A review of progress towards sustainable development in the UK
– The contribution made by regional and devolved government, the private sector and NGOs

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Sustainable Development Commission

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A Review of Progress Towards Sustainable Development in the UK: *The Contribution Made by Regional and Devolved Government, the Private Sector and NGOs*

January 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIMS:

The recently formed Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) has commissioned two papers to provide the Commission with an analysis of the current state of sustainable development in the UK. These papers will help the Commission identify priorities for its activities in seeking to accelerate the shift towards sustainable development in the UK.

This paper has been prepared by Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and provides a review of progress made in contributing to sustainable development by Regional and Devolved Government, the Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The review is based on existing knowledge of work undertaken by these organisations and makes use of the Government's sustainability indicators; the review has not involved the collection of a detailed set of new data.

CAG Consultants have been commissioned to undertake a parallel review of contribution made by central and local government.

The analysis has sought to cover five key themes identified by the SDC and listed below. The selection of these key themes was informed by a joint SDC and UNED/UK conference held in November 2000 to identify UK priorities for the 2002 Earth Summit (Rio plus 10).   The five key themes:

- Participation, leadership and the relationship between the responsibilities of citizens and government.

- Access including transport, mobility and the planning / land use dimension.

- Improving eco-efficiency with a particular focus on production eco-efficiency.

- Health, including de-coupling it from sickness treatment and the role of lifestyle and consumption choices.

- Food production and consumption, with a focus on agriculture and rural land use (environmental management of the rural landscape).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Tables 1 to 3 summarise the progress made by Regional and Devolved Government, the Private Sector and NGOs in contributing to sustainable development. Sections 3 to 7 in the main report present findings in relation to the five key themes.

Table 1:   *Summary of Progress Towards Sustainable Development - Regional and Devolved Government:*

Issue:	Activities:	Progress:
Sustainable Development Strategy	Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks; DA Sustainable Development Strategies	RSDFs are being produced by all English regions and provide a potentially very useful frameworks for integrating SD into regional activities. But regional partners need to use them effectively rather than being 'put on the shelf and allowed to gather dust'. Similarly, the SD strategies, 'schemes' or approaches which have been or are being developed in Wales, NI, Scotland and London.
Integrating Sustainable Development into development strategies/policies	Regional Economic Strategies Scottish, Welsh and N Irish Programmes	SD is being integrated (with varying degrees of success) into development strategies. In Scotland, the "Programme for Government" requires all Executive Bills to be scrutinised against SD criteria. "Better Wales" aims to mainstream SD into the delivery of Assembly Programmes. The challenge is now to translate this strategic commitment in SD into action through implementation of the strategies. Sustainability appraisals have been carried out on the RESs and some of the related action plans, but this is no guarantee that SD will feed into delivery of the economic strategies.
Other strategies:	E.g. Regional Planning Guidance & Transport Strategies;	Other regional strategies are beginning to address SD - e.g. integrated transport aspects in Regional Transport Strategies, but specific transport projects being implemented on the ground often pre-date these strategies or the establishment of the RDAs/National Assemblies and many therefore tend towards 'business as usual'.
	Energy;	All regions are producing renewables strategies and seeking to develop targets for renewables relating to the government's 2010 target. In Scotland, there is a strong sectoral focus on energy, with SE using its leverage as a consumer to develop a stronger market in renewables.
	Rural Development Plans	Strong emphasis on more sustainable agricultural practices, communities and economies. But still the bulk of funding goes towards more traditional agricultural support schemes.
Sustainable Development in Funding mechanisms	Structural funds	Efforts have been made throughout the UK to integrate SD into EU Structural Fund programmes (again with varying degree of success) rather than having SD as a stand alone priority. A number of programmes have been subject to SD appraisal. In addition, partners such as the GOs and Environment Agency have assisted programme secretariats to integrate SD into programme implementation.
	RDA Funding sources	Current funding streams for are dictated by existing programmes and often offer little scope for integration of economic, social and environmental issues. However, Government commitment to 'single pot' funding for RDAs has the potential to increase integration in the future.
Sustainable programme / project delivery	Project delivery	RDAs are currently looking at project selection criteria in order to identify the scope for including sustainability criteria. They are also trying to identify 'beacon' ('win-win-win') projects to support.
Monitoring and Evaluation against SD:	RDA Evaluation of impact	Indicators for monitoring the contribution of organisations such as the RDAs, WDA, NI Exec and Scottish Enterprise are being developed but are at a relatively early stage – in Scotland the consultation process will start in early 2001

Table 1 continued:

Others:	Government Offices	GOs have been closely involved in many of the regional activities to promote SD (e.g. RSDF, RPG). There is a need for a more distinct role for the GOs in relation to SD and for greater integration of different GO programmes and departmental activities
	Round Tables/Other Fora	RRTs are catalysing SD activity in the English regions using different structures and with varying degrees of success. But they lack core funding and – sometimes – stable leadership. There are plans for an SD forum in Wales – precise structure and remit yet to be decided. Scotland has just abolished its multi-sectoral advisory body on SD, but retains a Ministerial Group involving external membership.
	Sub-regional partners	Regional partners and organisations at the sub-regional level have a key role in translating strategic commitment to SD into practice and there is considerable scope for extending existing limited examples of good practice in this area amongst SRPs. Focus on the role of local government and local communities is especially strong in the Devolved Administrations

Table 2:   *Summary of Progress Towards Sustainable Development - Private Sector*

