



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

# The Biodiversity Indicator & the Duty – making it work?

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# Setting the Scene

- ❑ A range of biodiversity tools
- ❑ New institutional arrangements
- ❑ Cultural change – biodiversity and local government
- ❑ How do we make it all work for biodiversity?



# Local government reform

## Some principles ...

- Local people know what is needed locally
- Decisions should be taken as locally as possible
- Communities should be empowered
- Different policy areas can best be integrated in places
- Local accountability

## and some priorities ...

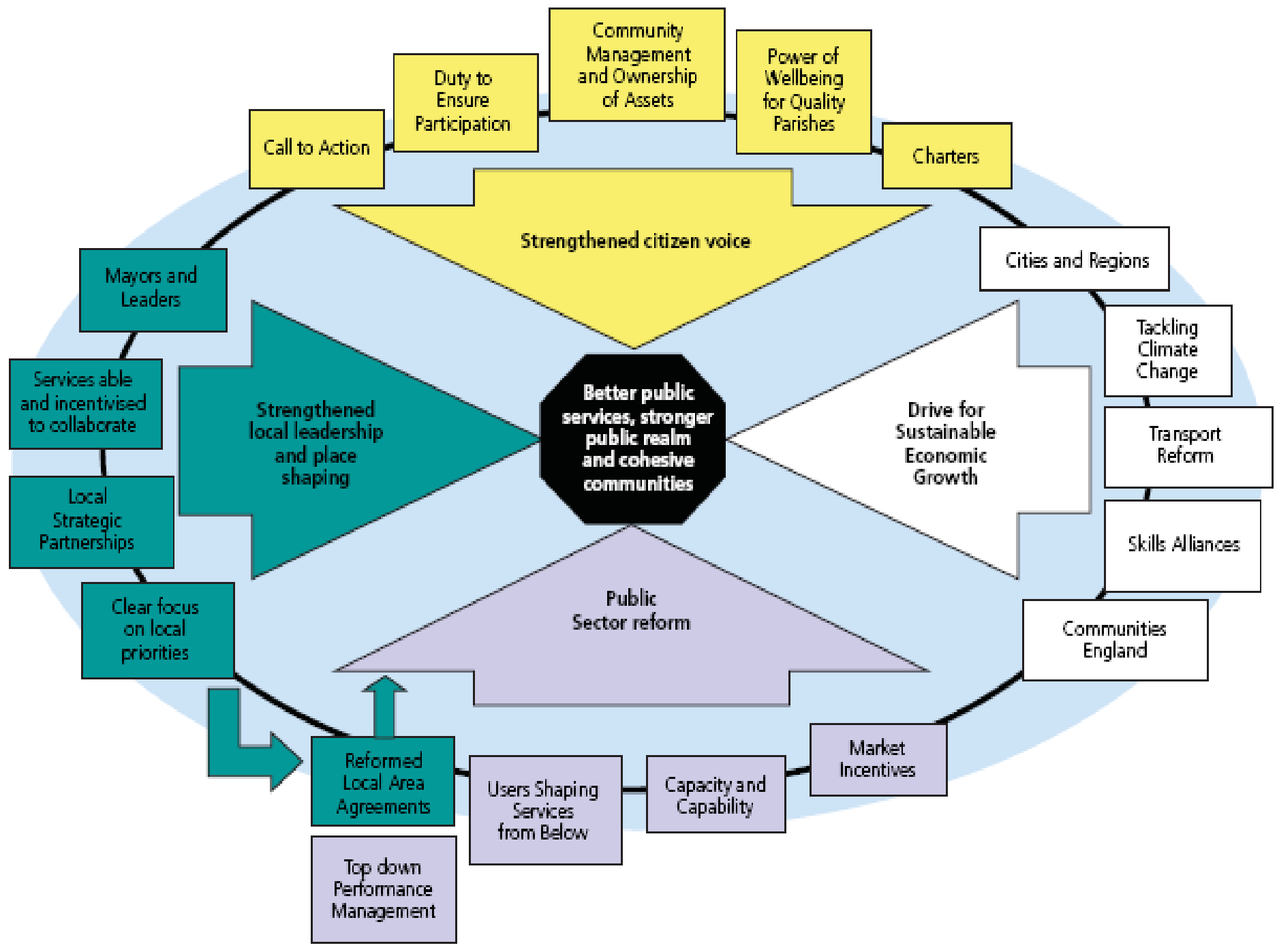
- More responsive services and empowered communities;
- Stronger local authorities as leaders and place-shapers;
- Stronger, more stable local authority leadership;
- Supporting councillors as democratic champions;
- Fundamentally rebalancing the central-local relationship;
- Promoting community cohesion; and,
- Developing economic prosperity



