

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Cabinet

27th September 2004

THE AALBORG COMMITMENTS

A framework for sustainable development , for Leicester City Council services

Report of the Corporate Director for Regeneration and Culture

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Cabinet are asked to endorse the signing of the Aalborg Commitments by the Leicester Partnership and to note the report presented to the Leicester Partnership 4th August (appendices 1 & 2). The Commitments will provide a useful framework within which to develop the Leicester Partnership's new Community Strategy, and to deliver key sustainability outcomes in the Council's Corporate Plan.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Leicester signed the Aalborg Charter in 1994, committing the city to consulting and developing a vision for sustainable development for Leicester people. Earlier this year a new call was made by the City of Aalborg (in conjunction with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions) to move the charter onto the next stage, known as the Aalborg Commitments. These are a set of shared commitments to be jointly implemented by signatory organisations, across Europe. In Leicester, this process has already begun through the Community Strategy.
- 2.2 The Leicester Partnership supports the Aalborg Commitments. By signing the commitments, the Leicester Partnership entered into a voluntary pact to demonstrate its allegiance to the sustainable development agenda in Europe. In supporting the Aalborg commitments the Leicester Partnership retains the discretion to select those elements of the Commitments that are most relevant to Leicester's situation.
- 2.3 The Commitments provide a useful framework in which to develop the Leicester Partnership's new Community Strategy, and delivers key sustainability outcomes in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 2.4 The commitments set out 10 principles by which signatory local authorities will conduct:
- governance
 - sustainability
 - protection of the natural environment
 - consumption and lifestyle
 - urban planning and design

- transport
- health
- local economy

2.5 The majority of the Commitments are already reflected in the existing Community Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan. The remainder are included and monitored through other key strategies and programmes such as the Local Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategy.

2.6 The report provides illustrations of how the City Council contributes to the Aalborg Commitments.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Cabinet are asked to endorse Leicester Partnership's signing of the Aalborg Commitments.

4 Financial & Legal Implications

Financial

4.1 The majority of the Commitments are already reflected in Leicester's Community Plan and the remainder are included and monitored through other key strategies and programmes such as the Local Transport Plan. It is expected that the signing of these Commitments, therefore, will add no additional activities to those already underway or planned and will, accordingly, require no further resources or finance.

Alan Tomlins, Head of Finance, 7 September 2004

Legal

4.2 Although largely aspirational and an expression of political intent nonetheless the signing of these commitments may have some legal implications. In particular they may be used as an aid to interpretation and evidence as to our intentions in any dispute resolution in contracts where these commitments might be relevant. Also they may be a material consideration which we would have to have regard to if relevant in our decision making, the reasonableness of decision making is subject to judicial intervention through the process of Judicial Review.

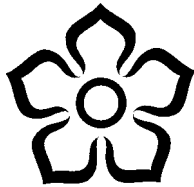
Joanna Bunting 2nd August 2004

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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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Report

1. Background - The Aalborg Charter

- 1.1 Leicester signed the Aalborg Charter in 1994. This provided the framework for the Council's earlier work on sustainable development.

2. The Aalborg Commitments

- 2.1 Earlier this year a new call was made by the City of Aalborg (in conjunction with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the Council for European Municipalities and Regions) to move the Charter onto the next stage known as the Aalborg Commitments. These are shaped as a set of shared commitments to be jointly implemented by signatory organisations across Europe. For Leicester, this process has already begun through the Community Strategy target setting and monitoring process.
- 2.2 The wording of the Commitments was finalised at the "Aalborg Plus 10 conference" held in the City of Aalborg, Denmark between the 9th and 11th June this year. (appendix 1)
- 2.3 The Leicester Partnership supports the Aalborg Commitments. By signing the Commitments the Leicester Partnership entered a voluntary pact that demonstrates its allegiance to the sustainable development agenda. In delivering the commitments the Leicester Partnership retains the discretion to select those elements of the Commitments that are most relevant to Leicester's situation.
- 2.4 Over 110 cities signed up to the Commitments at the Conference. Leicester was one of five UK cities to sign the pledge.

3. Leicester City Council – illustrations of our commitment

- 3.1 The following illustrates how Leicester City Council already delivers elements of the Aalborg Commitments. The headings refer to the 10 Commitments of the Aalborg Commitments (attached as appendix 1).