Issue:	Activities:	Progress:
Sustainable Development Strategy	Corporate vision statements and goals	A small minority of companies are embedding SD into corporate strategies and goals – but the majority of businesses are still not engaged, especially SMEs.
		Some companies are seeing a business case for SD, particularly those with international operations or who see reputational risk attached to their performance in re. SD. However, behaviour of the majority of companies is not being driven by government or market drivers for SD - these drivers remain undeveloped.
		Overall business awareness of SD is low.
Integrating SD into policies	Corporate social responsibility	More companies are addressing single aspects e.g. corporate social responsibility, environmental sustainability.
	Climate change and energy	Most activity is amongst high energy users / companies in the energy sector. Many companies appear to be against the use of economic instruments for promoting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
	Transport & distribution	A small number of companies are pursing green transport plans / non-road freight transport initiatives.
		At present much of this activity is at the single company or single site level, this is indicative of the lack of any framework for industry to follow on sustainable transport issues.
	Eco-efficiency	There are a number of initiatives (sectoral and across industries) to look at what eco-efficiency means in practice in areas such as production and packaging. Groups such as WBCSD are attempting to develop basic frameworks for assessing and implementing eco-efficiency, such as 'eco-efficiency metrics'. There does not appear to be a common understanding of what eco-efficiency or concepts such as 'Factor 10' or 'Factor 4' really mean or signs of more fundamental reductions in resource use.
	Participation and stakeholders	Some examples of stakeholder engagement and consultation as a reputational risk management tool and license to operate.
Integrating sustainability into operations	Processes and site management	Increasing uptake of environmental management systems (e.g. ISO 14001), but still limited to a small minority of companies.
	Products	In most product groups and amongst larger producers there are 'environmentally friendly product' niches but product labelling and claims are still problem areas and producers are not really addressing product durability and still tend to focus on selling more products.
	Procurement	There are good opportunities for encouraging companies to change behaviour through supply changes. Some major retailers are responding to customer pressure on product traceability and are providing more information on product sourcing, processing etc. But in other sectors there are no real exogenous drivers to change procurement practices.
Reporting	Environment and social	Sustainability reporting is still in its infancy. Participants in initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative tend to be limited to larger companies. The vast majority of companies do not produce even environmental reports and there seems to be no mechanism for changing this situation.
		There is a need to assess the real impact of reporting in terms of promoting SD.
	Company performance	Current measures of performance remain overwhelmingly financial and fail to take account of environmental or 'citizenship' issues.

Table 3:   *Summary of Progress Towards Sustainable Development - NGOs*

Level:	Activities:	Progress:
Involvement in national/internatio nal Sustainable Development Strategies		Many different NGOs are involved in activities to promote SD - focusing on single issues or integration of social, environmental and social issues. Their activities include public, industry and government awareness raising, lobbying, community programmes and direct delivery of projects and services to promote SD. These activities have generated significant results in some issues (e.g. GMOs), but in other areas public behaviour and government policy appear relatively unaffected (e.g. transport issues).
	Participation	NGOs play an important role in encouraging and providing a means of participation by the public in sustainability issues. This role is recognised by the public and business.
	Transport and access	NGO activities have raised the profile of SD issues on the transport policy agenda, but appear to have had limited impact on public attitudes and government policy.
	Eco-efficiency	In general, little attention has been given to this issue by NGOs in the UK. However, activities by a number of NGOs (e.g. Forum for the Future's 'Natural Step') have sought to assist companies improve eco-efficiency. NGOs have lobbied Government to adopt a national indicator of eco-efficiency.
	Food and rural land use	NGO activity has been effective in raising public awareness of issues in this area, providing expertise (e.g. the Soil Association) and promoting closer examination of Government policy.
		Work of NGOs on SD is often overlapping.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR ACCELERATING PROGRESS:

The study identifies a range of actions for accelerating progress towards sustainable development. In a number of cases there appears to be considerable scope for the SDC to become involved, either as a catalyst for action by others or as a leading partner in specific projects and initiatives.

Recommendations relating to Regional and Devolved Government, Private Sector and NGO activities (taken from Section 2 of the main report) are shown below. Recommendations relating to the five key themes are highlighted at the end of relevant sections of the report.

Table 4:   Recommended Actions for Increasing the Contribution of Regional and Devolved Government to Sustainable Development:

Action:	*By Whom:*
Work closely with Devolved Administrations and regional organisations to ensure that SDC work programme reflects regional and national differences, and is not excessively London-centred	SDC
Encourage the establishment of sustainable development fora at sub-UK level, and develop links with these new organisations	SDC
Support a network of Regional Round Tables in England, share best practice and act as their advocate in Whitehall	SDC
Encourage devolved and regional bodies (which include development agencies) in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to incorporate SD into their performance indicators and encourage consistency within regions	DETR
Encourage devolved and regional bodies to undertake staff training and awareness raising regarding SD.	DETR
Support activities by devolved and regional bodies to incorporate SD into project appraisal criteria.	DETR / SDC
Provide guidance to regional development organisations on integrating sustainable development into the forthcoming 'single pot' funding arrangements.	DETR
Work with Regional Chambers to develop guidelines and approaches for making use of the RSDFs and reporting on progress in delivering the RSDFs.	SDC
Assist Regional Chambers develop approaches for monitoring and evaluating the performance of RDAs in relation to SD.	SDC
Encourage regional organisations to make active use of the RSDFs.	SDC / DETR
Support the development of a distinctive role for the Government Offices (GO) in the Regions in relation to SD.	DETR / GOs / SDC
Work with Development Agencies across the UK to develop methods for demonstrating the added value of their activities to SD.	SDC
Encourage devolved and regional bodies to allocate staff responsibilities for promoting SD - at senior Board level and operational levels.	DETR / SDC

Table 5:   *Recommended Actions for Increasing the Contribution of the Private Sector to Sustainable Development:*

Action:	By Whom:
The SDC could hold a major conference on the respective roles of the private sector, government and the public in advancing SD in order to focus discussion on the relationships between these key actors and to identify linked actions.	SDC
Issue clear guidance to industry on sustainability reporting.	DETR
Provide awareness-raising and communication initiatives on SD at senior and middle-management level in businesses.	SDC / CBI / IOD
Increase awareness of sustainable development / competitiveness issues amongst SMEs.	DTI / SBS / RDAs
Work with financial / investment organisations to establish approaches for screening investments against sustainable development criteria, building on the experience of 'Project Forge' (DTI, DETR. BBA and ABI). Encourage the expansion of green or ethical investment funds.	DETR / DTI / SDC
Commission research to assess the potential for companies to extend their responsibility to the behaviour of product consumers.	SDC
Encourage Government to explore ways of strengthening drivers for companies to go beyond 'good practice' towards step changes in products and processes.	SDC / DTI / DETR
Review the effectiveness and if appropriate extend the number of sectoral sustainability strategies.	DETR
Examine the credibility of concepts such as 'Factor 10'.	DETR / SDC / DTI

Table 6:   *Recommended Actions for Increasing the Contribution of NGOs to Sustainable Development:*

Action:	By Whom:
Integration of Issues: Encourage further integration of social, environmental and economic issues in the work of UK NGOs.	NGOs / SDC
Partnership Working: There are an increasing number of partnerships between NGOs and other sectors (notably business). It is important that the effectiveness of these partnerships is debated and reviewed, to establish greater understanding among NGOs (and other groups) of the criteria for successful partnerships.	NGOs / SDC
Increased co-operation between NGOs: UK NGOs may be able to exert greater influence on government, and indeed others, by uniting on issues of common interest. Organisations should examine the scope and likely benefits of further co-operation - for example, on issues such as climate change, which are being addressed by a large number of NGOs.	NGOs
Public Attitudes to Sustainable Development: The SDC could assess strategies for shifting public attitudes towards sustainable development, and the role that can be played by government, business, NGOs and others.	NGOs / SDC / DETR

1.   INTRODUCTION

The recently formed Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) has commissioned two papers to provide the Commission with an analysis of the current state of sustainable development in the UK. These papers will help the Commission identify priorities for its activities in seeking to accelerate the shift towards sustainable development in the UK.

