

Taking it on

developing UK sustainable development strategy *together*

Summary of responses

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the results and analysis of the 'Taking it on' consultation to develop new UK sustainable development strategy. The consultation was launched by the UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Administration on the 21 April 2004, the deadline for comments was reached on the 31 July 2004.

A wide range of consultation mechanisms were specially designed and used to engage with stakeholders at all levels.

At national level:

In a bid to make the consultation as paperless as possible, Dialogue by Design were contracted to run a web based consultation giving respondents the opportunity to reply to each of the 42 questions online. Prior to the consultation launch over 1,700 voluntary, private and public sector organisations were invited to take part in the online consultation. Dialogue by Design created a mirror image online consultation open to the general public, and responses were also welcomed by email and post. To support the consultation, a series of themed seminars and workshops were held across the country.

At the regional level:

Regional dialogues, developed in each of the English Regions, discussed issues that would require action at both the national and regional levels. These dialogues included at least one event in each region to bring stakeholders together. Other activities, varying between regions, included internet and paper based surveys, working breakfasts with key stakeholders, and workshops with key regional groups.

At the local and community levels:

6 events were held across England for representatives of local authorities and community groups. These offered individuals training as 'facilitators', while also seeking their responses to the consultation document. Consultation packs, through which groups responded to the consultation, were distributed to community groups (who were also asked to make pledges for action), Local Authorities, and Local Strategic Partnerships throughout England.

Taking it forward

We wish to thank everyone for responding to the consultation. A wealth of information was received, from a diverse range of individuals and organisations - the number of words received for the online consultation alone was larger than that of the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy. Efforts to make the consultation paperless were successful - only 10% of responses were received by post.

To take the development of the strategy forward, working groups have been set up, focussing on key themes within the strategy. These groups are a mix of new

and existing interdepartmental structures (comprising Central Government Department officials, the Devolved Administrations and the Sustainable Development Commission). At the time of writing, working groups are analysing responses with a view to putting forward policy options for the new strategy. These groups will be overseen by a cross Government sustainable development strategy programme board, made up of high-level officials from across the key Departments. Alongside the programme board, a Sustainable Development Task Force comprising of key stakeholders and Ministers from across Government meets periodically to support the development of the strategy and ensure delivery of World Summit on Sustainable Development commitments.

We intend to build on the constructive dialogue we have had with regional and local stakeholders throughout the strategy review. As part of this we have set up a regional working group with members from both Central Government and external stakeholders, including Regional Assemblies, Regional Development Agencies and the voluntary sector. This looks across the board at the regional dimension of policy options from the other working groups, as well as policy options for improving delivery at the regional level. For local issues, we have worked jointly with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Authority to establish a Ministerial working group under the Central Local Partnership specifically to develop an action plan for improving delivery of sustainable development at the local level. This will feed into the strategy. A range of stakeholders are involved including the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), Audit Commission, Sustainable Development Commission, the Urban Forum, Action for Communities in Rural England and representatives of Local Authorities themselves. We have also established a separate interdepartmental working group on the theme of 'helping communities to help themselves' and have involved a wider range of community stakeholders in the group's work which will feed into the Strategy to re-invigorate community action on sustainable development.

2. Executive summary

In all, 844 responses were received centrally by post, email or online from a diverse range of individuals and organisations (for a full list of respondents see <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/respondents.htm>). Regional Dialogues were taken forward in each region, all including at least one event. In total over 1,000 individuals attended the Regional Dialogue events. Other activities, which varied between regions and included surveys and workshops, generated a further 757 responses. 240 individuals from local communities attended 6 facilitator training and consultation events across England and a further 176 community groups contributed to the review via the Community Consultation Packs. Over 500 people attended themed or more general workshops or seminars, which also fed into the consultation.

Throughout the responses to the 42 questions, many recurring opinions emerge. There is general consensus amongst respondents on the specific issues that need to be prioritised over the next 15 years. Many of the key themes coming out of the consultation are applicable to almost all areas of sustainable development - for example, changing behaviour was mentioned in response to almost every question. In order to provide a brief overview, priorities have been grouped to fit the chapters in the 'Taking it on' consultation document.

Key Priorities emerging from the consultation include:

Sustainable development definitions, priority areas, principles and approaches

- Make the new strategy delivery focused;
- amend or remove the objective 'Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth'.

Climate Change and Energy

- The cost of transport should better reflect the environmental damage it causes (particularly aviation);
- sustainable development should be firmly embedded in building and land use regulation and planning;
- the absence of alternatives to road transport and the resulting impact on the UK's energy needs (key concern of community groups).

SCP and Natural Resources

- Greater focus should be given to natural resource protection;
- prioritise action on fuel, energy and waste in a long term strategy that deals with basic supply and demand issues at the same time as educating the public to understand the need for change;
- government should lead by example and ensure all public sector procurement is sustainable whilst maintaining the political will to deliver a clear and convincing message;

- food, both in terms of its links to healthier lifestyles and the environmental affects of agriculture.

Environment and social justice

- Engage and empower communities, providing them with a voice and a stronger role in decision making by devolving power;
- focus on supporting planning and regeneration regimes in order to deliver sustainable development;
- publicly integrate environmental and social concerns at the national, regional and local level.

Helping Communities to help themselves

- Give local communities the motivation, inspiration, understanding and confidence to act locally on sustainable development and act as catalysts for changing behaviour;
- strengthen community planning processes at the county, district, parish and neighbourhood level;
- provide a structured programme of support, skills, resources and structures for community action on sustainable development.

Changing Behaviour

- Make more concerted use of economic instruments (both carrots and sticks) to change behaviour;
- highlight and celebrate good examples of how changing behaviour can deliver tangible and positive change at the local level;
- pursue behaviour change through more effective education and awareness-raising at all levels.

Beyond the UK – sustainable development in Europe and internationally

- Prioritise climate change on the international stage;
- reduce social and environmental injustices through tackling poverty and doing more to ensure the provision of basic human needs such as clean water and sanitation and healthcare;
- reform international trade and dramatically reduce international debt.

Getting the structures right for Leadership

At the national level

- Better leadership and coordination at all levels – nation, regional and local;
- ensure Government Departments are more in tune with each other with clear and more consistent policy and guidance and ensure policy conflicts are resolved in the new strategy;
- put sustainable development at the heart of HMT and put a heavier focus on it in spending reviews and the budget.

At the regional level

- Make national policy and guidance more responsive to regional differences;
- improve leadership and coordination of sustainable development at the regional level;

- give Regional Sustainable Development frameworks a more prominent role.

At the local level

- Send consistent messages which promote, recognise and reward sustainable development through Government policy, the central-local Shared Priorities, Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the Beacon Council scheme;
- embed sustainable development into Community Strategies, Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Development Frameworks;
- improve local skills and capacity on sustainable development – within local government, Local Strategic Partnerships and across beyond.

Business contribution

- Prioritise changing behaviour themes for business (see previous page);
- promote reporting and league tables to encourage sustainable behaviour.

Measuring our progress

- Achieve consistency between UK wide, national, regional and local indicators;
- reconsider the use of GDP as an indicator of sustainable development - consider ecological foot-printing as an alternative.

3. Guide to the document

The following chapters of this document provide a summary of the key issues arising from the 42 questions posed in the 'Taking it on' consultation document¹. Each chapter is split into the sections set out below. Where the regional, local and community specific consultation mechanisms identified additional key issues, these are reflected within the relevant subject area in the following chapters.

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

This section of each chapter will provide a quantitative summary of the online responses analysed by Dialogue by Design. This includes short and concise paper and email responses received by Defra's Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) which were subsequently entered online in house. Due to the reason that not all respondents answered all of the questions posed in the consultation document this section will also highlight how many of the 624 respondents replied to each question.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's SDU

There were a number of responses received by paper and email that were either too lengthy to be entered online, or which commented on themes in the consultation document rather than specific questions. These were summarised by the SDU and comments were grouped into the relevant areas (as outlined in the following chapters). This section of each chapter will provide a quantitative summary of these responses.

It would have been desirable to have combined these responses with those made online (see above) to create an overall consensus of opinion, however this would have created an inaccuracy in the figures as issues raised in relation to sustainable development themes are not directly comparable to responses made to specific questions.

Summary of Themed Events

As part of the consultation process the SDU wrote to a range of organisations and invited them to submit proposals for funding to run workshops or seminars to feed into the consultation. Defra contributed funding towards 23 workshops which took place throughout May, June and July 2004, each workshop focused on one of the themes outlined in the various chapters of the consultation document. This section of each chapter will provide a brief overview of any themed events that took place relevant to that chapter. Where available each event will be referenced providing the location of the full event report for further reading.

¹ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/consult/document/index.htm>

4. The approach to a new strategy

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q1. What do you think of our approach to the content and structure of a new strategy?

Of the 624 online respondents a total of 453 participants answered this first question. 140 voice explicit support for the approach taken though many qualify this support. 68 point out that **action and implementation plans** are needed as much, if not more than, a strategy. The Environment Agency response highlights: *“the greatest failing of the 1999 strategy was its lack of focus on delivery.”*

51 stress the need for **integration between government departments**, policies and strategies. 61 people refer to the relationship between a UK wide strategy and those of the devolved administrations. 51 put emphasis on a successful strategy addressing the need for broad public **awareness and education**, with a further 42 talking specifically about engagement and consultation with a broad set of stakeholders. These are themes that recur in responses to many of the questions in the consultation document. 39 discuss the need to set targets, use indicators and monitor performance. 31 raise the issue of sustainable development in the wider international context. 24 comments stress the **role of local government** including LSPs, community groups and businesses.

The need for leadership and a sense that there is a real urgency that needs to be communicated and acted upon, and a fear that the issues raised in the consultation paper will be watered down and diluted when it comes to implementation, are other themes that recur.

Other specific issues mentioned include the need for a common definition of sustainable development (38 responses), the need to put the environment at the heart of sustainable development (19), the need to change behaviour and lifestyles (21), transport and planning policy as a particularly urgent issue (7), consumption patterns (4), and the need to support innovation (3).

Participants use their responses to this question to express a range of opinions about the subject of sustainable development generally. The impression received, impossible to quantify, is that the participants divide into those who think the idea of a strategy to tackle sustainable development is a good idea, those who think it is all just more words and those who question basic premises such as the **role of economic growth** or that progress on sustainable development is possible at all. These underlying themes can be sensed between the lines of many responses throughout the consultation.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra’s Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses, 191 refer to the Government's overarching approach to sustainable development. 14 voice explicit support for the approach taken. While the majority of other responses are also supportive, they qualify this support with a range of concerns. 18 believe the strategy must have a greater **focus on action and implementation**, with 10 explicitly expressing doubt that this will be the case.

The need for **effective leadership** from Central Government is a key concern (17), as is the importance of sharing goals across the departments and their various strategies (13). 9 respondents commented that there should be **stronger links with EU and global strategies**.

There is some concern that the structure of four separate strategies under a unifying framework may lead to tensions between the UK wide strategy and those of the devolved administrations (5). Other specific issues respondents mention include the need for public education and awareness-raising (9) the need to drive the strategy with legislation (5) creating continuity with the former strategy (4), the importance of stakeholder buy-in (4), and a call for greater emphasis on rural areas (4).

5. What is sustainable development, and how do we do it?

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q2. Is an explanation of what sustainable development means based on the UK Government's four objectives approach of the 1999 strategy useful? If 'Yes', what changes would you make to improve it? If 'No', how would you explain it instead?

Of the 624 online respondents, 418 responded to this question. 70 say the explanation is fine as it stands, 143 are generally positive but suggest revisions or additions, and 11 think it fine but not particularly useful. 50 think the explanation is conceptually flawed, with one of the main areas of contention being the inclusion of **economic growth**. 32 are negative and suggest revisions. 58 people would prefer the adoption of another definition of sustainable development, with the original Brundtland definition still being popular.

The big issue here is whether the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment is an acceptable sustainable development objective (73). Other issues raised include the **communication** of sustainable development (31), while 229 people see the need to resolve tensions among its component objectives. 14 believe the emphasis should be on **implementation rather than definition**.

Q3. What should be our vision of sustainable development for the UK?

Out of the 624 online responses, 363 responded specifically to this question which range from adjustments of the 1999 strategy's wording to comments about what is missing from 'Taking it on', and suggestions for communicating whatever vision emerges.

While 40 endorse the ideas for the content of a vision as presented or see it as something on which to build, 31 participants have specific objections to these ideas or suggest they require a different focus.

Those with specific objections mainly feel the ideas are conceptually flawed either because they feel the emphasis is incorrect or because of their underlying assumptions. Those who want a different focus are often concerned about how to treat the question of **economic growth**.

While the need for some form of overarching vision seems to be implicitly accepted by most, the difficulty of finding the right words is recognised. 202 responses argue for a shift in emphasis, 102 participants offer their own vision statements and 35 recommend the adoption of other existing visions. 97 people suggest what the characteristics of such a vision should be, ranging from the

tone it should have to where and how it should be used. 44 participants mention the importance of communicating the vision or of educating people in what it means. Many participants mention specific subjects they would like to see covered in the vision. 39 stress the use and **conservation of natural resources** while 31 mention the quality of life in general, 19 the protection of the environment, 18 the need to reduce human impacts and 16 the importance of the United Kingdom's policy having an international dimension and/or offering leadership to the rest of the world. The need for a long-term focus is mentioned by 14, and using the vision to encourage people to take personal responsibility for their role in sustainable development is mentioned by 12. A further 50 participants list ideas the vision should include.