# And seeks to achieve this through ...

- A single performance framework for councils
  - Making Local Strategic Partnerships legal bodies
  - Making Local Area Agreements statutory with 35 (+18) improvement outcomes
  - Giving bodies (including EA and NE) a duty to co-operate with LSPs
  - Giving greater powers to parish councils
  - Reducing the number of local authority performance measures to 200
  - Giving councillors greater scrutiny powers
  - Replacing Comprehensive Performance Assessment with Comprehensive Area Assessment





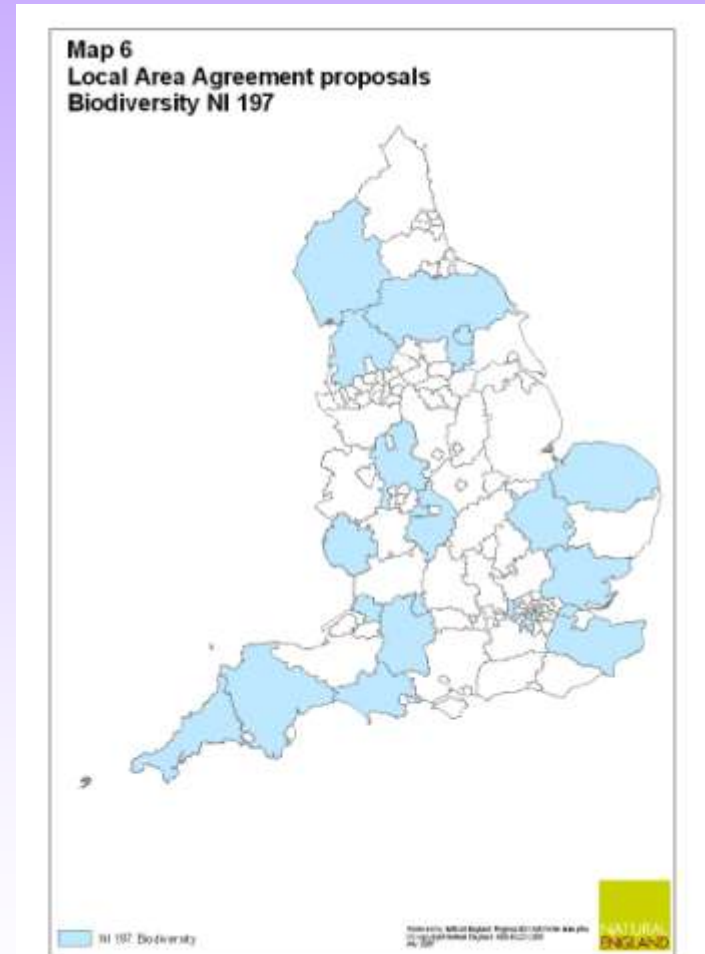
# From a biodiversity perspective ...

- PSA 28 Natural Environment
- S40 Biodiversity Duty
- Local Sites Guidance
- LGPF - NI 197 – Improving local biodiversity
- UK Biodiversity Strategy
- EU Directives and Action Plans



# NI 197 Improved Local Biodiversity – proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented

- Local Authority to measure positive conservation management of Local Sites, and consequently their wider performance for biodiversity (in turn contributing to wider environmental quality)



# Lets consider what it is that is being asked of for LAAs here .....

- The Local Sites Partnership will verify the evidence. one, or more of the following:
  - site management plan
  - management schemes -agri-environment or conservation management agreement or scheme
  - relevant Biodiversity Action Plan (including habitat action plan, species action plan or local biodiversity action plan). Where a site is designated primarily for its geological features, the recommended management activity may be defined within a Geodiversity action plan
  - management guidance and advice



# And what does this mean in terms of the detail? ..

- Delivery plan through the LSP
- Performance management
  - Delivery through healthy partnerships
  - Developing and delivering projects
  - Coordinating work
  - Data and records
  - Incorporating into policies and programmes across sectors
  - Improving and reporting performance



