Guiding principles for sustainable development

The government’s refreshed vision for sustainable development builds on the principles that underpinned the UK’s 2005 sustainable development strategy, by recognising the needs of the economy, society and the natural environment, alongside the use of good governance and sound science.

The following set of shared principles forms the basis for sustainable development in the UK and devolved administrations. Sustainable policy must respect all five of these principles, though some policies, while underpinned by all five, will place more emphasis on certain principles than others.

Sustainable development recognises that the three ‘pillars’ – the economy; society; and the environment - are interconnected. The government has initiated a series of growth reviews to put the UK on a path to a strong, sustainable and balanced growth. Our long term economic growth relies on protecting and enhancing the environmental resources that underpin it, and paying due regard to social needs.