Q4. What should be the guiding principles for UK decision-makers, and how can they be made widely practical and relevant both within and beyond government?

There were 364 responses to this question ranging from explicit support for the existing principles from 66 participants, and suggestions for complete sets of principles (some building on the existing principles, others introducing their own) from 33 people. 56 people offer ideas and pointers, in many cases very detailed, to inform whatever principles are eventually adopted, and 40 answer the second half of the question with ideas about implementation, and how the principles can be made practical and relevant. Meanwhile 56 people like or actively prefer the **principles drafted by the Scottish Executive, the Sustainable Development Commission, or by other bodies.**

17 participants are critical of some or all of the principles as drafted, and most participants suggest amendments to the existing principles or completely new principles. The principles attracting most amendments are those concerning the economic system, (22) and the principle addressing **social equity and justice** (18). The specific new principles most often mentioned as required are around **policy integration** (21), the conservation of resources (18), the need to involve citizens and communities in sustainable development (15), the need for an international dimension (14) and the principle of leading by example (16).

Communication and education around sustainable development are mentioned by 28 people, while 10 people think targets and the means to measure progress are important principles. 14 respondents would prefer the development of a practical implementation plan to principles.

Q5. Are there any social, economic or environmental limits that must be protected in all circumstances? If 'Yes' what do you think they are?

Of the online responses 320 responded to these questions, 23 explicitly challenge either the premise of setting limits or the question itself; many other responses reflect different interpretations of the questions or explore the issues around them.

Of the participants who mention limits that must be protected in all circumstances, 78 focus on **critical environmental limits** and natural capitals such as air, soil and water quality and other non-renewable natural resources. In addition, 52 mention the preservation of biodiversity, and 50 greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. 55, meanwhile, mention **human needs and rights**, and 15 wider social limits. 36 participants suggest that certain important sites, sensitive for either ecological, cultural or amenity reasons, should be protected at all costs. 20 focus on whole system approaches, starting with the planetary ecosystem. 24 participants challenge the question because they are either not sure what it means or because they believe the idea of limits needs to be further defined before an answer can be meaningful. 6 participants suggest using the hierarchy approach as developed by the Sustainable Development Commission.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses, 191 refer to the Government's overarching approach to the sustainable development. 10 of these respondents say the explanation of sustainable development is fine as it stands, and a further 13 are generally positive but suggest minor revisions or additions. There are a number of areas of contention, the most significant of which surrounded objective Four: **maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment**. 37 respondents believe it to be unsustainable, and call for it to be either amended or removed. 7 responses feel there is work to be done in resolving tensions between the objectives. A total of 39 respondents feel that the explanation of sustainable development should be simplified - 13 respondents prefer the familiar Brundtland definition, and 12 prefer the Scottish Executive's description of sustainable development.

Responses relevant to the sustainable development vision largely focused on adjustments to the 1999 strategy's wording, and suggest shifts in emphasis to bring other factors to the fore. Specific subjects participants would like to see covered in the vision include: the use and **conservation of natural resources** (9), **biodiversity** (9), **engaging business** (7), transport (4), natural heritage and the historic environment (4), and supporting new technologies (3). Individual responses mention climate change, social exclusion, conservation, and sustainable energy as areas where greater emphasis is needed.

The importance of achieving a balance between the three pillars of sustainable development within the vision is highlighted by 9 respondents. The need for a **long-term focus** is mentioned by 8. Using the vision to encourage people to take personal responsibility for their role in sustainable development is mentioned by 2, while a further 2 respondents argue that the vision should not be people-centred, but rather focus on environmental concerns.

67 respondents comment on the sustainable development principles. 9 respondents explicitly support the existing principles. 9 people actively prefer the principles drafted by the Scottish Executive, and 5 prefer those of the Sustainable Development Commission.

The principles attracting amendments are those concerning the **economic system** (7), the principle addressing social equity and justice (4), and polluter pays (3). The specific new principles most often mentioned as required are the need for an **international dimension** (9), the **conservation of resources** (9), the need to involve citizens and communities in sustainable development (9), the principle of leading by example (8), and climate change (3).

Communication and education around sustainable development is mentioned by 11 people, while 4 people think targets and the means to measure progress are important principles.

Of the 58 participants who mention limits that must be protected in all circumstances, the majority (13) focus on critical **environmental limits and natural capital**. Also prioritised are **biodiversity** (11), fossil fuels and climate change (4) and human safety, equity and health (2). 6 participants suggest using the Sustainable Development Commission's hierarchy approach.

6. Setting priorities

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q6. Are the four priority areas identified above the right ones for the UK as a whole to focus on over the next few years? If 'No', what would you change?

Of the online responses 397 responded specifically to this question. 168 agree that the four priority areas are the right ones, some with caveats. 114 respondents suggest priority areas they believe are missing (including education, biodiversity, health, and transport) or are less explicit. 76 comments suggest the need for more clarification or **redefinition of existing priorities** and 48 suggest ways of re-ordering or re-categorising priorities. Many of the 'objections' are around, again, the place of **economic growth**. This was illustrated in a response from the Economic and Social Research Council: *"The government presently confuses 'economic growth' with 'quality of life' or 'wellbeing'. It's fourth sustainable development objective... is likely to be incompatible with long term environmental protection, even with significant technological advancement."* Another priority for many people is education about sustainability. These sort of attitudes are reflected in the fact that 40 people comment on the need to ensure priorities are implemented effectively, with many of these comments referring to **education** as being the main means of achieving this.

The Regional Dialogue reports are generally supportive of the four priority areas. Eight regions chose to report on sustainable development priorities for their region and all of these identified transport as a top priority. Housing was identified by four regions as a sustainable development priority.

The 29 people who say 'no' give a mixture of reasons: procedural (for example, the way they have been 'lumped together'); semantic ('a mixture of methods and objectives'), and substantive ('the current priority areas miss out biodiversity – the fundamental building blocks of a healthy functioning environment'). Many responses here emphasise participants' sensitivity to the importance of language and their appreciation that words really matter when strategy is being devised.

Q7. What issues do you think are important, or better dealt with, only within the separate UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government or Northern Ireland strategies, or at a regional or local level?

Of the 624 online respondents, 294 responded to this question. The responses are divided into those which largely see policy and framework being set at a national or international level and those who stress the need for devolved, regional and local government to be given a high degree of freedom to develop regionally appropriate strategy.

57 submissions support a **top-down approach**, with a national framework to be followed by all. However, 96 believe that different issues should be dealt with by different levels of government. 51 highlight the need for a **bottom-up approach**, with a particular role for local government.

33 believe that issues should be dealt with primarily at the **devolved and regional level**, with 6 people mentioning specific issues that should be the business of devolved administrations, such as community development strategies, initiatives to support rural communities, protection of green space, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses, 191 refer to the Government's overarching approach to the sustainable development. Of the 47 responses which refer to priority areas, 22 people agree that the **four priority areas are the right ones**, while 3 challenge the priority approach, suggesting either that they are too wide-ranging to be useful, or that the concept of prioritising is itself detrimental.

There were 29 responses concerning the level at which sustainable development is dealt with. 8 submissions support a **top-down approach**, with a national framework to be followed by all. 8 respondents believe that different issues will need to be dealt with at different levels. 6 see a particularly important role for the devolved and regional level, and a further 6 focus on the role of local government.

1 respondent believes the UK Government strategy for England and non-devolved issues could cause confusion, and suggests a separate strategy for England.

7. Climate change and energy

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q8. How can we encourage more public involvement in action to reduce emissions?

Of the 624 online respondents 372 comment on this question. 132 respondents explicitly mention **tax or other fiscal measures**, using both carrots and sticks, as among the most effective ways to reduce emissions. The other major reoccurring theme is **education**, as it was in many of the responses throughout this consultation. 102 people mention education in response to this question, with 24 seeing the education of young people as particularly important. One respondent suggested: *“Children are excellent at cajoling parents to change behaviours - use that ability. Educate the children, and their parents, to become more responsible citizens.”* The theme of education also runs through the responses of the 130 people who express the need for well-targeted, clear and realistic communication campaigns.

The responses are also packed with ideas and examples of what can be done, with 62 responses relating to offering incentives and pushing a positive message, and more specifically 46 respondents who think that finding and **promoting alternatives to cars** such as improved public transport would encourage more public involvement. Several responses flag aviation as being a major culprit and worthy of stronger regulation and enforcement.

Q9. How can more people and organisations be encouraged to consider the impacts of climate change (CC) on their activities, and to respond to them? What are the opportunities for, and barriers to, progress?

Many participants answer this question as if it is asking about the impact of human activities on the climate rather than vice-versa. The former is well-trodden ground, and it is not surprising that many people refer back to their previous answers. Bearing this in mind, there are many more mentions of opportunities than barriers among the 347 online responses.

Education and awareness-raising as an opportunity are mentioned by 172 respondents and is by far the most common response. **Fiscal measures**, rewards and incentives are mentioned by 95, rewards and incentives (carrots) by 43 and the introduction of laws and regulations (sticks) by 34. 26 people mention the need for the government to lead by example, and the need for producers to display carbon emissions on products is mentioned by 17 respondents. The innovative idea of issuing carbon credits to all citizens and the subsequent trading of these credits is mentioned often. Among the barriers, **ignorance, apathy and lack of understanding** are mentioned by 71 people, while 30 people think lack of political will is to blame for hindering progress in this field. 'Short-termism' is mentioned by 12, and the fear of the loss of competitive edge by businesses is mentioned by 10. As with the paper

and email analysis it was evident that a handful of respondents saw the attitude of the USA as a barrier.

Q10. What opportunities are there for making sure that considering the impacts of CC are an essential part of policy and decision-making as part of the drive for sustainable development?

Of the 624 online responses 298 responded specifically to this question. 71 respondents recommend that some type of assessment should be built into all **policy decisions**. **Taxes and other fiscal measures** are once again heralded as an effective way of instigating change (34 responses). As is very evident in the email and paper response analysis, the **planning process** is perceived as very important to reduce emissions. 68 responses relate in some way to changing existing planning processes, mostly around development control planning.

Opinions on the use of carrots or sticks to achieve behaviour change continued on this question. 21 people believe clear explanations of the cause and effect of CC are the answer; while 40 would like to see **more legislation or guidance** and 30 would like to see targets, reporting and disclosure. **Transport policy** was again on the agenda, 15 respondents thought transport policy was a key issue in the reduction of emissions and several respondents mention the negative impacts of aviation specifically.

In terms of Governance, 24 respondents think the Government should lead by example, and 21 think political will is lacking. 23 thought the role of local authorities should be increased. In addition to this, the majority of Regional Dialogue reports expanded on the call for Government to lead by example by citing the need for regional and local government to play their part.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses received by paper or email 86 comment specifically on this section. From the 86 responses, 4 reoccurring themes emerge focusing on: education and awareness-raising, tax and fiscal measures, transport policy and planning regulations.

Of the 86 responses, 47 believe some form of **education/awareness-raising** programme would significantly help to reduce emissions. Of these 47 respondents 14 think that awareness-raising campaigns are needed which personalise the problem to individuals and organisations. Other recurring themes are energy labelling (11 responses), education in schools (11) and clear communication campaigns (9).

47 of the 86 responses highlight **tax and other fiscal incentives** as the most effective means of changing behaviour in order to reduce climate change with 11 respondents in particular calling for higher taxes on fossil fuels (especially aviation fuel).

There is a heavy focus on **transport policy** in the 86 responses and specifically the perceived lack of synergy between the key Government Departments involved in this area, such as DfT, DTI and HMT. 47 responses mention transport in their response and 17 of those call for a reduction in air travel. Amongst those responses were Friends of the Earth Scotland: *“Aviation is the fastest growing source of anthropogenic climate change emissions in the UK. To tackle emissions from this sector the UK must plan to manage demand, and should begin by ending the favourable tax treatment of airports and airlines”*. Also on the transport theme 14 respondents call for an improvement to public transport.

Planning is also a key issue amongst the 86 responses. 19 respondents highlight building regulation and planning as a key opportunity for reducing energy use and producing energy efficient homes. Land use planning is also a recurring theme and seen as an opportunity to reduce CO₂ emissions. The main barriers to progress on CC are seen as lack of political will and public apathy and lack of understanding.

Summary of themed events

Centre for Sustainability CC and Energy workshop²

This event was attended by 15 delegates and held at the University of East Anglia, Norwich on the 13th of July. Responses were categorised into barriers and actions.

Over half of the barriers to tackling CC focused on public perception and changing behaviour and included ignorance and apathy, scepticism to predictions and the general lack of understanding, amongst others. The group mentioned that the consistency of the message and the pressures of everyday life could also be barriers to tackling CC. In addition the fact that the present political climate is not conducive to radical change was also quoted as a barrier.

