to CSFs and outcomes. Outputs will be the focus of strategies. *For example, to increase renewable energy generation capacity by 100% by 2013.*
- **Actions** – Actions are what we do, utilising inputs to achieve the outputs and outcomes. Actions will be the focus of operational plans. *For example, assess current renewable energy generation by September 2010.*
- **Inputs** – Inputs are the specific tools, people, resources and information required for action. *For example, allocating budget and officers to a community renewable energy program.*
- **Management** – Management refers to the business processes, planning, resource acquisition and allocation, prioritisation, review and evaluation. *For example,*

coordinating actions on energy and climate change through an Energy Management Team.

- **Governance** – Governance is the continuous appraisal of alignment of outputs with outcomes and the vision. For example, review of the effectiveness of renewable energy programs on the vision of carbon neutrality, council financial sustainability and a strong local economy.

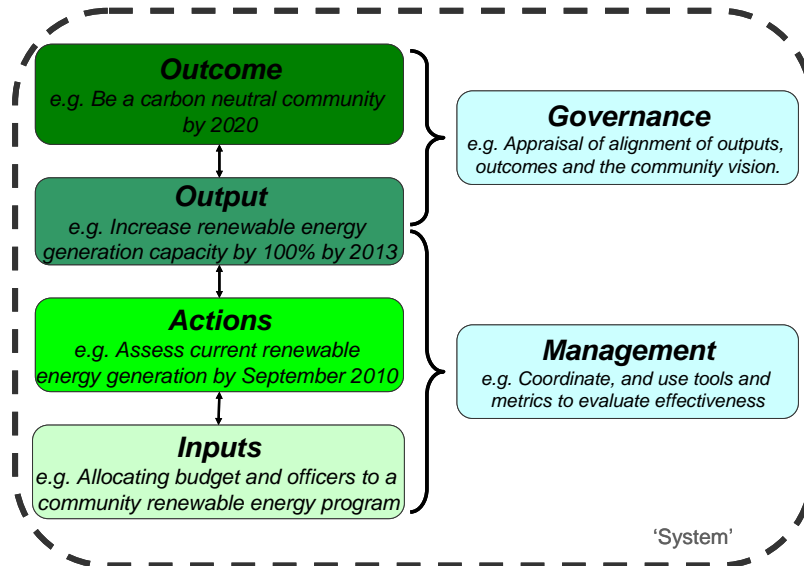


Figure 2 - Implementation process

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The policy is the overarching framework for all future policies and plans submitted to Council for approval. All subsequent policies will be reviewed to ensure they are aligned with this framework and assessed for their contribution towards sustainability of our City-Region.

WORKPLACE INFORMATION

Local Government Act 1995

Freedom of Information Act 1992, including associated regulations,

City of Greater Geraldton's Code of Conduct.

The City's mission in the Strategic Community Plan 2011 – 2021 is to be a leading organisation, which through effective sustainable practices and business excellence, facilitates the Vision. The Vision refers to being smart city which has a prosperous, liveable and creative community and utilizing its wealth of sustainably managed natural and human resources as the foundation to become a centre of global significance.

The same document also describes our Organisational Values with which this Policy aligns, which include:

- Protection of high priority natural resources, including biological diversity.
- Engagement of the broader community in taking ownership and responsibility for their environment at a local and global level.
- Appropriate development which has no net loss of environmental assets.
- Provision of essential and timely services to which all members of our community have equitable access.

- Creation of an environment which facilitates cultural and social diversity.
- Meeting the active and passive recreation needs of the community.
- Empowering the City to make the required decisions to meet the long term objective.

There are International, Federal and State commitments, strategies and legislation that encourage moves towards sustainability at a local government level. Principles and actions that have guided development of this policy come from these documents

- The Bruntland Report, Our Common Future (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).
- Rio Declaration and Local Agenda 21 (Rio Earth Summit, 1992).
- Australia's National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (1992).
- The Earth Charter (2000).
- UNEP's Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities (2002).
- Hope for the Future: The WA State Sustainability Strategy (2003).
- Sustainability for survival: creating a climate for change. (2007).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Policy Owner) is responsible for implementing this Policy.

The Policy Framework owner is the Chief Executive Officer. The Policy Framework manager is the Manager Environmental Health and Sustainability.

The CEO shall oversee the implementation of this Policy Framework and subsequent policies through receiving reports and giving directions through the Executive Management Team.

APPENDIX 1

Sustainability Framework's relationship to policy, strategies and guidelines presented pictorially.