This paper has been prepared by Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and provides a review of progress made in contributing to sustainable development by Regional and Devolved Government, the Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The review is based on existing knowledge of work undertaken by these organisations and makes use of the Government's sustainability indicators; the review has not involved the collection of a detailed set of new data.

CAG Consultants have been commissioned to undertake a parallel review of contribution made by central and local government.

The analysis has sought to cover five key themes identified by the SDC and listed below. The selection of these key themes was informed by a joint SDC and UNED/UK conference held in November 2000 to identify UK priorities for the 2002 Earth Summit (Rio plus 10).   The five key themes:

- Participation, leadership and the relationship between the responsibilities of citizens and government.

- Access including transport, mobility and the planning / land use dimension.

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- Food production and consumption, with a focus on agriculture and rural land use (environmental management of the rural landscape).

1.1   STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER

After this introduction, the paper is structured into the following sections:

- Section 2 - **Overview of Activities**: Provides an overview of the progress made by Regional and Devolved Government, the Private Sector and NGOs.

- Sections 3 to 7 - **Key Themes:** These sections cover the five key themes identified above. Each section outlines the progress made towards sustainable development by Regional and Devolved Government, the Private Sector and NGOs. Actions are recommended for accelerating progress in the future

1.2   *SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

In line with the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development, "A Better Quality of Life" (DETR 1999), this paper defines sustainable development according to four broad objectives:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.

- Effective protection of the environment.

- Prudent use of natural resources.

- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

DETR Guidance[1] states that "Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It is concerned with achieving economic growth, in the form of higher living standards, while protecting and where possible enhancing the environment - not just for its own sake but because a damaged environment will sooner or later hold back economic growth and lower the quality of life. Sustainable development is equally concerned with making sure that these economic and environmental benefits are available to everyone, not just to a privileged few".

Sustainable development is about the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives so that they are achieved at the same time. This requires new ways of working in order to uncouple economic growth from environmental impacts and related social impacts and also to extend the benefits of economic growth to all parts of society, including excluded or disadvantaged groups in the UK and internationally.

Progress towards sustainable development requires an increase in the uptake of good practice activities, such as energy efficiency, and the development of fundamentally new ways of doing things. It requires gradual incremental changes, as well as more dramatic change in order to provide benefits to broader social groups in the UK and internationally and reduce environmental impacts, many of which have long lag-times or may be irreversible.

The challenging nature of moving towards sustainable development needs to be emphasised. Sustainable development is about establishing positive

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(1) Supplementary Guidance to the Regional Development Agencies, DETR April 1999

synergies between economic, environmental and social objectives – which do not at present exist. This requires major changes by all groups, in patterns of production and consumption and, ultimately, in lifestyles. 'Good practice', which goes beyond compliance, is the next step after regulation, but it is only a starting point for the scale of change required.   Technological advance may help to make these changes, if it is immense and positive – but, clearly, it cannot be relied upon. The use of information and communication technologies, for example, may help to 'dematerialise' the way we do things, but it can also lead to increases in overall levels of economic activity and consumption – these technologies are therefore tools, the effect of which depends on how we use them.

1.2.1 *Where is the UK in terms of progress towards sustainable development?*

In November 1998, the DETR published its first report on UK performance against the Government's sustainability indicators. The DETR published an update of progress against these indicators in January 2001. As shown in Figure 1.1, performance against the headline indicators varies - positive progress has been made since 1990 in areas such as economic output, education, climate change, air quality and river water quality; but no progress or a deterioration has occurred in areas such as investment, poverty and social inclusion, road traffic, wildlife and waste arisings.

Progress requires action by all of us: government (central, regional and local), the private sector, the voluntary sector, the public and consumers. Whilst the following analysis focuses only on UK Regional and Devolved Government, the private sector and NGOs, the impacts and actions of these organisations are clearly closely linked, and must be viewed in the context of actions by central and local government (the subject of the paper by CAG Consultants), the UK public and the international setting.

Figure 1.1:   *UK Headline Indicators for Sustainable Development*

Indicator number	Indicator		Change 1990-1999	Data used
Economic				
H1	**Economic output** (GDP)		✅	UK, 1990-99
H2	**Investment** (as % of GDP)		❌	UK, 1990-98
H3	**Employment**		≈	UK, 1990-99
Social				
H4	**Poverty and social exclusion**		≈	UK, 1990-99
H5	**Education** (qualifications at age 19)		✅	UK, 1990-99
H6	**Health** (expected years of healthy life)		≈	GB, 1990-97
H7	**Housing**		≈	England, 1991-96
H8	**Crime**	Violent crime	❌	E&W, 1990-99/00
		Vehicle, burglary	✅	E&W, 1990-99/00
Environment				
H9	**Climate change** (greenhouse gases)		✅	UK, 1990-98
H10	**Air quality** (days of air pollution)		✅	UK, 1990-99
H11	**Road traffic**		≈	GB, 1990-99
H12	**River water quality**		✅	UK, 1990-99
H13	**Wildlife** Farmland birds		❌	UK, 1990-98
H14	**Land use** (% new homes on previously developed land)		≈	England, 1990-98
H15	**Waste** (arisings and management)	Household	❌	UK, 1990-98
		Other	⦿	UK, 1998

Key:	
Significant change, in direction of meeting objective	✅
no significant change	≈
Significant change, in direction away from meeting objective	❌
Insufficient or no comparable data	⦿

Source: DETR 2001

2.   OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

2.1   REGIONAL AND DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT

2.1.1   Scope

In the last three years, there have been significant developments in the structure of government in the UK, including the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, the National Assembly for Wales, Regional Development Agencies and Regional Chambers in the English regions and the Greater London Authority (the Mayor of London, the London Assembly, the London Development Agency) [1] . As well as these new bodies, existing organisations such the Government Offices for the Regions, Scottish Enterprise and the Welsh Development Agency have also continued to play a key role in regional development activities.