The group of delegates produced a lengthy list of actions and opportunities to tackle CC, again these were largely focused on how behaviour could be changed. The group suggested that the message given to the public needs to be simple, explaining the science and demonstrating the effect on everyday lives such as with health risks and agriculture.

In terms of more immediately achievable actions the group identified a number of possibilities, including an advertising tax where the level is set dependent on the product's contribution to emissions, reduction in air travel and tougher building regulations.

In terms of Governance the group suggested that there should be a Minister for CC and Energy, a CC officer in each Local Authority and that the Sustainable Development Unit be repositioned in the Cabinet Office.

² <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/uea/pdf/uea.pdf>

Government Office for London and Futerra CC business breakfast³

This event was attended by 52 delegates and was also held on the 13th of July. Many conclusions were drawn from the event focussing on the key barriers to, and opportunities for encouraging business to do more to tackle CC.

Within the barriers noted by the delegates there was a strong focus on financial implications. They specifically saw high investment costs in new technology, with long term payback as a problem. The delegates also questioned whether generating wealth without consumption was a contradiction and saw this as a huge challenge. In addition, lack of skills and understanding and inconsistent media coverage leading to denial of the issue in hand were also cited as barriers.

The opportunities to encourage business were seen as direct incentives in terms of reducing business rates for reduced emissions, creating a level playing field so that the 'first mover' is not disadvantaged and to widely spread the knowledge that energy saving saves money!

Additional opportunities identified were more senior level responsibility, focusing more on supply chain behaviour and tenants becoming more demanding regarding the energy efficiency of the buildings that they occupy.

³ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/ccbb.htm>

8. SCP and use of natural resources

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q11. What steps do you think that government, business and others should be taking to promote a more innovative, competitive, resource-efficient, low-waste economy?

The word 'steps' used in the question is not defined, but the majority of participants seem to take it to mean specific policy items. 111 out of the 320 online respondents who responded specifically to this question discuss the need for some form of **fiscal measures or tax reforms**. 52 want more spent on advertising and awareness campaigns; 49 want waste, energy and resource efficiency to be targeted as a matter of urgency, and 40 want more money for research and development. 34 want companies to report more comprehensively on their sustainability impacts, with **eco-footprints** being specified as a tool by many. 32 respondents call for wider promotion of innovation and best practice; whilst 31 comments refer to the need to legislate or regulate.

There is clearly room here for better information, supplied more widely, both nationally and internationally. Business and consumers need to know both the whys and the hows regarding the necessary behavioural changes. Another area that attracts attention is **procurement** (27 responses). One respondent says: *“Government and public bodies have huge purchasing power and should set an example through the development and promotion of sustainable supply chains.”*

Q12. What steps do you think need be taken by government, business, & others over the short and long-term to help businesses make more sustainable products (reduced environmental and social impacts)?

This is a composite question and so affects how participants focus their responses. 127 of the 286 responses clearly refer to government intervention via **fiscal measures or tax reforms**. Some regard these as the only way to make business develop more sustainable products, while others see them as just one means. 50 mention the need to regulate and legislate for desired behavioural changes. This question of how to influence behaviour is a recurring theme throughout the consultation. The stock answers are 'education and awareness-raising' and 'fiscal measures' – carrots and sticks.

Several responses stressed the importance of tailoring our education, both at school and at the workplace, to ensure we have the skills required in a changing economy. For example, Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) called for us all: *“to focus on the skills required for sustainable development across all sectors, but also on the skills that employees have now and will need in the future low carbon economy.”*

41 responses refer to more sustainable procurement policies as a way of driving business forward. 38 responses regard **consumer pressure** as a major driver so suggest ways to help aid consumer decisions such as via **improved product labelling** and information at the point-of-sale. 33 responses discuss the need to use management tools such as life cycle analysis or the Eco Management and Audit scheme (EMAS). 26 suggest the government should increase its support of research and development and market development programmes.

Q13. What steps do you think need to be taken by government, business and others over the short and long-term to help business and household consumers choose more sustainable goods and services?

There are a total of 297 online responses to this question. An overwhelming number of responses (190) regard the need for **education and product labelling** as the most significant way to help consumers choose more sustainable products. The next most popular option is fiscal incentives, and rates 95 mentions. 90 responses think that government, both local and national, needs to be more involved, and 28 believe that business and industry have a more important role to play. In addition the Regional Dialogue reports highlighted the need to take the differing circumstances of urban and rural communities into account.

Q.14. What areas of consumption do you think need to be tackled first? Why? What actions need to be taken by whom?

Of the 303 online responses to this question, 140 mention **energy and fuel** use as the area of consumption that needs to be tackled first. Often related to this, 76 people mention **transport**, with 33 specifically focusing on aviation and 24 focusing on vehicular emissions. 56 people mention resource use and resource management as a high priority, particularly the way we deal with non-renewables.

Packaging is a big issue for many people (50); several specifically mention the millions of plastic bags we use every year. As one local councillor says, *“the throw-away waste disgusts us all. If Eire can achieve some progress, why not GB? I try to take my string bag shopping, and buy mushrooms in a paper bag which can rot on our compost heap, but there's not much else consumers can do. It won't be popular until it pays to do so.”*

Related to this is concern regarding issues such as planned obsolescence (7) that leads to electrical appliances (13) being disposed of rather than re-used or recycled. **Food and food waste** is a major issue for 51 people, sometimes linked to agricultural and fisheries practice (13). Water consumption and management is an issue for 20 people.

As regards action, 51 people mention **fiscal incentives or disincentives**, 23 want more education and awareness-raising, 20 want more extensive labeling, and 13 recommend new legislation or regulation. 20 others talking about other forms of government action or leadership; education and

awareness-raising is a topic for 23, while 28 moot a variety of strategic approaches to tackling consumption.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses, 145 comment specifically on the Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) section. Within these 145 responses, the most popular intervention by some margin, mentioned by 73 respondents, is the need for greater use of **fiscal, legislative and/or regulatory measures**.

The next most popular step for achieving change is increased **leadership from all levels of government** (17). The most prominent example given of how this might be done was through greener public sector procurement practices that create a viably sized market for greener goods and services, and could be copied by business. This is followed by 16 calling for government to do much more to promote innovation and to **publicise best practice**. 11 mention the specific need for government to engage with, and support, business more.

11 people mention a nationwide **education and awareness** campaign would help change the attitudes and hence the behaviours of consumers. 10 people also single out the importance of sourcing goods and services locally, with food miles as the dominant concern here. 8 responses call for long-term, solid signals from government so that businesses may plan accordingly and reduce risk. The same number seek broader reporting by business on the sustainability impacts of their activities, in particular regarding the whole life costs of 'true' costs of their products.

Energy and fuel were the most popular areas of consumption recommended to be tackled first, cited by 29 of the 145. 18 mentioned **waste** in general and transport was singled out by 22, followed by food/food miles (12) and packaging/plastic bags (10). The Regional Dialogue responses identified areas of consumption to be tackled first which were based on their individual circumstances. For example, as one of the driest regions and with climate change predicted to have a large impact, the East of England highlighted the need for sustainable water management to be addressed as a priority. This compared to the South East region which cited the need for waste management to be tackled due to the lack of available landfill sites.

Summary of themed events

Waste & Resources: Closing the loop organised by Green Alliance ⁴

25 delegates attended this event which took place in London on the 14th of July. Overall the participants at this workshop acknowledged that some progress had been made by the UK in developing and putting in place a set of policies to move waste policy up the waste hierarchy. They group thought that

⁴ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/loop.pdf>

recent policies such as the increased landfill tax and Pollution Prevention and Control regime (PPC) seem to be beginning to make a difference.

However, it was generally agreed by the delegates that there is no room for complacency: the economy is still hugely resource inefficient and there are some major challenges in improving resource efficiency and reducing associated environmental impacts. The group identified the need to set clear objectives that reflect the targets and saw barriers to progress as vested interests, a lack of effective communication work, and the low price of transport.

The delegates identified many priorities for action, these included: a focus on key product groups which have big impact; targets for waste minimisation in industrial and commercial sectors, wider application of economic instruments and the development of a wider range of policy tools which are integrated across government. The group also highlighted that transfer of the UK package approach to indicators on resources, which the European Commission is not doing, would be a useful part of the development of the European thematic strategies.

9. Environment and social justice

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q15. How should we bring together 'environment' and 'social' concerns at national, regional or local level?

This is a process question, a 'how' question, and this is reflected in the responses. The 269 online respondents to this question come up with a wide range of ideas, suggestions and examples of how environmental and social concerns can be brought together, many implicitly indicating at which level or levels it should happen. 51 responses mention some form of **integration or 'joining up'** at a variety of levels and in regard to many issues, from policy formulation to implementation on the ground.

Often linked to this and cited by 43 people is the need for **local involvement and empowerment**, whether through dialogue and consultation or cross-sectoral partnerships. 30 people mention specific mechanisms for 'bringing together' different concerns, with a further 27 making general process suggestions and 15 providing examples of collaboration.

Other vehicles for linking environmental and social issues are the **planning system**, mentioned by 16 respondents, **schemes to regenerate the natural or built environment** (17 responses), increase green spaces (7) and employment and training (6).

Meanwhile the need for **education, communication and awareness-raising** is mentioned by 26 people; 14 people raise other issues relevant to this area and 12 feel the need for **further research**, appraisal and target schemes in order for progress to be made. 10 raise the importance of promoting social equity and justice. Public and stakeholder engagement is mentioned by 4 people as a means to bring these diverse issues together.

Finally, the whole question of whether it is wise to 'bring together' environmental and social issues is addressed by a small number of people who feel that focusing on social as well as environmental concerns may force the latter into second place. 6 participants think it is important to provide a clear explanation of the links between environmental and social concerns.

Q16. What more could be done to tackle environmental inequalities?

233 online respondents answered this question, with 50 listing **mechanisms that could tackle inequalities** such as: the provision of budgets to Local Strategic Partnerships to enable them to address hotspots, ring-fenced budgets for implementing local biodiversity action plans and supporting local authorities with additional funds, to address issues such as people not having close open spaces.

A further 51 people see the answer in **legislative or fiscal measures**, such as changing the structure of taxation. Both these measures, and many of the mechanisms suggested, involve intervention by government, and 39 people mention other forms of **government intervention**, from policy-making to local management. 37 people stress the importance of involving and supporting **local people and communities** in initiatives, with 26 mentioning the importance of **further research** to identify exactly where support and further resourcing is required. 11 people think that environmental quality standards need measuring or reviewing, 32 people mention the significance of the **planning system** in dealing with inequalities, and 19 the relationship between **health and environment**.

Education and awareness-raising, among both the better-off and the deprived, is mentioned by 24 people, and 15 provide examples of what is already being done. 16 people address what they see as the associated or underlying causes of inequalities.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221, 115 responses are relevant to this section.

Many responses stress the importance of a long-term integrated approach at national, regional and local level to address environmental and social issues (23 responses), with another 15 suggesting assessment tools to **ensure integrated decision-making**. This is often supplemented by calls for increasing funding to tackle inequalities (14).

By far the most common theme, mentioned in 37 responses, is the need to **engage and empower communities** to tackle environmental and social inequalities, not least to be given a stronger role in decision making. Many of the responses (especially those from Local Authorities) note that the community planning mechanisms and Local Strategic Partnerships provide the structures to do this.

In general, other issues raised were: improvements to the **planning regime** (18), the importance of ensuring long-term environmental issues are integrated into neighbourhood regeneration and sustainable communities programmes (21), health and the environment (9) and green space policy (5). In addition respondents mention changes to fiscal and tax regimes, access to rural services, cultural heritage, biodiversity and transport issues (mainly around reducing road traffic).

8 responses feel communities and individuals should have more access to environmental information, including on businesses. **Education, communication and awareness-raising** is raised in 12 responses and skills training (for communities and professionals) is raised by 5. 9 respondents feel that the use of tools and toolkits (on the lines of the Department for International Development's Sustainable Lifestyles) is a good way to engage communities and practitioners; and 7 feel that there should either be an independent tribunal or mediation service or a third party right of appeal on

planning issues for communities to be able to hold decision makers and businesses to account for the environmental impact of decisions.

6 respondents challenge the question, mainly because they are concerned that economic issues are not being addressed by the priority and that this does not support a holistic approach. One respondent says: *"I was very unclear as to what is meant by 'environment and social justice' – surely economics, as well as the environment, has a role in social justice?"* A further 9 responses feel the chapter should consider international issues.

The need for **more research** on environmental inequalities was raised by 12 respondents. Many of the Regional Dialogues expanded on this citing the need for comparable data to be available on inequalities.

Summary of themed events

Environment and social justice in the built environment workshop organised by the Institution of Civil Engineers⁵

This event took place on 6th July 2004, and was attended by 40 delegates representing the construction industry, central & local government, Non Governmental Organisation's and research bodies. The Key messages from the workshops focussed on highlighting inequalities and action needed to tackle those inequalities.

The inequalities identified included: community disempowerment and lack of awareness, poor choice and access to community facilities, low income leading to lack of affordability and mobility, wide ranging quality of the local environment and link between poor health and poverty.

