FOREWORD

Sustainable development is a concept easy to subscribe to, harder to put into practice. What matters is the change to culture, policy and action that results from a strategy – and this one is designed to deliver such change.

Few words are required to state our commitment. As the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Scotland, we are determined to lead a government which is an exemplar of sustainability. We have made progress already but have no doubts that there will be many more hard choices balancing the social and economic with the environmental. Scotland bears the scars of decisions taken in the past – but we are determined to stay the course and bring about the long-term changes in the way we govern, so that Scotland sets an example to the world.

Jack McConnell MSP
First Minister

Nicol Stephen MSP
Deputy First Minister
BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: A NEW STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND
WE HAVE TO BUILD, FAST, ON THAT PROGRESS AND MOMENTUM IF SCOTLAND IS TO MAKE THE RADICAL CHANGES THAT ARE NOW URGENTLY REQUIRED

1.1 Scotland is committed to building a sustainable future. Individuals, businesses, local authorities and communities are taking action to change the way we use resources, plan and develop services, and seize the economic opportunities that sustainable development presents. Policies and programmes are in place to drive change in key areas: transforming the way we deal with our waste, capitalising on Scotland’s sources of renewable energy and taking action on climate change.

1.2 We have to build, fast, on that progress and momentum if Scotland is to make the radical changes that are now urgently required.

1.3 This is a priority that is shared across the UK and the international community. Scotland signed up to a new UK shared framework for sustainable development, One future – different paths\(^1\), in March this year. The framework sets out a common goal for sustainable development across the UK:

*“to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations”*

and a powerful new set of principles that will help us to achieve it and which underpin the approach that we are adopting in Scotland (see below).

1.4 This strategy sets out the measures that we will take in Scotland to turn the framework into action.
WHY THIS MATTERS
THE CONTEXT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MAKING IT HAPPEN
GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY
1.5 The UK framework challenges governments to “promote a clear understanding of and commitment to sustainable development so that all people can contribute to the overall goal through their individual decisions”. This strategy for Scotland has been prepared with that challenge in mind:

- The document sets out at a high level what we are trying to achieve in Scotland.
- It provides the strategic framework for a number of the Executive’s new and emerging strategies on climate change, transport, renewable energy, energy efficiency, green jobs and biodiversity. It does not attempt to replicate the detail of those programmes.
- Each section sets out the outcomes that we are working towards: what difference new and existing programmes and investment will make.
- It looks at these issues from different perspectives: from a focus on the health and well-being of individuals in Scotland through to the sustainability of the planet, with learning to live more sustainably a theme which runs across them all. This is illustrated in the facing diagram.
- Some key issues – travel, food, waste and the built environment – are considered in the round, to help illustrate the connections between both problems and solutions.
- It sets out the contribution that people in Scotland can make, whether individually or collectively.

1.6 The strategy also draws out the connections between issues, making the links between problems that are often presented as disparate and disconnected. The strategy explores for example:

- the social and environmental consequences of our purchasing choices and use of resources
- the interaction between people and the environment we live in
- the human consequences of global environmental challenges such as climate change.

1.7 Making the links can be an effective stimulus to action, encouraging us to spot solutions and deliver creative new approaches. It is a more efficient way of taking action, pooling resources in the pursuit of common goals. And it can help us to build new partnerships and alliances with other businesses, groups or individuals who have similar objectives. The strategy includes examples of people in Scotland taking action in this way and of the links that are being made. We hope these will inspire others to follow suit.
WHY THIS MATTERS:
THE CONTEXT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
WIDESPREAD FLOODING DEVASTATED SEVERAL CENTRAL EUROPEAN CITIES IN 2002 WHILE AN UNPRECEDENTED HEAT WAVE LED TO OVER 20,000 ADDITIONAL DEATHS IN 2003. SCOTLAND IS STARTING TO EXPERIENCE MORE FREQUENT EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS, AND STORMS AND FLOODING ARE PROJECTED TO BECOME MORE FREQUENT IN FUTURE DECADES.

