

Summary

The Social Structure Plan is a social policy plan drawn up by the City of Amsterdam and based on an analysis of social and demographic trends and developments. The City has set various targets based on this analysis that it intends to achieve by **2015**. Specific **programmes** have been developed to enable the City to do so; these are in line with existing policy. If trends and developments in Amsterdam are to be influenced in the right direction, these programmes must commence in 2004.

Why has the City of Amsterdam developed a Social Structure Plan?

The purpose of the Social Structure Plan is to place the social aspect of municipal policy within a clearly defined context and to indicate the direction in which the City of Amsterdam intends to influence trends and developments. The plan will **guide** and provide a **context** for **policy-making** and **investment** in the social arena. The intention is to improve the interaction between social policy and the City's policy on spatial planning, the economy and public safety. In addition, the Plan will meet the need for an integrated long-term policy plan, i.e. for a period of more than four years.

Urban dynamism as a basic principle

The Social Structure Plan takes the social function of the city as its starting point. The population of Amsterdam is in constant flux. Such dynamism is typical of the city, and it is cultivated by the municipal authorities because it benefits both individual residents and the city as a whole. It is a **catalyst** for all kinds of personal, social and economic processes, but there is another side to it as well. When Amsterdam's dynamic quality begins to stagnate, as has been the case in recent years, selection and rejection processes threaten to occur. A slump of this kind affects the city's social environment in various ways and therefore impinges on the lives of many residents.

To prevent Amsterdam's population being increasingly divided between the haves and the have-nots, the municipal authorities have set themselves **three objectives**:

- **Investment in urban dynamism**, so that Amsterdam becomes a creative centre of knowledge that scores top marks in the national and international competition for business investment;
- **Investment in human capital**, so as to stimulate the personal development of as many of the city's residents as possible, enabling them to participate independently, fully, actively and in a variety of different ways in the community through work and education, sport, leisure activities and culture, and through the provision of care and services;
- **Investment in the quality of life**, so that generally accepted notions about society are shared and protected even in a modern, multicultural and changeable environment such as Amsterdam.

The title of the Social Structure Plan for Amsterdam 2004 - 2015, "What Moves Amsterdam" [*Wat Amsterdam Beweegt*], refers to the municipal authorities' intention of shifting the city's **career machine** back into high gear. The Plan describes what is required when it comes to **investing in society and the community**, on top of the necessary economic and physical/spatial investment under other municipal plans. The Social Structure Plan creates links between different orders of scale in the spatial, policy-making and administrative senses, so that these various levels are properly coordinated, both organisationally and in terms of actual policy content.

The Social Structure Plan is divided into two detailed programmes: a *Social Investment Programme*, geared to social and physical action, and a *Partnership Structure*, for organisational and content-related action. Such action will be taken in close partnership with the parties who were involved in developing the Plan as well as with relevant new parties.

The various components of the two programmes are described in six different sections of the plan: **A Knowledge-driven City, A Working City, A Cultural City, A Sporting City, A Caring City and A Safe City**.

Each section proposes **programmes** and **programme items** that will be developed in more detail with the parties involved.

A Knowledge-driven City

Amsterdam aims to take a leading position as a knowledge-driven city. It already has a number of strengths in that respect, for example the fact that its inhabitants are **highly educated**, the **excellent quality of its educational and research institutes** and its **innovative cultural climate**. If Amsterdam is to compete successfully against other regions in Europe and beyond, however, it will have to take new initiatives based on a critical analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. The city's promising position in the knowledge-driven and service economy is being undermined by the lack of **housing and commercial property** available to students, employees and companies that wish to settle in Amsterdam. Another factor that influences companies is the **mobility problem**. Amsterdam is also less attractive to the knowledge and service sectors because **educational institutions** are not producing enough graduates with the necessary **professional qualifications**. Companies not only need university graduates in science and technology; they also need a **low-skilled workforce** in the technical and service professions. The pre-vocational secondary or senior secondary vocational education received by many of Amsterdam's young people, whether or not they leave school with a qualification, does not prepare them sufficiently to meet this demand.

In view of these weaknesses, it is important to invest in the **quality** of education and to make it more **attractive** to Amsterdam's youth; it is also vital to ensure that educational institutions can supply the workers required in the field. At the same time, every opportunity must be taken to introduce innovations in the knowledge and service sectors, so that the problems noted do not prove detrimental to Amsterdam's national and international standing. The municipal authorities can encourage institutions and companies to develop joint plans to improve the innovativeness of the region, make technical training and the technical professions more appealing to young people, and enhance Amsterdam's image as a good place to live and set up business.

A Working City

Amsterdam's municipal policy on work and income aims to ensure the best possible match between **supply** and **demand** in the labour market, so that by 2015 as many inhabitants as possible are in employment and as few as possible live in poverty.

On the supply side, the aim is to make **education** more appealing to young people and to prevent them from leaving school without proper qualifications. For those who stop working temporarily for one reason or another, the City will set up compulsory programmes to reintegrate them into the workforce. The intention is to lower the threshold to the labour market and to ensure that job-seekers re-enter employment. In the next few years, the basic principles will be that the unemployed are, in the first instance, responsible for finding their own jobs and sources of income. The municipal authorities will develop a differentiated range of instruments for those who require help to do so. When the threshold is so high that re-entering the world of work is impossible, unemployed persons will be brought to the attention of welfare and care institutions. Here too, they will be encouraged to **participate in society** in some form or another.