These organisations have been given responsibilities for developing Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the English regions and, therefore, have an important role in promoting sustainable development. Their contribution to promoting sustainable development is analysed below.

Policy Context:

The policy context in which devolved and regional government now operate has been established by a range of Government policies and guidance [2]. These place a strong emphasis on the need to promote sustainable development and on principles such as decentralised decision making, the importance of focusing on regional needs and a shared vision for developing a region, partnership, integration of economic, social and environmental goals and a strong element of accountability.

This policy context and the specific duties imposed on regional bodies to promote sustainable development (e.g. statutory duties placed on the RDAs [3], the Greater London Authority and the National Assembly for Wales[4]) provide a strong impetus and significant opportunities for promoting sustainable development through the activities of regional bodies to develop the regions.

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(1)Throughout this paper, the term "regions" is sometimes used to encompass the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, London, and the English Regions. While we recognise that Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are not 'regions', it is difficult to find an alternative term to encapsulate the concept of government at sub-UK level..

(2)Examples of sources of the policy context include: the White Paper 'Building Partnerships for Prosperity' (December 1997), the government's sustainable development strategy 'A Better Quality of Life' (1998), the Performance and Innovation Unit's report 'Reaching Out', the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, the Rural White Paper, the Urban White Paper, the Competitiveness White Paper 'Building our Competitive Future' (1998), guidance on regional strategies, guidance on Regional Planning Guidance and the Spending Review 2000.

(3) Under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, one of the RDA's statutory purposes is to "contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK, where it is relevant to its area to do so".

(4) The National Assembly for Wales has a duty under Section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions.

| 2.1.2 | *Actions by Devolved and Regional Government to Contribute to Sustainable Development* |

The emergence of these organisations has been accompanied by a significant increase in attention given to sustainable development in the context of regional development. This has in part been driven by statutory duties to contribute to sustainable development, as well as driven by the expectations of many other national and regional organisations and stakeholders.

Wales: In Wales, the National Assembly for Wales has finalised a "scheme" to promote sustainable development. A consultation process is now underway on an "action plan" to implement this scheme, as well as on the use of sustainability indicators. The Scheme includes a proposal to establish a new sustainable development Forum for Wales. The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) is also preparing a sustainable development policy for promoting sustainable development through its own activities. The National Assembly has also formulated a strategy for its work to develop Wales 'Better Wales' (2000) in which sustainable development is an underlying or cross-cutting theme.

The WDA and partners in Wales have also prepared guidance for promoting sustainable development through the Objective 1 Programme for West Wales and the Valleys (under the European Regional Development Fund).

Scotland: In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament, unlike the National Assembly for Wales, has no statutory duties relating to sustainable development and is leaving it to the Scottish Executive to give a lead. The Executive has adopted a strong sectoral focus on the issue of sustainable development, and has identified waste, energy and travel as the Executive's key priorities for sustainable development and is developing guidance on these three issues for public bodies. The Executive is also developing sustainability indicators and all New Bills in Scotland are required to be accompanied by memoranda explaining their implications for sustainable development.

Northern Ireland: In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Executive plans to publish a strategy for sustainable development by April 2001. The Department of the Environment, within the Executive, is responsible for integrating sustainable development into the different policies and activities of the Executive.

London: In London, the Greater London Authority has a duty to deliver sustainable development through all the Mayor's strategies, which cover spatial planning, culture, transport, biodiversity, waste, air quality and noise. The Mayor has also added an energy strategy. The Mayor must also produce an economic development strategy, being written for him by the London Development Agency.

The GLA is seeking to deliver consistent and integrated strategies through a common approach to sustainable development, and it has been working towards an agreed set of sustainable development principles to guide this

work. In addition, the Mayor has announced that he will be setting up a Sustainable Development Commission for London.

The English Regions: The following range of activities have been undertaken by regional organisations in order to promote sustainable development:

- **Regional Economic Strategies [1] & RDAs**: In the eight English regions, the RDAs and regional partners have sought to integrate sustainable development (with varying degrees of success) into the Regional Economic Strategies (RES). The RDAs have been assisted in this by the Government Offices for the Regions and Agencies such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Countryside Agency.

  In line with DETR requirements, the English regions have undertaken – though sometimes after the event - sustainability appraisals of the Regional Economic Strategies.   Action plans are also being developed and appraised against sustainable development criteria. Some RDAs – eg SW RDA – have specific training programmes for staff in sustainable development.

  The Regional Economic Strategies and the Action Plans to implement them contain many examples of positive actions which successfully integrate economic, social and environmental objectives and which will undoubtedly contribute to sustainable development. Examples are shown in Box 2.1.

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(1) 'Regional Economic Strategies' are also sometimes referred to as 'RDA Regional Strategies' or 'Regional Strategies'.

Box 2.1:   Examples of RDA Actions for Promoting Sustainable Development

- Community led regeneration activities which enhance local employment opportunities, environmental improvement, quality of life and social inclusion.

- Increased access to skills and learning for all parts of the community, particularly disadvantaged groups.

- Promotion of rural public transport services and development of integrated transport schemes.

- Activities to support the expansion of high growth, 'clean' industry sectors, which provide high quality jobs and relatively low environmental impacts.

- Actions to attract and embed inward investment into local economies in order to provide lasting employment opportunities and reduction of environmental impacts of inward investment.

- Actions to encourage the use of brownfield land over the use of greenfield sites.

- Support for businesses supplying environment goods and services and development of renewable energy generation capacity.

- Actions to highlight the contribution of the environment to regional economic development and the quality of life.

- Support for the development of regional and local agricultural produce and the supply of produce to markets within the region.

- The promotion of management best practice in businesses – including innovation, human resource and environmental practices.

- **Regional Sustainable Development Framework:** As well as work in relation to the Regional Economic Strategies, the Government has required each English region to develop a Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF). These identify regional sustainability priorities, targets and indicators and have involved strong partnership working between regional organisations such as the Regional Assemblies, RDAs, the Government Offices for the Regions, Government agencies such as the Environment Agency, NHS Executives, sub-regional partnerships, local authorities, NGOs, business representatives, education associations, Regional Sustainability Round Tables and organisations such as Sustainability North West.