The workgroup identified many key actions to take including: encouraging community ownership and management, mainstreaming the best local projects in national policy, addressing the skills gap of consumers and individuals (particularly low income and ethnic minority groups) and encouraging mixed communities (private and social housing).

There was also a large focus on investment, more specifically in terms of innovative use of community facilities and providing more transport options. The workgroup also highlighted better enforcement of the regulation and planning system to produce more sustainable urban design and procurement as a key action to take.

Facilitator training organised by the Community Environment Associates

100 local sustainability practitioners and 110 community and voluntary sector delegates attended training events between the 12th and 28th of May 2004.

⁵ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/ice/index.htm>

The key messages from local sustainability practitioners focussed on the need for closer links to be made between environmental and social concerns at national, regional and local level and a clear assessment regime to embed environmental concerns in health, antipoverty, economic and regeneration programmes. The practitioners also concluded that the Government definition of sustainable development is too growth focused and that building sustainable prosperity would be a more appropriate goal. Amongst other issues they also highlighted the need for a more global perspective and a greater awareness of the ecological impact of the richest and poorest communities in the UK.

The key messages from community delegates focused more on investment and long term funding and the need to build on community pride and attitude. The delegates also felt that mixed message were coming from Government giving the example of selling off playing fields to raise funds and how it does little to promote health and fairer communities.

Seminar organised by Friends of the Earth and the Sustainability Centre⁶

42 delegates from public and voluntary sector organisations attended this event which was held on the 8th of July 2004 at Glasgow Caledonian University

Many key messages came out of this event. The delegates highlighted that the poor and powerless were more likely to suffer disproportionately from environmental impacts and that the assessment of poverty should include environmental criteria.

The group identified a number of key actions to take including: establishing enforceable community rights of access to information, participation and social justice; reform of the planning system to take environmental justice into account; the introduction of financial incentives, including tax breaks and procurement incentives to help individuals / private companies take sustainable decisions and by establishing a set of legally enforceable corporate directors duties to take stakeholders' (including local communities) environmental and social interests into account.

The group also thought that a key action should be to incorporate environmental justice into education, society and industry and fund ongoing relevant research which explores the issue of equity and justice in relation to environmental issues.

3 seminars looking at Black/Minority Ethnic (BME) communities – tackling environmental and social inequalities organised by Capacity Global⁷

The events took place in London and Manchester on the 5th, 8th and 13th of July. 2 of the events were attended by BME groups and 1 with policy makers.

⁶ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/02.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/bme.htm>

Outputs from the event were categorised into barriers to action and action needed. Several of the barriers identified by the groups focussed on the manner in which BME communities are consulted. The group felt that the Government is often tokenistic in its efforts to consult with BME groups and offer little or no benefit to the community involved. They highlighted that BME groups when asked to be part of consultations were often asked to do so without any extra resources, financial or otherwise.

The group raised the issue that some BME and economically excluded communities living in deprived neighbourhoods often lack the opportunities or resources to live in or visit healthy environments and therefore the ability to change their environmental terms of reference. Other barriers identified included the lack of information/research relating to BME and environmental social inequality and the lack of diversity and BME employees within the environment sector workforce.

Amongst the actions needed to be taken the group highlighted the need for evaluation and measurement of projects to look at issues of diversity, for example the impact of environmental policy or projects on BME groups. They also saw a need to establish a national network or committee, working on environmental and social inequality that could take part in consultations and influence relevant policy.

The group saw raising awareness of integrated issues of ethnicity, social inclusion and the environment as important and suggested improvements were necessary in the delivery of environmental advice of organisations by mainstream advisory organisations such as Citizen Advice Bureaux, the delegates also highlighted the need to improve access to environmental information at post offices, places of worship and local libraries.

In terms of governance the group saw the need to raise the role of the Department of Health, and the Commission for Racial Equality in environment, regeneration and social policy and establish a permanent Government cross department post/posts with the remit to work on BME and diversity issues relating to environmental and social inequality.

Series of 3 events involving Local Authority officers and sustainable development practitioners organised by Community Environment Associates

Over 50 delegates attended these events which were held across England. A number of recommendations came out of the events, and the priority issues which might help tackle environmental inequalities were seen as: safety and security (reducing fear of crime), improving civic pride and sense of ownership, access to transport, education and information, access to facilities, equal access to peace and quiet (enforcement against noise), equitable design and location and higher minimum standards for housing and design.

Delegates recommended that community engagement is a key part of any strategy for environmental and social justice but proper resourcing and independent evaluation to assess success is needed.

The emerging key issues for environmental inequality included: quality of local open spaces, access to services, a hard to understand and inaccessible planning process, level and quality of local employment, access to rights and information, variation in deprivation and the urban/rural divide.

The delegates highlighted the importance of community strategy in bringing together environmental and social concerns and mentioned specifically the small amount of understanding of the role and value of such strategies.

Amongst many other key issues identified the delegates also thought that the attitude of central and local government professionals was a barrier especially the inability of local communities to have any real control of the resources being used to transform their neighbourhoods.

10. Helping communities to help themselves

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q17. What are the main barriers to community action on local, social or environmental issues?

37 people mention apathy and inertia, or just a lack of interest. An additional 33 people cite the lack of a sense of community or responsibility locally as a major barrier.

This apart, of the 300 online responses, 78 mention **lack of resources or support** as the main barrier, with 65 see a **lack of awareness**, understanding or education about the issues as being critical. Lack of time and energy is mentioned by 28, and 28 also see grappling with bureaucracy and the complexity of funding claims as a being a problem. Lack of confidence, skills or experience are mentioned by 24 people, and lack of leadership by 22.

A barrier mentioned by 23 people is the feeling within communities' that they are **not properly consulted** about issues, resulting in a lack of involvement in what affects them. Linked to this is the sense, mentioned by 32 people, that making a difference or creating real change is overwhelmingly difficult. 37 people are frustrated by the lack of integration between local and central government polices, and '**short-termism**' in everything from funding to staffing.

There are also a raft of barriers mentioned by smaller number of people: from distrust of authority (5) and the problems caused by the requirements of insurers (5) to the challenges of the planning system (4) and the difficulties of forming a community organization in the first place (1).

Q18. What can be done at a national or local level to improve support for community action and participation in all areas?

Various forms of support for local activities, including funding, make up 72 of the 261 online responses to this question. 32 people mention the importance of **local empowerment and ownership** of local initiatives, with 26 mentioning the value of **partnerships** across sectors, particularly involving the voluntary sector, while 28 people see the need for changes at the national and strategic level before more can be done at community level, and 26 providing examples of what can be done. The underlying process of how to do it through **consultation and participation** is mentioned by 27 people. As one respondent says: *“Engagement is the key. One good method of finding a way in is to link with the health message. Explaining quality of life in terms that people can appreciate will have the best chance of success. Coupling greener transport options with the health benefits of walking or cycling, or explaining the need to cut down on emissions because of the long term impacts on the unborn child are examples of messages that will have more resonance.”*

Other essential components of community action are communication, information sharing and promotion (24), and a further 24 mention training and **capacity building** needs. Education and awareness-raising in general are mentioned by 18, with 27 thinking that **legal or fiscal** measures will help; for example, Thames Water - who offers each of its staff 2 days per year of company time to volunteer - suggests that *“Government could further stimulate employee volunteering by, for instance, offering tax or NI breaks to offset the costs involved.”* And 14 mentioning the need for clearer leadership at national or local level, or the identification of local sustainable development champions.

Q19. How can we empower communities to take greater control over the quality of their local environment and to tackle their other priorities?

The 142 online responses to this question show some similarity to the responses to the question above, for example a mixture of supporting local groups (21) or local schemes and activities (14). 12 mention resourcing and 11 mention different forms of empowerment.

Devolving power is considered important by 29 people, 27 mention **education and awareness-raising** as important, and 25 **consultation and participation** with local communities. 18 people mention the importance of creating local partnerships and 17 the role of training and capacity building in the empowerment of local communities.

15 people say that progress on this front could usefully be made simply by removing the obstacles to local action, for example, by streamlining the bureaucracy around grant applications, while 11 mention the other forms of incentives to action, and 8 mention the importance of making information as accessible as possible.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra’s Sustainable Development Unit

10 key themes emerge from the 234 paper, email and community group responses to the helping communities to help themselves section.

34 respondents mention **valuing time**. Giving people more time from work to be active in their community on improving quality of life and linking this to time banks, skill sharing by professionals and use of small incentives/rewards for voluntary action.

Better access to information and advice is cited by 65 respondents. More specifically providing an easily accessible bureau exchange with a resource bank of ideas, real-life examples of what other communities have achieved and practical information and basic start up kits (including local audit tools) for community projects. The respondents also highlight that clearer educational material about what sustainable development means is also needed and more community environmental education opportunities with some linking to vocational or community qualifications in sustainable development.

37 respondents see a benefit in **building confidence** of individuals to get involved by celebrating concrete examples of positive community action and showing the difference that can be made to local people and places. Another suggestion is to use the local media to promote a simple message on sustainable development which makes it relevant to everyone, linking with people's health, our children's future (rather than 'future generations') and showing why doing things the sustainable development way is common sense.

37 respondents feel it is important to **build capacity of community activists / community champions** to provide a local support resource by training them on environmental and social issues, project development skills and the sources of information and funding available.

Training for professionals who work with communities is seen as important, in order to increase their capacity to deploy good practice in community participation, and to extend community outcomes to include wider social and environmental objectives. Respondents also see making better use of existing 'local enabler' networks such as those provided by the public, voluntary and private sector as important. 33 respondents mention working together within communities. They specifically highlight working with schools, extended schools, universities, housing associations and businesses to foster greater links with local communities to share buildings, expertise and resources to support development of community initiatives that build on the organisations environmental and social goals. Many also feel there is a need to address the fear of legal liabilities that is often felt by local public and private organisations, which stifles community empowerment.

28 respondents mention the need for **simpler funding streams and application procedures**. Respondents feel there should be more investment in communities, not just bricks and mortar.

Devolving power is cited by 28 respondents who specifically encourage an increase in the community's ownership, management and control of local assets, facilities and services and an increase in the openness of local government with minimum standards for public consultation.

25 respondents believe it is important to **increase trust** between communities and local service providers and address perception of strong corporate interests and decision makers pre-judging outcomes of consultation.

Improving land-use planning processes was cited by 28 respondents, highlighting the importance of improving access to the planning process and enabling communities to engage and stop decisions from being taken before public consultation.

58 respondents highlight the need to **address inequalities** that get in the way. They highlight that community capacity and empowerment is disrupted by inequalities that fracture communities and cause social exclusion. There is often a lack of trust and suspicion of community involvement in communities with deep inequalities.

Respondents also call for the perception that community action is only for poor communities to be addressed.

Summary of themed events

Inner Cities Religious Council Meeting

Delegates to the themed event organised by the Inner Cities Religious Council thought that the main barriers to community action included lack of information on sustainable development; the wider public not making the connection between local sustainable development action and global consequences; and little or no resources to motivate the community in sustainable development. They also thought that due to limited resources, faith communities are not able to make as big an impact as they would like in sustainable development.

The event concluded that leadership at the various levels has to be nurtured whilst developing genuine partnerships between various community groups. This will build capacity in faith communities to disseminate the sustainable development message. Delegates also stressed the need for greater resources and the need to work with existing local organisation and structures to deliver a strong and convincing sustainable development message.

Faith Communities and Sustainable Development organised by CEA and GO London⁸

The forty-five delegates from faith communities who attended this event in London thought that sustainable communities cannot exist unless people are empowered; requiring the building up of confidence, capacity and skills within faith groups. They suggested that the first steps to engage faith communities were to adequately resource community groups; work towards community cohesion (critical for sustainable development); and widen the perceptions of deprived communities. They concluded that examples of local leadership and engagement exist in faith communities and surmised that with support the impact of faith groups will only increase.

Community involvement, community action, and sustainable development - Feedback from events for the Defra 'Taking it on' consultation

170 people attended 3 events organised by CEA, representing community groups, local authorities, businesses, professionals, statutory bodies,

⁸ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/faith.htm>

voluntary organisations and central Government across the UK. Participants discussed a familiar list of key barriers to community involvement and action: 'buy in', funding and resources, capacity, working together, support, time, representation and the operation of Government and other larger organisations.

Recommendations for action included providing a clear political lead, improving access to resources, building capacity in communities, improving support for community allowing them to take action and strengthening the links between community involvement and sustainable development.

11. Changing behaviour

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q20. How are we likely to be most successful in changing behaviour?

Awareness-raising and promotion are the methods favoured as a means of achieving behaviour change by 110 respondents of the 314 that responded online to this question. **Education** is identified by 96 of the 314 respondents. They refer to all levels of education and many make reference to the eco schools scheme as a positive initiative.

Economic reforms or fiscal measures gets 86 mentions (fewer from the VP again), including a carbon tax. 58 discuss the need for legislation and regulation to force change and e.g. increase the costs of motoring. 49 participants mention various forms of incentive, financial and otherwise, such as the government taking the lead in investing in the renewable energy market.

