

# CHARTING OUR COURSE: SUSTAINING BERMUDA

A Summary of the draft  
*Sustainable Development Strategy and  
Implementation Plan for Bermuda*



Government of Bermuda  
June 2006





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On behalf of the Government of Bermuda, I am pleased to announce the launching of the public consultation phase on the draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan for Bermuda.

Bermuda has seen many changes over the centuries, and has weathered many storms. The decisions made since we were first settled have created the Bermuda we see today. We have much to be proud of, but we need to make some choices now to ensure that our way of life continues.

This publication is a summary extracted from the full draft document entitled “Charting our Course: Sustaining Bermuda”. The full document contains the sustainable development strategy for Bermuda, a plan for implementation of proposed actions, and supporting annexes. The Plan is the result of wide consultation with Bermuda and includes proposals for sustaining those things which we as Bermudians consider integral to our quality of life.

We determined early on that the Plan should be more than the Government’s perspective – it must be guided by the people and institutions of Bermuda. This initiative has been about brokering a new partnership for the future of Bermuda. It hasn’t been plain sailing and it will have its challenges going forward. The process thus far has been a powerful example of the spirit of partnership, with the people of Bermuda working in good faith with each other, the community, the project team, and with the Government, to develop and deliver our common aim – a sustainable Bermuda.

This next phase of intensive consultation will be to ensure that all Bermudians have input to the proposals put forward. The public, as the most important stakeholder in the development of the proposals for further action, need to be assured that we have got the plan right. It is my sincere hope that the public will take this opportunity to engage in open and honest dialogue to help shape the way forward. This can only be achieved by participating wholeheartedly. Let us hear your voice.

The Sustainable Development Unit along with the Sustainable Development Roundtable will carry out extensive public consultation this summer on the draft Plan. Once the consultation process has concluded, the Government will finalize and publish the final Plan.

We believe that Bermuda’s draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan provides us with the foundation upon which to make decisions that represent the views of the people of Bermuda on the type of Bermuda they want to pass down to their children’s children.

This summary has been widely distributed for your review and feedback. For more detailed analysis of the proposed options for action, please review the entire draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan which is available on the Government’s web-site [www.chartingourcourse.gov.bm](http://www.chartingourcourse.gov.bm) and at public locations throughout Bermuda.

I encourage you to get involved in “Charting our Course” by reviewing the documents and responding in kind with your views on the proposals to the Sustainable Development Unit.

Sincerely,

The Honorable W. Alexander Scott, J.P. M.P.  
Premier of Bermuda

# What is Sustainable Development?

There are many definitions of sustainable development. The landmark definition below first appeared in 1987:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>1</sup>

Other definitions go further than the above. However, the underlying trend running through most definitions of sustainable development is a consciousness of how actions that we carry out today will impact on both societies at present and in the future.

A strategy for sustainable development may therefore be taken to comprise a set of processes which seek to integrate the economic, social, and environmental objectives of society. It does not necessarily involve a development plan covering a fixed period of time, nor does it necessarily require a separate planning process.

## Why do we need a strategy?

As a small island we have little ability to influence the tides and currents of global affairs but are strongly influenced by them. Our size and relative isolation makes us uniquely vulnerable to changes in the global economy and uniquely strong in being able to adapt quickly. It also allows a higher level of control over physical borders. A world where surprise, change and uncertainty are the norm requires a degree of forward planning, harnessing economic, environmental and social assets, to chart our course into the next century.

Bermuda's viability as a prosperous place to live and work has been due historically to its participation in the global economy. Examples include privateering, blockade running, ship building, tourism, insurance and reinsurance. The position in 2006 is no different. Bermuda must sustain its development in a world of rapid technological change and extreme mobility of human and economic resources.

We cannot know every decision and situation which this island will face in the future but we can:

- Prepare ourselves for what we know is inevitable or a strong possibility.
- Keep scanning the horizons so that we are forewarned of upcoming challenges and changes.
- Ensure that our systems can react effectively to these upcoming challenges and changes.
- Ensure that we know what we are aiming for so that as well as adapting flexibly to the future, Bermuda maintains the unique identity of which its residents are justly proud.

The draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan (SDSIP) is based on extensive consultation with the people, charities, organisations and businesses of Bermuda, as well as available statistical data and research on approaches of other jurisdictions.

# What does the strategy contain?

The strategy sets out

- a vision for Bermuda in the future, drawing on the many inputs received during public consultation in 2005
- some of the major challenges or weaknesses which Bermuda must bear in mind and the strengths which Bermuda can draw upon in aiming for this vision
- six primary priorities for action
- other secondary priorities for action
- monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to enhance delivery of these priorities

The implementation plan takes these primary and secondary priorities and organises them under five key themes:

- Theme 1: Building and Maintaining an Inclusive Strong Economy
- Theme 2: Transforming Governance and the Public Sector
- Theme 3: Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Natural Resources
- Theme 4: Sustaining our Communities
- Theme 5: Living within Bermuda's Limits

The implementation plan takes each priority and

- offers some background, defining the particular issue in question;
- sets some short-term and medium-term objectives, and where possible, targets;
- offers some options for actions to achieve those objectives;
- suggests actors, both governmental and non-governmental;
- suggests timelines for delivery; and
- sets out what is already being undertaken by Government.

A sustainable development strategy and implementation plan is not the solution to everything that needs to be done. As with any plan, part of the process is to prioritise in order to focus efforts and resources where they are most needed.

It will not be possible to implement the actions in one fell swoop. Sustainability is a long road, but where we have been able to make immediate progress we have done so and where not, we have ensured that this document contains clear directions as to what is needed. It is an AGENDA for action – some of which is being done already, some of which will take time.