- **Regional Planning Guidance:** The Regional Assemblies and Regional Planning Conferences have also been seeking to integrate sustainable development into revised Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) during revision of RPG, including through the use of sustainability appraisal of RPG, in line with DETR guidance. Activities have also focused on integrating sustainable development into Regional Transport Strategies (which form part of RPG), particularly via regional multi-modal studies (discussed further in Section 5.2 below).

- **The Role of Government Offices for the Regions:** Regional Government Office objectives include an objective "To support and promote a coherent

regional approach to competitiveness; sustainable development; regeneration and social inclusion both through the government programmes over which the GO has direct control and by influencing the action of partners/partnerships"

Their activities – sometimes in partnership with local authorities[1] - have included:

- preparation of Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks

- providing secretariats for Regional Sustainability Round Tables

- work to integrate sustainable development into the EU Structural Fund programmes

- delivery, funding and support of regional programmes and projects, e.g. preparation of regional food and produce strategies, programmes to support environmental businesses (e.g. promoting Government programmes such as Envirowise), waste minimisation initiatives and projects such as the GONW Support for the Mersey Basin Campaign.

- establishment of regional sustainability organisations such as Sustainability North West

- regional communication projects relating to sustainable development - for example, the South West's 'www.oursouthwest.com' which provides a clearing house on sustainability issues and organisations involved in the South West.

- **Other Regional Players.** Regional Round Tables on sustainable development exist in a variety of different forms in most English Regions. They are often funded or supported in kind by GO's, but currently lack a source of core programme funding. They focus on building cross-sectoral capacity on sustainable development, and place a high priority on working with business.

2.1.3   *How effective have these activities been in contributing to sustainable development?*

Many of the activities outlined above have occurred in the last two years, and generally, the promotion of sustainable development through regional development initiatives is at a relatively early stage. Similarly, the Devolved Administrations are still new organisations, and their sustainable development programmes are barely at the implementation stage, if that. Efforts so far have largely focused on embracing the overall concept of

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(1) [1] The Local Government Act 2000 establishes a power for local authorities to "do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objects: (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area, (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area, and (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area." The Act also requires that every "local authority must prepare a strategy (a 'community strategy') for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom." These strategies will build on existing Local Agenda 21 strategies and actions.

sustainable development and integrating it into high level strategic documents such as the Regional Economic Strategies, and identifying sustainable development objectives in documents such as RSDFs, the National Assembly's 'scheme' for sustainable development and the GLA's strategy for sustainable development.

There has been mixed success in integrating sustainable development into the Regional Economic Strategies. In some cases, sustainable development is firmly embedded and the strategies have been successful in highlighting the positive linkages between economic, social and environmental objectives and stress how sustainable development is essential to the long-term success of the region.

However, in a number of other regions, sustainable development appears as something of an add-on and it is unclear how the objectives and actions will generate sustainable development. Scope exists for strengthening the contribution of the Strategies to sustainable development in terms of further de-coupling economic growth from increased environmental impact and ensuring that the benefits of development reach all parts of society. In this respect a number of the Strategies tend to resemble traditional models of economic development rather than heralding a more marked shift towards a more sustainable growth path.

Nevertheless, the Regional Economic Strategies and the Action Plans to implement them contain many examples of positive actions which will undoubtedly contribute to sustainable development (as shown in Box 2.1 above). There is, however, considerable scope for more widespread implementation of these and other actions to promote sustainable development.

Having completed the preparation of the Regional Economic Strategies, the RDAs and regional partners now face a greater challenge of translating strategic commitments to sustainable development into practice. In implementing the strategies, there are concerns that economic objectives will take precedence over broader sustainable development, social and environmental objectives. Obstacles to progress towards sustainable development include the fact that:

- Many of the projects being implemented by Development Agencies in the Regions and the Devolved Administrations have been inherited from pre-existing programmes (for example, transport projects). These often contain little in the way of the integrated thinking of sustainable development and the criteria which determine the allocation of funds do not necessarily reflect regional sustainability priorities. However, it is hoped that the move in April 2002 [1] towards integrated funding for RDAs, to replace 'silo' funding, will help put sustainable development into practice.

(1) Transitional arrangements come into effect in April 2001.

- At present, most English regions lack of clear set of regional priorities for sustainable development to guide the implementation of regional development programmes. However, it is hoped that these priorities will be provided by the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks.

- The current criteria and indicators used for monitoring regional development and the success of organisations such as the RDAs tend to focus on economic measures of development, rather than sustainable development. This is a particular concern because of the competition between regions in the UK and internationally for jobs and inward investment. The eagerness to attract these jobs and investment may override broader sustainable development objectives.

- It will be important to continue to build experience and awareness of sustainable development amongst personnel in regional organisations with responsibilities for implementing regional development programmes (including in RDAs, regional partners and sub-regional partnerships). Individuals will need to develop further experience in ways of promoting economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time. It is therefore important that good practice in designing projects in order to promote sustainable development is identified and disseminated.

- There are limited resources in organisations such as the RDAs available or allocated for the promotion of sustainable development. The RDAs also have limited resources available to encourage and assist regional partners promote sustainable development (as opposed to delivering existing programmes in a way which promotes 'business as usual').

- Regional bodies are, arguably, relatively powerless in addressing some major sustainable development issues. For example, promotion of more sustainable transport is to a large degree dependent on national policies and funding, rather than regional actions.

- The Regional Economic Strategies often give significant weight to the development of certain high growth, high-tech sectors, and it is unclear how the development of these sectors will provide benefits for disadvantaged groups, traditional industry sectors or for rural areas.

On a more positive note, Regional Development Agencies and regional partners are increasingly aware of these issues and are now seeking to address them.

In terms of the work of the Government Offices, 'Reaching Out', highlighted the need for further integration of different GO activities (eg. economic, regeneration and social) and a need for clearer demarcation of GO responsibilities - including for sustainable development.