Leadership from Government and the need for 'champions' is identified by 53 participants, with some original thoughts about the form it might take, such as capturing the young for life through Prince of Wales type awards for sustainable activities and lifestyles which could be given to individuals, schools or communities. 38 submissions make direct reference to the need to support local initiatives, local communities and local groups in instigating changes in behaviour.

Q21. How can communication and raising awareness support our efforts most effectively?

89 of the 219 online responses describe a range of tools for **communication and raising awareness**, from advertising and television programmes such as soap operas and documentaries, to pamphlets and leaflets. Plus using all of the skills and media commonly used to sell unsustainable activities and lifestyles. These range from advertising and engagement campaigns to enlisting celebrities and asking political leaders to set an example. Additionally 11 talk about using positive messages; 14 talk about needing to be balanced, honest and accurate; and 13 stress the importance of a consistent message from across government. 20 responses discuss the role of education with 16 submissions suggesting that communication alone is not enough, and that some form of fiscal or legislative tools are needed as well.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221, 135 responses are relevant to this section. **'Education'** is identified as a key issue by 55 of the 135 respondents, including education at all levels from nursery (instilling behaviour from a young age) through to adult

and work based qualifications for professionals. Many references are made to the Eco Schools programme⁹.

Distinct from education is **'Awareness-raising and promotion'** which is mentioned 55 times. Another recurring theme is large advertising campaigns, on the scale of the smoking, seatbelt and AIDS campaigns which should be run by independent organisations due to the lack of trust with the Government message. Strong partnerships between Government and NGOs and Government and media are also mentioned as a good way to promote the right messages. Case studies and demonstration projects as a way of providing the information are mentioned 16 times. A smaller number of responses (10) highlight the importance of having the facilities/infrastructure in place ready for people to respond to the information given.

'Fiscal and economic measures' are a reoccurring theme. 48 responses cite tax (several specifically mention the Irish plastic bag tax), and price signals as an effective way to change behaviour. Taxing the 'bads' and giving tax breaks/incentives to the 'goods' is seen as important.

'Legislation and Regulation' to either stop bad practice or force good practice is mentioned in 30 of the responses. Government providing Leadership (in procurement, action of workforce and policy), as well as a clear, consistent and importantly joined up cross-department message is also mentioned in 29 responses. Interesting themes to note include eco-labelling and use of global/ecological footprints as ways of raising awareness.

Summary of themed events

Behaviour Change – believing you can make a difference! Organised by Global Action Plan, BTCV and The Environment Council¹⁰

45 delegates attended this event which took place in London on the 20th of July.

The event Investigated whether participation, consumer action and volunteering can bring about change in behaviour. Conclusions were that these are viable ways of effecting behaviour change and convincing people they can make a difference and that they can move people from knowledge and awareness to action and change. The delegates highlighted social capital either through building new networks or spreading the message through existing ones as important. The delegates also noted that being personally asked to take part, and receiving personal feedback increases likeliness to continuously take part.

The delegates highlighted that being able to see positive outcomes can retain and reinforce peoples commitment to changed behaviours. Observing the success of relevant projects with good feedback instils the change behaviour values. In addition, making it easy and convenient to change behaviour is

⁹ <http://www.eco-schools.org.uk>

¹⁰ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/bc.pdf>

vital. Most people can be motivated to change behaviour if it fits with their schedule and existing routines. The group saw the short term nature of projects as a barrier.

Sustainability literacy: knowledge and skills for the future organised by Forum for the Future¹¹

21 delegates attended this event which was held on the 21st of July in London. The event investigated what knowledge and skills people need to act and make decisions that help sustainable development; whether these skills are generic for all or job/sector specific.

The delegates concluded that most knowledge and skills relating to sustainable development are generic. However, variations were found in the level to which an individual might need to acquire the skills/knowledge (especially in jobs).

The workshop provided a definition for sustainability literacy in that a sustainable development literate person might be expected to understand the need for change to achieve sustainable development, with knowledge and skills to decide and act to favour sustainable development and recognise and reward others actions that favour sustainable development.

A 'five capital model' (Natural, Human, social, manufactured, financial capital) was used to identify the knowledge to keep all the stocks of capital in good condition ensuring desired flow of benefits. It was concluded that this set of knowledge was relevant to sustainable development. It was also concluded that the skills needed to be sustainable development illiterate were strongly related to those for delivering other key policy agendas.

Learning and the UK sustainable development strategy organised by the Council for Environmental Education¹²

This event took place on the 12th of July in Reading. The event looked at education, indicators and changing behaviour.

The delegates of the event concluded that people should have an opportunity to learn as part of sustainable development and that further research and clarification was needed on causes of behaviour change and the role of education in this. They thought that education should motivate by showing a link to outcomes.

In terms of the message being given out, 'challenging' rather than 'shocking' was seen as more of an effective approach, with clear, jargon free messages bringing clarity to complex issues.

¹¹ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/sl.pdf>

¹² [http://www.cee.org.uk/scripts/cee/hfclient.exe?a=cee_website&AS=FIND|ZX|NEWS|AND|Z0|N-301&F=1&\\$CATEGORY=FP](http://www.cee.org.uk/scripts/cee/hfclient.exe?a=cee_website&AS=FIND|ZX|NEWS|AND|Z0|N-301&F=1&$CATEGORY=FP)

Politics of Persuasion: Influencing Public Behaviour for sustainable development organised by Demos, Green Alliance & National Consumer Council¹³

54 delegates attended this event which was held on the 19th of July in London. The seminar was convened to debate the complex set of issues around changing people's behaviour and sustainable development. Its aim was to explore sources of new ideas from academia theory and practical experience in other sectors, and to connect this new thinking to a practical agenda for action for government, industry and individuals.

Those attending the seminar concluded that changing behaviour is not just a challenge for sustainable development but the problem is faced in many areas of public policy and there are lessons to be learnt from these. The group went further stating that the theory underlying changing behaviour is hugely complex and that simple messages from credible, trusted sources are a prerequisite for success.

In terms of action the group concluded that there are opportunities for short term gains where public and private interest align, e.g. the encouragement of uptake for energy efficient bulbs. Identification and analysis of these can provide a useful short term agenda for action to build support for more ambitious change. In the long term, however there is a need to plan to achieve sustained behaviour change.

The group highlighted the possible benefits of benchmarking the UK's sustainability against other countries and also thought that incentive driven schemes would be an effective way of changing behaviour.

In terms of Governance the group thought that clear leadership was required from Government without trying to do everything itself. They stressed the need for the development of a more rounded set of social marketing strategies, combining use of regulatory tools with education and communication, which are consistent across government.

Creativity and Sustainable Development Workshop organised by Futerra

This event on the 27th July was attended by 12 participants from various sections of the media and sustainable development sectors. The discussions initially focused on how sustainable development and environmental issues generally have been communicated in the past, highlighting missed opportunities or misplaced ideas and approaches.

The group looked at the tone, content and style of previous campaigns and sought to understand how the sustainable development communications community might better apply more commercial creative tactics to its own campaigning.

¹³ <http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/ourwork/NewSUSTAINABLEDEVELOPMENTStrategyUK/PoliticsOfPersuasion/>

There was a strong feeling that mainstream advertising and marketing had effectively 'hijacked' the vocabulary and imagery of sustainability: using security, community and happiness not to promote a more integrated, interdependent view of the world but simply to sell more 'stuff' and promote consumerism.

The group then focused on the key issues they felt the public should/needs to understand and drew up a list of questions for a creative brief to address this perceived lack of appreciation/understanding. These then developed into a series of creative ideas for a range of media projects, from remaking the '100 adverts that changed the world' from a sustainability perspective, through a green version of TV's 'Big Brother' to localised guerilla style campaigns involving community participation, stickers, t-shirts and other interventionist approaches. The workshop was a success with several participants seeking to collaborate on developing the creative ideas that emerged further.

12. Beyond the UK – sustainable development in Europe and internationally

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q22. What are the top international and EU priorities for sustainable development that should be dealt with in the new sustainable development strategy?

Of the 624 online responses 246 respond to this question. 96 of the 246 cite **climate change** as a key priority. Energy use is highlighted by 39 respondents, as is the need for better resource management also highlighted by 39 respondents. The need to tackle **poverty, health, social and environmental injustice** is raised as a key priority by 38 respondents. The protection of habitat and the **preservation of biodiversity** are a priority for 33 respondents. 27 respondents raised the need for a common vision/strategy for sustainable development across the world.

Q23. How can we in the UK, at all levels, do more to help other countries achieve sustainable development and to promote and deliver sustainable development internationally or in the EU?

237 responded online to this. 81 of the 237 respondents feel that **setting a good example** is important in the promotion and delivery of sustainable development internationally. Sharing knowledge and best practice is raised by 49 respondents. 45 respondents call for **reform of international trade** while 30 respondents support applying or reforming European Union and other international agreements. The use of international aid to promote sustainable development is favoured by 31 respondents.

Q24. What distinctive contributions can government, business, charities and non-governmental organisations, and the public make and how might the strategy help kick-start those contributions?

158 people responded online to this question. 53 of the 158 mention the contributions that government can make, in particular **leading by example** and **promoting good practice**. 41 respondents mention the contributions that businesses, charities and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) can make. Many look to the new strategy to help initiate partnerships between business and wider stakeholders to deliver sustainable development, whereas NGOs can engage the public and help deliver change. Among the contributions most often mentioned, 28 refer to **education and awareness-raising** and 12 mention **legislative and fiscal measures** by government.

Q25. What lessons can we learn from other countries to shape our sustainable development strategies and how can we put them into practice?

178 responded online to this question. 151 respondents feel that learning from other countries and **sharing knowledge and experience** is key to shaping our sustainable development strategies and putting them into practice. These are set in different contexts, such as: cultural awareness; political commitment (northern European countries); waste management practices; transport; development of renewables and energy efficient homes.

Many suggest that the countries we can learn the most from include Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Germany, France.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

95 out of 221 paper and email respondents give responses relevant to this section. Some very strong opinions are raised and many recurring themes can be identified. **Climate Change** is by far the most common theme. 33 responses mention the need to tackle climate change and CO₂ emissions as a key priority for the new strategy. 19 respondents raise energy as a key priority for a new strategy, urging the UK to promote clean, renewable energy to reduce insecurity from relying on fossil fuels.

Health, poverty, social and environmental injustice is also high on the agenda and 17 respondents raise these as key issues and comment that equity and the provision of basic human needs are a necessity if we are to move towards global development and sustainable living. A further 12 respondents support this notion by raising access to **water and sanitation** as a top priority.

17 respondents cite **debt cancellation** for developing countries as key to assisting their development. A further 17 respondents mention the need for ethical/fair trading. 17 respondents call for **International trade reform** and urge trade rules to be made more equitable and to encourage local systems of production.

Many respondents stressed the importance of a common vision/strategy for the world. One respondent said: *"Without action across the world, each country's efforts may be in vain"*.

25 respondents feel that **leadership and setting good examples** is an important contribution to the delivery of sustainable development worldwide. While 28 respondents highlight **learning from others**, specifically other countries as important. This goes hand in hand with sharing best practices and knowledge, of which 20 respondents mention.

Summary of themed events

UK Sustainable Development Strategy – The international Dimension' organised by the Green Globe Network British Academy¹⁴

¹⁴ http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/uksustainable_developments.pdf

24 delegates attended this event which took place on the 12th of July in London, the group produced a number of key outcomes and outlined that the UK Government should prioritise climate change, loss of biodiversity, agriculture, governance, resource consumption as well as poverty, equity and environmental justice.

The group recommended that the UK should 'get its own house in order' providing leadership in implementation as well as diplomacy. They saw working to improve linkages and coherence between international conventions and organisations as a priority and stressed the importance of making new commitments on finance and trade, including increased support for capacity building. Leading on from this the delegates highlighted making UK involvement in international institutions more transparent and subject to increased parliamentary scrutiny as important.

In terms of the linkages between the UK and other countries, assisting other countries to develop coherent sustainable development priorities was seen as a priority as well as learning from good practice elsewhere. Other issues mentioned included raising awareness and focussing regulation on the internalisation of external costs.

13. Getting the structures right for leadership

At the national level

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q26. What more do we in Government need to do to improve our own leadership in sustainable development? How would you like to see reporting improved?

There are 263 online responses to this question covering a wide range of issues. Of these, 121 responses offer specific actions, with another 64 offering general advice on leadership. Because of the broad spectrum of issues covered in the responses it is difficult to gather any major consensus.

Key themes highlighted amongst the specific advice includes ensuring that sustainability criteria become a key concern of HM Treasury and is included in its **spending reviews**, ensuring green **procurement** is introduced and followed through and putting more of a focus on transport policy. As with the paper and email responses a reoccurring theme was the **lack of synergy** between Government Departments. 61 submissions specifically state the need for **consistent messages** and consistent policy development across government. Several responses again suggest a cross party consensus could be a solution.

The supplementary question about reporting receives 56 wide ranging suggestions of improvements, from the general to the specific. Some reoccurring themes included reporting more on social progress and **ceasing to use GDP** as a measure of economic growth.