The strategy has been prepared drawing on best practice guidelines prepared by a number of organisations, including the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). All the nations of the UN agreed in 2002, that they would develop and begin implementing national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) by 2005. The strategy and implementation plan fulfils that commitment.

# Bermuda's unified vision for the Island

The draft strategy outlines the vision for Bermuda in the future, drawing on the many inputs received during public consultation. Setting out this vision will not in itself mean that it will be achieved. However, it does give an idea of the Bermuda which residents would like to see and thus gives direction to the policies and actions which are needed in the future. This vision is set out under five main themes.

## Theme 1: Building and Maintaining an Inclusive Strong Economy

Imagine...

- An island where we continue to have the resources to import the technology and goods we need, and to travel from the island to broaden our horizons and gather new ideas.
- An island where we achieve an economy which constantly improves the quality of people's lives; offering high quality employment, with internationally recognised labour rights and fair trade principles.
- An island where businesses which choose to locate here share responsibility for their impacts on the infrastructure, particularly transport and housing, and play a full role in training Bermudians; while Government and private sector work together to ensure that our education systems adapt quickly to changing needs
- An island where we reduce our reliance on imports, and sustain our economic growth by looking for new opportunities and achieve diversification, working in partnership with our current businesses, forming joint ventures with overseas partners and reassess out protectionist model.
- An island where we redevelop our waterfronts and pedestrianising parts of Hamilton, installing sidewalks along the major roads, and phasing major construction such as the causeway, the hospital, the police station and the courts.
- An island society where through constructive dialogue, access to education, careers advice and support of good business ideas, we have levelled the playing field from its current imbalance, and freed residents from their racial prejudices. Where everyone has the skills and opportunities to progress to a suitable job and we are welcoming to all visitors – both workers and tourists.

## Theme 2: Transforming Governance and the Public Sector

Imagine...

- A Bermuda where we really do all work together to achieve this shared vision.
- An island where we put sustainable development at the heart of what we do, making these goals the driving force for policy-making and action in Bermuda.
- A Bermuda where we take holistic decisions, evaluating and incorporating the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of our choices.
- An island where we adopt a precautionary approach, ensuring that there is full evaluation of potentially damaging activities to avoid or minimise risks of serious or irreversible damage to the environment or human health.

- A Bermuda where we encourage broad participation in decision-making, continuing to develop partnerships between government, business and the island's people and institutions.

### **Theme 3: Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Natural Resources**

Imagine...

- An island where open space and natural habitats are preserved for current and future generations to enjoy by building in different ways and concentrating on building in a few key areas; redeveloping previously developed sites rather than encroaching on green space; slowly restoring habitats to pristine condition; using landscaping to help with shading and screening; encouraging organic agriculture; and making maximum use of our marine environment without exploiting and damaging it.

### **Theme 4: Sustaining our Communities**

Imagine...

- An island society where we celebrate Bermuda's diversity, promote social cohesion, provide equal rights for all, and care for the vulnerable who cannot care for themselves.
- An island where everyone can afford to put a roof over their head without having to work two jobs, where we invest in our youth as an asset, and have adequate systems to help and rehabilitate those that find themselves in trouble.
- An island where our growing numbers of seniors have security and our healthcare system ensures high quality treatment for everyone, no matter what their income

### **Theme 5: Living within Bermuda's Limits**

Imagine...

- An island where we ensure that our population only grows at a rate which can be sustained by our infrastructure and where we continually reinvest in our roads, water, energy and education infrastructure.
- An island with a reputation as one of the most environmentally conscious places on the planet. One where we make responsible lifestyle choices and use cutting edge technologies to minimise our use of water and energy and the creation of waste and pollution, as well as promote efficient buildings and vehicles.
- An island with a resource-efficient economy. An economy which generates as much economic value as possible from the lowest possible input of raw materials and energy. An economy, which, at the same time, reflects the true costs of pollution, inefficient resource use and negative social impacts in the prices we pay for all products and services.

# The Implementation Plan

## **Proposed objectives and actions which will help achieve the strategy**

As stated earlier, setting out a unified vision for Bermuda will not in itself mean that it will be achieved. There must also be a plan and a mechanism for implementation, monitoring, and assessment.

The tools at Government's disposal – including legislation, economic and fiscal instruments, guidance and the sharing of knowledge – will be aimed at meeting these objectives and will be guided through an effective implementation and monitoring system.

The following sections set out broadly the issues to be addressed by the strategy and the proposed options for action to help achieve the unified vision for Bermuda contained in the strategy.



## Building and Maintaining an Inclusive Strong Economy

Bermuda's economic position is almost unique. With one of the highest Gross Domestic Products per capita in the world yet with very few natural resources, the population is dependent on imports for most basic commodities and consumer goods. Bermuda imports merchandise and exports services. Foreign currency generated by international businesses, from tourism and from overseas investments, makes Bermuda a wealthy island which sustains many, varied, local businesses. Yet Bermuda's current economic success is, like any other economy, vulnerable. The economic mainstays are subject to many influences beyond Bermuda's control, including increased competition from other jurisdictions. This section explores some of the issues associated with maintaining the economy, as well as, ensuring that all Bermudians have the opportunity to share in Bermuda's prosperity.

### **Issue: Is everyone sharing Bermuda's economic success?**

Employment levels and average incomes are high. Yet some Bermudians are not sharing in Bermuda's economic success, because they do not have the skills, the desire or the perceived opportunities to enter the mainstream economy.