On the demand side, the authorities can stimulate Amsterdam's economy by exploiting its strengths, for example its international appeal and creative vitality. A particular point of concern will be to create jobs for low-skilled workers in such sectors as tourism, conference services and transport. One vital element of the City's policy on work and income for the 2004-2015 period is to improve the **conditions** for companies and employees wishing to reside in Amsterdam, for example the availability of suitable housing and commercial property, mobility and public safety.

A Cultural City

With its lively arts and cultural scene, a population that takes active part in cultural events, and its sympathetic reception of artists from abroad, Amsterdam has what it takes to become a "**creative city**". Creative cities typically owe their prosperity and quality of life and their ability to manage social problems to the **rapid adoption of new markets, lifestyles** and **behavioural patterns**. The cultural sector is expected to grow in the coming years, with the creative industry becoming just as important

to the economy as the ICT sector and financial services. Amsterdam's biggest challenges are to ensure suitable housing and commercial premises, to close the gap between education and the world of work, and to increase the employment participation rate. Three issues will therefore require the attention of the authorities, each one being complementary to Amsterdam's Long-term Cultural Outlook and Arts Plan:

- urban identity and identification with the city;
- culture as part of education and its role as an educational tool;
- the creative industry.

A Sporting City

The inhabitants of Amsterdam are less likely to take exercise or play sport than the average Dutch person, a situation that is desirable neither for individuals or society in general. The causes are related in part to **poor access to** public sports facilities and **their lack of variety**, and to the fact that **public space** is not **designed** to be conducive to sport and exercise. Amsterdam's facilities and the design of its public space are incompatible with the growing popularity of sport and exercise, a popularity that has resulted in more variety in the types of sport people play and in new organisational and spatial arrangements supporting their interests.

For Amsterdam, the challenge is to ensure that sport remains part of community life, even in an increasingly urban setting with a varying population. What the City must do is **facilitate sport** in a way that meets the needs of urban-dwellers with many different lifestyles. Sport can enhance the city's social structure, provided that the authorities achieve **seven aims** that relate to organised sport, casual sport, commercial sport, amateur sport and professional sport:

- improve the quality of organised sport (where viable), i.e. the traditional sports club;
- develop new, promising arrangements, i.e. innovative sports centres;
- create synergies between the neighbourhood, schools and sport;
- consider commercial sport as a partner within municipal sports policy;
- boost the role played by professional sport in developing amateur sport and in the urban social infrastructure;
- enhance the quality of public space as a place for sporting activities;
- help create partnerships between the sports sector and other sectors in the organisational/policy sense and in the spatial/physical sense.

A Caring City

As the recipients of care and welfare services Amsterdam's inhabitants can expect that by 2015 they will have a **range** of neighbourhood care, housing and welfare facilities that are both accessible and reliable. To help those who are unable to pay for care themselves, the municipal authorities intend to create a **safety net** in cooperation with the various district authorities.

It is the **people of Amsterdam** who set the standard for the quality of care and the way it is organised, a policy that reflects a general tendency towards socialisation and takes into account projected health trends among Amsterdam's population between now and 2015. There will also be ample concern for the contribution made by the institutions that provide care – which are undergoing dramatic changes – and the role of the insurance companies.

Eight urgent issues have top priority at the moment and will remain at the top of the agenda in the years ahead: **monitoring of the demand for care, prevention, quality of care, cohesion and organisation of care in the neighbourhood, infrastructure, youth policy and public mental health**. These issues will be the subject of programmes that are intended to produce results before 2015.

A Safe City

The City of Amsterdam has taken a **two-track approach** to public safety: firstly, it will continue its **policy of targeting specific groups of offenders and high-risk areas**; secondly, it will refine this

policy by putting more emphasis on **prevention**. Amsterdam's inhabitants will need to be alert to objectionable or criminal behaviour and take active measures against it if they hope to prevent it. The municipal authorities have introduced the concept of **Amsterdam Citizenship** to encourage them to do so. To exercise the form of citizenship envisaged, the people of Amsterdam will have to become involved, have access to good education, receive care when they require it and have an attractive environment in which to live. In addition, there will always be a need for the proper enforcement of public order and safety.

Outline of programmes and programme items

The three aims of the Social Structure Plan – investing in urban dynamism, in personal development and in the quality of life – can be summarised in the following twelve programmes, which are based on an analysis of trends and developments described in the various themes:

Theme	Programmes and programme items	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
		Invest in urban dynamism	Invest in personal development	Invest in the quality of life
Knowledge-driven City	1. Invest in extra (technical) education	X	X	
	2. Improve dynamism and access for students and knowledge workers	X	X	X
Working City	3. Improve physical mobility and digital access	X		X
	4. Reduce unemployment figure to below the national average	X	X	X
Cultural City	5. Enhance economic vitality	X	X	X
	6. Invest in city's cultural and tourist appeal	X	X	X
Sporting City	7. Create conditions to increase number of sporting activities	X	X	X
	8. Create conditions to increase participation in sporting activities		X	X
Caring City	9. Prevent poverty and facilitate participation in society		X	X
	10. Intensify municipal duty to provide care		X	X
Safe City	11. Safeguard public order and safety	X	X	X
	12. Stimulate Amsterdam Citizenship		X	X

Table 1.2: Programmes compared with the objectives of the Social Structure Plan