Q27. What do you see holding back effective action by Government?

Amongst the 244 online responses to this question a much clearer picture emerges on what the key issues are.

63 respondents cite the **lack of political will** and commitment as a key to halting effective Government action on sustainable development. But many are more sympathetic with 46 recognising that the **short term nature** of our political system, such as the electoral cycle, can also be hindrances to action. One respondent says: *“The relatively short period for an administration to hold office will always be a challenge to the longer-term decision-making that sustainable development requires”*.

39 respondents see the **vested interest** of lobby groups and industry (particularly transport and aviation interests) preventing government from really moving the sustainability agenda forward.

Again high on the agenda is the **lack of collaboration** between departments and lack of joined up thinking across government (50 responses), a further 17 stress conflicting priorities. Lack of a clear direction and implementation plans including legislation is also a reoccurring theme amongst the responses being discussed by mentioned 30 respondents.

Q28. In what areas is a clearer lead from us needed to promote sustainable development? What form might this take?

This question produced 205 online responses with a long list of areas in which action is required to promote sustainable development and the forms it might take. 35 responses state all areas need a clearer lead while 36 make mention of **transport and aviation** issues, 21 education and **learning**, 19 leadership in **procurement**, 18 energy and **energy efficiency**, and 17 housing **planning** and other land use issues.

As for the forms this leadership might take, **clear and strong leadership** is mentioned by 44 participants, 10 raise the issues of funding and grants while 9 talk about the need to promote sustainable development.

Other reoccurring themes where a clearer lead is needed were climate change, equity, biodiversity, health and waste.

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses 120 comment on this section. The responses cover many different themes and areas of thought. Amongst the responses there is a heavy focus on how Government Departments interact with each other. 20 respondents feel that Government Departments need to be **more joined up** and in tune with each other. One participant suggested: *"Resolving the policy conflicts across government should be at the heart of the new strategy"*. The need for more **support for this agenda from HM Treasury**, was specifically mentioned by 10 respondents. Greater political authority and a higher profile for the Government's Sustainable Development Unit is also mentioned several times, with 4 respondents specifying that it should be put under the control of the Cabinet Office rather than Defra.

A general theme running throughout the responses to the consultation is the need to raise awareness of sustainable development and this section is no exception, 7 respondents highlight the need to promote a better understanding of sustainable development. There is a general consensus among respondents that the message being given out needs to be clearer, with 8 respondents calling for the Government to be clearer on objectives and 5 respondents prioritising clearer and less misleading information.

In terms of barriers to Government action the main reoccurring theme is the current political system and its **short term** nature, 10 respondents noted this as a barrier to real progress and 5 specified that a solution could be a cross

party consensus. 6 respondents thought that sustainable development is not a vote winner and that this is also a barrier to progress.

Among the 120 responses there are a wide range of references to where and how the Government should prioritise its efforts. 8 Respondents thought that Government **procurement** should be a priority while 10 respondents thought that transport policy should be prioritised. 8 respondents thought that fiscal measures should be used as a method of instigating change. The issue of economic growth and its value as a measurement of progress towards sustainable development is questioned by 6 respondents. Other recurring issues were the need to focus on poverty eradication and the need for continued stakeholder engagement.

At the regional level

Questions 29 – 31 in the consultation document related to regional leadership. On these questions a great deal of similarity existed between responses which came in from the different consultation mechanisms (see Chapter 3). An overall set of key messages from all consultation processes is outlined below

Q29. What are the main challenges for delivering sustainable development in your region ? This received 164 responses from the online consultation.

Q30. How can Regional Chambers, Regional Development Agencies and other regional organisations better deliver sustainable development ? What contributions from a national and local level would help the regions to improve delivery of sustainable development ? This received 150 responses from the online consultation.

Q31. How can regional sustainable development frameworks better contribute to the delivery of sustainable development ? This received 130 responses from the online consultation.

All of the regional dialogue (RD) reports and many of the responses received centrally call for greater leadership from central government on sustainable development. Comments include that the Government needs to lead by example with clearer and more consistent policy and guidance and with better coordination between departments. Two RD reports suggest that the Sustainable Development Unit be moved from Defra to somewhere perceived to be more at the heart of government such as the Cabinet Office, Prime Minister's Office or HM Treasury.

Regional Priorities

The RD reports are generally supportive of the four priority areas identified in the national consultation and their comments on these themes are being considered by the working groups on these. Many of the proposals, such as fiscal measures and awareness-raising initiatives, would require action at the

national level. However RD reports contain an important regional dimension to the issues. For example, the East of England has a dynamic coastline and suffers from coastal erosion. Managing this is a regional priority in adapting to climate change. As one of the measures to address environmental and social justice, the Yorkshire and Humber RD report proposes that the regions planning and development policies should aim to spread prosperity to poorer areas such as South Yorkshire and the Humber, and ensure that any further acceleration of development in already-thriving areas benefits excluded communities in those areas. To support sustainable consumption and production, the West Midlands RD report suggests that the region investigate opportunities for tying the outputs of the region's key economic sectors, such as business clusters, to regional demand for the same goods and projects. The London RD report suggests that we take advantage of London's role as a global city and leader. If London were to pioneer activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change these would undoubtedly be taken up around the world.

The RD reports also identify a number of other issues as priorities for their own region.

Transport

Eight regions chose to report on the sustainable development priorities for their own region. All of these identified transport as a top priority. For example, as part of the London Dialogue, the Panel chose to carry out a public consultation. This found that the greatest number of people considered transport to be the biggest future problem for London. Some concerns are common across the RD reports, such as greenhouse gas emissions, managing demand and encouraging more sustainable modes of transport. However there are also regional specific comments. For example, a key challenge for the South West is to address the problems of isolated communities by improving communications infrastructure. The West Midlands is a major manufacturer of carbon-fuelled vehicles and needs to support the development of cleaner systems. The South East has the greatest number of and longest car commuting journeys and needs to address the inter-relationship between where people live, work and access services. In the East of England, the infrastructure needs of the growth areas and proposed airport expansion risk increasing transport use in these areas, whilst increasing the isolation of the more peripheral parts of the region. Issues raised in the East Midlands included the lack of an east-west rail link in the south of the region.

Housing

Four RD reports identify housing amongst their region's top sustainable development priorities. Again there are common themes such as the need for sustainable land use and for sustainable design and construction techniques. There are also different emphases between regions. For example, the East of England has parts of three out of the four growth areas in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. Managing growth and the provision of

infrastructure is therefore a top priority. In the South East a top priority is to tackle the shortage of social and affordable housing. This shortage is resulting in high vacancy rates in many public sector jobs, such as health and education, and is hindering economic growth.

Other Issues

The RD reports raise a number of issues, which are concerns for the whole country but priorities for one or two regions. For example, one of the priorities for the South West is to develop sustainable solutions to the needs of a growing and ageing population. Solutions offered in the Regional Dialogue ranged from positively assisting with 'overheating' in the South East to developing more locally-based economies and smaller, more local multi-use public services centres. The West Midlands identifies as one of its priorities tackling the differing needs of urban and rural communities. Their report recognises that rural proofing is making a difference but needs to be more widespread. Responses received centrally also identify a range of challenges for their particular region. These include transport, housing, urban and rural differences, waste, water and energy.

Proposals for Improved Regional Delivery

The main message from the RD reports is that to improve delivery of sustainable development we need better leadership and coordination at all levels – national, regional, local.

Regional Leadership

All the RD reports call for improved leadership and coordination of sustainable development at the regional level, as do many of the responses to the online consultation. To achieve this, six of the RD reports recommend that a new statutory obligation be placed on regional bodies to contribute to sustainable development.

Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (rsdfs)

Regional and local priorities for sustainable development are set in regional sustainable development frameworks (rsdfs) and Community Strategies at the local level. These need to contribute to the objectives in the UK sustainable development strategy. The most common message is that rsdfs need to be given a more prominent role. Four RD reports call for a mandatory or statutory requirement for all regional strategies to be consistent with the rsdf. A further two RD reports indicate that there is also some support for statutory status in their region.

The RD reports propose a range of measures to strengthen rsdfs. The most common suggestion is that rsdfs need to be more focused on action. In particular, there needs to be a clearer link between the rsdfs and delivery at regional, sub-regional and local levels so that there is a clear allocation of responsibilities. There needs to be more effective monitoring and reporting;

using rsdfs to provide an appraisal toolkit; and improving presentation to make the objectives and priorities of rsdfs more readily understandable.

The views on rsdfs expressed in responses received centrally through the website consultation are in line with those in the RD reports.

The comments on regional leadership and rsdfs taken together show strong support for putting the delivery of sustainable development at the regional level on a statutory footing.

Indicators

Seven of the RD reports address indicators. These comments cover the full range of issues from discussions of general principles though to comments on individual indicators. The general consensus is that indicators should be more outcome focused. Six RD reports cite GDP as an example of an indicator that is of only limited value in measuring success and should be supplemented or replaced by a more outcome focused measure.

Three RD reports call for consistency between national and regional indicators to enable regions to assess their performance against the national situation. There is also support for regions setting their own additional indicators to measure progress against regional priorities. These points are also made in responses received through the website consultation.

At the local level

Questions 32 to 35 in the consultation document related to local leadership. Of these questions, a great deal of similarity exists between responses which came in from the different consultation mechanisms at national, local and community levels (see Chapter 3). This set of key messages is outlined below:

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by dialogue by Design

Q32. What are the main challenges for delivering sustainable development in your local area ? This received 198 responses.

Q33. How can we re-energise local delivery and strengthen local leadership for sustainable development ? This received 206 responses.

Q34. How could local stakeholders make the most of existing partnership arrangements, strategy requirements, freedoms and flexibilities to improve delivery of sustainable development ? This received 160 responses.

Q35. What can be done to build the capacity of local professionals and local communities to deliver sustainable development ? This received 195 responses.

Online respondees included 61 local authorities and 13 Local Strategic Partnerships

Paper and e-mail responses

The 221 paper and e-mail responses to the consultation included responses from 40 local authorities along with responses from other local stakeholders from the voluntary and community sectors.

Key messages from all consultation processes on Q32-35 - 'leadership at the local level'

A **simple consistent message** is needed from Government which reconciles policy and terminology on 'sustainable communities', 'sustainable development', 'well-being' and 'sustainability'. Many respondents also commented on the need for a broader coherent and consistent message which takes in wider policy across Government Departments and avoids the policy conflicts which arise when these messages are 'joined together' at the local level.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), **auditing and accountability** on sustainable development were seen as crucial by the majority of respondents with many criticising the current weakness of CPA in recognising and rewarding sustainable development. Many saw this as the key driver to local authority work on sustainable development.

The need for **high level public commitment and leadership** on sustainable development was cited as a critical factor in improving delivery at the local level. Respondents felt that more needed to be done to raise the profile of sustainable development and to urge action from local leaders in the private, public and voluntary sector. At the local level, local authority leaders and Chief Executives were mentioned as the people who could make the most difference in this respect, with LSPs also being suggested.

The majority of respondents were positive about the potential role **community strategies and LSPs** could offer for delivering sustainable development at the local level but expressed a strong opinion that these tools were not being used well and that many were failing in this respect. There was a clear call from respondents for **further clarification from Government** about what it expects from Community Strategies and LSPs in terms of sustainable development. Others commented on an apparent poor quality of community involvement in Community Strategies and LSPs and some respondents expressed great frustration in their attempts to be included – especially a number of LA21 groups who were not part of the LSP.

Respondents mentioned **LA21** and expressed both positive opinions about what this initiative have achieved by engaging communities but also frustration that LA21 had either been 'lost' or 'diluted' by the new community planning arrangements. Others commented that LA21 officers had been lost during the 'changeover'. All respondents who commented on this wished to see LA21 reinvigorated with high profile support from Government so that the energy and community engagement which typified the original initiative could be regained.

The need for proper **training on sustainable development** was strongly felt by respondents. The aim being to raise awareness and improve knowledge on sustainable development at the local level. The most frequently suggested target audiences for this training were Local Authority members, Chief Executives, officers, LSPs, professionals in partner organisations (health and the police) and other 'decision-makers'. Some called for this training to be mandatory. A number of comments suggested identifying and training particular 'champions' in local organisations. Overall, many saw training as needing to be part of continual professional development. Others commented on the need for this training in wider professions such as building construction and accountancy. The Egan Review¹⁵ was mentioned a number of times with the majority of respondents commenting on this expressing support for the review's recommendations.

The use of '**sticks**' to improve delivery of sustainable development at the local level was seen as very important. In terms of 'sticks', 24 respondents explicitly mentioned the need for a statutory measure on sustainable development for local authorities and expressed a view that this would be the only way significant improvements in delivering sustainable development could be made at the local level. Three out of the nine RD reports explicitly called for sustainable development to be made a statutory responsibility for local authorities with a fourth regional asking that this should only be considered. Overall, little detail was provided about the nature this statutory measure might take but suggestions included an overall duty, changing the well-being powers into a duty, a sustainable development code, mandatory reporting on sustainable development and making LA21 officers mandatory. Local authority funding regimes also received a large number of comments with respondents suggesting that sustainable development should be built-in to local government funding agreements.