**Objective (Primary):** Achieve an equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, build the social capital needed to maintain Bermuda's infrastructure and quality of life and achieve a better representation of all Bermudians in the higher positions of the labour market – with a focus on traditionally under-represented groups such as black Bermudians and women.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Improved investment in skills and human resources*

**Objective:** Increase opportunities for entrepreneurship. Small businesses and entrepreneurs in any country employ significant numbers of people, encourage economic diversity, the creation of new markets and can generate new wealth in previously disadvantaged communities. The same is likely to be highly true in Bermuda, despite no tracking of this kind of data. Bermuda has a long history of entrepreneurship, which explains its current high position in global GDP tables. However, start-up costs are high, the marketplace small, and access to capital limited. The proposals below have been developed by

the Bermuda Small Business Development Corporation (BSBDC) and are already being actioned, in parallel with continued support in business and financial planning, as currently offered by BSBDC.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Continually reassess regulatory framework and fiscal burden*
- *Establish a North Hamilton Economic Empowerment Zone*
- *Establish an Enterprise Capital Fund*
- *Create a Small Construction Contractor Incubation and Expansion Service*
- *Establish free Market Vendor Space for start-up businesses*
- *Create a mentor pairing system*
- *Legally define “social enterprise” companies*
- *Lower duty on goods imported in kit form*
- *Small business support through Government Procurement*
- *Consider short-term tax breaks*
- *Develop a business registry*

#### **Issue: How do we strengthen the existing economic sectors which earn foreign currency?**

The high cost of living, rising healthcare costs, increases in oil price rises, the fact that most goods are imported, all impact on wages and the cost of doing business in Bermuda. These factors ultimately create an expensive destination for both tourists and businesses. These factors also impact on international business but to a lesser extent, since while it makes financial sense to have headquarters here, it may not be as profitable to base backroom staff here as opposed to cheaper jurisdictions.

**Objective:** Plan for the future with the best information available.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Undertake regular long-range economic, population and manpower forecasting*

**Objective:** Maintain Bermuda’s status as a quality destination for reputable international business. \$967.3 million was spent in Bermuda by international companies during 2000, including \$405 million in salaries and benefits and \$45.2 million in business fees. On average 56.6% of employees were Bermudian. These companies directly accounted for 3,470 jobs in 2000 (up 65% from 1991), helped maintain 9,450 jobs and severely influenced a further 4,670 jobs.

### **Options for Action**

- *Continued dialogue and brainstorming*

**Objective:** Maintain and improve Bermuda's tourism industry. Tourism has been and continues to be an integral component of Bermuda's economy. In 2004 there were 477,750 visitors to the island: 271,617 by air and 206,133 by cruise ship. Today there are 55 guest properties and 4,412 beds. Air travellers alone are estimated to contribute between \$293.6 and \$336.5 million to the Bermuda economy. However, tourism has both positive and negative impacts and it is important to look at both. Visitors contribute to the vast amounts of waste produced on the island. Their presence places additional strain on Bermudian infrastructure and on Bermuda's natural environment. The height of the tourist season often coincides with periods of scant rain, and therefore puts additional stress on already scarce water resources.

### **Options for Action**

- *Publish a Tourism Strategy annually*

### **Issue: How do we diversify the economy?**

Central economic planning is extremely difficult, especially in a global system which operates on market-based principles, and a pre-disposition in Bermuda against Government intervention. The market-based economic system has served Bermuda well. Fundamentally, a well-educated, globally-minded population with high entrepreneurial skills (for which Bermuda is famous) are the basis of a flourishing and adaptable economy. However, the current pillars of the economy, Tourism and International Business, did not become so strong without significant help from Government in ensuring an effective regulatory environment, coupled with communication and partnership with private sector stakeholders.

**Objective:** Develop, over time, a more diverse economic base.

### **Options for Action**

- *Continued dialogue and rapid Government reaction*
- *Expand Bermuda's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)*
- *Loosen foreign exchange controls*

### **Issue: How do we ensure that businesses in Bermuda contribute positively to the island's social and environmental needs?**

Bermuda is known for its local entrepreneurship, secure business environment, sound reputation and democratic stable governance. The presence of international business on the island brings an abundance of intellectual capital, which needs to be harnessed for the benefit of Bermuda. Taking a full role in achieving a more sustainable path is of equal and fundamental benefit to those local and international business domiciled here.

**Objective:** Strengthen the partnership with the private sector in developing a more sustainable Bermuda.

***Options for Action***

- *Redesign and expand the current Corporate Responsibility programme*



## Transforming Governance and the Public Sector

The success of the Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan, and ultimately the future viability of Bermuda, lies in an effective and accountable Government and Civil Service. Government must plan its activities and deliver effectively in partnership with other actors. This will mean transforming the machinery of government and decision-making processes in order to embed sustainable development principles into the daily work of the public sector. It will involve training and development for all, but in particular the policy creators to understand how the broad concepts of sustainable development translate to a specific proposal.

### **Issue: Can the Government and Civil Service deliver sustainable development?**

Policies and actions across Government should underpin progress towards sustainable development objectives, otherwise, by definition they will be supporting un-sustainable development. The draft Strategy and Implementation Plan is intended to become the overarching framework within which to make balanced policy decisions. This will avoid addressing long-term problems through short-term “quick-fixes”; instead identifying, win-win scenarios which meet environmental, social and economic needs, and where this is not possible, setting out the means to reach a trade-off between different goals.