2.1 At the start of the 21st century countries across the world are facing up to the global threat of unsustainable development, causing damage to such an extent that the planet cannot sustain human life, leading to a world where future generations would no longer have the resources to meet their needs.

2.2 This is no longer a distant threat: it is happening now. Unsustainable development across the world is changing habitats and climates, overexploiting resources and creating pollution. If current patterns continue, damage to the natural world will accelerate, not diminish.

2.3 These changes cannot be seen as ‘just’ an environmental problem. We can already see the dramatic human consequences of changes in the global environment. Extreme weather patterns caused by climate change are linked to increased cycles of drought across Africa, triggering deepening food shortages and exacerbating hunger. Widespread flooding devastated several central European cities in 2002 while an unprecedented heat wave led to over 20,000 additional deaths in 2003. Scotland is starting to experience more frequent extreme weather events, and storms and flooding are projected to become more frequent in future decades.
2.4 Facing up to these challenges means changing the way that we live and develop: as individuals, as a nation and as part of a global society. In an increasingly global economy, we rely on imports of food, raw materials and manufactured goods from and exports to many nations. That challenges us to consider the impact of the resources that we are consuming.

2.5 One way of measuring this is our ecological footprint, an estimate of the land and sea area needed to provide all the energy, water, transport, food and materials that we consume. In 2001, the average Scot had an ecological footprint 2.4 times the global average. If everyone on Earth lived the same way, it is estimated that three planets would be needed to sustain us. A key objective for this strategy must be to reduce the size of that global footprint.

2.6 These priorities for Scotland and across the UK are our response to these challenges:

- **Sustainable consumption and production**: achieving more with less. This includes reducing the inefficient use of resources, looking at the impact of products and materials across their whole lifecycle and encouraging people to think about the social and environmental consequences of their purchasing choices.

- **Climate change and energy**: securing a profound change in the way we generate and use energy, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement**: protecting our natural resources, building a better understanding of environmental limits, and improving the quality of the environment.

- **Sustainable communities**: creating communities that embody the principles of sustainable development locally.
2.7 We will achieve these changes in Scotland only by learning and embracing new approaches to the way that we go about things, whether that is as individuals, businesses, communities or government. We must all learn to:

• respect the limits of the planet’s environment, resources and biodiversity

• use resources as efficiently as possible – including reducing the need for them in the first place

• get much better at thinking about the long-term consequences of our actions – and their global as well as the national and local consequences

• develop a much more integrated approach to tackling problems and identifying solutions.

2.8 Sustainable development presents us with a framework for thinking about the future: the kind of world we want to live in and the legacy we want to leave behind for future generations. The actions we are taking are driven by a vision of the future we want to build, a Scotland that:

• is a leader in green enterprise

• has transformed its approach to waste, reducing our dependency on landfill

• is maximising the potential of our renewable energy sources

• has a vibrant, low-carbon economy

• provides a quality environment for all.

2.9 This future is within reach. We can all play a part in making it happen.
3 BUILDING A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY
3.1 We are committed to pursuing the goal of sustainable development in an integrated way, through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.

3.2 The chapters that follow describe the future we are building: improving the well-being of people in Scotland, supporting Scotland’s thriving communities, protecting our natural resources for the long term, and making a fair global contribution. A strong, sustainable economy has a key role to play in securing this future.

3.3 The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (FEDS)3 articulates a clear vision – to raise the quality of life of the Scottish people, through increasing economic opportunities for all on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis. These priorities are reflected in our strategy for the Enterprise Networks, A Smart, Successful Scotland4.
3.4 This economic framework is complemented by the Executive’s commitment to Closing the Opportunity Gap. The six objectives of Closing the Opportunity Gap will tackle poverty and disadvantage, including action to increase the chances of sustained employment for the vulnerable and disadvantaged; to improve the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people; and to increase the rate of improvement of the health status of people living in the most deprived communities.

3.5 Economic growth is our top priority – but not at any cost. We must recognise that economic growth and the protection of our world for the future go hand in hand. The challenge is to make economic growth sustainable, breaking the link with environmental damage. To achieve this we need to make dramatic improvements in business resource efficiency, to seize the economic opportunities that sustainable development represents and to become more mindful as businesses and consumers of the social and environmental consequences of the way we live our lives.