The use of '**carrots**' to improve sustainable development delivery were also seen as being important. Suggestions included small financial incentives for local authorities for good sustainable development performance, more freedoms and flexibilities, building on LPSAs and town competitions. The potential use of the Beacon Council scheme to address a sustainable development theme was also mentioned.

Comments on the **land-use planning system** fell into two broad categories; comments about 'process' and comments about 'policy'. In terms of 'process', the majority of respondents who commented expressed a strong view that local communities were excluded from the local planning process with a lack of transparency on behalf of the local planning authority. Some expressed a view that commercial interests overrode community views. Other comments were made regarding the speed of the process and an opinion that the Government is speeding up the local planning system at the cost of sustainable development. In terms of policy, the most frequent comments

made were in relation to the need for better standards for sustainable development in buildings, developments and the provision of wider infrastructure. Many expressed a view that local planning departments were averse to innovative ideas which promoted sustainable development and were making presumptions for economic growth not sustainable development.

Respondents called for a greater emphasis and more coherent approach to the coverage of **sustainable development in the education system**. Comments ranged from primary and secondary school through to further education and adult skills. The overall opinion is that little attention is being paid to sustainable development in the curriculum and that where it was mentioned it was fragmented. Comments called for a strengthened sustainable development curriculum as part of a 'whole-school' approach to understanding and contributing to sustainable development.

In terms of specific local issues that need addressing transport and affordable housing are the two issues raised the most. Issues on transport generate the most comments mainly focusing on local public and private transport including the need to improve local public transport, improve access to services especially in rural areas, improve cycling facilities, alternative fuels and reducing traffic congestion. Also covered is air transport and the growth in air travel and airport developments. Respondents discussing affordable housing focus on local difficulties in providing enough affordable housing to meet local needs.

Other reoccurring issues at the local level are: waste, local food supply and demand, regeneration, flooding, growth and infrastructure and working in partnership with local businesses.

14. Business contribution to sustainable development

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q36. What more needs to be done to improve the business contribution to delivering sustainable development?

The answer of 69 among the 238 online responses to this question is more **education and awareness-raising**. This is closely followed by more fiscal incentives (63) and regulation / a clear policy framework (60). Promoting the economic advantages and disadvantages gets 40 mentions, while **reporting and league tables** feature in 39 responses. 22 talk generally about rewards and punishments to promote desired business behaviours, and 19 remind us that small-to-medium businesses (SMEs) should not be forgotten about and need tailored support. A common theme to virtually all responses, is that business must be brought on board if progress is to be made towards sustainable development.

Q37. What actions should we take to support, enable or require a higher level of business contribution?

There were 221 online responses to this question. Many of the responses resemble those for Q36, with similar actions mentioned as supporting a higher level of business contribution. In this case, the ones mentioned most frequently are: **fiscal incentives** (40), regulation and policy framework (39), education, awareness-raising and best practice (34), reporting and league tables (33), rewards/punishments (24) and economic carrots and sticks (22).

In this section, there is greater emphasis on the need for government to support businesses and **lead by example** (20 of 221 as opposed to 5 of 238). One participant makes a concise suggestion: *“Give them free environmental audits and costed environmental plans”*. Also mentioned is the need for greater partnership working, (19), the need to encourage CSR (13), support SMEs (9) producer responsibility / polluter pays (8), consumer demand (7), product labelling (7) support for research and development and innovation (7), and sustainable procurement (7).

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra’s Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses, 89 comment specifically on this section.

Amongst the respondents the most popular step for achieving greater involvement and contribution by business is, as in many sections of the consultation, the increased use of **fiscal incentives** including taxes and grants (31 responses). Closely aligned to this is the call for more **regulation** and a **coherent policy framework** (24). In terms of the number of mentions,

these recommendations are followed by more education and awareness campaigning (19) and businesses being compelled to report in depth on the impacts of their behaviour, green or otherwise (16).

15. Measuring our progress

Summary of the 624 online consultation responses analysed by Dialogue by Design

Q38. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current sustainable development indicators, and how they are used?

- *In general*
- *More specifically indicators used:*
 - *in the UK Government's headline set;*
 - *in the wider UK core set in Quality of life counts;*
 - *in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;*
 - *in the English regions;*
 - *in local authorities; and*
 - *elsewhere (for example, sectoral indicators).*

In general:

Most of the 266 online responses to this composite question feel that, overall, sustainable development indicators are a good thing, just by virtue of the fact that they exist. However, nearly all respondents feel that there is scope for improvement.

Of the 266 replies, 88 suggest additional indicators or specific/generic improvements to existing indicators that they would like to see in place in one or more of the indicator sets. Of these, 5 people feel that air travel should be included and a further 12 feel that a **composite indicator**, such as the **ecological footprint**, would be a useful tool (51 respondents replied to an email petition supporting the use of ecological foot-printing).

70 respondents feel that some of the indicators are inadequate or inappropriate. Of these, 32 feel that **Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an inappropriate measure** that cannot be clearly linked to sustainable development; for example, Stirling Council argue that *"We need a wider measure than GDP, that includes economic activity and levels of employment, but also considers issues such as health, security, quality of life, environmental protection and the use of natural resources"*. In addition to above the majority of Regional Dialogue reports raised the need for indicators to be focused on positive and aspirational issues as well as negative issues.

30 respondents say they find it difficult to relate indicators to the concrete implementation of sustainable development on the ground. And 18 would like to see more correlation between indicator performance and resulting government policy. In addition, a key message from Regional Dialogue reports was that the current indicators failed to capture the essence of what sustainable development is about and were often viewed in isolation to each other.

27 respondents feel that there is a need for **consistent indicators** across the whole of the UK. However, 29 participants want a better integration of indicators – both at a local/regional and national level as well as better integration and links between indicators and other national/local measures. 18 suggest a better balance needs to be struck between the headline UK-wide indicators and the flexibility needed to set indicators on a local basis to support local priorities. Many feel that local and regional indicators should be subsets of national indicators.

Q39. What needs to be monitored and measured UK-wide?

Of the 166 who responded online to this question, 11 suggest a **new aggregate footprint indicator**, whilst 29 agree with the existing indicators. Most of the remainder mention as important indicators from a broad range that spans 45 groups, many of which already feature in some form in the current indicator set. Of these, the most frequently mentioned are **climate change**, particularly CO₂ emissions (29), waste (24), social indicators (21), transport (19), ecological structures (18), economy (17) biodiversity (16), energy (16), health (15) and quality of life (13).

Other views expressed include a desire not to try and prioritise indicators; while others propose that we need to take account of indicator sets being used elsewhere, e.g. other sectors or other regions. A number of the Regional Dialogue reports expressed concern that the indicators were based on availability of information rather than being a useful measure of progress towards sustainable development.

One other topic that arises here, as it does periodically throughout the consultation, is the question of **quality of life** and how you measure it. As one person says *“Current indicators only cover some contributors to quality of life: there is an aching absence of indicators of whether people feel content with their lot, free from anxiety and stress, and have the space and time for self development and interaction with others”*.

Q40. Who are the audiences for indicators and how could we better meet their needs?

Of the 151 online respondents, 66 identify a **diverse range of audiences** for these indicators, with several citing ‘everyone!’. Many of the other respondents mention specific audiences including Government (32), the general public (29), policy and decision makers (27), businesses (20) and local government (14) and the voluntary sector (12). 5 mention schools/educational establishments and academics.

26 participants feel that the manner in which the indicators are presented is crucial. One respondent says: *“Ultimately the whole community is the audience for indicators and while there will be a need for ‘technical’ indicators there is a need for ‘community’ based indicators that are simple and readily understood. For example, the majority of the community is unlikely to be interested in what the level of phosphate is in a river or loch but would be concerned if the number of fish have increased or decreased. Consequently*

there is a need to provide simple clear indicators that have been agreed by local communities”.

Most of these respondents feel that they need to be clear and applicable to the audiences; 25 feel that **information provision and publicity** around the indicators would help meet the needs of the various audiences. A further 8 mention that how the indicators are established in the first place is also important and 2 mention a need for funding.

Q41. Should any set of indicators supporting the new strategy concentrate on just the main priorities in the strategic framework; or be wider and more comprehensive?

There is a split amongst the 132 online responses to this question, with no clear winner. 33 participants think that indicators should be **wider and more comprehensive** than the main priorities, 34 argue for a balance between the two and 24 want a **concentration on the main priorities**. The remainder argue for something else altogether, with 4 requesting changes in the current indicators, and a further 2 want the **Scottish Executive indicators** to replace the UK set.

Some see a balance between the two as happening over time, while others feel that the decision needs to be taken based on a sort of cost/benefit analysis weighing up the value of the indicators as compared with the amount of time/effort it would take to collate them.

Q42. Should important high-level sustainable development indicators focus on monitoring general progress towards final outcomes; specific delivery actions and targets; or both?

94 of the 155 online responses to this question argue for both, 19 for **specific delivery actions and targets**, and 13 for general progress towards final outcomes. Other responses suggest other options that do not fit into any of the options above (6), or believe there is more work to be done before such a decision can be made (3).

Summary of the 221 paper and email responses analysed within Defra's Sustainable Development Unit

Of the 221 responses received by paper or email, 90 comment specifically on this section.

Of the responses that addressed the indicator issues generally, rather than specifically to each question, the most frequently made comment related to the importance of being able to **set indicators at a local level**, with 20 mentions. This was followed by the importance of consistency in indicators which was raised by 18 respondents. Also mentioned is the importance of aggregating up indicator data from local to regional to national to UK-wide.

13 respondents want to see the results of the indicators have **more impact on policymaking**. The same number (13) also feel that the indicators are not

adequate in their current form, whilst 12 comment that the existing set are either good or excellent. Some form of ecological footprint is mentioned as a valuable additional indicator in 21 responses; while 18 feel that the GDP indicator should be removed or amended to take account of broader quality of life issues.

Summary of themed events

Why Heritage Counts - workshop to explore the contribution of the historic environment to sustainable development; organised by English Heritage¹⁶

40 regional stakeholders in Yorkshire, including representatives from the Regional Environment Forum, Regional Development Agency, local government, and members of the Regional Historic Environment Forum attended this event. The group in general expressed concern that the historic environment did not fit naturally under the four new priority headings for the sustainable development strategy. One suggestion was that the second priority might be amended to read: 'Sustainable consumption, production and use of natural and historic resources'.

Delegates also discussed a possible new framework of historic environment indicators based on the three main groupings: **Understanding the Assets** (information on the number of listed buildings, monuments etc), **Caring and Sharing** ('condition' information on how the assets were being managed) and **Benefiting** (data on the benefits that active participation in heritage could bring in social and economic terms). In the plenary discussion the group agreed that the criteria for a good indicator included external resonance, political significance, relevance to the issues, applicability to cross-cutting themes, demonstration of change, high-level and a link to action.

¹⁶ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/brodsworth.htm>

16. Devolved Administration responses

The earlier sections of this document included responses from individuals and organisations across the UK; yet some issues of specific relevance to devolution need to be brought out.

The need for **effective leadership** from central government is a key concern of consultation responses, and a top down approach is favoured by many. However the need for different issues to be dealt with at different levels, and for **greater integration between government policies and strategies**, is also stressed many times. Central to this concern is the relationship between a UK wide strategy and those of the devolved administrations.

There is some concern that the structure of four separate strategies under a unifying framework may lead to tensions between the UK wide strategy and those of the devolved administrations. **Communication with the devolved and regional level** in both formulating and implementing policy is paramount.

Responses that were specifically relevant to devolved areas have been forwarded to the Devolved Administrations, and will feed into the formulation of their own Sustainable Development Strategies.

Themed events held by the devolved administrations

Scottish Sustainable Development Forum event¹⁷

This event took place on the 19th of May in Stirling, Scotland. Attendees urged the Government to use the responses to the consultation to develop both a framework and a strategic plan, putting the health of individuals, social equity and the physical limitations such as carrying capacity at the very heart of policy. The Government, and public agencies, must lead by example in order for the plan to be taken up more widely.

The forum called for requirement for "high and stable economic growth" in the UK Government's four objectives to be removed. **Economic vitality** is as essential as economic and social well-being, but it should be a consequence, rather than a pre-requisite, of following a truly integrated sustainable strategy.

Producers and consumers must be required to pay for the full cost of their actions with regard to **climate change**. At the same time, the Government must continue to tackle the perception that Sustainable Development is anti-business - the **business** sector must be valued for its essential role in a sustainable economy.

The issue of **debt** must be tackled. High levels of debt not only have adverse social consequences, but are incompatible with a sustainable economy because interest payments on personal and business debt are a major driver

¹⁷ http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/ssustainable_developmentf/index.htm

of the need for growth in GDP, regardless of whether such growth actually increases people's well-being.

The UK Strategy must endorse **education** for sustainable development as a priority, as a process of empowering citizens to respond to the issues of sustainable development. Strategies to support the voluntary sector should also be recognised as a priority for sustainable development.

Business in the Community (Northern Ireland)¹⁸

Three working groups met to discuss climate change and energy, SCP and use of natural resources, and changing behaviour. The workshop took place in Northern Ireland on the 22nd of June.