# A strong correlation with the Biodiversity Duty ...

- Statutory planning and development control
- Policies and strategies
- Partnerships - Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements
- Include in other environmental programmes, such as waste, energy and climate change
- Deliver national planning guidance
- Participate in local biodiversity partnerships and contribute to LBAPs
- Work in partnership with other organisations to improve biodiversity
- Enhance the local authority estate
- Identify policy drivers and ensure that up to date data is available
- Identify local sites
- Use biodiversity benefits to deliver other services such as social care
- Support access to nature and education

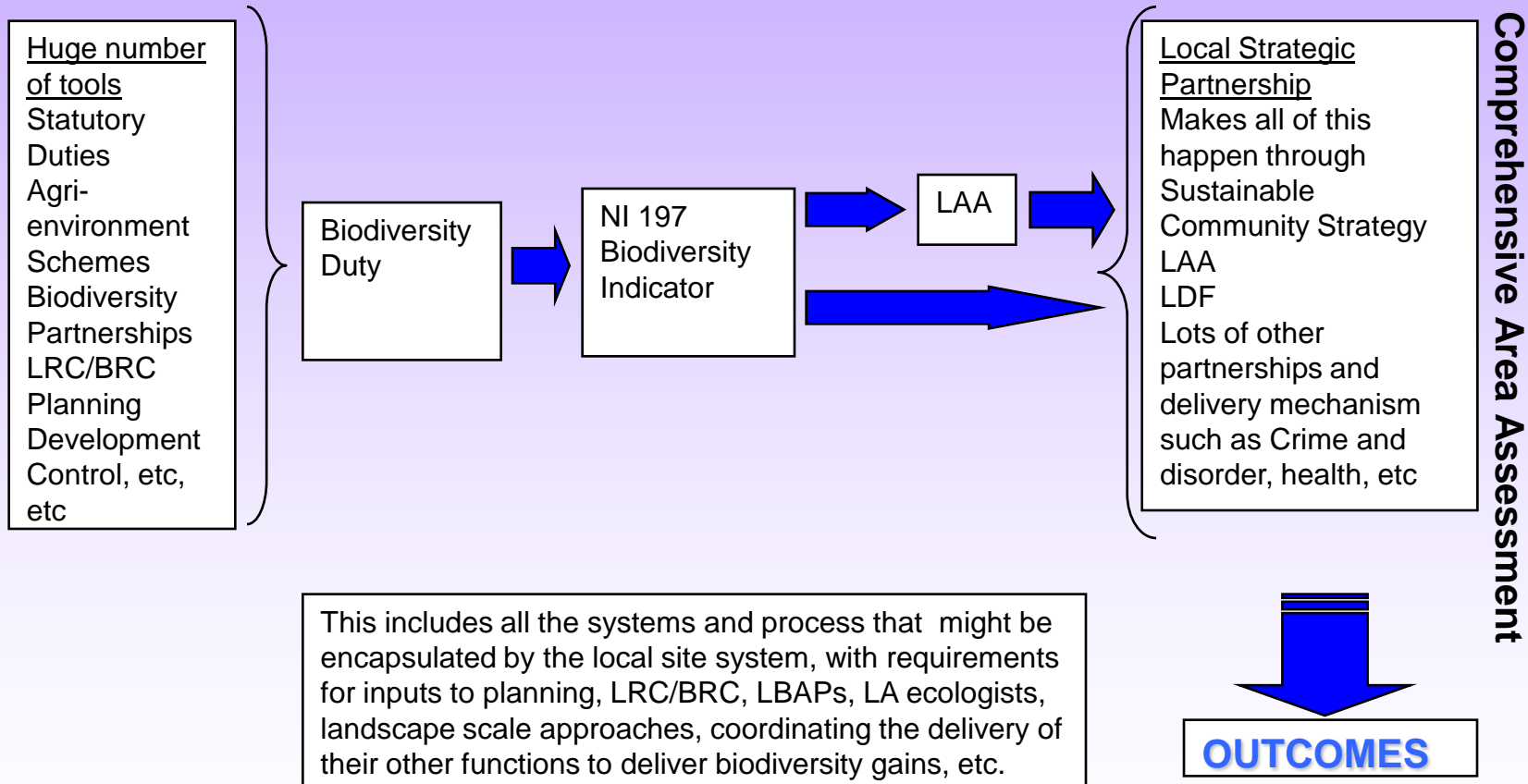


# The implications for biodiversity...

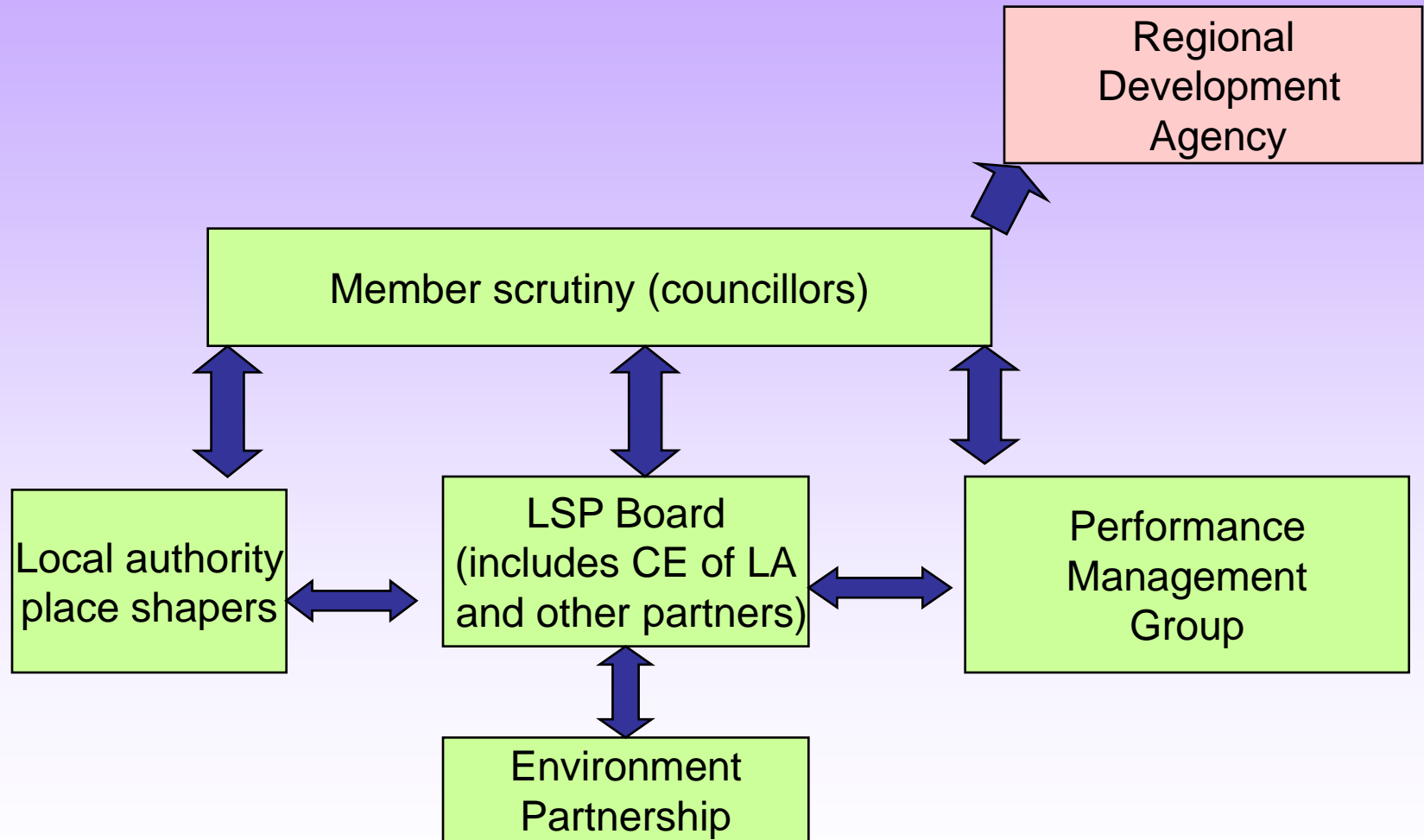
Policy



Delivery



# ...Some of the levers



# Roles...

- Councillors
- Senior local authority officers
- LSP
- Performance Management
- Agencies
- Voluntary sector
- LBAPs
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs)
- Government Office
- Audit Commission