3.6 The actions in this strategy reinforce the approach set out in FEDS and will help us deliver sustainable economic development in Scotland: improving transport, investing in infrastructure, regenerating communities, protecting our natural resources and releasing the skills and creativity of Scotland’s people.

3.7 Our vision is of a vibrant, low-carbon economy with Scotland a leader in green enterprise. In exploiting business opportunities, we want to focus on innovation and high value activity. By improving resource efficiency, we can compete more effectively in global markets. The recently published Going for green growth: a green jobs strategy for Scotland highlights the wealth of business and employment opportunities arising from the shift towards a sustainable future and the potential in sectors like waste management, recycling and renewable energy.

3.8 It also highlights how companies of all types and sizes can improve their productivity and competitiveness by using resources more efficiently. Improving productivity through smarter use of resources, whether water, energy, or raw materials, can help increase the competitiveness of Scottish businesses, safeguarding jobs and providing a basis for further job creation.

CASE STUDY
Kilmarnock Company gives off good vibes for the environment

Kilmarnock-based Dana Glacier Vandervell Bearings (DGVB) manufactures aluminium and bronze bimetallic materials for bearing components.

DGVB, which employs around 500 at its Kilmarnock site, won a national Vision in Business for the Environment (VIBES) award in December 2004 in the large company category. Through improved environmental measures the company has cut copper and lead emissions to air by more than 50 per cent, saving £43,000 in 2003 alone. The reduction in material usage produced further savings of £26,000.

The closure plan of an oil-fired power plant on site reduced oil usage by 49% between 2002-2004. Lead emissions to water also decreased by 44% over this same period. Energy was reduced and material utilisation improved through revising and optimising working procedures.

DGVB has a specific environmental policy which is displayed on the intranet site and company website and also has a designated ‘Environmental Champion’. Company representatives discuss and highlight the policy with their customers on a one-to-one basis. Furthermore, all suppliers are audited and complete an assessment of environmental matters.

www.vibes.org.uk

Image left: Ocean Power Delivery Ltd
3.9 There is huge scope for improvement in Scotland. An estimated £1.3 billion is lost to the Scottish economy every year through energy wastage. In addition, the unproductive use of resources costs the manufacturing sector in Scotland around £300 million every year, which could be reduced by waste minimisation.

3.10 Becoming more energy efficient is a major priority for Scotland, for both economic and environmental reasons. Energy efficiency measures are expected to contribute half of the UK’s objective of a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. Energy efficiency has a key role to play in our approach to the problem of climate change – possibly the biggest long-term threat facing businesses in Scotland.

3.11 The business case for sustainability is simple. Smarter use of resources does not just make good economic sense; it is absolutely essential for our long-term survival.
4 MAKING THE LINKS: TRAVEL
Being able to travel – to see people, to get to work, to explore our world – is vital to our sense of well-being. More sustainable travel choices such as cycling and walking bring major health as well as environmental benefits. Good transport links help places to function and communities to thrive.

**Key Issues**

4.2 Transport is an area where the challenges of sustainable development are particularly acute. Business and commerce rely on transport to grow our economy: without freight transport no goods would get to market or to consumers; without the ability for people to travel to their work, we could not do business and create jobs; and without international aviation business and tourism would suffer. But transport has significant social, economic and environmental downsides too. For example, road traffic can be hazardous to health (in terms of accidents and poorer local air quality) and unrestricted increases in car use will lead to increased congestion, stifling economic growth in our cities.