2.1.4   *Recommended Actions for Increasing the Contribution of Regional and Devolved Government to Sustainable Development:*

Action:	*By Whom:*
Work closely with Devolved Administrations and regional organisations to ensure that SDC work programme reflects regional and national differences, and is not excessively London-centred	SDC
Encourage the establishment of sustainable development fora at sub-UK level, and develop links with these new organisations	SDC
Support a network of Regional Round Tables in England, share best practice and act as their advocate in Whitehall	SDC
Encourage devolved and regional bodies (which include development agencies) in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to incorporate SD into their performance indicators and encourage consistency within regions	DETR
Encourage devolved and regional bodies to undertake staff training and awareness raising regarding SD.	DETR
Support activities by devolved and regional bodies to incorporate SD into project appraisal criteria.	DETR / SDC
Provide guidance to regional development organisations on integrating sustainable development into the forthcoming 'single pot' funding arrangements.	DETR
Work with Regional Chambers to develop guidelines and approaches for making use of the RSDFs and reporting on progress in delivering the RSDFs.	SDC
Assist Regional Chambers develop approaches for monitoring and evaluating the performance of RDAs in relation to SD.	SDC
Encourage regional organisations to make active use of the RSDFs.	SDC / DETR
Support the development of a distinctive role for the Government Offices (GO) in the Regions in relation to SD.	DETR / GOs / SDC
Work with Development Agencies across the UK to develop methods for demonstrating the added value of their activities to SD.	SDC
Encourage devolved and regional bodies to allocate staff responsibilities for promoting SD - at senior Board level and operational levels.	DETR / SDC

2.2   *THE PRIVATE SECTOR*

2.2.1   *Scope*

The private sector is basically defined as 'businesses'. This category clearly covers a very broad range of organisations undertaking an equally broad range of activities, from: primary industries, such as agriculture, oil and gas and utilities; to manufacturing; and services sectors covering activities such as banking and finance, marketing and media.

2.2.2   *What Actions have been Undertaken?*

A growing number of companies are becoming more aware of sustainable development and are making strategic commitments to change / improve their performance. For example, actions described in sustainability reports

issued by the likes of Shell, BP-Amoco and British Telecom. However, as indicated in Box 2.3, these companies are a small minority, and of these, even fewer have got as far as turning strategic commitments to sustainable development into hard action that fundamentally change the ways in companies operate.

Box 2.3   *Indicators of Corporate Progress towards Sustainability*

- A recent survey [1] questioned environmental health and safety managers in European and North American companies on what they were doing to promote sustainable development. The survey found that:

  "…to a surprising degree many companies have now accepted the business value of the sustainable development pathway. 95% of the sample believed sustainable development to be important, and 82% felt it offers business value…But the survey found that action is much "thinner on the ground. Only 17% of the sample felt they were "well down the road" in integrating sustainable development into their business strategies or operations….The survey found "surprisingly little 'out of the box' thinking in current practice. Even companies in the vanguard were busiest in traditional areas of environmental action, such as pollution prevention, environmental auditing and improved energy efficiency….More novel tools and concepts such as full cost accounting, life-cycle assessment, eco-efficiency and closed loop manufacturing remain very much the province of a minority.

  "…there remains a mismatch between executives' perceptions of the importance of sustainable development and their companies' actions…One reason for this is that "uncertainty about the timing of the threats and opportunities in sustainable development makes it hard for many companies to engage intensively in it. If 'the crunch' may be 50 years off, why make space on today's already crowded agenda? Related to this uncertainty is the difficulty companies have in seeing what sustainable development means for them."

- The 1999 BiE survey[1] of corporate environmental engagement amongst the FTSE top 100 and top 350 companies reported that "the majority of companies said they had taken the initial steps of preparing environmental policies and allocating responsibility for the environment to a board member. But a different picture emerged when firms were questioned on operational issues. Only a minority could claim to have well developed environmental management systems or consider their suppliers' environmental impacts".

- The number of businesses in the UK adopting environmental management systems also indicates that only a minority of businesses have taken action to change their operations beyond making strategic and policy commitments to improved performance. Despite environmental management systems having been promoted vigorously by the Government and others for several years, and despite evidence that they improve efficiency and help to ensure compliance, by May 2000, only around 1,200 ISO14001 certificates had been issued to companies in the UK and fewer than 100 sites were registered under the EC eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS).

- Whilst substantial increases have occurred in the numbers of firms reporting on their environmental performance, reporting remains a minority activity - and the quality of reports is highly variable – for example, it is often difficult for stakeholders to draw meaningful comparisons between firms.

(1) "Measuring Corporate Progress towards Sustainability" – Survey undertaken by ADL, and reported in ENDS, 1999

During the mid-1990s a number of larger companies (particularly global players in the energy and mining sectors) began to explore the issue of 'social responsibility' in relation to their operations. In most cases, the catalyst for including social issues was the recognition of the risk to reputation and brand as a result of an increase in NGO campaigning and media interest. Companies such as Shell, BP and Nike became embroiled in public battles after accusations that they were failing to consider the social impacts of their operations. The concept of 'corporate social responsibility' has since grown, from its origins in corporate philanthropy to the direct impacts of business policies on workers and local communities. For companies in the highly sensitive sectors with connections to developing countries (eg oil & gas, mining, retail with extensive global sourcing operations), the management of social issues has had to be more closely integrated into day-to-day operations. Eg, clothing retailers which manufacture or source products globally often task technical, quality, or purchasing staff with managing the social impacts of purchasing decision.

Other companies who are looking at their social impacts have tended to restrict this to employee health and safety and community involvement programmes and for many, these are still managed from the corporate affairs or communications department (albeit in conjunction with health and safety managers at the operational level). This underlines the corporate understanding that these issues are reputational risk or PR challenges.

A great deal of research has been carried out into business attitudes towards issues such as the environment, climate change and corporate social responsibility. In all of these areas a number of commonly perceived business advantages and opportunities as well as perceived barriers emerge. Both the perceived business advantages and the barriers are clearly important in understanding the extent to which business has engaged with sustainable development to date and factors which may influence the on-going development of the engagement process. Table 2.1 highlights some of these drivers and barriers.

One important issue is that much of industry's efforts to date have focused on compliance with environmental and other regulations. Compliance in itself is only a very small component of moving towards sustainable development.

The Global Dimension: Many UK companies are increasingly working in a globalised marketplace: selling and producing or sourcing products and services internationally, and responding to market pressures and regulations outside the UK. As a result these businesses have a global 'footprint', affecting progress towards sustainable development in countries outside the UK. This global footprint has several implications.

- The UK, like any other Westernised economy, consumes a greater proportion of natural resources per head of population than most

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(2) BiE 1999 survey reported in ENDS, March 2000.

developing countries. It is using more than its 'fair' share of world resources. The private sector is inextricably linked to the UK's consumption of resources and the global impact of this.