The key themes coming out of the **climate change** group were that the public need convincing, both through education and through tax and financial incentives. The group felt that a top level commitment was needed from Government, and greater co-operation across departments in decision making. More Government pressure on the USA was also called for.

The key themes coming out of the **SCP** group included the importance of having commitment at the top – for Government to pay “over the odds” and lead the market in sustainable procurement. More widely, fiscal measures are needed to discourage unsustainable purchasing. It is a strategic need to address sustainable **consumption**, and not just production – it needs to be ‘cool’ to buy sustainable.

For **changing behaviour**, the key theme identified was the need for legislation and enforcement. Education could be used to develop personal responsibility - this could be done positively (developing a ‘cool’ image for sustainable products) or negatively (through social embarrassment of being unsustainable). In the same way, there should be a balance between fiscal incentives and punishments.

¹⁸ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/ni.pdf>

17. Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) initial submission – Shows promise. But must try harder

Although the SDC did not submit a formal response to the consultation they have informed us that the report: ‘Shows promise. But must try harder’¹⁹ can be treated as such. The following provides a brief summary of the SDC’s priorities for a new sustainable development strategy.

The SDC see a significant gap between the Government’s assessment of progress and their own. Notably, they offer their own assessment of the Government’s progress against the headline indicators, drawing mixed conclusions, and argue for a new and better set of headline indicators. Overall, they argue that commitment to the goal of sustainable development has so far been too generalised and too patchy to deliver the changes required. As such, the SDC set challenges – twenty in total – for the UK Government, the Devolved Administrations, the English Regions, local government and society on the key issues that it identifies as presenting the biggest challenge to current patterns of behaviour and where, therefore, decisive action is required.

In particular, they identify that ‘conventional’ economic growth is currently the primary objective of society and the Government, with as much social justice and environmental protection that can be reconciled within that goal. The SDC’s vision, on the other hand, is of “a society whose primary goal should be the well-being of society itself and of the planetary resources and the environment that sustains us all, with economic objectives shaped to support that central goal rather than the other way round”. They therefore recommend a fundamental review of the Government’s four sustainable development objectives, especially the fourth of these - the economic objective.

The SDC offer broad support for most of the Government’s ten guiding principles, but highlights the need for them to be applied more consistently and rigorously. In addition the SDC see the concept of equity - both within and between countries and within and between generations - as missing from these principles.

The SDC highlight the need to incorporate sustainable development objectives and principles at the centre of all Government Department objectives and to give a clear, strong and consistent lead. They also feel that sustainable development should be incorporated in the key cross-departmental processes such as: the spending review, the budget, all public procurement and public service agreements. Furthermore, they feel that consideration should also be given to the possibility of locating lead responsibility for sustainable development in a central department which has greater leverage over other Government Departments.

¹⁹ http://www.sustainable-development-commission.org.uk/news/resource_download_search.php?attach_id=SMD0B79-7JQMZF-10HI1PA-UFRDL3I

The SDC identify fiscal measures and education as key drivers for behaviour change. They stress the need for taxes or levies to encourage more sustainable patterns of behaviour but are keen to ensure that such taxes do not put unfair burden on the poor. In terms of education, they are keen for DfES to press forward with its Sustainable Development Action Plan and ensure that sustainable development is embedded in the school curriculum, teacher training, further and higher education and educational estate management.

In 'Shows promise. But must try harder' the SDC set challenges for the Devolved Administrations and call for central and local government to act together in partnership and launch a new drive for achieving sustainability at the local level. They also call for Government to rationalise the present confusing pattern of regional sustainable development throughout the regions.

The SDC state the importance of creating behaviour change within the corporate sector and highlight the need for demanding medium and long-term targets for improved performance. They call for steadily and consistently implemented programmes of regulatory and fiscal action to support these targets and regular monitoring and reporting by business on their progress towards sustainable development.

In terms of the more specific aspects of sustainable development the Commission set challenges for sustainable consumption and production, waste, farming and food, transport, public health and climate change. As their final challenge to Government the SDC call for an increase in development assistance by setting out a firm path and timetable for the commitment of 0.7% of GDP to official development assistance and by reducing the debt burden of the poorest countries.

The SDC also held a seminar on Redefining the Prosperity Objective. Notes from this seminar can be read on the Consultation website.²⁰

²⁰ http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/sustainable_developmentc-040616.htm

18. Summary of other events

As well as all the events that covered specific themes summarised in the above chapters a number of workshops took place that discussed sustainable development in general. These are summarised below:

‘Taking it on’ consultation launch organised by Defra²¹

120 delegates from a variety of organisations attended this event which was held in London on the 21st of April. The event was chaired by Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Margaret Beckett and included keynote speeches from United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director Klaus Topfer and chair of the Sustainable Development Commission Jonathon Porritt. During the lunchtime session delegates were asked ‘What 3 outcomes would really help to further sustainable development and what action should Government take achieve them.

The most commonly stated outcome required to achieve sustainable development was that of better awareness and education and more specifically a better understanding of the benefits of acting in a more sustainable manner.

The next most commonly stated theme in the discussions was the relevance of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a headline indicator of sustainable development, many of the delegates felt that the objective of economic growth was questionable and should be re considered. One group of participants concluded: *“Establish clarity about what isn’t a part of SD (sustainable development) – economic growth is a means to an end not an end itself”*.

Reduced emissions and meeting the CO₂ target was also a reoccurring outcome highlighted by delegates as something that is a priority for furthering sustainable development and many concluded that tackling the adverse environmental impacts of aviation would go some way to achieving this outcome.

Trade and development and its negative impact on the pursuit of sustainable development was also a common theme among the delegates as were sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency. Over 50% of the delegate groups saw the use of economic instruments as something that would further sustainable development.

An outcome that would help to further sustainable development identified by one of the tables was: *“Environmental and Social Justice with a fairer distribution of wealth locally and globally”*, this was reflected by comments made by a number of other delegates.

Young persons workshop summary²²

²¹ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/launch.htm>

²² <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/commonpurpose.htm>

40 young people participated in a Common Purpose Residential programme at the University of Sussex on the 1st of July.

The group felt that, for **climate change and energy**, Government needed to focus on monetary incentives (to use alternative sources of fuel, a charge for plastic carrier bags etc), education (both in schools and in the wider community), placing environmental warnings on packaging of electrical equipment (similar to health warnings on cigarette packages), and making alternative sources of power more readily available.

In supporting community action, it is important to provide accessible information and have a representative/action group within the community where members of the public can go to with their concerns. Communication is important - ensuring individual initiatives are aware of each other and have support, and targeting the media to encourage interest, as is a coherent set of incentives for sustainable behaviour and disincentives for unsustainable behaviour.

The group investigating sustainable consumption and production believed energy consumption should be taxed. Car sharing should be encouraged – this could be part of corporate social responsibility. There was a need to increase facilities for recycling, and reduce unnecessary consumption (junk mail, bureaucracy, packaging, materials) while increasing the usage of renewable energy (solar, wind, hydro). Normal TV could be stopped for a day, replaced by a day of national campaigning on every channel highlighting issues and explaining how the public can help.

The group looking at behaviour change felt that the big focus needed to be on education. The media had to be engaged in a national campaign, similar to BBC revision campaign and 'falling tomb stone' campaign. Experts could be brought in to speak at schools. Initiatives had to be enforced, either through taxation, environmental damage charge, charge for plastic bags. The key responsibility lies with the Government to promote sustainability and make it the 'norm' within society, and the key targets should be schools, universities, and parents.

Youth consultation workshop²³

This workshop took place at Osterley House in west London on the 19th of July. It was sponsored by the Government Office for London as part of their regional consultation for 'Taking it on'. Around 200 young people aged between 16-18, from 40 different schools across London attended the day long event and between 80-100 (around 20 per session) were directly involved in the 5 themed workshops.

The group discussing climate change and energy agreed that there should be more recycling - more should be done to make recycling easier, and it should

²³ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/youthconsult.pdf>

be made compulsory by law. The majority of the group were pro-renewable sources of energy, but opinion seemed to be divided on nuclear. Car use and aviation were highlighted as key action areas.

The group believed that in addressing changing behaviour, there needed to be a balance between the Government acting now with sustainability laws, and longer-term efforts at changing attitudes. Government communication strategies for sustainable development can't compete with advertising - therefore communication strategies without company and local group support are not generally effective. The group liked strategies like the congestion charge because they were controversial and yet went ahead anyway.

On sustainable consumption and production, Government need a public information campaign, an effective labelling programme, and to lead by example. Industry and business need to offer products that represent overall good 'value' (i.e. sustainably produced and fairly traded) rather than just the cheapest.

The group felt the current indicators were 'depressing', and were trying to avoid negatives. They came up with a list of positive indicators to show moving towards sustainability rather than away from un-sustainability.

19. Session two responses

The participants that were invited to take part in the online consultation were also invited to take part in a second session. This was, to some extent, a process about the process - an opportunity to reflect on the initial answers to the consultation document, and focus more sharply on priority issues, rather than merely repeat what had already been said.

Below is a short summary of the responses to the 3 new questions posed for this session.

Q1. What comments or observations do you have about participants' responses to the questions in Session 1?

The purpose of this first question was to get an overall sense of whether the consultation had attracted the full range of opinions about sustainable development, and the extent of agreement revealed.

The 74 participants seem generally impressed with the range and quality of responses – especially, as some put it, given the number and complexity of the questions. They were less sure about the degree of consensus achieved. Some seem to think there is an emerging consensus about the importance of sustainable development, others are more concerned about the differences displayed and the pursuit of sectoral interests. There seems to be some agreement that these issues are becoming increasingly urgent and that action is needed now, rather than more reports or consultations. There is also agreement that government needs to offer clearer leadership and that there is a huge job of education and awareness-raising to be done.

Q2. What one or two specific actions, by each of the following 6 sectors, between now and 2010, would convince you that serious progress is being made on sustainable development?

The purpose of this question was to give participants the opportunity to focus precisely on their absolute priorities and to identify specific actions (i.e. who does what and, preferably, how) – to get away from the general and the aspirational – thereby reflecting the calls for action noted above. In this respect the question worked reasonably well. Below provides a quantitative summary of these actions.

Specific actions for Central Government: According to 23 of the 141 submissions made here, the Government should be using fiscal measures to advance sustainable development. 18 focus on transport policy, 16 on leadership, another 16 on education and awareness-raising, 15 on climate change, 14 on Government procurement. Among the other areas mentioned are land use and planning, the legislative framework, and joined up thinking and working.

Specific actions by local government:

The major thrust required here for 18 of the 111 contributions is 'joining up' through bringing together both separate organizations and building ownership within communities. Others focus on specific ideas to build sustainable development into decision-making, whether at the heart of local government (12), the planning system (16), or in particular areas such as waste (12).

Specific actions by large businesses or trade/industry groups:

25 of the 119 ideas presented here focused on the need for business to use monitoring and reporting systems more effectively, and 13 say that sustainable development needs to be adopted as a core business value. 10 mention the value of working in partnership with others. Altogether some 30 areas of potential action are identified.

Specific actions by small and medium-sized businesses:

Among the 89 suggestions here, 18 focus on the need for SMEs to have training and support in the area of sustainable development. Auditing and management tools are valued by 15, and 10 see the answer in various forms of partnership and collaboration, or in realising that sustainable development is itself a potential market.

Specific actions by community and voluntary sector groups:

For many of the 76 responses, it is the community and voluntary sector groups which are spearheading sustainable development, and whose job it is to develop and support local initiatives (15). But 12 also mention the need for such groups to develop their own awareness and application of sustainable development, particularly – as mentioned by 10 – they have a role in the promotion of sustainable development.

Specific actions by individuals:

Of the 101 responses here, 64 mention the need for individuals to take personal responsibility and action in relation to sustainable development. This can take many forms: from lobbying politicians and local council to being more careful about what one buys, reducing car usage and educating children to understand the demands of sustainable development.

Q3. What will get sustainable development thinking and understanding into the mainstream?

The final question of Session 2 picked up on a recurring theme in Session 1: the need to educate, inform and generally raise people's awareness of sustainable development. The 77 responses include many ideas, ranging from national awareness campaigns (30), through leadership, including the involvement of celebrities (26) and integrating sustainable development into the formal education system (24) to changes in the legislative and taxation frameworks. A recurrent theme, underpinning all the methods advocated, is to find and use language that strips away sustainable development jargon and makes sense of the subject to 'ordinary people'.

20. Further information

Copies of the full responses are available by calling at or writing to the following addresses, or by phoning the numbers given below. If you are calling at one of the libraries, you should give them at least 24 hours' notice of what you need. You will have to pay an administrative charge to cover photocopying and postage costs.

In **England**

Defra Information Resource Centre
Lower Ground Floor
Ergon House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

tel: 020 7238 6575
defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk

In **Scotland**

Scottish Executive Library
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD

tel: 0131 244 4552

In **Northern Ireland**

Department of Environment
Environmental Policy Division
20-24 Donegall Street
Belfast

tel: 02890 (5) 44582

In **Wales**

Strategic Policy Unit
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