4.3 These challenges have become more acute in recent years. The amount that people in Scotland travel per year is increasing – figures for average miles travelled in 2002-03 are 43% higher than figures for 1985-86. In particular, the car is the dominant mode of travel and use of the car is steadily going up – road traffic has grown by 19% over the last 10 years.
4.4 Aviation has seen large increases of some 91% in 10 years. Although aviation brings many economic benefits to Scotland it is also a major environmental issue because of greenhouse gas emissions. Subject to specific concerns being addressed regarding lifeline air services in the Highlands and Islands, the Executive supports the UK Government in seeking the inclusion of the aviation sector, which accounts for a modest but growing proportion of greenhouse gas emissions, in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

4.5 Historically economic growth has been accompanied by traffic growth but we need to break that link. We wish to support people in making the choice to use public transport, walk or cycle, knowing that these are healthier, safer, more sustainable modes of travel. The Scottish Executive has an aspiration to stabilise road traffic levels at 2001 levels by 2021. That is why we are making record investment in public transport and other initiatives to promote more sustainable alternatives to single-occupancy car use. This will improve safety, reduce pollution and congestion, and free up the roads for essential economic activity.

4.6 One of the key challenges for the Executive’s new National Transport Strategy will be how to support Scotland’s long-term economic growth while taking full account of, and reducing wherever possible, environmental impacts. The Strategy will set out a long-term vision for transport; our five key objectives for transport (economy, environment, social inclusion, safety and integration); drivers for change, and principles by which we will proceed. It is also likely to include a range of plans, policies and actions to deliver our objectives and indicators to allow us to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy, covering issues such as:

- how we might reduce the need for travel – for example by making links with planning policies and promoting the uptake of alternatives such as home working
- how we might encourage more sustainable modes of travel – by making the choice to use public transport easier through better infrastructure and services, integrated ticketing, better passenger information, and improved safety and security, and by encouraging more cycling and walking with attendant health benefits
- the need for demand management measures to make modal shift away from single occupancy car use a reality.

CASE STUDY
Edinburgh CityCarClub

Edinburgh CityCarClub is the largest in Britain, operated by Smart Moves with the support of the City of Edinburgh Council. It offers an alternative to traditional car ownership through pay-as-you-drive car hire. Members have local access to a car when they need one and only pay for the time it is in use and the miles driven. Cars are parked in reserved parking spaces, close to homes or workplaces and can be booked on-line or by telephone. All vehicles are serviced and maintained by the club, which means members don’t have the expense or bother of dealing with servicing, repairs, insurance, MOTs, road tax and cleaning. CityCarClub provides a hassle-free alternative to traditional car ownership. It suits people with a variety of transport needs, from those living within 10 minutes’ walk from a bay to those only needing a car on odd days. By only paying for the time they use the cars, members save money and help reduce the number of cars on the road. CityCarClub cites research showing that each car in a car club typically replaces five privately owned vehicles. Fewer cars = less congestion and also quieter, cleaner, safer streets.
4.7 Similar concerns will be reflected in the regional transport strategies to be developed by regional transport partnerships, which will be required to cover:

- how to meet the need for efficient transport links between heavily populated places
- how transport will be provided, developed, improved and operated to enhance social and economic well-being
- the promotion of public safety, including road safety and the safety of users of public transport
- the principles of sustainable development, and how to conserve and enhance the environment
- the promotion of social inclusion
- the encouragement of equal opportunities
- the facilitation of access to hospitals, clinics, surgeries and other places where a health service is provided
- integration with transport elsewhere.

4.8 The Scottish Executive will:

- Develop a new National Transport Strategy to be published by the middle of 2006, which will set out its key objectives of economic growth, social inclusion, protection of the environment and health, integration and safety, and the measures which will be taken to meet them over the medium to long term.
- Work with regional transport partnerships and give them guidance on the development of their regional transport strategies (which will require Ministerial approval).
- Promote the uptake of sustainable Travel Plans.
- Continue to use the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) to subject new transport projects to rigorous appraisal against economic, accessibility and social inclusion, environmental, safety and integration objectives.
- Invest substantially in public transport infrastructure and services, and continue to promote walking and cycling.
- Invest in rail infrastructure projects including rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports and the Borders rail link, to improve rail services and social inclusion, and in targeted improvements to the trunk road network.
- Roll out the Scotland-wide free bus scheme for older and disabled people from 1 April 2006 to ensure that they have access to services and opportunities.
- Support initiatives to promote more efficient freight practices.
THE WELL-BEING OF SCOTLAND’S PEOPLE
INTRODUCTION

5.1 Promoting personal well-being is one of the core aims of sustainable development. Good health, a decent income, meaningful work, a high quality local environment, spending time with friends and family, taking part in activities that are not linked to work – sport, culture, leisure, studying, volunteering; these are all part of the mix that contributes to our sense of well-being, as individuals and as a country.