Governance

"We are committed to energising our decision-making processes through increased participatory democracy"

- 3.2 Area Committees will bring together Elected Members with local residents and representatives from other organisations to discuss issues of local importance and agree how improvements can be made.

Urban management

"We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through implementation to evaluation."

- 3.3 The City Council has a Corporate Plan and EMAS system to oversee the delivery of our responsibilities. Our EMAS system was quoted as best practice in the EU "Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment " in March 2004.

Natural common goods

"We are committed to fully assuming our responsibility to protect, to preserve, and to ensure equitable access to natural common goods."

- 3.4 Council allocated extra resources in 2004 to develop and maintain for parks and green spaces. The Leicester Partnership launched its "Climate Change Strategy" in 2003 and the city council is playing a lead role in delivering the strategy through initiatives such as the intelligent metering project.

Responsible consumption & lifestyle choices

"We are committed to adopting and facilitating the prudent and efficient use of resources and to encouraging sustainable consumption and production."

- 3.5 The City Council has developed a new waste recycling facility and collection process that will achieve a 40% household waste recycling target. A new process of collecting our own office waste will be implemented this year that will deliver our 40% office waste recycling target. We continue to review and extend our environmental purchasing policies and are currently leading a European eco-procurement project. The city council plays an active role in Leicester's Fair Trade City initiative by, for example, providing fair trade teas and coffees at council meetings.

Planning and design

"We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all."

- 3.6 Leicester City Council is a key partner in the Leicester Better Buildings Project to be launched by Jonathan Porritt in November this year. Leicester Better Buildings is a web-based tool designed to encourage the more sustainable buildings in the city. The City of Leicester Local Plan makes provision for high density development on brownfield sites and supports and helps deliver mixed-use developments.

Better mobility and less traffic

"We recognise the interdependence of transport, health and environment and are committed to strongly promoting sustainable mobility choices."

- 3.7 Leicester's second Local Transport Plan is currently being developed. It considers two scenarios- a *carry on as usual* and a *stretch* scenario for the following shared priorities :
- Congestion
 - Accessibility
 - Air quality
 - Road safety

Local action for health

"We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our citizens."

- 3.8 The City Council's involvement in the LIFT project is a good example of partnership on health issues with the primary care trusts. Other projects, such as the *Breathe Easy* project run by Pollution Control, make links between health and environmental deprivation.

Vibrant and sustainable local economy

"We are committed to creating and ensuring a vibrant local economy that gives access to employment without damaging the environment."

- 3.9 The city council's commitment to regeneration is at the heart of the new Corporate Plan and is evidenced by our role in the Leicester Regeneration Company. Part of the Leicester Better Buildings Project helps the construction industry develop intermediate labour markets to stimulate and support local employment. To encourage markets for local produce, we support the recent Leicestershire Produce label through the provision of farmers' markets in the Market Place on the last Wednesday of the month.

Social equity and justice

"We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities."

- 3.10 The City Council's "Community Cohesion Strategy" is intended to foster social cohesion in the city. Our affordable housing policies and housing renewal work support the Community Cohesion Strategy and help deliver inclusive and sustainable communities.

Local to global

"We are committed to assuming our global responsibility for peace, justice, equity, sustainable development and climate protection."

- 3.11 The City Council is already playing a lead role in meeting the city's 50% carbon dioxide reduction target. In partnership with Environ, we are running *Keep Leicester Cool*, a 3-year campaign programme which aims to show how we can all help to prevent climate change.

4. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The majority of the Commitments are already reflected in Leicester's Community Plan and the remainder are included and monitored through other key strategies and programmes such as the Local Transport Plan. It is expected that the signing of these Commitments, therefore, will add no additional activities to those already underway or planned and will, accordingly, require no further resources or finance.

Alan Tomlins, Head of Finance, 7 September 2004

Legal Implications

- 4.2 Although largely aspirational and an expression of political intent nonetheless the signing of these commitments may have some legal implications. In particular they may be used as an aid to interpretation and evidence as to our intentions in any dispute resolution in contracts where these commitments might be relevant. Also they may be a material consideration which we would have to have regard to if relevant in our decision making, the reasonableness of decision making is subject to judicial intervention through the process of Judicial Review.

