The new Asker municipality is based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
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Why?

Norway is undergoing a local municipal reform. The goal is to build bigger, stronger local authorities. As part of the reform, Hurum, Røyken and Asker have decided to merge in 2020. The new municipality is to be called Asker. The three municipalities decided at an early stage that the new municipality should not only be built on “best practice” but on “next practice”.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals came into force in January 2016. At the same time, Hurum, Røyken and Asker had just started planning their future merging. It was natural, therefore, for the three municipalities to use the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals as the framework for building the new Asker municipality.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are proving to be a good starting point and have inspired the three municipalities to see new, sustainable possibilities. While the goals are to do with large, overarching issues, they nevertheless concern each and every one of us. The Sustainable Development Goals are there to help us look up, steer in the right direction and develop good local solutions that also contribute on a global basis.

Foreword

Now that we are building a completely new municipality, we find ourselves in a unique situation. Together, we are able to think in new ways and take new steps in pursuit of the further development of sustainable, healthy and inclusive local communities. The municipality has responsibilities towards its residents throughout their lives, and we want to ensure a development that does not compromise on the ability of our future generations to meet their needs.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are developed to do this, by including the environment, economic matters and social development in a collective context. They indicate that democracy, good governance and a society where the rule of law is respected, are crucial for sustainable development.

For this reason, we wish to make the Sustainable Development Goals the framework of the overall local authority plan for the new municipality. In doing so, we can fulfil the idea of taking action locally and thinking globally, as well as ensure relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals in a local context. The UN Sustainable Development Goals provide an exciting framework for local policy, putting our own policies and priorities into an international perspective.

In order to achieve the goals, we need everyone on the same team. I hope residents, businesses and voluntary organisations will join us so that we together can pursue a course of great importance for both the present and the future.

Lene W. Conradi
Leader of the joint committee for new Asker
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A global dimension
in the municipality plan

A local authority is responsible for many tasks that contribute to sustainable development. Local authorities provide health services, education, housing policy, infrastructure, clean water and refuse collection and disposal. They manage land, housing, amenities and facilities, ensure a balance between urban and green spaces, and implement measures to reduce climate impact.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals bring a new dimension to local authority planning.
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Throughout 2017, the new Asker municipality worked to discover the best way of utilising the UN Sustainable Development Goals as an overlying framework for the municipal plan and subordinate plans. Both elected officials and administration representatives worked together on the project. The work resulted in a method for translating the goals to our local reality and making them relevant to our local community.

In developing this method, local politicians worked across party political lines and traditional sector thinking. The Sustainable Development Goals have thus additionally contributed to creating a shared position.

The triangular model below illustrates the process by starting with the global goals and concretising them in local initiatives.

Our method
for using the Sustainable Development Goals

- The upper triangle shows a broad-based starting point which is then narrowed down from the global to the local perspective.
- The lower triangle shows the hierarchy of our local plans, where initiatives are incorporated for subsequent implementation.
At first glance, the Sustainable Development Goals may seem complicated and all-encompassing. Many people also feel that they are aimed particularly at developing countries. The goals have nevertheless been developed to apply to all countries and all people. For this reason, we have put a lot of work into defining the goals in relation to the world we live in and the municipal importance they can have for us and the local community we aim to develop.

In the course of the work, we have thoroughly investigated all 17 goals and all 169 targets. We have looked at the significance of each goal for the new Asker municipality, selected relevant targets and assessed the possibility of the municipality achieving them in the future. Altogether, 84 targets have been selected. We have also looked at the challenges indicated by the goals that may be relevant to the municipality. In addition, we have started defining strategies to reach these targets and identifying relevant interested parties within the local community that may be invited to participate in the work when the goals are to be achieved. The model below shows the method's three levels.
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We choose targets where we can have the most impact.

The methodological tool allows a broad-based starting point and a thorough approach to all 17 goals. The 17 goals constitute a whole but a developing municipality needs to prioritise. For this reason, we have undertaken a materiality assessment based on the goals we have the greatest opportunity to influence directly and the areas for which the municipality has, or should take, direct responsibility in the work to develop a healthy local community and offer adequate services to its residents.

In further work with the municipal plan, we shall undertake a closer evaluation of which goals the municipality is to prioritise. Provisional priorities are as follows:

- **GOAL 3** Good health and well-being
- **GOAL 4** Quality education
- **GOAL 9** Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- **GOAL 11** Sustainable cities and communities
- **GOAL 13** Climate action
- **GOAL 17** Partnerships for the goals

We believe Goal 17 is a prerequisite of achieving the other goals. As a local authority, we are unable to do this alone. We must be joined by residents, business and the voluntary sector.

The Sustainable Development Goals are not just ideal visions but are to be monitored. To this end, we will be developing means of measurement to assess what we are achieving. New Asker is now taking part in a research and development project under the auspices of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS). Indicators for the UN Sustainable Development Goals are to be a part of this measurement tool.
We shall involve the local community

We find that the Sustainable Development Goals create enthusiasm and increased cooperation across party political lines. We also believe that they contribute to our shared identity as a new municipality. Up to now, it has largely been politicians and administrative officers that have worked on developing the framework. In further work with the municipal plan – to be completed in 2020 – the local community, including young people, business and others, is to be involved in a participatory process. To encourage interest and involvement, we must make residents familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In addition we want our work to inspire other municipalities, businesses and local communities in Norway and elsewhere.

We are well on the way with this. All primary and secondary schools in Hurum, Reykjen and Asker have teaching programmes about the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Innovation Camp for all 8th grade students and the Asker Conference on UN Day are examples of how we involve the local community.
Vestre Billingstad