5.2 Sustainable development is about securing a better quality of life for current generations, without compromising the right of others in the world and future generations to do the same. As a developed and relatively wealthy nation Scotland’s concerns are more about maintaining than securing the fundamentals of life that we take for granted: enough food to eat, a safe water supply, shelter and protection from disease. But we still face major challenges in terms of delivering improvements to the quality of people’s lives, their health and well-being.

5.3 For most people, work is a key part of what helps us to flourish. Employment and economic activity rates are at historically high levels. And yet at any one time about 13% of our young people aged 16 to 19 are not in education, training or employment; 11% of the working-age population are not working but want to do so. The creation of opportunity for all is a major priority and a key route to improving the well-being of people in Scotland.
5.4 Our health and well-being are inextricably linked to the quality of our air, water and food. Aspects of the social and physical environment are believed to be particularly important in the burden of ill health and the absence of well-being, and to be a significant factor in health inequalities. This is a critical issue for Scotland. Although people are living longer, they often do not spend those additional years in good health. There are unacceptable inequalities in life expectancy and health by almost every measure and at every stage of life between the most affluent and the most deprived areas in Scotland.

5.5 Many people in Scotland suffer from mental health problems at one time or another. Around a third of all GP consultations and a similar proportion of absences from work are due to mental health problems. This represents a social and economic burden for the country – but more importantly a huge personal challenge for individuals and their families. Learning how to promote good mental health for individuals, communities and as a society is a prerequisite for the modern Scotland we are trying to build.

**KEY OUTCOMES**

5.6 We want people in Scotland to enjoy higher levels of well-being, through:

- increased economic opportunities for all
- an environment that provides the conditions for health and well-being
- a focus on the promotion of good mental health and well-being.

**INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

5.7 The primary contribution of economic development is through the provision of opportunities for all people to participate in and benefit from the ongoing economic activity within Scotland.

5.8 FEDS highlights the need for all in society to enjoy enhanced economic opportunities, with social development in turn contributing to economic prosperity, and identifies closing the opportunity gap as one of its key outcomes.
5.9 Although the current Scottish employment rate of 75.2% and economic activity rate of 79.6% are at record levels, there are still some areas of concentrated unemployment, economic inactivity and deprivation. The Employability Framework for Scotland and NEET (not in education, training or employment) Strategy will be published shortly. Together, these will set out how the Executive and its partner organisations will ensure that those who want to work – whatever their current circumstances – are given the best support to help them to develop the confidence, ability and skills to enable them to move into work and maintain and develop their job and career. They will place increased emphasis on the development and delivery of locally based solutions able to support those furthest from the jobs market, those closest to the job market and those in low-paid, low-skilled jobs into more rewarding and sustainable work.

5.10 Investment in the quality of our environment is a necessary condition for health. Major programmes are in place to ensure that people in Scotland have:
- clean and safe air to breathe
- safe and healthy food to eat
- clean and safe water to drink
- protection from the threat of flooding
- waste dealt with safely.

5.11 Air quality, largely as a result of traffic emissions, remains an important environmental issue in some urban areas. Air-borne pollution can cause many health problems, especially for the very young and elderly. Air quality has improved greatly over the last 10-15 years as a result of technological improvements and tighter legislation, leading to significantly reduced emissions. However, increasing traffic levels are forecast to start offsetting these gains unless more is done. Councils are required to declare and take action in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) to tackle air quality hotspots. Edinburgh and Glasgow already have AQMA plans in place and Aberdeen’s is being finalised.
5.12 The serious health effects of flooding can range from those associated with sewage contamination to the long-term anxiety of dealing with its aftermath. There is some evidence that recent flood losses in Scotland’s heavily-populated urban areas struck low income groups hardest. This is compounded by the fact that these communities may be the least resilient to disruption and least likely to be able to afford insurance. The Executive has commissioned a study into the range of social impacts of flooding in Scotland and the most effective interventions, and has established a Flooding Issues Advisory Committee to advise on taking forward Scotland’s National Flooding Framework, founded on the principles of ‘awareness, avoidance, alleviation and assistance’.

