

### Session 3 – Redefining Prosperity

Redefining Prosperity is a new project from the Sustainable Development Commission following on from a report of the same name written by Jonathon Porritt and published by SDC in 2003. Redefining Prosperity was broadly about the relationship between sustainability and economic growth. This new project will revisit this key area of debate, in the light of:-

- The increasing interest in “wellbeing” as a possible aim of government policy (potentially in conflict with the “growth” aim)
- Increasing evidence about the effects of current patterns of economic activity on carbon emissions, the atmosphere, and the global environment.
- The need to bring greater economic precision to the debate about growth and sustainability.

The project will ask four main questions initially, although these will no doubt lead to others –

- Can long-term economic growth be environmentally sustainable?
- If it is possible, what policies would be needed to make it happen?
- If it is not possible, how could the UK adapt to a no-growth path of economic development? For example, what would be the consequences for wellbeing, employment, tax revenues, profits and international competitiveness?
- Are there alternative conceptions of “prosperity”, perhaps based on ideas about “wellbeing”, which might become attractive alternatives to current ideas about development, individual prosperity and social progress, all of which are based on economic growth?

This is an ambitious agenda, setting out some of the issues which might be seen as following on from the debate about “wellbeing” and how it should be measured. This agenda is about taking the concept of “sustainable development” seriously, and seeing where it leads.

SDC is inviting involvement in this project which is intended to take around a year. If you can contribute in some way to the research and discussion for this project, please get in touch with the SDC project manager Victor Anderson at: [victor.anderson@sd-commission.org.uk](mailto:victor.anderson@sd-commission.org.uk). The SDC Commissioner leading this work is Professor Tim Jackson (University of Surrey).