

Conclusion

This policy document towards a sustainable community in Reykjavík states nine main policy aims. The general aims are accompanied by 23 principal objectives, and 130 means to achieve them. A total of 107 measures or proposals for projects are proposed; these are to be completed, or in progress, by 2015. Each project must pass through a process of approval and funding in City administration.

Fifteen environmental indicators have been developed for the City of Reykjavík, and more will be added in the future. These indicators will make it possible to monitor the progress of the many projects detailed here, and thus help the City of Reykjavík achieve its ambition to become a sustainable community.

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City of Reykjavík

Shaping Reykjavík

*Reykjavík Local Agenda 21: policy formation
towards a sustainable community in Reykjavík to 2015*



The place to live



Reykjavík in 2015: the appearance and image of Reykjavík is to reflect the creativity of its inhabitants, giving priority to the social and natural environment, making it a good place to live.

The policy of the Shaping Reykjavík project is a collaborative process in two phases: expert consultation with stakeholders, and public consultation with the people of Reykjavík.

Participation by the people of the city is consistent with the City of Reykjavík's policy on increased participatory democracy. Policy formation takes account of the Local Agenda 21 ideology and the Aalborg Commitments.



Tread lightly

Transport: safe and easy travel without polluting the environment

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

1. Public transport

- All buses to be free of charge
- Implement park-and-ride, with small buses providing transport into centre

2. Footpaths and cycle-paths

- Reduce light pollution in the city
- Heat foot- and cycle-paths

4. Traffic structures and parking

- Tunnels for traffic
- Parking fees at public parking lots

5. Mobility management

- Reduce burden of traffic at rush hours through flexible working hours
- Study possible car pooling in Reykjavik

6. City Centre

- Small buses in city centre
- Cycle rental in city centre

In recent years numbers of cars have risen greatly, and this has led to a greater burden on the road system, as well as more atmospheric pollution. Transport and traffic are matters of growing debate in Reykjavík.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 6 of the Aalborg Commitments, on transport issues.

1 Public transport

Only 4% of journeys in Reykjavík are made by bus. In 1970 over 13 million bus journeys were made, while in 2000 they numbered only 7.5 million. This trend reflects rising car ownership, and the expansion of the city in relatively sparse development. Bus company Strætó bs. has responded by redesigning its network in order to reach out to a broader group of customers.

Objective

To double bus use in the capital area in the next 20 years

Means

Park-and-ride bus service for the city centre • Increasing use of environmentally-friendly fuels by public transport • Explore national government contribution to financing of public transport • Explore possibility of reducing fares, or offering free bus service.

2 Footpaths and cycle-paths

Today foot- and cycle-paths are primarily perceived a leisure facility, and not as a transport network, e.g. providing routes to cycle to work. The path networks are used extensively, especially in summer, when thousands of people use foot- and cycle-paths every day.

Objective

That foot- and cycle-paths be defined as transport routes, and be designed and maintained as such.

Means

Cycle lanes created alongside all main roads • Connections between foot- and cycle-paths in the different communities of the capital area completed as soon as possible • Organised counting of cyclists in Reykjavík • Study how residential districts can be made cyclist-friendly • Improved access for pedestrians and cyclists to main roads between the north and south areas of the city • Heating of certain foot- and cycle-paths, in order to prevent ice formation, making them passable all year, especially paths adjacent to senior citizens' residences • Improved maintenance of pavements • Study of street and path lighting in Reykjavík, reducing light pollution, improving illumination where appropriate.

3 Local authorities take over main roads in urban areas

Today road management in urban areas is handled jointly by national and local government, and this makes for complicated processes of decision-making and funding, leading to delays in necessary developments of the city's road system.

Objective

That building and management of main roads in urban areas be transferred from national to local government.

Means

Initiate negotiations with national government on a changed system of building and maintenance of main roads in urban areas, with the objective of simplifying administration and enabling faster decision-making.

4 Traffic structures and parking

About half the total area of the city comprises traffic structures, including parking facilities. Traffic must flow easily within the city, a certain level of services must be maintained, and road safety must be ensured.

Objective

That traffic structures meet demand, along with re-thinking city residents' means of transport in order to reduce need for investment, land use and negative environmental impact of large traffic structures.