Joanna Bunting 2nd August 2004

5 Other Implications

5.1

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	NO	Not directly
Policy	YES	Paras. 3.1-3.4 The Commitments are already being taken forward through the Community Planning process and other key policy documents.
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	Paras. 2.1-2.4 The Aalborg Commitments are an important statement of our pledge to sustainable development.
Crime and Disorder	NO	Not directly
Human Rights Act	NO	Not directly
Elderly/People on Low Income	NO	Not directly

5.2 Risk assessment

	Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1	City is unable to meet the Commitments	Low Able to select those Commitments relevant to the City's circumstances	Low They are not mandatory	Use the Community Planning process to ensure that they are met.

6 Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Report to Leicester Partnership 20th May 2004

Report to Leicester Partnership 4th August 2004

The Aalborg Charter 1994 (see: www.aalborgplus10.dk)

Leicester's Community Plan 2003, Leicester Partnership

7 Consultations

Consultee

R&C Head of Finance

Legal

Sustainable City Officer Group

Chief Executive Informal Briefing

Leicester Environment Partnership

Corporate Directors Board

Leicester Partnership

Date Consulted

20th July 2004

20th July 2004

7th June 2004

19th May 2004

20th May 2004

24th August 2004

20th May 2004

4th August 2004

AALBORG + 10 - INSPIRING FUTURES

OUR COMMON VISION

We, European local governments united in the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign, assembled at the Aalborg+10 Conference, confirm our shared vision of a sustainable future for our communities.

Our vision is of cities and towns that are inclusive, prosperous, creative and sustainable, and that provide a good quality of life for all citizens and enable their participation in all aspects of urban life. Since the Rio Summit in 1992 and the adoption in 1994 of the sustainability principles embodied in the Charter of European Cities & Towns Towards Sustainability - Aalborg Charter, our vision has grown through the 1996 Lisbon Action Plan 'From Charter to Action', the 2000 'Hannover Call of European Municipal Leaders at the Turn of the 21st Century', and the 2002 'Johannesburg Call'. We consider the 2004 'Inspiring Futures - Aalborg+10' Conference a milestone in this ongoing process.

OUR CHALLENGES

In carrying out our responsibilities of local government and management, we are increasingly subject to the combined pressures of economic globalisation and technological development. We are confronted with fundamental economic change as well as with man-made and natural threats to our communities and resources.

We face daunting challenges: creating employment in a knowledge-based economy, combating poverty and social exclusion, securing effective protection for our environment, reducing our ecological footprint, responding to demographic changes and managing cultural diversity, as well as averting conflict and sustaining peace in formerly war-torn communities.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We have a central role in ensuring sustainable development whilst meeting our challenges in cooperation with all other spheres of government. This central role demands that we take a more energetic and integrated approach to local policy making, harmonising environmental, social, cultural and economic objectives. At the same time we must ensure that our efforts to improve our local quality of life do not jeopardise that of people in other parts of the world or of future generations.

We are the level of government closest to European citizens on a day-to-day basis, and have unique opportunities to influence individual behaviour towards sustainability through education and awareness raising.

We can provide local support in implementing European strategies and policies such as the Lisbon Strategy, the European Sustainable Development Strategy, the Sixth Environment Action Programme, the forthcoming EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, and European initiatives on climate change, on health, on governance, and in implementing the UN Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

OUR RESPONSE: THE AALBORG COMMITMENTS

We, European local governments, take up these challenges and accept our responsibilities. We adopt '**The Aalborg Commitments**' as a significant step forward, from Agenda to strategic and co-ordinated Action.

We will accelerate our efforts towards local sustainable development, drawing inspiration from the sustainability principles set out in the Aalborg Charter. We aim to translate our common vision for sustainable urban futures into tangible sustainability targets and action at local level.

We adopt the Aalborg Commitments as a resource from which we will select priorities appropriate to our local situations and needs, which also take into account the global impact of our activities. We will initiate a local, participatory process to identify specific targets and time frames to monitor progress towards achieving them.

OUR PARTNERS

We urge all European local and regional governments to join us in signing the Aalborg Commitments, and to inform the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign of their decision.

We urge our national associations of regional and local authorities, our national governments, the European Commission, and other European Institutions to recognise the Aalborg Commitments as a significant contribution to Europe's efforts towards sustainability, and to support our work with the Aalborg Commitments.