**Objective:** Improve co-ordination, collaboration and effectiveness of Ministries and Departments.

Embedding sustainable development objectives in the government decision-making process.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Set up a Sustainable Development Unit*
- *Continue the Cross-Ministerial Steering Group*
- *Regular review of the Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan (SDSIP)*
- *Implement Sustainability Impact Assessments*
- *Keep abreast of international best practice*
- *Engage in “peer review” of sustainable development strategies*

- *Ensuring clear goals, business planning, and budgetary rigour*
- *Business Plans for each Ministry and Department, linked to Forward Job Plans*
- *Peer review of business plans*
- *Develop and respond to indicators of sustainable development*
- *Set up a procurement unit*

Accountability within and outside Government and improved investment in civil servants.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Regular public reporting of progress*
- *Improved Civil Service training*
- *Increased mandate for the Department of Management Services*
- *Performance-related pay and promotion*
- *Human Resources and succession planning*

### **Issue: Can Bermuda work together more effectively?**

Sustainable development embodies the principle that unresolved conflicts of interest do not breed sustainability. Government can and is leading in the Sustainable Development Project but it has neither the assets nor attributes to deliver on its own. Sustaining Bermuda's future requires strong and effective links and co-operation between Government, the private sector and civil society. The small population of Bermuda and small absolute numbers of civil servants means that knowledge and expertise on any particular issue does not reside solely in Government, nor could it be expected to. Working together to a common agenda, and having effective opportunities for debate and discussion where those agendas do not match, is essential.

**Objective:** Promote opportunities for working together in partnership.

#### **Options for Action**

- *The Sustainable Development Round Table*
- *Public Access to Information (PATI)*
- *Reviewing the role of Parish Councils*
- *A review of the roles of all Government boards*
- *Develop a "Personal Sustainability Pledge"*

**Objective:** To safeguard human rights and foster a culture of understanding. The United Nations, in reference to promoting a culture of peace states that, "*for peace and non-violence to prevail, we need to promote sustainable economic and social development by reducing economic and social inequities and by eradicating poverty and assuring sustainable food security, social justice, durable solutions to debt problems, empowerment of women [or*

*designated interest groups], implementing special measures for groups with special needs, and environmental sustainability". Inequality poses great risks. National stability is an outcome of how rights are balanced, inequalities are reduced, information is shared and decision-making is transparent and accountable.*

***Options for Action***

- *Modernize and expand heritage outreach activities*
- *Include more Bermudian history in school history curriculum*



## Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Resources and Environment

Bermudians have serious concerns about over-development and the piecemeal destruction of the Island's open space. While we have to ensure that there is land available to meet our most pressing development needs, we must not forget about providing for such basic human needs as easily accessible open spaces when some contact with "nature" is desired. This is even more important as the Island's housing densities are likely to increase in some areas. We must also ensure the protection of our native biodiversity and our marine environment against degradation by human behaviour as these ecosystems are vital to our quality of life.

### **Issue: Increasing overdevelopment and associated loss of open space?**

We need to find a balance between the spatial development needs of the population such as housing, a new hospital, business, light industry, boating, fishing, etc., and spaces for recreation and nature.

**Objective (Primary):** The protection of, rehabilitation of and access to open spaces.

Target: Maintain between 30–45% of Bermuda's land mass as open space for future generations.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Implement a temporary limit on Planning Applications*
- *Develop Marsh Folly into a public park*
- *Develop the Railway Trail and Tribe Roads, linking up areas of public space*
- *Create additional Community Areas in densely populated neighbourhoods*
- *Encourage the creation of sidewalks*
- *Assess options for compensation to protect open space*
- *Increase Government funding for the protection and creation of Open Space*
- *Government commitment to protect Government-owned green-field sites*

**Issue: Is Bermuda rural, urban, or both, and how do we preserve its heritage and unique character without compromising its ability to adapt to residents' needs?**

This is a question facing much of the world. Bermuda has a strong history of spatial planning upon which to build, and a substantial legislative framework.

*“At the turn of the millennium, nearly half of the world’s population was urban and by the quarter century in the new millennium, urbanisation is projected to account for nearly two-thirds of the total population”*

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, *Habitat Debate* article June 2001, Vol.7, No.2

**Objective (Primary):** Better managed spatial development in the future.

Target: Develop a clear, island-wide, comprehensive land-use and planning policy, with associated guidelines.

**Options for Action**

- *Revise the existing Bermuda Development Plan and Planning Statement as a matter of urgency*
- *Issue Interim Planning Policy*
- *A Tourism Development Strategy*
- *Review the Planning Department*
- *Land Title Registration*

**Issue: Is enforcement of Environmental and Planning legislation effective?**

Throughout the Bermudian community there seems to be little respect for environmental legislation. Crimes against the environment are generally not taken seriously.

**Objective:** To improve enforcement of planning and environmental legislation.

Target: Increase successful prosecutions of environmental and planning violations by 20% by 2007

**Options for Action**

- *Create an environmental enforcement agency*
- *Train Police and Judiciary*
- *Increase deterrents, modernise legislation and revise procedures*

**Issue: What should be done with Morgan’s Point?**

**Objective:** Redevelop Morgan’s Point to meet the current economic,

environmental and social needs of Bermuda, and thereby save other open spaces from redevelopment.

Target: Issue a Request For Proposals (RFP), assess proposals and undertake public consultation on the proposals.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Morgan's Point*

### **Issue: How do we protect the marine and terrestrial environment and our natural resources?**

**Objective:** The protection of and rehabilitation of Bermuda's natural ecosystems.

#### **Options for Action**

- *Implement proposals set out in the June 2005 White Paper on the Marine Environment and the Fishing Industry in Bermuda*
- *Continue to implement the 2003 Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)*
- *Control imports of invasive plant species*
- *Require the planting of native and endemic species as part of new developments' landscaping schemes*
- *Government nurseries to increase stock levels of native and endemic species*

### **Issue: Do we have the environmental data we need?**

**Objective:** A strategic approach to environmental data gathering to inform future policy-making.

#### **Options for Action**

- *An environmental data gathering strategy*



## Sustaining our Communities

Bermuda's greatest resource is its people. As such, a cohesive and fair society is essential to Bermuda's quality of life. Meeting residents' social needs and helping the vulnerable should drive current and future social policies. Housing, and more accurately, the lack of affordable housing is at the root of many social problems as people are stressed economically trying to find adequate housing. It can be a contributing factor to resentment, xenophobia, and stress. The inability to purchase, or in some cases, rent a "piece of the rock" can lead to feelings of disenfranchisement and marginalisation, and a lack of respect for wider society and the future of the island. Anti-social behaviour is also perceived to be increasing. However, considerable amounts of money are spent on addressing the issue with little focus and no picture of whether this spending is achieving positive change.