- UK companies that source products for UK markets are increasingly under pressure from consumers and NGOs to adopt progressive labour / social policies.

- UK companies are responding to the multiple agendas of other countries as well as the UK, with differing levels of enthusiasm for sustainable development. This can result in considerable divergence in corporate concepts of sustainable development and in corporate priorities.

- It needs to be recognised that there is an imbalance in power and resources between the UK, as well as other Western countries, and their trading partners in the developing world. Campaigners accuse Western countries of using their power to create deals that benefit themselves at the expense of developing countries.

- There are concerns that the opening up of markets around the world will lead to the homogenisation or 'westernisation' of cultures.

Some companies are responding positively to their global footprint. For example, BP, Shell, Rio Tinto, Marks & Spencer, and B&Q are spreading corporate environmental and social good practice throughout their businesses and suppliers worldwide, involving adoption of better environmental technology, more advanced manufacturing techniques, higher labour standards etc, in their international operations.

SMEs: Much of the discussion above relates to large, often multi-national companies. The picture amongst SMEs is somewhat different. While some contend that many SMEs are actively involved in their local communities - recent research by MORI found that over 60% of SMEs describe themselves as being involved in the community [1]. - they generally do not see this as part of a wider sustainable development activity. On the whole SMEs are unlikely to have a formal sustainable development strategy and it is unlikely to feature as a high priority. Scarce management resources is a key factor in this.

Clearly there is an important role for the Small Business Service (SBS) in advising and training SMEs in sustainable development issues as a critical part of business competitiveness. It is important to underline that SMEs are more likely to respond positively to approaches which focus on improved economic performance and their future viability than on approaches which focus on sustainable development per se.

Research has also emphasised that SME behaviour is significantly influenced by the attitudes and awareness of key company personnel / owners and also their key clients (supply chain effects). This highlights that consumer demand

(1) Business in the Community Website.

and client pressure are likely to be the determining factors in SME responses to sustainable development.

Table 2.1:   *Perceived Company Drivers & Barriers for Engaging with Sustainable Development*

PERCEIVED MOTIVATION/DRIVERS FOR ACTION	PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ACTION
1. Potential cost savings through action represent a business imperative.	1. Costs/financial implications of investment/time.
2. Reputation building as responsible company.	2. Scale of action / change required is prohibitive, in time and feasibility scales.
3. Sustainability / existence as a company in the future.	3. Lack of support from top-level management restricts potential for action and resources to facilitate action.
4. Market opportunities.	4. Other issues take priority, e.g. safety, the 'bottom line', shareholders.
5. Increased staff support and commitment to the company.	5. Government policies incompatible with environmental initiatives.
6. Enhanced media reputation.	6. Difficulties of stakeholder communication, engagement and satisfaction.
7. Increased investor support, particularly ethical investors.	7. Dangers of associated 'Green-Washing' label.
8. Achievement of compliance	8. Lack of, or incompatible, consumer demands.
9. Increased efficiency of business processes.	9. Absence of infrastructure required to support initiatives.
10. Meeting social responsibilities.	10. Pressure from shareholder attitudes and opinions.
11. Increased local community support.	11. Commercial viability problems.
12. Job creation through research, development and production of new technologies.	12. Lack of appropriate technology.
13. Stimulation and enhancement of innovation and research.	13. Dependence on action by other parties in the sector or supply chain.
14. Action is an appropriate response to customer/stakeholder expectations.	14. Lack of resources and/or expertise.
15. Satisfaction of moral/environmental/social duty.	15. Time frame of issues / expected benefits is too long for business to understand and invest in.
16. Employee Individual/Personal Attitudes and Values in support of action.	16. Intangibility of the issue.
17. Risk management, regarding future impacts of climate change on business practices and Viability.	17. Legislative/regulatory restrictions, e.g. planning restrictions over renewable energy developments.
18. Communication with, and engagement of stakeholders can enhance company credibility.	18. Resource/time intensive. Results not always predictable.
19. Associated environmental and social benefits.	19. Difficulty in quantifying benefits.
20. Reduction of risk from future financial impacts, e.g. higher insurance premiums, delays in delivery of products.	20. Difficult to quantify and often seen as long term.
21. Strategic consideration of the triple-bottom line .	21. Difficult to monetise and 'make real' at the operational level.

Source: Based on research carried out by Jo Hall, 2000.

2.2.3 *Recommended Actions for Increasing the Contribution of the Private Sector to Sustainable Development*

There are clearly a plethora of different actions which could be undertaken to promote sustainability. However, ones which the SDC might consider being involved in, include the following. Issues specific recommendations are provided in Section 3 to 7.

Action:	By Whom:
The SDC could hold a major conference on the respective roles of the private sector, government and the public in advancing SD in order to focus discussion on the relationships between these key actors and to identify linked actions.	SDC
Issue clear guidance to industry on sustainability reporting.	DETR
Provide awareness-raising and communication initiatives on SD at senior and middle-management level in businesses.	SDC / CBI / IOD
Increase awareness of sustainable development / competitiveness issues amongst SMEs.	DTI / SBS / RDAs
Work with financial / investment organisations to establish approaches for screening investments against sustainable development criteria, building on the experience of 'Project Forge' (DTI, DETR. BBA and ABI). Encourage the expansion of green or ethical investment funds.	DETR / DTI / SDC
Commission research to assess the potential for companies to extend their responsibility to the behaviour of product consumers.	SDC
Encourage Government to explore ways of strengthening drivers for companies to go beyond 'good practice' towards step changes in products and processes.	SDC / DTI / DETR
Review the effectiveness and if appropriate extend the number of sectoral sustainability strategies.	DETR
Examine the credibility of concepts such as 'Factor 10'.	DETR / SDC / DTI

2.3 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

2.3.1 Scope

This sub-section provides an overview of the contribution made towards sustainable development by NGOs in the UK. The UK has a large and tremendously diverse NGO sector. There are over 160 000 charities in the UK, that are registered by the Charities Commission. This total excludes the community groups that are not registered by the Commission. Over 100 000 of these organisations have an annual turnover of under £10 000. At the other extreme, 300 organisations have an annual turnover of over £10 million. Table 2.2 provides a breakdown of the relative size of NGOs in the UK and shows that the total turnover of organisations registered by the Commission is over £23 billion. This makes the sector a powerful economic force in its own right.