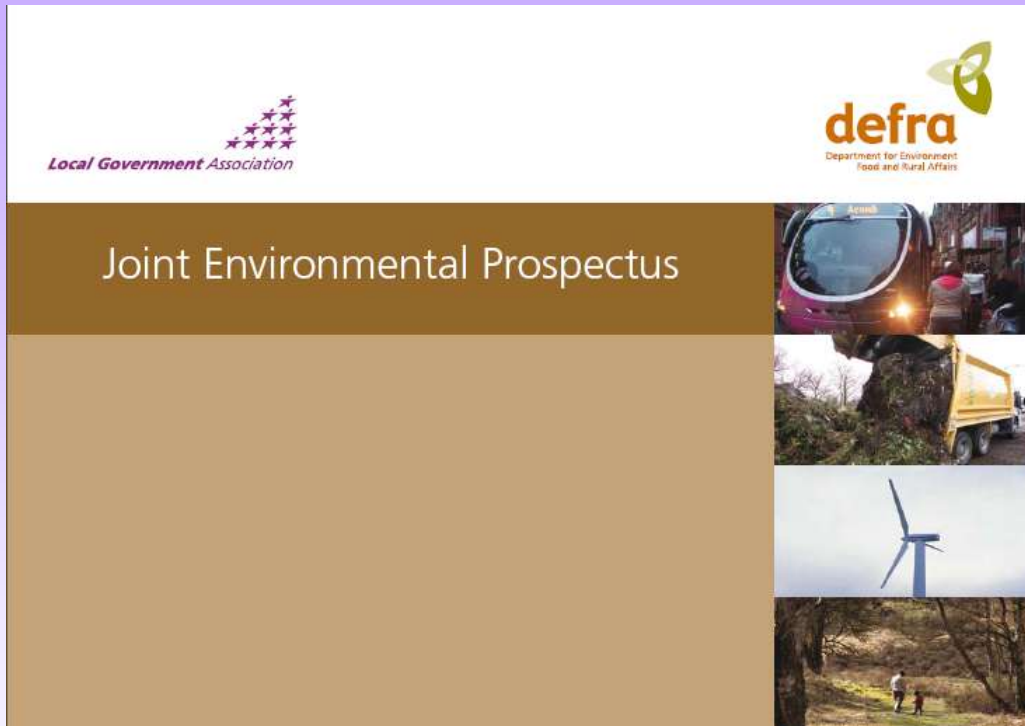


# For councillors, LA senior officers

- ❑ What is your particular role?
- ❑ What particular challenges do you face?



# Encapsulating the environmental agenda for local government....



- Tackling and adapting to Climate Change
- Protecting Natural Resources
- Enhancing the Public Realm

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/delivery/landscape/pdf/joint-environment-prospectus040707.pdf>



## Sustainable communities: integrating environmental needs and opportunities to create places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

10 key questions to ask **your council and partners**, to help you understand what you can do to shape and maintain sustainable communities.

basic

challenging

more challenging

- What key activities within your organisation, and within your community, have the greatest environmental impact?
- What steps are you taking to reduce this environmental impact?
- What are your local strategic partners, and local environmental groups, doing on the environment and how could your ambitions fit together?
- Do your procurement policies include environmental aims and objectives, and have you identified priorities?
- What mechanisms do you have in place for communicating environmental messages throughout your organisation and changing behaviour?
- Has the Local Strategic Partnership agreed a key set of environmental challenges and opportunities, and do these include climate change?
- Do the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Local Development Framework adequately address the 3 overarching environmental aims, your key challenges, and opportunities?
- What incentives (financial and others) do you have in place to support behaviour change and reductions in environmental impact?
- How will the changing climate and other large environmental changes impact on the local economy and community? What are the costs of these impacts? Is it clear what action needs taking?
- How confident are you that your actions on the key environmental challenges (identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Development Framework and Local Area Agreement) will result in a significant improvement in the LSP's environmental performance?

How will you know the effect of your action?

# Agencies

- ❑ Duty to cooperate and involve
- ❑ Support the process
- ❑ Deliver some projects



# LBAPs

- ❑ A fundamental role
  - ❑ Likely to be different in different places
  - ❑ Work through LSP
  - ❑ Coordinating delivery
  - ❑ Driving improvement
  - ❑ Learning by doing
  - ❑ Local Sites Partnership –  
monitoring and reporting results
- ❑ What are the key challenges for you?



# How are we doing?

In progress and completed

- Biodiversity Duty Review
- Bangor University/ Anglesey County Council work
- WM Wildlife Trust review of local sites work
- Comprehensive Area Assessment

Informal evidence

## Where next?



# A time to deliver ....

- Biodiversity is now at the heart of local government performance processes
- Now is the time to deliver:
  - In partnership
  - Each partner making their particular contribution
  - Co-ordinated
  - Focus on the outcomes
  - Learn by doing
  - Show leadership
- Create wonderful places for people to live in