### **Issue: Affordable housing**

High accommodation prices and rents risk further entrenching inequalities in Bermuda. Families struggle to get their 'piece of the rock' or even put a roof over their heads. In 2000 48% of Bermudians did not own their own home, while rental costs are currently rising faster than incomes. A 2005 study found that 22% of Bermudian households on lower incomes spend 60% or more of their income on housing needs.

**Objective (Primary):** Ensure that the housing provision meets Bermuda's needs by:

- (a)** Getting the Basics Right. This entails developing an effective organisational structure, gathering the right information, clearly defining what 'affordable' housing means, having an accurate Land Registry, and ensuring that information is regularly used to better define future and current housing needs.
- (b)** Developing and regularly reassessing a Comprehensive Housing Strategy.

**Target 1:** Hold a Housing Summit with all stakeholders to discuss the draft proposals for a housing strategy contained below, and begin implementing them as soon as possible.

**Target 2:** Increase Bermudian home ownership to 65% of the population by 2012.

**Objective:** Getting the Basics Right.

**Options for Action**

- *Develop an effective organisational structure*
- *Gather, monitor and regularly publish housing information*
- *Use the collected data to more effectively define affordability for Bermudians and track the impact of the Housing Strategy.*
- *Finalise the Land Title Registry*
- *Build more sustainably*
- *Work in partnership more effectively*

**Objective:** Develop and regularly reassess a Comprehensive Housing Strategy.

**Options for Action**

- *Slow and/or brake the continued price increases in the market*
- *Develop specific measures aimed at providing low cost market housing, and subsidised housing*
- *Increase opportunities to own a home for first time buyers, young families, and 'key-workers'*
- *Improve the quality of housing stock*
- *Improve the behaviour of tenants*
- *Provide supported accommodation for persons with special needs, including older persons, young persons, persons with disabilities and ex-offenders*

**Issue: How do we care for, invest in and protect the more vulnerable members of our society?**

Consultation has raised concerns about poor, duplicated and unstructured social support systems, wasteful spending, and ineffective delivery by Government, private sector and charities. Activities may be more focussed on meeting the presentational needs of the donor rather than the real needs of the client. Many charities and Government departments work in similar fields. For example there are 23 charities and at least four ministries involved in youth development in Bermuda. This has led to fragmented delivery of social support services, such as seniors care, drug rehabilitation, and youth support. We need to fill the gaps to provide a social service system which efficiently and effectively meets the needs of those vulnerable members of society who require such services by:

- *intervening effectively during family and individual crisis;*
- *offering support to prevent crisis; and*
- *investing resources at the earliest stages to prevent spiralling costs of later intervention.*

**Objective (Primary):** Systematise social service provision to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

**Options for Action**

- *Improve tracking of trends in anti-social behaviour*
- *Perform an audit of the social services provided in Bermuda*
- *Complete a gap analysis to identify gaps in social service provision*
- *Improve co-ordination between ministries*
- *Improve project management skills within Government ministries*
- *Government engagement with other stakeholders to identify services required and decide who will fund the different activities*
- *Set minimum standards for third-sector service providers and encourage collaboration*
- *Review Charities Act to support improved standards and accountability*
- *Improve rehabilitative services provided in correctional facilities*
- *Complete and implement co-ordinated strategies for youth development, drugs and seniors*

**Issue: What's happening to the gap between rich and poor?**

Some Bermudians are not sharing in Bermuda's economic success because they do not have the skills, desire or perceived opportunities to enter the mainstream economy. Solutions in the form of training, education and skills are covered in earlier themes. The focus here is services provided to the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. Evidence shows that the costs to society of children raised in families under pressure can be significant. Early intervention in problems is key. Affordable housing and day-care can help significantly.

**Objective:** To achieve self-reliance for those on lower incomes.

**Options for Action**

- *Develop an outreach and information programme*
- *Link Financial Assistance with other support programmes*
- *Develop an electronic database of Financial Assistance clients to enable better tracking of trends in poverty*
- *Link Financial Assistance increases to the Consumer Price index and Household Expenditure Survey*

- *Establish poverty thresholds for Bermuda*
- *Improved enforcement of child support payments*
- *Increase Government day care places for children*
- *Review the current child health care subsidy*

**Issue: How do we deal with the increased costs of health care and pension funding, especially with the implications of an aging population?**

Between 1950 and 2000, the number of pensioners doubled from 6% to 11% of the population. The number of elderly is rising at a faster rate than the number of workers, which has implications for future pension provision. Bermuda's seniors are "land rich and cash poor": In 2000, 71% of Bermuda's seniors were owner-occupiers, while 40% of them were considered "poor". In 2000, the average pension for seniors was less than \$11,000 per year. The poor pay proportionately more of their incomes for health care than the rich and in 2000, 14% of residents had only basic health insurance or none at all.

