

sustainable
communities

working to benefit the community

network **21** for the 21st century

What is Network 21?

Network 21 is a partnership involving local communities, public bodies and business. Through co-operation and mutual support this partnership will seek to build local awareness and action for sustainable development.

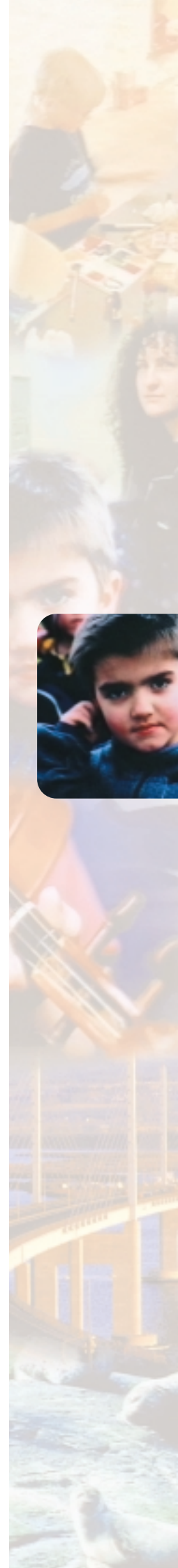
What does Network 21 offer you?

Network 21 helps you to:

- **set your priorities for action**
- **put your community in control**
- **learn new skills**
- **gain support from public agencies and voluntary organisations**
- **develop sustainable community products and services**

By joining the network a wide range of support becomes available for the development of projects and actions on the ground, including:

- **immediate access to £2000 towards an aspect of your project of your choosing**
- **guidance from the Network Co-ordinator**
- **access to advice, technical information, training and facilitation**
- **a network of local advisors**
- **a helpline**
- **a web site**
- **exchange of ideas and experience between communities**
- **an annual meeting of Network members**



What is Sustainability?

Although a much overused word, common sense tells us that it involves:

- **responsibility to each other**
- **providing for now and the future**
- **protection of our natural environment upon which we all depend**

Sustainable development is about:

- **making wise choices to meet our current human needs and aspirations (our quality of life) without exceeding the capacity of our environment to support these needs now or in the future**
- **recognising our environment as a precious asset which provides us with our resources, copes with our wastes and maintains the balance of our life support systems – and making sure we do not degrade or destroy it**
- **working together at home and around the globe to harness the knowledge, creativity and energy of individuals and communities to plan and act in a way that favours sustainability**

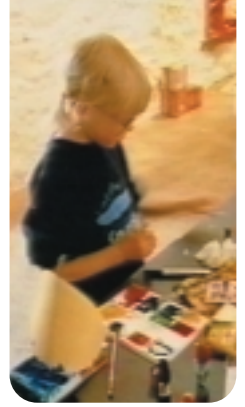
Which projects qualify for Network 21?

Network 21 is open to a wide range of ideas and initiatives, from individual projects to longer-term community development plans designed to put sustainability into practice.

Whatever your project is, priority will be given to projects that address all of the following:

- **help build stronger communities**
- **bring benefits to local business**
- **bring benefits to the local environment**
- **look to the future**

To help think through these issues groups applying are asked to produce their own 'Sustainability Checklist' based on a list of ideas included on the reverse of this leaflet.



Making an application

Using the guidance notes supplied with the enclosed application form please answer the following questions. Check that you have answered all the questions fully before submitting to the address on the back page.

1. Describe your community group and its constitutional status
2. Give the name and address of your principle contact. (NB. Please give a telephone number and a fax and email address if possible)
3. Briefly describe your project and its objectives
4. Describe how you have involved the community in both developing and supporting your project
5. Create your own 'Sustainability Checklist' which relates specifically to your project (see guidance notes overleaf)
6. Outline the amount of funding which you require from the Network for your project (up to a maximum of £2000)
7. Outline the total funding package for your project and where this money will come from
8. Outline any other forms of support which you may require from the Network (advice, information, training etc.)
9. Outline how this support will be used
10. List key actions, timescales and outputs for your project
11. Fill in the Checklist enclosed with the application form to ensure you have completed the process



Creating your own Sustainability Checklist

Groups are asked to use this guide to develop their own 'Sustainability Checklist', and to help think through the potential positive and negative impacts their project might have on local people, the local economy and the local and wider environment.

Trying to get the best out of the way we use things is at the heart of the sustainability message. Projects and plans work best when they meet everyone's needs and make links to other activities. Projects that appear to bring benefits to the community and the local economy may not be very sustainable if they produce negative impacts on the environment. Remember the emphasis is on projects that bring benefits to, and do not damage, the community, the economy and the environment. Just because a project might be primarily social, economic, cultural or environmental doesn't mean it won't have benefits in the other areas as well.

In putting together your sustainability checklist please be specific and demonstrate how you have considered the potential effects, good and bad, of your project under the following four headings (some examples for each are provided to help with your thinking):

• community

In what ways does your project strengthen the community and its cultural heritage? Are there any ways in which it might have a negative impact on the community?

This could include benefits arising directly from the project but should also include benefits arising from people coming together, tackling local concerns and planning for the future. The project might benefit local amenities, health and welfare or promote local history, language, art or crafts. You might also think of its implications for the global community, such as purchasing 'fair-trade' goods.

• local economy

Will the project create benefits, either direct or indirect, that help to promote and boost the local economy? Could it be damaging some local economic interests?

The project might generate jobs or promote locally produced goods and services. It might help people gain skills for work through vocational training opportunities or encourage visitors to stay longer in the area.

• local and wider environment

Does the project address environmental issues? Will it damage the environment?

Your project might help conserve wildlife, recycle waste or promote cycling, walking or the use of public transport. Even if your project is not environmental – what could you be doing to minimise any damage to the local environment by saving energy, reducing pollution and waste or using local, natural or environmentally friendly materials?

• the future

Does your project look to the future by giving long-term benefits and minimising damage to the environment and natural resources?

Sustainable activity is not just about how actions affect us now but also considering how they might affect our children and their future.

Questions to ask include – How long will it last? Are the running costs affordable? Will it contribute to the kind of community we want to live in the future? What is its long-term effect on the environment? Does it have features that save energy and other resources, minimise waste, use renewable materials? How will it effect people's long term health?

Who is eligible to join Network 21?

Application to Network 21 is open to any properly constituted community group within Highland, seeking to benefit overall community interests, that can demonstrate local consultation and support for its project.

How do I join the Network?

The application and assessment process is simple and designed to avoid spending too much time on form-filling.

- before applying we recommend a quick phone call to the Network Co-ordinator to discuss your ideas
- to join Network 21 simply send in a completed Project Proposal together with your 'Sustainability Checklist'. Receipt will be acknowledged immediately and initial assessment takes about 2 weeks
- in some cases (for example, more complex projects) there may be a review by a specialist Network Advisory Panel who will consider in more detail the support requested. This stage may take up to 4 weeks and may include a site visit
- once the project and support package have been approved the project can go ahead immediately

At the end of the project you will be asked to:

- review the success of your project in meeting its aims and submit a brief report and evidence of expenditure
- help the Network Co-ordinator to document the project for the benefit of other Network members
- consider options for the continuation of your work



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