We urge local government networks, including the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling (ACRR), Climate Alliance - Klima-Bündnis - Alianza del Clima e.V., Council of European Municipalities & Regions (CEMR), Energie-Cités, EUROCIITIES, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Medcities, Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) and World Health Organisation (WHO) - Healthy Cities, to support our work with the Aalborg Commitments, to assist us in achieving and monitoring our progress and to make available their respective fields of expertise.

THE AALBORG COMMITMENTS

1 GOVERNANCE

We are committed to energising our decision-making processes through increased participatory democracy.

We will therefore work to:

1. further develop a commonly shared long-term vision for a sustainable city or a town.
2. build participation and sustainable development capacity in the local community and municipal administration.
3. invite all sectors of local society to participate effectively in decision-making.
4. make our decisions open, accountable and transparent.
5. cooperate effectively and in partnership with adjoining municipalities, other cities and towns, and other spheres of government.

2 LOCAL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through implementation to evaluation.

We will therefore work to:

1. strengthen Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability processes and mainstream them into the heart of local government.
2. deliver integrated management towards sustainability, based on the precautionary principle and with regard to the forthcoming EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment.
3. set targets and time schemes in the framework of the Aalborg Commitments and create and follow the Aalborg Commitments monitoring review.
4. ensure that sustainability issues are central to urban decision-making processes and that resource allocation is based on strong and broad sustainability criteria.
5. cooperate with the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign and its networks to monitor and evaluate our progress towards meeting our sustainability targets.

3 NATURAL COMMON GOODS

We are committed to fully assuming our responsibility to protect, to preserve, and to ensure equitable access to natural common goods.

We will therefore work, throughout our community, to:

1. reduce primary energy consumption, and increase the share of renewable energies.
2. improve water quality, save water, and use water more efficiently.
3. promote and increase biodiversity, and extend and care for designated nature areas and green spaces.
4. improve soil quality, preserve ecologically productive land and promote sustainable agriculture and forestry.
5. improve air quality.

4 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES

We are committed to adopting and facilitating the prudent and efficient use of resources and to encouraging sustainable consumption and production.

We will therefore work, throughout our community, to:

1. avoid and reduce waste, and increase re-use and recycling.
2. manage and treat waste in accordance with best practice standards.
3. avoid unnecessary energy consumption, and improve end-use energy efficiency.
4. undertake sustainable procurement.
5. actively promote sustainable production and consumption, in particular of eco-labelled, organic, ethical and fair trade products.

5 PLANNING AND DESIGN

We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all.

We will therefore work to:

1. re-use and regenerate derelict or disadvantaged areas.
2. avoid urban sprawl by achieving appropriate urban densities and prioritising brownfield site over greenfield site development.
3. ensure the mixed use of buildings and developments with a good balance of jobs, housing and services, giving priority to residential use in city centres.
4. ensure appropriate conservation, renovation and use/re-use of our urban cultural heritage.
5. apply requirements for sustainable design and construction and promote high quality architecture and building technologies.

6 BETTER MOBILITY, LESS TRAFFIC

We recognise the interdependence of transport, health and environment and are committed to strongly promoting sustainable mobility choices.

We will therefore work to:

1. reduce the necessity for private motorised transport and promote attractive alternatives accessible to all.
2. increase the share of journeys made by public transport, on foot and by bicycle.
3. encourage transition to low-emission vehicles.
4. develop an integrated and sustainable urban mobility plan.
5. reduce the impact of transport on the environment and public health.

7 LOCAL ACTION FOR HEALTH

We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

We will therefore work to:

1. raise awareness and take action on the wider determinants of health, most of which lie outside the health sector.
2. promote city health development planning, which provides our cities with a means to build and maintain strategic partnerships for health.
3. reduce inequalities in health and address poverty, which will require regular reporting on progress towards reducing the gaps.
4. promote health impact assessment as a means for all sectors to focus their work on health and the quality of life.
5. mobilise urban planners to integrate health considerations in their planning strategies and initiatives.

8 VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY

We are committed to creating and ensuring a vibrant local economy that gives access to employment without damaging the environment.

We will therefore work to:

1. adopt measures that stimulate and support local employment and business start-ups.
2. cooperate with local businesses to promote and implement good corporate practice.
3. develop and implement sustainability principles for the location of businesses.
4. encourage markets for high quality local and regional produce.
5. promote sustainable local tourism.

9 SOCIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE

We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities.