**Objective:** To provide a more progressive and equitable healthcare and pension provision.

***Options for Action***

- *Undertake a comprehensive review of health care funding in Bermuda*
- *Develop a policy on the most cost effective options for caring for vulnerable seniors*
- *Help keep seniors active*
- *Implement outcomes of pensions review*



## Living within Bermuda's limits

Sustainable development involves finding a balance between social, environmental and economic priorities. Often environmental resources represent a limiting factor to sustainability. All too often unrestrained economic or human activity can lead to a degraded environment. This section deals with the resource limits which Bermuda faces, and the infrastructure and policies needed to overcome or manage those limits.

### **Issue: How do we meet our energy needs without relying almost entirely on imported fossil fuels?**

A strong economy, increased development, and extravagant use have resulted in higher electricity consumption. For example the extensive use of air conditioning has contributed to significant increased demand. Bermuda's high electricity prices are not effective in limiting demand because of strong and sustained income growth. Global oil prices continue to rise, driving inflation and affecting the balance of payments. Yet, in real terms, oil is cheaper today than in 1980. This means, that for the moment, there is little economic incentive to invest in renewable energy sources, even though burning fossil fuels has been strongly linked to global climate change.

**Objective:** Develop a more secure energy supply.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Set up an Energy Unit within Government*
- *Develop an Energy Strategy for Bermuda*

### **Issue: How do we deal with the increased demand for water and limited water resources?**

Water collection and use in Bermuda is an example of a sustainable best-practice that has existed for centuries. Traditionally, most residential buildings have collected their own rainwater from white lime-washed roofs, which purify and then store that water for individual use in underground water tanks. This method has proved adequate for our survival thus far, so long as demand is tempered with conservation. However today, during dry periods, demand for water exceeds supply.

As a result of lifestyle changes – dishwashers, washing machines, more regular showers

– residents use more water than we collect in our tanks. In 1967 we consumed an average of 7 gallons per person per day. Now we consume around 30. We collect an estimated average of 1 billion gallons of rainfall in our tanks every year. Yet we use 1.58 billion gallons of water per year. By 2010, it is expected that we will use 1.76 billion gallons of water in one year.

**Objective:** Encourage water efficiency and map the next steps to a secure water supply.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Develop a 20 year water strategy*
- *Improve water efficiency*
- *Introduce a Government water efficiency programme*
- *Public education*

#### **Issue: How do we deal with increased waste levels and the potentially hazardous nature of waste streams?**

Bermuda produces high levels of waste. In fact, Bermudians produce more waste per capita than New Yorkers. Moreover, each year we are producing up to 4% more garbage than the year before. Waste has many impacts. Economically – since we pay not only to dispose of our waste but also the raw materials which we turn into waste. Socially – on the people who live near our waste disposal plants and on human health more broadly. Environmentally – through pollution.

Bermuda is well on the way to developing an integrated solid waste management system. However, much remains to be accomplished if the system is to become sustainable in the long-term. In order for this to happen changes must be introduced and systems added in several areas.

**Objective:** Minimise waste production, encourage re-use and recycling where viable, and use safe disposal as a final option. This will also involve updating the waste management infrastructure.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Expand Tyne's Bay Waste Treatment Facility*
- *Develop a new composting facility*
- *Utilise the Airport "Land Reclamation Fill Site" for inert wastes only*
- *Construct a new Material Recovery Facility (MRF)*

#### **Issue: How do we deal with sewage and waste water?**

Historically, Bermuda has been fortunate to be able to rely on its geology to efficiently dispose of sewage and waste water. However, now there are more people producing more waste. There is a greater housing density, more multi-person dwellings, more chemicals in our waste stream, and more buildings located in environmentally sensitive

areas. Sewage and waste water have serious potential to create problems that relate to aesthetics, health, ecology and ultimately economics. Thus, there is a need to constantly re-examine and improve upon the way we deal with waste water and sewage. We must remain aware of the impacts of current disposal practices, continually improve existing practices, and make use of new technologies.

**Objective:** Move towards tertiary treatment of sewage.

***Options for Action***

- *Focus on addressing sewage from urban centres*
- *Keep under review the possibility of sewage collection from cess pits*

**Issue: How do we deal with the increasing numbers of vehicles, limited road space and residents' need to easily get around the island?**

Due to the growth in the population and households, the number of vehicles on our roads continues to increase. This has led to increased air pollution, more traffic congestion, extensive fuel consumption, and a swell of road safety concerns. Our current pricing system doesn't take into account the costs associated with air pollution, time in traffic and vehicle disposal.

**Objective:** Ease congestion on Bermuda's roads.

***Options for Action***

- *Continue to implement the 2002 National Transportation Management Report*
- *Encourage the use of school buses*
- *Conduct regular traffic flow management surveys for Hamilton*
- *Limit the creation of new assessment numbers*
- *Encourage carpooling*
- *Continue to improve public transport*
- *Study the benefits of road pricing*
- *Increase parking costs*
- *Increase deterrents, modernise legislation, revise procedures and improve enforcement*
- *Promote opportunities for adjusted working hours and flexi-time policies*
- *Encourage the decentralisation of business*

**Issue: How do we manage the overall size of our population?**

Bermuda is one of the few islands that did not have a native population. As a result, the island has a long history of immigration that dates back to 1609 with the arrival of the first settlers. Today Bermuda continues to attract a wave of immigrants.

The influx of non-Bermudian workers has always been an important issue because it is linked with perceived crowding, labour-force issues, race and ethnic relations and nationalism. Today immigration is a particularly contentious issue because 28% of Bermuda's population is comprised of foreign-born person. This percentage is higher than any OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) country.

In addition to labour-force issues, Bermuda is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Therefore the question of how many residents can Bermuda accommodate often arises. Imported workers and their accompanying families place an impact on Bermuda's infrastructure, contributing to heightened traffic congestion, increased water consumption, and more healthcare demands. Additionally, imported workers compete with Bermudians for affordable housing and access to private schools.