5.13 The environments we live in should make healthy choices the easy choices. That means:
- safe, accessible, attractive places where we can cycle and walk
- access to affordable, healthy food
- public spaces that are free from smoke
- healthy workplaces
- access to recreation, be it gyms, parks, arts centres, swimming pools or libraries, the countryside and its woodlands, hills and lochs, greenspace – places where we can stretch our legs, our lungs, our minds and our spirits.

5.14 Parks and greenspaces within our communities make an important contribution to physical health by providing places for walking, play and sport, and to mental health by offering ‘breathing spaces’ away from the stresses of modern life. They help to make neighbourhoods attractive places where people want to live and work and provide for biodiversity and opportunities for people to learn about nature and our cultural heritage. Improving the quality of our greenspace in Scotland will be a priority for this strategy: building on the investment which is already being made to deliver projects throughout Scotland, identifying the most effective delivery mechanisms, and releasing funding opportunities through a review of funding streams.

5.15 Our home environment can also play a significant contribution – positive and negative – to our health and well-being. Measures to reduce cold and dampness in Scotland’s homes and investment in our housing stock are now beginning to have an impact. Programmes like Warm Deal and the Central Heating Programme have contributed to the substantial decline in the proportion of people living in fuel poverty (738,000 households in 1996 to 286,000 households by 2002).
The Executive has the target of eradicating fuel poverty, as far as reasonably practical, by 2016. To this end, it is currently consulting on how best to take forward this work when the present programmes end in 2006. The price of fuel is a significant factor in achieving this target and the Executive will need to work with fuel supply companies to help their most vulnerable customers.

5.16 Public health and environmental improvements have historically gone hand in hand. That tradition continues today through major investment programmes, for example in our water infrastructure and the quality of our housing stock. We are still limited however in our understanding of the specific ways in which the environment affects human health and well-being. The Executive is developing a new strategic framework that will map the connections between health outcomes and environmental factors, including the impact of the broader environment (poverty, unemployment and other causes of stress) in which people live. The initial focus of the programme will be on childhood asthmas and cardiovascular disease. This new approach should allow us to identify the most effective interventions that will secure improvements in both the environment and health.

A FOCUS ON THE PROMOTION OF GOOD MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5.17 We know from research – and indeed personal experience – that many factors influence our happiness and well-being. Good health, social networks, community involvement, the quality of our local environment and living conditions can all have a powerful impact on how we feel. A decent level of income, a good job, the opportunity to progress: these are all factors that contribute to our well-being. Yet we also know – from international comparisons and studies over time – that for society as a whole once countries have reached a certain level of development there is only a weak link between further increases in income and happiness. This may be because our expectations and aspirations continue to rise or are relative to those around us, it may be because increased consumption brings a different set of problems: a poorer work-life balance, more time spent commuting, concerns about traffic fumes and air quality, less time to spend doing things we enjoy.

5.18 The Executive is committed to developing a better understanding of the components of personal well-being: how they interact, how public policy can influence them and how overall well-being might be measured in Scotland. NHS Health Scotland is developing proposals for a core set of national mental health and well-being indicators for Scotland. The Executive will support the work of Defra to investigate the concept of well-being and explore how policies might change with an explicit well-being focus. Depending on the strength of the evidence, the results of this research may be used to develop a more comprehensive set of well-being indicators to measure progress across the UK. The Executive will also encourage public debate around well-being: what it means to us in Scotland, how to measure it and how public policy can influence it.
MAKING THE LINKS:
FOOD
SAFE, HEALTHY FOOD IS VITAL TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY FROM PRIMARY PRODUCERS THROUGH TO RETAILERS AND THE FOOD SERVICE SECTOR MAKES AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITIES, CREATING WEALTH AND PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT AND ACCESS TO HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE FOOD.