We will therefore work to:

1. develop and implement programmes to prevent and alleviate poverty.
2. ensure equitable access to public services, education, employment opportunities, training, information, and cultural activities.
3. foster social inclusion and gender equality.
4. improve community safety and security.
5. secure good quality and socially integrated housing and living conditions.

10 LOCAL TO GLOBAL

We are committed to assuming our global responsibility for peace, justice, equity, sustainable development and climate protection.

We will therefore work to:

1. develop and follow a strategic and integrated approach to mitigate climate change, and work towards a sustainable level of greenhouse gas emissions.
2. mainstream climate protection policy into our policies in the areas of energy, transport, procurement, waste, agriculture, and forestry.
3. raise awareness of the causes and probable impacts of climate change, and integrate preventive actions into our climate change policy.
4. reduce our impact on the global environment and promote the principle of environmental justice.
5. strengthen the international cooperation of towns and cities and develop local responses to global problems in partnership with local governments, communities and relevant stakeholders.

RECOGNISING AND APPROVING THE ABOVE, WITH MY/ OUR SIGNATURE, I/ WE:

1. endorse the Aalborg Charter.
2. endorse the Aalborg Commitments.
3. agree to produce an integrated **Aalborg Commitments baseline review** as a starting point for our target setting process within 12 months following the date of our signature. This review will include a policy context, refer to existing political commitments and describe current challenges.
4. agree to enter into a **local participatory target setting process** that incorporates existing Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability action planning and takes into consideration the results of the local baseline review.
5. agree to prioritise our tasks, aiming to address the ten Commitments on:

1	GOVERNANCE	6	BETTER MOBILITY, LESS TRAFFIC
2	LOCAL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY	7	LOCAL ACTION FOR HEALTH
3	NATURAL COMMON GOODS	8	VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY
4	RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES	9	SOCIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE
5	PLANNING AND DESIGN	10	LOCAL TO GLOBAL
6. agree to **set individual local targets** within 24 months following the date of our signature, taking into account the Aalborg Commitments Annex as an inspirational resource, and to set time frames related to the targets that are suitable to demonstrate progress on our Commitments.
7. agree to make a regular **Aalborg Commitments monitoring review** of our achievements available to our citizens.
8. agree **to regularly provide information** on our targets and our progress to the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign and, through this cooperation, to review progress and learn from each other. A first European assessment is scheduled for the year 2010, with subsequent reviews scheduled in five-year cycles.

Full name/s and function/s in block capitals:

Local / regional government or organisation:

Place and date of signing:

Signature/s:

AALBORG COMMITMENTS - UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To bring Partnership members up-to-date with the progress made at the Aalborg Plus 10 Conference (9th-11th June) in relation to the 'Aalborg Commitments'.

2. Report

2.1 Members of the Partnership will recall endorsing the proposed comments on the draft version of the Aalborg Commitments at their meeting on the 20th May 2004. Cllr Vincent took those comments to the Aalborg Plus 10 conference held in the City of Aalborg, Denmark, between the 9th and 11th June this year. The comments made by the Partnership were adequately addressed and the wording of the Commitments was finalised and signed at the conference. An extract from the final version of the Commitments is attached as Annex One and more information can be found on the Conference website at www.aalborgplus10.dk.

2.2 The Leicester Partnership is now asked to ratify the signing of these Commitments. By signing, the Leicester Partnership will enter a voluntary pledge that demonstrates its allegiance to the sustainable development agenda in Europe. In taking these forward the Leicester Partnership retains the discretion to select those elements of the Commitments that are most relevant to the issues affecting Leicester.

2.3 A 'gap' analysis has indicated that the vast majority of the Commitments are reflected in the existing Leicester Community Plan. The remainder are included and monitored through other key strategies and programmes such as the Local Transport Plan and the Leicester Partnership's Climate Change Strategy.

2.4 The City has already made good progress on many of the Commitments and these can be further developed and monitored through the review and monitoring framework for the Community Plan and other supporting strategies and plans.

2.5 Members of the Partnership are reminded that they should be mindful of the Commitments throughout the review of the Community Plan.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are recommended to:

- ratify the signing of the Aalborg Commitments; and,
- endorse the proposal of taking the Commitments forward through the Community Plan Review and monitoring process.

4. Background Papers

Report to the Leicester Partnership on 20th May 2004 'The Aalborg Commitments'.
The Aalborg Commitments www.aalborgplus10.dk

5. Report Author

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