Means

All traffic projects to be reviewed with respect to safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians • Potential benefit of replacing traffic lights with roundabouts to be examined • Means to be sought of using conduits/tunnels for traffic structures, in order to make better use of land for buildings and recreational areas, thus enhancing quality of life in the city • Overall planning of transport issues and development to be strengthened • Cycle lanes to be included in design standards for all main roads • Traffic elements to be separated where necessary, e.g. by means of grade separation, and pedestrian bridges to be used to enhance road safety • Fees to be charged for parking at major public buildings, in order to reduce demand for parking • Possibility of transparent pedestrian "walkways" and noise barriers to separate sensitive recreational areas from main roads, e.g. at the south of Miklatún park.

5 Mobility management

"Mobility management" is a relatively new concept in transport, spanning a variety of solutions regarding means of transport and information gathering for users of the road system. An interesting approach proposed by this methodology is customised transport arrangements for large workplaces.

Objective

That efforts be made to create customised travel arrangements to and from work for staff of larger workplaces.

Means

Study of potential benefits of car-pooling, which is increasingly used in other countries, e.g. in collaboration with companies or in groups • Municipal agencies and companies to encourage their staff to use environmentally-friendly means of transport • Abolish perquisite payments towards car expenses • Staff offered alternatives, such as contributions toward bus or cycle costs • Businesses and agencies encouraged to introduce flexible working hours • Reduce burden on transport structures during rush hours by spreading traffic load.

6 City centre

In order to ensure vigorous life in the city centre, easy access and good transport into the centre are vital. The future lies in prioritising pedestrian and cycle traffic, and providing plentiful car parking at the periphery of the city centre.

Objective

To reduce motor traffic in the city centre, while public transport, along with cycle and pedestrian traffic, is strengthened concomitantly.

Means

Multi-storey car parks to be located taking account of service centres in city centre • Public transport in the city centre, e.g. small buses, linked to large car parks at the periphery of the city centre • City-centre buses to use environmentally-friendly fuels, such as methane • Possibility of cycle rental in city centre to be examined • Possibility to be examined of pedestrian streets, to encourage city dwellers and visitors to be out in the open air, and to promote social life of the city centre.

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

7. Environmentally-friendly means of transport

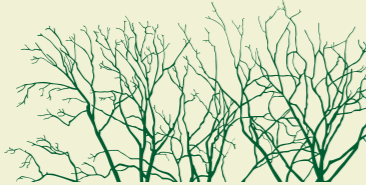
- City authorities to promote environmentally-friendly means of transport

8. Transport and pollution

- More efforts towards environmentally-friendly technology

9. Studded tyres

- Reduce use of studded tyres in Reykjavik



7 Environmentally-friendly means of transport

The concept of environmentally-friendly transport has received little attention in Iceland. The people of Reykjavik must be informed on the options available, and encouraged to re-think their own means of transport.

Objective

That the people of Reykjavik make environmentally-friendly transport a way of life.

Means

The City's Department of the Environment is to make efforts in publicising environmentally-friendly means of transport as a healthy, economical option • Cycle routes to be given priority, and made a visible option for travelling to work • Economic incentives to be applied in promoting environmentally-friendly means of transport, e.g. by grants for cycles, by cessation of perquisites for car expenses, and by charging fees for parking at public buildings • Efforts to be made in publicising the environmental and economic impact of transport among city residents • Education on environmentally-friendly means of transport to be introduced at all educational levels • Collaboration to be undertaken with the Public Health Institute and other stakeholders on research and publicity on the interaction between environmentally-friendly means of transport and health.

8 Transport and pollution

Reykjavik, like other cities, is facing growing pollution from motor vehicles – mainly air pollution from exhaust emissions, including greenhouse gases.

Objective

That pollution arising from transport be reduced.

Means

The City of Reykjavik is to take the initiative in promoting environmentally-friendly means of transport, by purchasing more environmentally-friendly vehicles for its activities • Efforts to be made to change over to methane-powered buses or other environmentally-friendly technology, e.g. electricity or hydrogen • The City of Reykjavik is to make efforts to ensure that special filters for soot and airborne particles be required equipment for diesel-powered vehicles.

9 Studded tyres

A major source of pollution in Reykjavik is minute airborne particles, caused by studded winter tyres tearing up the road surface. About 60-70% of vehicles in the city are fitted with studded tyres in winter: not only does this contribute to pollution, it also leads to higher road-maintenance costs.

Objective

Cut use of studded tyres in Reykjavik by 50% over the next five years.

Means

A campaign to reduce use of studded tyres in Reykjavik is to be launched by the City's Department for the Environment and Department of Public Works in collaboration with stakeholders, e.g. by increased installation of underground heating on steep streets with a risk of ice, together with more effective snow-clearing and de-icing of the streets • Systematic publicising of alternatives to studded tyres, e.g. granule-impregnated or multicell tyres.



Healthy city, healthy people

Environment, public health and welfare: the activities of the City of Reykjavik are to take account of the synergy of environment, health and welfare of the inhabitants

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

1. Outdoor activity

- Ensure access for all to good recreational areas

3. Welfare and social capital

- Heated footpaths adjacent to old people's homes
- Family policy for the city

4. Promotion of health

- City authorities to subsidise children's sports programmes

- City authorities to promote healthy diet and availability of organic foods

Environment, health and welfare are all different aspects of the same issues: for instance, driving entails more pollution and less exercise, while walking/cycling improves health and is far more environmentally-friendly. It is important to create an environment, both indoors and out, which is pollution-free and hence enhances health, wellbeing and welfare.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 7 of the Aalborg Commitments, on Local Action for Health.

1 Outdoor activity

Getting out and about in beautiful surroundings is good for people's physical health and mental wellbeing. City authorities must provide conditions for people to enjoy outdoor life all over the city, without having to drive long distances. It is important to ensure good access to recreational areas all year round.

Objective

That access to recreational areas be ensured for all city-dwellers within a reasonable walking distance of their homes.

Means

Systematic efforts to be made to provide city-dwellers with access to recreational areas within a reasonable walking distance of their homes

2 Interior environment

The interior environment of home and workplace is no less important than the outdoor environment. "Sick-building syndrome" has been discussed in recent years, along with air quality, work facilities, noise pollution and lighting. As yet, little research has been carried out in Iceland in this field.

Objective

That the City of Reykjavík take the lead in focussing on the need for a healthy interior environment.

Means

Research in the field of the interior environment, and its influence on the working environment and general wellbeing, to be greatly increased.

3 Welfare and social capital

Social interaction plays a vital role in public health, enhancing "social capital" and promoting welfare. This is especially important for those who are socially isolated due to ill-health, age or other reasons.

Objective

That City authorities be leaders in ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in society and welfare in Reykjavík.

Means

Special measures to be applied to overcome the social isolation of certain social groups, such as elderly and disabled people and those of foreign origin, e.g. by promotional efforts and improved availability of information on possibilities for outdoor activity and social activities • Access to recreational areas for

the elderly and disabled to be improved, e.g. by underground heating of footpaths, and around buildings and other areas in Laugardalur • Vigorous artistic activities to encourage people to come "out of the box" • City authorities to formulate a consistent family policy, and to be a leader in this field • Possibility to be explored of moving odd public holidays, e.g. public holidays which fall on Thursdays, to make a long weekend • City authorities to encourage more flexible working hours, in order for people to have more time with their families and friends • Universal right and potential of all to work to be recognised.

4 Promotion of health

Health promotion efforts encourage city dwellers take more exercise, engage in outdoor pursuits, and eat a healthy diet. The health benefits are accompanied by

environmental gains: e.g. walking and cycling are non-polluting means of transport which also promote health.

Objective

That health promotion as a way of life provide an important solution in environmental issues.

Means

More education on improved health and reduced use of cars • Insurance companies to be encouraged to contribute to costs of clients' exercise regimens • Promotion of "longer 24 hours" – with improved organisation, more outdoor activity and more family time • City authorities to examine the possibility of contributing more to the costs of children's sports activities • Campaign to promote healthy eating, with the slogan: "What did you eat, and where did it come from?" • "What is the price of what you do? – in quality of life, not just in money." Project to be launched, in collaboration with the appropriate bodies, to evaluate quality of life.





Clean city

Environmental quality: Reykjavík is to set an example in all fields relating to environmental quality

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

1. Care for surroundings

- Improve cleanliness in the city
- Make emergency response plans for pollution accidents

2. Soil

- Prevent soil pollution by education on the issue

3. Air quality

- Reduce noise pollution
- Measures to reduce airborne-particle pollution



Great progress has been made in recent years and decades on various pollution issues. Reykjavík's drinking water supply is of high quality. However, soil pollution within the city has not been systematically studied.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 3 of the Aalborg Commitments, on Natural Common Goods.

1 Care for surroundings

Objective

That Reykjavík be a clean city where inhabitants, companies and institutions treat their surroundings with care.

Means

Individuals, companies and institutions to treat their surroundings with exemplary care • Building and other structures to be maintained, and kept in good condition by regular maintenance • Emergency response plans to be made for most possible forms of pollution accident • Efforts to be made to improve people's treatment of their surroundings in the city • Disposal of animal waste, from e.g. pigs, poultry and horses, to be managed in consultation with stakeholders.

2 Soil

Objective

That soil within the city be free of pollution.

Means

Any further soil pollution to be prevented by systematic educational and information work • Special action plan for disposal of polluted soil, in order to prevent further danger from this source • Systematic work to cleanse polluted soil in Reykjavík, e.g. due to oil pollution • Methods sought of moving fuel storage facilities out of the urban area • Companies using hazardous substances to be moved to the periphery of the city • Cooperation with companies in the field of working with minerals, such a concrete plants and gravel contractors, in order to provide them with appropriate facilities at the periphery of the city.

3 Air quality

Objective

That air quality in Reykjavík be the best of all cities around the world.

Means

The City of Reykjavík to make a contribution to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, for instance by incentive measures in the field of transport, and by imposing strict standards on polluting businesses in the city • Continuing systematic efforts to improve energy use, and emphasis on environmentally-friendly energy sources, including e.g. use of hydrogen and methane as fuel for vehicles • Continuing reduction in noise pollution and work on improved noise levels in residential areas, e.g. by provision of grants.

4 Water quality

Objective

That maximum quality be ensured in all fields of Reykjavík's water supply.

Means

Work to be completed on separation of runoff water drains and sewers in the City of Reykjavík • The utmost care to be taken in handling of the City of Reykjavík's water sources.



Back to nature

Nature conservation and outdoor life: safeguarding nature zones and promoting good access to recreational areas

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

- Improved lighting in recreational areas
- Develop diverse forms of recreational area, e.g. sanctuaries, play parks
- Conserve unspoiled nature, e.g. Elliðaárdalur valley

Reykjavík has many beautiful recreational areas and parks, and city dwellers are enthusiastic in making use of these facilities, to take exercise and enjoy the open air. Various wild natural areas also remain within the city limits. Future planning must ensure these areas a worthy place in the city.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitments 3 and 5 of the Aalborg Commitments, on Natural Common Goods and Planning and Design.

Objective

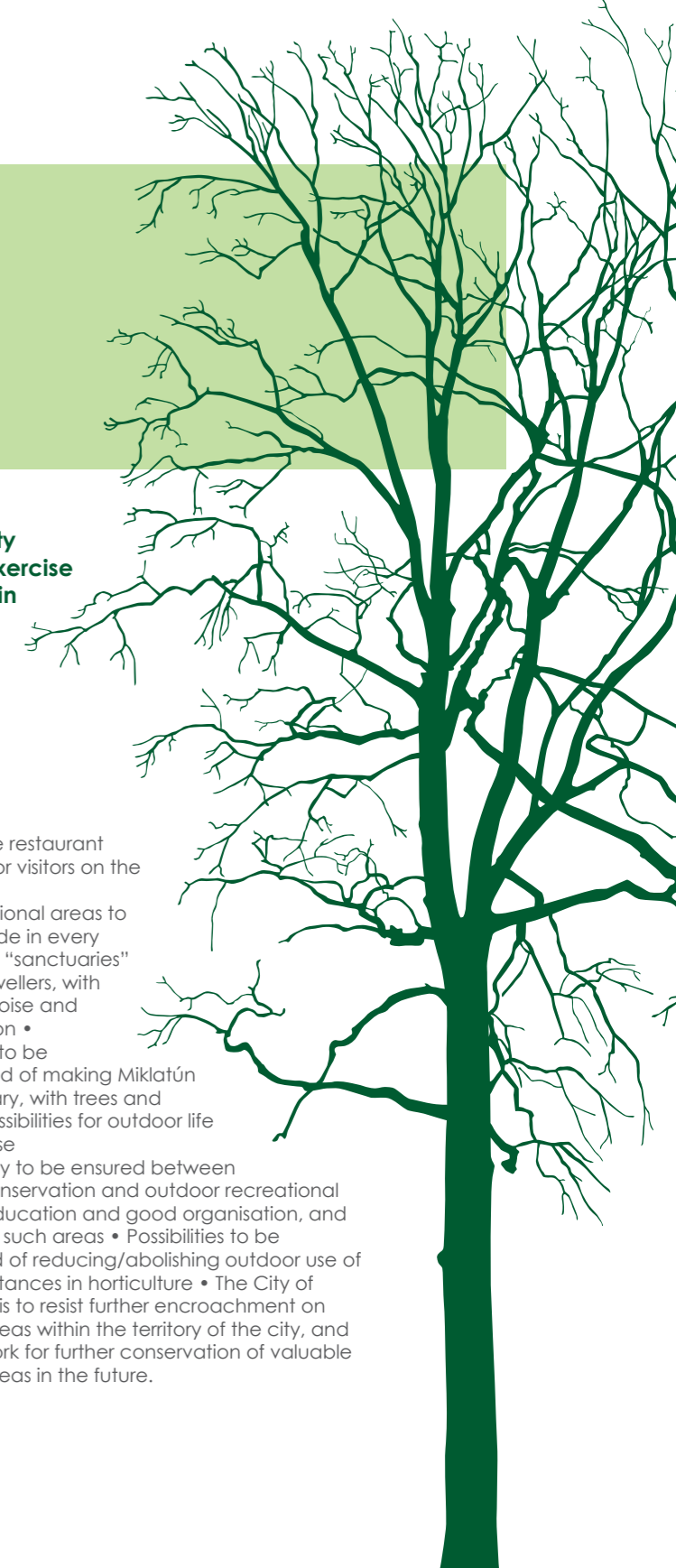
That the city's recreational areas be accessible and diverse, so that city dwellers can enjoy a variety of outdoor activity all year round.

Means

Recreational areas to be securely separated (e.g. by noise barriers, glass screens, tree belts, etc.) from traffic, in order to reduce noise pollution and enhance the safety of the areas • Lighting to be improved in the city's recreational areas, especially in the winter months • Experimental project to be undertaken for design of windbreaks along footpaths, and their impact on the environment evaluated • Further research is required on recreational areas and the nature there, in order to ensure that further development of them is based on scientific data • Careful consideration must be given to the special status of new recreational areas, e.g. at Úlfarsfell, Leirvogsa and the slopes of Mt. Esja • Cleanliness in the city's recreational areas to be improved, e.g. by making it easier for users of the areas to dispose of waste • More use of recreational areas for educational and school activities, with emphasis on working with nature • Possibilities to be explored for making recreational areas more diverse and specialised, e.g. by utilising certain areas as play parks • More consultation with non-government organisations to involve them in utilisation of recreational areas • Bus services to principal recreational areas to be improved, e.g. to Heiðmörk and Rauðavatnsskógur • Public access to Viðey island to be ensured, along with

adequate restaurant facilities for visitors on the island

- Recreational areas to be set aside in every district, as "sanctuaries" for city dwellers, with minimal noise and air pollution • Possibility to be considered of making Miklatún a sanctuary, with trees and varied possibilities for outdoor life and repose
- Harmony to be ensured between nature conservation and outdoor recreational use, by education and good organisation, and access to such areas • Possibilities to be presented of reducing/abolishing outdoor use of toxic substances in horticulture • The City of Reykjavík is to resist further encroachment on natural areas within the territory of the city, and also to work for further conservation of valuable natural areas in the future.





Reduce and re-use

Consumption and waste: set an example in reducing waste production and promote yet more recycling and re-use of waste

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

- More sorting categories at recycling centres
- Improve utilisation of materials made available e.g. by demolition
- Improve cleanliness, better street cleaning



In Reykjavík, 30% of waste is recycled or reused, while 70% goes to landfill. A system of premiums means that 85% of drink containers are returned for recycling. Waste production can be reduced by encouraging individuals and businesses to change their ways.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 4 of the Aalborg Commitments, on Responsible Consumption and Lifestyle Choices.

Objective

That systematic work be undertaken to reduce consumption by and waste from institutions, businesses and inhabitants in the city.

Means

The City of Reykjavík is to set a good example and be exemplary in all environmental fields, e.g. with respect to handling of waste, cleanliness, re-use and recycling, and environmentally-friendly purchasing • Monitoring of waste statistics must be improved, and the standards which are to be achieved must be promoted, e.g. for recycling or re-use of waste packaging • The City of Reykjavík is to launch a campaign to promote recycled products, and the possibilities for businesses, institutions and individuals to make use of them • Systematic work to reduce paper use, with emphasis on use of electronic media • Examination of possibility of enhancing consumer consciousness of city dwellers, by presenting information on lifetime of commodities and service • Businesses in secondary production to be encouraged to utilise raw materials that become available, e.g. when buildings are demolished • The City of Reykjavík is to encourage businesses and institutions to design structures and carry out product development with environmental principles in mind • The City of Reykjavík is to create incentives for more utilisation of abattoir by-products and other waste from the food industry which is re-usable or recyclable • Economic incentives to be used for better waste sorting • Possibilities to be explored for imposing fines for behaviour such as littering in the street or in the open country • Community service for environmental purposes to be available as a form of penalty in criminal cases.



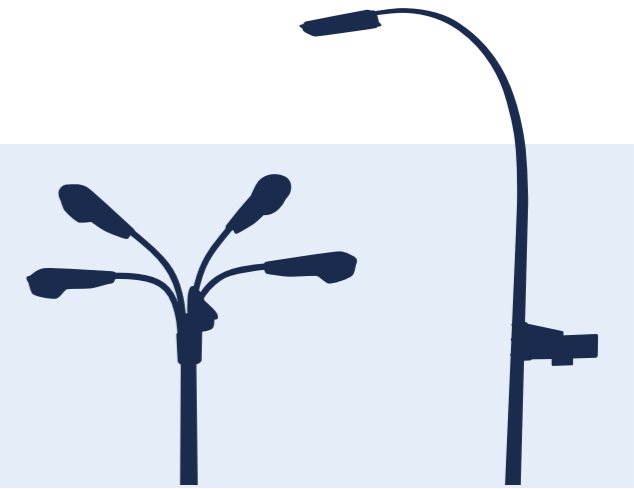


Building a future

Land use and buildings of the future: municipal planning and building design is to reflect creative thinking and respect for Icelandic attributes and history

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

- Re-open the Lækurinn brook, which now flows underground from the Lake to the sea, under Lækjargata
- Major roads to run through conduits
- More emphasis on environmentally-friendly buildings



Land planning and design of buildings are among the most important environmental issues of the time. Denser, mixed development can be a beneficial option, which reduces the need for costly traffic structures.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 6 of the Aalborg Commitments, on issues of planning and design.

Objective

That land and resources be used in an efficient manner, in harmony with the social and natural environment.

Means

Continuing emphasis on denser, mixed development in older residential districts • Emphasis on more mixing of commercial/residential development in planning of new districts • Urban development to take account of attributes of Iceland and its people, e.g. with regard to solar elevation, views and climate • The history of the city to be respected, and care to be taken in treatment/planning of older buildings • Continuing emphasis on green/sheltered zones in the city • Environmental impact assessment to be carried out on all planning proposals • Architecture to be creative, and respected as such • Urban planning to emphasise facilities for the inhabitants being above ground, while traffic structures are located increasingly in tunnels/conduits, especially in the case of main roads in densely-populated areas • Regular studies to be carried out on the wellbeing of the people of the city, and the ambiance of the city • Proportionately less space to be allocated to parking, as a proportion of developed land in the city. Areas which are thus made available to be used more efficiently • In design of buildings and choice of building materials for the City authorities, account to be taken of environmental and economic factors. Private bodies in the city to be encouraged to do the same • In future development of traffic structures in the city centre, the focus is to be on creating pedestrian streets where practicable.





Green prospects

Green accounting and environmental management: the City of Reykjavík and business in the city are to set an example in the use of environmental management tools

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

- Promote green purchasing
- More environmentally-certified businesses

Environmental certification plays a growing role, and in 2004 about 2% of all jobs in Reykjavík had some form of environmental certification: Nordic Swan, Green Flag or ISO 14 001. The City of Reykjavík also presents environmental awards. With rising standards and growing competition it is clear that businesses and agencies will be seeking ISO certification.

The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 8 of the Aalborg Commitments, on a Vibrant and Sustainable Local Economy.

Objective

Economic rewards for businesses and agencies in Reykjavík, which perform well with regard to the environment.

Means

Environmental standards to facilitate evaluation by businesses and agencies of their position vis-à-vis comparable parties in Iceland and abroad • City of Reykjavík agencies to introduce environmental management system • City of Reykjavík to open an information gateway, e.g. with regard to certificates of origin for goods • City tenders to include environmental requirements • City agencies and businesses to introduce green accounting, while environmental targets are to become a fixture in the City's score card • Facilitation of businesses and agencies taking the first steps in environmental work, e.g. by access to a simple environmental management system • City of Reykjavík's environmental performance to be systematically publicised in the media, in order to set an example to others • Necessary to publicise the economies and savings which can be achieved by introducing environmental management systems • The City of Reykjavík to encourage businesses to introduce certified environmental management systems, e.g. to ensure correct handling of drainage.



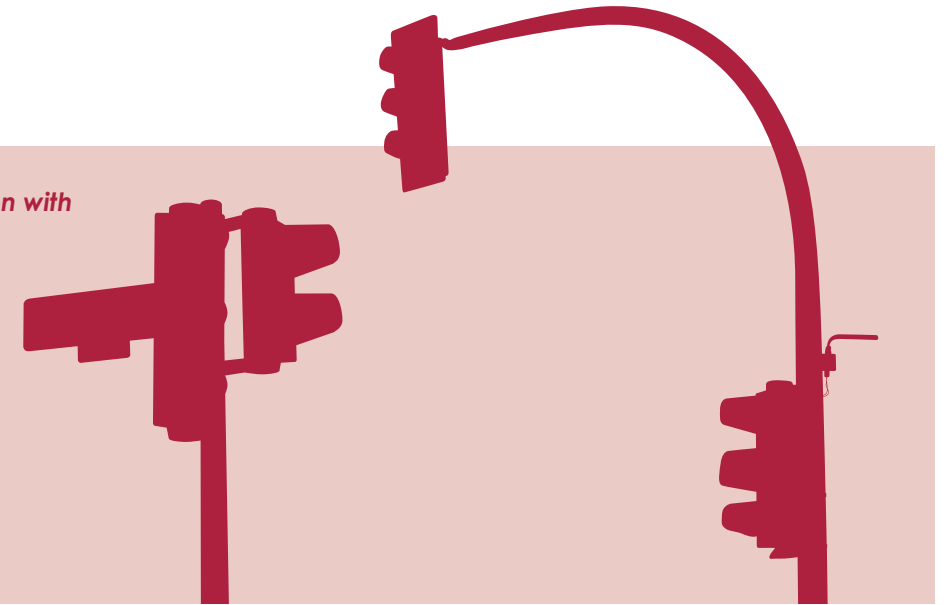


Democracy in action

Democracy and participation by citizens: the people of the city are to be active participants in environmental matters and in the shaping of their city

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

- *Create an open forum for debate on environmental issues in the city*
- *Charters for each city district on environmental affairs, based on local residents' priorities*



The general public can offer ideas and experience which may not necessarily exist within the local government administration. Successful environmental work requires participatory democracy, involving residents and individual districts, as the decisions made generally have an impact upon the immediate environment of the people of the city.

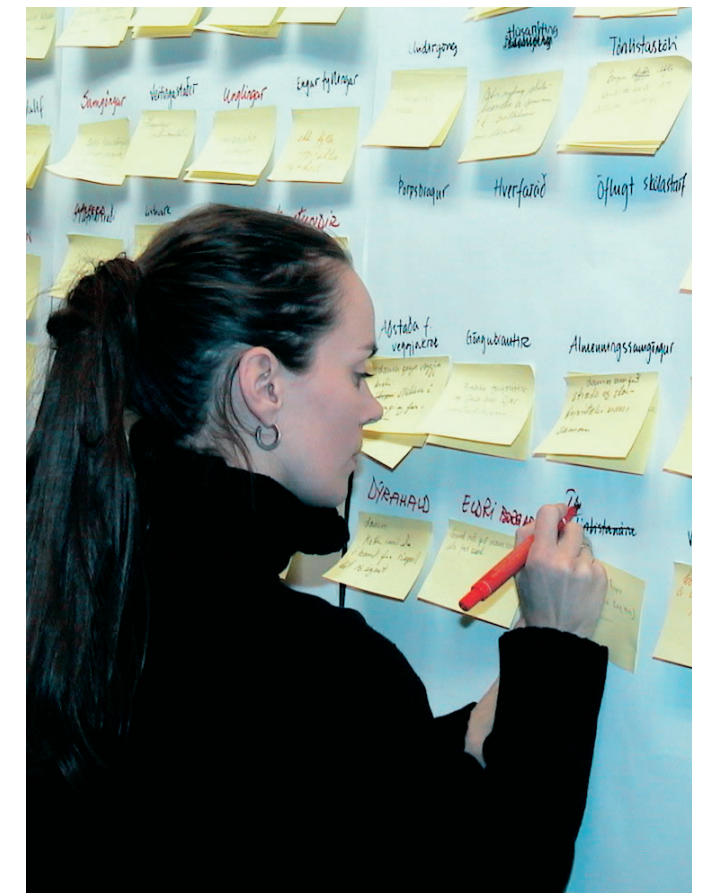
The following objectives and means are in the spirit of Commitment 8 of the Aalborg Commitments, on a Vibrant and Sustainable Local Economy.

Objective

That increased participatory democracy enhance the equal rights of all city dwellers to influence their environment, particularly in their local district.

Means

Consultation with residents to be followed by charters for each district of the city. Each charter to cover all issues of importance to the residents of the district, including discussion of environmental issues, and regular consultation meetings at which local issues are discussed • All districts to have a vigorous residents' association, which will promote the solidarity of the inhabitants by linking non-government organisations, sports clubs and parents' associations • As a contribution to promoting solidarity within districts, a forum for debate on local issues to be founded • Electronic voting to be introduced on major issues affecting city dwellers. On-line opinion polls also to be used to explore the views of residents in individual districts of the city on their local issues • Participatory democracy to be used to reach out to a diverse groups of Reykjavik people.





Learning by doing

Environmental education: promoting accessible education on environmental issues for the people of the city

Proposals arising from consultation with residents and stakeholders

- Promote such projects as Global Action Plan
- More educational activity to inform all social groups on environmental issues



Various projects which focus on conduct have changed people's mindset and behaviour, so that they have adopted a more environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

Objective

That environmental education become an inseparable part of teaching at all educational levels and in adult education provided by the City of Reykjavík.

Means

The Municipal Work School, which provides employment/training for 14- to 16-year-olds during the summer vacation, to be better utilised to promote environmental issues and nature in the city • Possibility to be explored of appointing wardens at Reykjavík recreational areas • Continuing support for projects such as Global Action Plan (GAP) and Green Flag, to motivate individuals, families and schools on environmental issues • Efforts to be made in increasing environmental education at all educational levels, including continuing education and adult education • City of Reykjavík Department of the Environment, in collaboration with stakeholders, to ensure that active environmental education be introduced for businesses, e.g. by preparing information material • School custodians to receive regular information on environmental matters • Engineers and architects to receive special information on environmental issues, in order to draw their attention to potential for designing structures which can reduce environmental waste.