6.1 Safe, healthy food is vital to health and well-being. The food and drink industry from primary producers through to retailers and the food service sector makes an important contribution to communities, creating wealth and providing employment and access to healthy, affordable food. Food and drink industries depend on sustainable management of natural resources, such as water, land and fish stocks. Growing, transporting and processing food is a major contributor to our global environmental impact.

KEY ISSUES

6.2 The Scottish Food and Drink Strategy aims to achieve a sustainable and profitable food and drink industry in Scotland that is consumer-focused, market-led and internationally competitive. The Executive is working with the Industry Strategy Group to identify and address sustainable development priorities within the sector, mainly relating to the use of water and energy and production of waste (including packaging), and is also funding work by the Waste and Resources Action Programme to tackle food and packaging waste (see chapter 10).

6.3 ‘Food miles’ are a source of greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change, and can be reduced by more efficient use of transport. Food-related freight and shopping traffic is a factor in the rising level of traffic on Scotland’s roads, which is one of the challenges to be addressed by our National Transport Strategy.
6.4 There is a need to encourage the industry and consumers to increase the take up of locally-produced food and for the industry to ensure that it responds fully to the growing consumer interest in healthy balanced diets by providing choices and information to support purchasing decisions.

6.5 The Executive gives a range of financial support to food businesses. Growing these businesses supports both agricultural and fisheries producers’ output by offering local outlets for produce. It also delivers the wider outcome of sustaining local communities, providing employment opportunities which in turn support local shops and services and bringing other economic benefits such as food tourism.

6.6 The sustainability of our primary food producers in agriculture, sea fisheries and aquaculture is being addressed through a range of policies, including both sectoral strategies and frameworks and cross cutting approaches such as our biodiversity strategy, as part of the Executive’s work to ensure natural resources are managed sustainably (see chapter 9).

6.7 Everyone has the right to a safe, healthy diet and diet has a potentially major contribution to make to improving the health of Scotland’s people, especially in our most disadvantaged communities. Improving Health in Scotland: the Challenge\textsuperscript{12} emphasises the importance of diet as a special focus national programme and sets out the Executive’s continuing commitment to the principles of the Scottish Diet Action Plan. As part of this strategy, Eating for Health: meeting the Challenge\textsuperscript{13} provides the strategic framework for food and health policy implementation at the national level, supported by regional and local action plans developed in partnership between local authorities and NHS Boards.

6.8 The Food Standards Agency, an independent UK Government department with offices across the UK including in Scotland, has the remit to protect consumer interests related to food. One of its key strategic goals is to continue to work towards reducing the incidence of food-borne disease and the Agency also seeks to make it easier for all consumers to choose healthy diets, improving quality of life by reducing diet-related disease.

6.9 For many communities, food access – defined in terms of accessibility, affordability, culture and skills – remains a major concern. The Food Standards Agency has commissioned a food access map of Scotland, from which a toolkit will be developed to help local authorities respond to their communities’ needs, and the Scottish Community Diet Project is reviewing its strategies to support disadvantaged communities to

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**CASE STUDY**

**Healthy Roots Initiative, Aberdeen**

Healthy Roots is a community-led initiative to transform 2 hectares of derelict land in the Middlefield area of the city into a new public park.

Work has involved clearing of the derelict site and the creation of a path network, flower beds, picnic benches, vegetable plots, composting, wildlife gardens and several play areas.

The scheme offers multiple benefits with a focus particularly on encouraging social inclusion, healthy eating and urban regeneration. Healthy eating is promoted by making it fun and part of the overall activities of the park rather than something people ‘ought’ to do.

The site also provides ‘horticultural therapy’ for a number of mental health and disability organisations in the city. Healthy Roots has received invaluable support from local conservation volunteer groups.

**Contact:** Healthy Roots, 3B Manor Walk, Aberdeen AB16 7UJ
Tel: 01224 680330

[www.middlefield.freeserve.com](http://www.middlefield.freeserve.com)
[aberdeencommunityproject.org](http://aberdeencommunityproject.org)
[www.greenspacescotland.org.uk](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk)