



delivering social, economic and other corporate priorities

greening communities

Is your council trying to:

- tackle crime or anti-social behaviour?
- improve public health, or reduce health inequalities?
- develop local culture to increase well-being?
- drive economic development, or support local businesses?
- drive regeneration of the local area and economy?
- provide accessible transport, or reduce congestion?
- improve public satisfaction with the council?

Competing agendas? Or mutually reinforcing agendas? Environmental action is often a key part of delivering social, economic or other corporate objectives. But the importance of environmental action in underpinning or directly delivering these objectives is not always recognised.

Why not have a workshop with lead members and officers, and brainstorm how a local *greening our community* campaign could help deliver your wider objectives? Here are some ideas – let us know if you have more!

Improving public satisfaction with the council

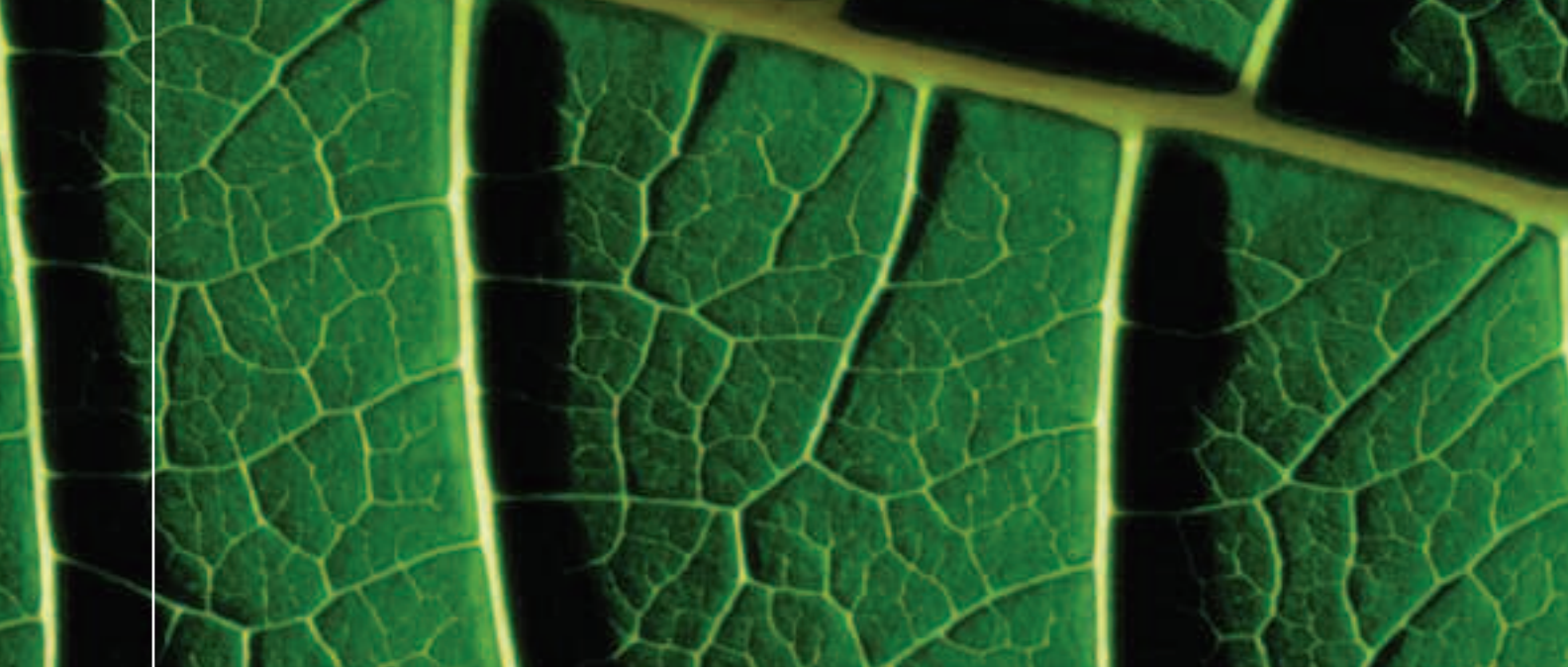
- ‘Cleaner & greener’ streets and public spaces are key factors affecting the public’s perception of how good the council is. Combine this with a communications plan aimed at ensuring local people know what the council is doing. The LGA’s reputation campaign – which is linked to our *greening communities* campaign – tells you more.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, building the community

- The benefits of a high quality environment include a reduction in more serious anti-social behaviour and crime.
- Greater use of public spaces creates social benefits, and action to improve parks involves the local community, for example through community clear up/litter picking days.
- Parks can provide places for teenager activities, or simply a space to gather which is not on the street or at bus stops.
- Green and clean environments promote a sense of belonging and are less likely to be vandalised than run down, dirty neighbourhoods.

Public health, reducing health inequalities

- Reducing health inequalities means tackling the underlying causes: energy efficiency measures in council/social housing have a clear impact on health through reducing damp, and making homes cheaper to heat.
- Pleasant and safe parks, walkways and cycle routes, or safe routes to school can all encourage a more active local population, as can protecting allotments and encouraging green gyms.



- Poor air quality contributes to increased incidence of disease and illness, particularly asthma, and action on air quality reduces these.
- Attractive, wildlife-rich parks and open space promote increased physical activity.
- Encouraging the production and consumption of locally produced fresh food can mean having improved access to fresh food which contributes to better health.

Culture and well-being

- The 'greenness' of a place will be a steadily growing driver of social well-being, as personal locational choices are influenced by the perception of somewhere being a nice place to live and work.
- Watersports, hiking, and other sports and types of outdoor recreation can be developed through improving green space and water bodies.
- Parks and gardens are a particularly important aspect of outdoor recreation in towns & cities. They act as informal meeting points for friends, they provide opportunities for social interaction between individuals who may not normally come into contact with each other and they can break down barriers as they are used by a wide cross section of society.
- Wildlife-rich green space can promote a sense of happiness and relaxation amongst users.
- Physical activity and other cultural experiences can help to prevent mental illness.

Economic development/supporting local businesses

- Improved use of energy and water, and minimising waste can all reduce costs for businesses.
- Pleasant and greener surroundings can support retail business.
- Joined-up local authority-led approaches can support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises through extensive and complex environmental regulation.
- Protecting the natural heritage and environment is part and parcel of protecting the tourism product, for instance, looking after or enhancing green spaces and countryside, local biodiversity, ancient woodlands and coastal areas. Tourists come to have a unique experience of 'place' which is strongly influenced by the local landscape, food and culture – all wrapped up in a well protected and preserved local environment.
- Supporting environmental businesses can create jobs, and stimulate new small and diverse businesses, or community and social enterprises.
- *greening communities* campaigns which encourage local and seasonal food production and consumption can also create a more diverse local market place and support the local economy.
- The values of properties rise when they are in green tree lined streets.



Regeneration

- 'Cleaner & Greener' is a key aspect of regeneration – dispelling the image of a 'run-down' place.
- Greening campaigns can be used to dispel poor images of ex-industrial or run-down areas, providing a better image so more people will want to live and work in, and visit, the area and so businesses will be attracted to trade in the area.
- Maintenance of green spaces and e.g. community waste recycling or reuse projects, offer opportunities for the development of new skills and employment for the hard to reach or long-term unemployed, excluded pupils, people with learning disabilities and drug users.

Accessible transport/reducing congestion

- Traffic is noisy, has a huge visual impact, is a major contributor to climate change, and has a direct link to poor air quality: greening campaigns which seek to reduce car journeys through improving public transport – making it more accessible – will have an impact in all these areas.