**Objective:** Ensure infrastructure provisions and population projections are closely linked.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Ensure accurate population projections are carried out*
- *Use population projections for forward planning of infrastructure and to inform long-term policy decisions*
- *Ensure regular updates of population projections*

### **Issue: How will climate change affect Bermuda and what should be done about it?**

Global warming can seem too remote or too uncertain to worry about, especially as something projected by the same computer techniques that often can't get next week's weather right. But it is a fact that the climate is changing. It is only how it is happening and our role in the process that is less certain. Bermuda already exists in delicate balance. Being 21 square miles sitting in the middle of the ocean, we cannot afford to ignore the fact that the climate is changing. Armed with the best knowledge science can offer, how do we plan for the future accordingly?

**Objective:** Study and prepare for the impacts of global climate change.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Regular coastline and foreshore assessment*
- *Appropriate shoreline development and protection*
- *Review options for public marinas*
- *Address the ecological factors relating to coastal erosion*
- *Encourage the use of endemic and native species in landscaping*
- *Monitor possible impacts of climate change on Bermuda*

### **Issue: What is the future of the cruise ship industry in Bermuda?**

Bermuda remains a popular cruise destination. Current understanding is that the smaller vessels which service Bermuda will soon be decommissioned. The newer and usually larger Panamax and post-Panamax ships often have better standards including the increased capacity to hold waste, water and sewage, and they carry more passengers. Yet their introduction to Bermuda may mean significant changes to port infrastructure and shipping channels, and have consequent environmental impacts. The Town of St George and the City of Hamilton present the most challenges in accommodating these larger ships.

The cruise ship industry is estimated by the Ministry of Transport to generate \$65 million a year in revenue for Bermuda, with particular impact on bus, taxi and walking tours, water-sports activities and commercial ventures at Dockyard and St George's. Broad concepts have been created for each of the existing cruise ship terminals. The process is underway to collect information and conduct feasibility studies on these proposals. To date, no final decisions have been formally made. However, there is considerable public concern about the future of the cruise ship industry in Bermuda, as evidenced during the public consultation on sustainable development and the numerous letters to the media.

**Objective:** A cruise ship industry suited to Bermuda's needs with redeveloped waterfronts in the major tourist centres.

#### ***Options for Action***

- *Finalise the Ports Infrastructure Master Plan, working closely with the Waterfront Development Taskforce*
- *Integrate sustainable development principles into the cruise ships policy*

### **Issue: How should we manage our reliance on food imports and the future of the agriculture industry?**

Approximately 80% of Bermuda's food requirements are imported. Bermuda's land and marine resources are unable to feed the current population. As Bermuda's population has grown, arable land has shrunk mostly due to built development. In 1912, 3,000 acres were farmed. Today 696 acres is zoned as 'Agricultural Land', but only half is still being used for farming. Most farmers are tenants and half of remaining agricultural land can be developed under current land zoning provisions. As one consultation response put it, "it is more profitable to farm concrete than to farm crops."

It is not realistic to envisage a future where Bermuda's agriculture sector meets the island's food needs. Labour costs are too high to support an export market, and the industry is suffering a skills shortage. However, agriculture is part of our heritage, it helps to protect open space, it contributes to our island's natural beauty, and it provides a small buffer if the situation were to arise where food imports did not arrive.

**Objective:** Maintain a viable agricultural sector.

### ***Options for Action***

- *Maintain and enhance farming skills*
- *Protect remaining agricultural land through the new Development Plan*
- *Review recommendations from the Board of Agriculture*

### **Issue: How do we manage forthcoming major infrastructure construction projects?**

Over the next few years, Bermuda will need to undertake a number of major infrastructure improvement projects. These include a new hospital, the law courts and police station, rebuilding the Causeway, completing the National Sports Centre, providing affordable housing, redeveloping Morgan's Point (including clean-up), rejuvenating North Hamilton, and redeveloping the waterfronts and ports infrastructure.

**Objective:** Phase construction of infrastructure over the coming years.

### ***Options for Action***

- *Develop a phased infrastructure upgrading plan*

# Priorities for Action

Government, on behalf of the electorate, sets the rules and framework for almost every activity in Bermuda. It can empower various sectors of the population, add or remove obstacles to change, provide certain services not provided by the private market, and is duty bound to regulate and monitor private sector businesses, services and charitable service providers.

To maintain Bermuda's quality of life, to minimise the risks above, and make the most of Bermuda's strengths in the face of such unknowns, it makes sense to take the current levels of Government revenues and invest in the priorities set out below.

It is important to note that these priorities:

- have been identified through extensive and far-reaching public consultation,
- have been identified through analysis of the main unsustainable trends,
- offer win-win solutions by making the links between a number of currently unsustainable or undesirable trends,
- are at the root of a number of issues meaning that tackling these will give biggest return on investment

Of these six main priorities, three – Sustainable Consumption, Open Space and Housing – are policy issues: meaning that Bermuda simply needs to decide what it wants to do.

The other issues: Systematising Social Services, Workforce Development, and Government Delivery are predominantly systemic issues: meaning getting the systems and implementers in a fit state to do what we already know we want them to do.

Bermuda's size should, in theory, lend itself to easy systematisation, though silo-based thinking and the desire to protect turf can mitigate against this.

## Primary Priorities

**More sustainable consumption patterns.** While Bermuda will never be entirely self-sufficient, strategies for energy, water, waste and sewage should be guided by a desire to manage reliance on imported resources. All imports to Bermuda have a negative impact on Bermuda's balance of payments and lead to increased waste levels. Bermuda can prepare for possible future shortages and inevitable rising prices in a number of commodities, by developing appropriate systems now. This involves reusing waste and wastewater, and minimising resource use where possible, thereby reducing capital outflow and negative impacts on air and water quality.

