



Sustainability Policy

Policy Statement:

This policy outlines Council's commitment to progressing towards sustainability and to the principles of sustainability under which Council conducts its activities.

Council will implement this policy by:

- integrating sustainability across the organisation's daily practices,
- considering sustainability in all decision-making processes, and
- supporting and guiding the community in their endeavours to work towards a sustainable future.

Council recognises the need to alter current practices based on growing evidence that business as usual is not sustainable. It also recognises the need to provide leadership in sustainability to the local and broader community.

By integrating the intent of this policy into everything we do, Council will:

- minimise Council's exposure to increasing resource costs,
- demonstrate corporate leadership, and
- satisfy Council's statutory obligations.

The Policy complements the delivery of the Coffs Harbour 2030 Vision and Plan, being the community's vision for a sustainable future for Coffs Harbour.

Director or Manager Responsible for Communication, Implementation and Review:

Director, City Planning

Related Legislation, Division of Local Government Circulars or Guideline:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 • Coastal Protection Act 1979 and Regulations • Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Regulations • Fisheries Management Act 1994 • Local Government Act 1993 • National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 • Native Vegetation Act 2003 and Regulations • Noxious Weeds Act 1993 • Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and Regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and Regulations • Water Management Act 2000 • Relevant State Environmental Planning Policies • Coffs Harbour City Local Environmental Plan 2000 • Coffs Harbour City Centre Local Environmental Plan (2011) • Draft Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan (2013) • NSW Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Information Guide for Councils 2002 |
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Does this document replace an existing policy?

No

Other Related Council Policy or Procedure:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffs Harbour 2030 Plan and Vision • Biodiversity Action Strategy (2012) • Coastal Zone Management Plan (2013) • Drinking Water Supply Risk Management Plan (Draft 2013) • Environmental Awareness Strategy (2002) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse Action Strategy (2002) • Local Environment Plan (2000) • Waste Action Resource Strategy (2002) • Community Engagement Policy • Coffs Harbour Climate Change Policy (2013) |
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Application:

It is mandatory for all staff, Councillors and delegates of Council to comply with this policy

Distribution:

This policy will be provided to all staff, councillors and delegates of council by:

☒ Internet ☒ Intranet ☒ Email ☒ Noticeboard ☒ ECM

Approved by:

Executive Team: 20 November 2013

Council: 28 November 2013 CP13/41 310

Council Branch Responsible: Sustainability

Signature:

General Manager

Date of next Review: June 2016

Key Responsibilities

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead sustainability outcomes across the community, driven by the Coffs Harbour Vision and Plan 2030.
General Manager	Executive	To lead the integration of sustainability principles in all of council's decision-making.
Directors	All Directorates	To communicate the sustainability principles and ensure that staff have access to any training necessary to effectively implement the policy.
Executive and Managers	All Directorates	To ensure sustainability is integrated into workplace practices and that staff undertake any necessary training to adhere to the policy.
All Council officials	Council	To ensure that the sustainability principles are integrated into the workplace and the policy is adhered to

1. Introduction

Council acknowledges that it has a responsibility to implement sustainability measures across the organisation and a significant role in leading and supporting the community in their sustainability endeavours.

This policy has been developed to:

- ensure sustainability is integrated in all decision-making processes within Council;
- show Council's commitment to operating in a sustainable manner including limiting Council's exposure to increasing resource costs and managing financial risk;
- show leadership to the community in guiding Coffs Harbour towards a sustainable future as articulated by the community in Vision 2030

This policy assists Council to fulfil its charter under the Local Government Act, in particular to:

- properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- have regard to the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions.
- engage in long-term strategic planning on behalf of the local community.

2. Definitions

Sustainability/Sustainable Development/Ecologically Sustainable Development

Sustainability has many definitions and the terms above are used interchangeably. There is no simple definition of 'sustainability'. Sustainability is essentially about enjoying a high quality of life within our fair share of the earth's resources or more simply - enough for everyone, for ever.

Most definitions include:

- living within the limits of what the environment can provide
- understanding the many interconnections between economy, society and the environment
- the equal distribution of resources and opportunities

The most commonly accepted definition of sustainable development is found in the “Bruntland Report”, the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. It defines sustainable development as: *Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Australia uses the term 'ecologically sustainable development (ESD) which is defined in the 1992 National Strategy for ESD as: *Development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends.*

Development

Development in the context of Sustainable Development has a different meaning to development in the local government sense of development applications (DAs) or Development Control Plans (DCPs). The term refers to development in the broader societal context. Partly because of the different connotations around the term development, the term sustainability has increasingly been favoured.

Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL)

Triple bottom line (TBL) accounting expanded the traditional reporting framework to take into account social and environmental performance in addition to financial performance. It is an approach to decision-making that applies economic, environmental and social criteria to decisions across council activities. The Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) expands this further to include governance systems.

3. Policy content

The key principles of sustainability

Council commits to the key principles of sustainability, as outlined in the Local Government Act. These are:

3.1 Integrated decision-making

Integrate both long and short-term economic, environmental, community and ethical considerations when making decisions. Decisions need to consider the linkages between

economic, environmental and community dimensions, and take account of impacts that may occur over many years.

3.2 *Provide for equity within and between generations*

The present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained and enhanced for future generations. We should ensure that everyone has enough for a decent life and opportunities to seek improvements. We should strive for equity in our decisions.

3.3 *Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity*

Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration. Natural systems, and the plants and animals that inhabit them, have important benefits to the community. We need to build a relationship between people and the environment that will maintain the long-term integrity of these systems.

3.4 *Act cautiously when there is a risk of serious or irreversible impacts on the environment or the community*

This is known as the 'precautionary principle', namely if there is a threat of serious or permanent environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

3.5 *Recognise dimensions beyond our border while concentrating on issues we can influence*

This means 'think global, act local'. Environment and development issues operate on a global scale. Our local actions should connect with and support regional, national and global scale activities and directions.

3.6 *Provide for broad public involvement on issues that affect the community*

We need to engage individuals, communities, stakeholders and businesses and adopt open deliberations to build an understanding of sustainability and promote collective responsibility.

4. Focus areas for sustainability

Council will focus its sustainability efforts in the following key areas, based on the ten principles of One Planet Living:

Carbon Reduction - Making buildings and activities more energy efficient and delivering all energy with renewable technologies, aiming at zero carbon

Waste reduction - Reducing waste, reusing and recycling wherever possible, ultimately aiming at zero waste to landfill

Sustainable transport - Encouraging low carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions and looking at ways to reduce the need to travel

Local and sustainable materials - Using sustainable healthy products, with low embodied energy, sourced locally and made from renewable or recovered resources. Minimising packaging wherever possible.

Local and sustainable food - Choosing low impact, local, seasonal and organic catering and reducing food waste

Sustainable water – Reducing water consumption by using water more efficiently in buildings and considering water usage in the products we buy

Land Use and biodiversity - Protecting and restoring biodiversity and natural habitats through appropriate land use management and planning

Health and Happiness - Encouraging active, sociable and meaningful lives to promote good health and well being

Equity and Local Economy – Supporting a local economy that supports fair employment, inclusive communities and international fair trade

Culture and Community - Supporting local culture and respecting and acknowledging local knowledge and wisdom.

Decisions made within these focus areas will be based on a QBL approach and within existing legislative and political frameworks.

5. Council will implement this policy by:

- Applying the principles and focus areas outlined in this policy to its decision-making frameworks using a QBL approach
- Applying the principles and focus areas outlined in this policy to its operational activities.
- Ensuring all staff understand their role in applying sustainability to their daily work.
- Showing leadership to the community as a good corporate citizen by continually improving its sustainability performance.
- Setting its own sustainability targets and regularly monitoring and reporting on this sustainability performance to the community.
- Supporting the efforts of the wider community in the transition to a low carbon community by fostering greater awareness of sustainability issues.
- Recognising that investing in sustainability initiatives provides long-term social, economic and environmental outcomes/ benefits.

6. Policy Limitations:

The 10 principles listed within the Focus areas of Sustainability represent aspirational goals that Council will strive to achieve. It is recognised that our ability to achieve these goals has to be set against relevant consideration of QBL principles that in themselves may limit our ability to meet our desired goal, for example:

The ability to achieve zero waste to landfill may be unachievable if there are no alternatives to recycle or reuse specific products such as asbestos.

7. Consultation

All managers and relevant staff

8. References

Dictionary to the Local Government Act (1993)

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+30+1993+cd+0+N>

The Ten Principles of One Planet Living <http://www.oneplanetliving.net/what-is-one-planet-living/the-ten-principles/>

9. Appendices

Coffs Harbour Coastal Processes and Hazards Definition Study (2011)

Coffs Harbour Mitigation and Adaptation Action Plan (2010)

Peak Oil Report and Action Plan (2008)

Sustainable Transport Action Plan (2008)

Coffs Harbour City Council Energy Savings Action Plan (2007)

10. Table of Amendments

Amendment	Authorised by	Approval reference	Date