**Open space protection and management.** Once land is built upon, it effectively eliminates other uses. Rehabilitating and restoring land for other uses is expensive as is the case on the former base lands. It therefore makes sense to use

this limited resource wisely by directing development to 'brownfield' and previously-developed sites. At the same time, protection and restoration of Bermuda's native habitats helps to strengthen the services they provide, such as climate regulation, prevention of erosion and flooding, shading, and cleansing water and air. Many people feel an innate human need to commune with nature, a need which further development may deny future generations.

**Affordable housing.** Housing, and more accurately, the lack of affordable housing, is at the root of many social problems as people are stressed economically trying to find adequate housing. It can be a contributing factor to resentment, xenophobia, and stress. The inability to purchase, or in some cases, rent a 'piece of the rock' can lead to feelings of disenfranchisement and marginalisation, and a lack of respect for wider society and the future of the island. The issue has two elements – affordable rental units and affordable starter homes for young people and families. The need exists to ensure that there is a system in place that provides for a variety of housing types (and prices), and to necessitate each and every neighbourhood in Bermuda to contribute its fair share to meet the needs of the entire population.

**Systematisation of social services provision.** Anti-social behaviour is perceived to be increasing, while the social services provision which helps support vulnerable individuals is currently fragmented across a number of Government departments and a host of charitable organisations. Considerable funding is provided by Government, corporate donors and individuals, with no clear system for effective delivery and no clear standards. As a result, considerable amounts of money are spent with little focus and no picture of whether this spending is achieving positive change.

**Work-force development and entrepreneurship.** As a small island, Bermuda's main resource is its people. It is very difficult to predict what the economic drivers of Bermuda will be in the future, but investing in a flexible workforce and supporting entrepreneurs is essential to meet the needs of a changing economy. Having a decent job can also mitigate against anti-social behaviour and eases the burdens on financial social services. As history has shown us, Bermuda cannot realistically be entirely self-sufficient and will always need to rely on some work permit holders for some skills, but a reduced reliance on immigration would also ease pressure on infrastructure. To feel valued in their own island, Bermudians need to have the fullest access to job opportunities, while avoiding filling jobs with unqualified employees. If Government and employers work together to give all Bermudians the tools to fulfil their potential, tensions arising around race, inequity and immigration are likely to fade.

**Accountability and delivery in Government.** The success of the strategy and implementation plan, and ultimately the future viability of Bermuda lie in an effective and accountable Government and civil service. For example, Government manages education, social services provision, numbers of people through the work permit system, land through a planning system, and infrastructure such as roads. Government must plan

its activities and deliver effectively in partnership with other actors. Without clear business planning, staff turnover means that there is often no consistent strategic approach to any specific issue or any effective handover when posts fall vacant or change. Equally, information exchange and collaborative working are often poor. Ministries and Ministers are, in some situations, not aware of parallel initiatives taking place in other departments. We need to gather better information, disseminate it more widely, overcome turf wars, streamline the civil service and tie departments together.

## Monitoring and Follow-up

In order to continually adapt to a rapidly changing world, a system is required to monitor and respond to:

- progress (or lack thereof) against the contents and commitments in the strategy and implementation plan;
- unsustainable trends and patterns in a range of areas, from housing to employment; and
- international best-practice in sustainable development, technological advances, and sectoral policies and actions.

For Bermuda, this system will comprise a number of mutually reinforcing elements:

- The formation of a Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) within the Central Policy Unit (CPU) of the Cabinet Office. This location in the centre of Government directly under the Secretary to the Cabinet and reporting to the Premier and the whole of Cabinet will reinforce the cross-Ministry nature of sustainable development.
- Keeping abreast of international best practice through membership in the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), observer status at the UN through associate membership of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and attendance at the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) processes of the UN.
- Engaging in “peer review” of sustainable development strategies, offering our insights to other jurisdictions, and sharing lessons and information on how to tackle common problems. It is proposed that Bermuda would, at the next review of its sustainable development strategy, take part in such a review process. Bermuda should also consider a peer review of implementation processes after a period of two or so years. As well as there being benefits for the review country, the reviewers themselves also benefit. Bermuda should offer to take part in other peer reviews to stay abreast of good practices and maintain links with the international community on sustainable development.
- Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of all future policies, initially by the SDU in consultation with Ministries, eventually leading to Ministries themselves developing this capacity. This will aid co-ordinated policy-making in the future and ensure that future policies reinforce rather than undermine sustainability.
- Continued stakeholder engagement and scrutiny through the Sustainable Development Round Table (SDRT) and Public Access to Information (PATI) legislation.

- Developing a set of headline indicators of sustainable development linked to key policies and actions in this document and reported on annually to act as a barometer of progress. These would need to be supported by more systematised data collection across the board to track trends and patterns and inform policy-making.
- Publishing an annual report of progress against the contents and commitments in this strategy and implementation plan coupled with a report on the headline indicators. This should also involve a quarterly report prepared for the Premier, Cabinet and the SDRT by the Civil Service Executive (CSE) and the SDU.
- Indicators and reporting progress against implementation should drive Government's agenda, the Throne Speech, and CPU projects for the following year.

<sup>1</sup> The World Commission on Environment and Development's (the Brundtland Commission) report "Our Common Future" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

## **Contact Us**

In order to Chart Our Course and decide our future we must agree where we want to go. This summary of the Bermuda's draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan is what we heard from you. Tell us what you think. Are we missing anything? Have we got it right? What have we got wrong? To truly make a plan to guide our future we need to hear from you again. Please feel free to provide us with your comments to the address below. For further details on the proposed actions contained in this summary please review the full draft plan.

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