Table 2.2: Size of UK Charity Sector

Annual Turnover	No. of Charities	% of Registered Main Charities	Total Annual Income (£billion) of main charities in each bracket	% of Registered main charities
£0-1,000	47,866	29.30%	0.008	0.03%
£1,001-10,000	60,674	37.14%	0.269	1.13%
£10,001-100,000	38,801	23.75%	1.260	5.31%
£100,001-250,000	7,381	4.52%	1.166	4.91%
£250,001-1 million	5,402	3.31%	2.636	11.11%
£1m-10m	2,924	1.79%	8.210	34.58%
£10m and over	307	0.19%	10.191	42.93%
Total	**163,355**	**100%**	**£23.740 billion**	**100%**

2.3.2 What Actions have been Undertaken?

Types of NGO Activity:

As indicated by Box 2.4, there is a very broad range of NGO activities which relate to sustainable development. In terms of 'types', these can be divided into four broad areas outlined below.

- **Public Awareness Raising:** NGOs raise public awareness of issues through campaigns that are directly targeted towards influencing public opinion, and also indirectly by encouraging the public to lobby government, business and others.

- **Lobbying:** NGOs lobby government at all levels to introduce new policies and programmes, and to revise existing policies and programmes. This is often based on research that has been undertaken by the NGO(s).

Box 2.4:   *Examples of NGO Activities Relating to Sustainable Development*

- **Community Regeneration, Social exclusion and poverty** - for example, activities by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Community Development Foundation, Groundwork, the Urban Forestry Unit and Shelter.

- **Health issues** in the UK and overseas – for example, activities of the Kings Fund, Green Gyms run by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), Oxfam, Action Aid, Save the Children, the Tearfund and many medical charities.

- **Recreation** and sustainable development – For example, the BTCV's Green Gym programme, activities by Surfers Against Sewage.

- **Youth programmes** – for example, Peacechild International, Going for Green, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Save the Children, Tearfund.

- **Education and Learning** for sustainable development – for example, Forum for the Future and FoE.

- **International trade, poverty** and sustainable development. For example, programmes by the Fairtrade Foundation concerned with trade with marginalised producers in the South. It ensures that producers are paid enough to manage farms and production sustainably, despite often low world prices; the Friends of the Earth (FoE); Tearfund; Action Aid; Oxfam, Save the Children and Water Aid.

- **Agriculture, forestry, food and rural issues** relating to sustainable development in the UK and in developing countries – for example, the role of the Soil Association in promoting organic produce and links to rural community development, activities by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), the Woodland Trust, Sustain and FoE.

- **Industry and Commerce** – Assistance to companies in developing sustainability strategies and actions, including helping businesses achieve cost effective environmental improvements (e.g. Groundwork); publicising poor corporate performance (e.g. FoE); developing corporate strategies for sustainable development (e.g. Forum for the Future); and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy (e.g. FoE, Sustainability North West and The Northern Energy Initiative).

- **Regional Development** and sustainable development, working with organisations such as the Regional Development Agencies and the Welsh Development Agency to promote sustainable development. For example, activities by Forum for the Future, the New Economic Foundation, the Groundwork Trust, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Sustainability North West and Sustainability South West.

- **Sustainable Economic Development** – For example, activities, research and campaigns by FoE, the Green Alliance and Forum for the Future.

- **Eco-efficiency and consumer behaviour** – For example, activities by the Commission for Sustainable Consumption and Forum for the Future.

- **Wildlife conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural environment.** For example, activities of the Wildlife Trusts, the RSPB, WWF, BTCV, Greenpeace, FoE and the Woodland Trust.

- **Sustainable Transport** – for example, activities by Sustrans, Transport 2000, FoE.

- **Community Programmes:** NGOs work with communities in a host of ways, to identify community needs, develop and manage projects, and act as a catalyst for change. At this level, NGOs can provide a voice for the views of communities.

- **Partnership / Service Delivery:** NGOs manage a wide range of services on behalf of government, that would otherwise be delivered directly to citizens. NGOs may be contracted to deliver such services, or enter into

partnership with government at different levels. NGOs also enter into partnerships with other organisations, such as industry groups and individual businesses.

Changes in Overall Role of NGOs:

There have been subtle but important shifts in the balance of activities carried out by NGOs during the past three to five years. These have been caused by shifts in NGO strategies, and also by changes in the approach of government to the charitable sector. The main shifts have been as follows:

- **Service Delivery:** The government has sought to increase the involvement of NGOs in service delivery, as evidenced, for instance, by the Government's future plans for New Deal; 200 of the first 600 computer learning centres are to run by community groups as well as the healthy living centres.

- **Community Partnerships:** The present government has placed increased emphasis on involving NGOs in community regeneration projects. Both the voluntary sector and community organisations have been encouraged to play a leading role in urban regeneration, most recently via participation in local strategic partnerships. This has been driven in part by the findings of the Social Exclusion Unit, that concluded that the failure to establish community ownership has been a primary cause of previous failures in community regeneration. This trend has led to a concern in some quarters that the independence of the NGOs is reduced as a result.

- **Integrated and Collaborative Working:** There is some evidence that NGOs are increasingly integrating environmental, social and economic issues - for example, environmental NGOs such as Friends of the Earth and WWF have placed increased emphasis on the social impacts of environmental problems in their public advocacy work; and the work of organisations such as Groundwork involved in regeneration make strong links between environmental improvement, community development and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

- **Partnership Initiatives between NGOs and business:** There has been a notable increase in the number and scale of such initiatives since the mid 1990's. This has been led by existing and new NGOs in the environmental movement i.e. the World-Wide Fund for Nature and Forum for the Future.

  Supporters of these initiatives argue that NGO campaigning is often a necessary but not sufficient driver for change, and that partnerships can deliver effective progress. The impact obviously of these partnerships obviously varies greatly. However the success of initiatives such as the Forest Stewardship Council has proved that substantial change can be delivered through such initiatives, though NGO campaigning should be regarded as entirely complementary. Several recent publications have

argued the case for these partnerships.[1] The impact of these partnerships is currently the focus of "Innovation through Partnership", a research project led by the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability, and supported by the Department of Trade and Industry.

- **NGO Co-operation:** Given the tremendous diversity of the NGO sector, one issue that should be briefly considered is the extent of co-operation between them on issues of common interest. The Jubilee 2000 initiative on Third World Debt demonstrated that joint activities can be much more effective than individual action. While the national environmental NGOs in the UK have co-operated on issues such as traffic reduction, there is no evidence that there is a significant shift towards increased co-operation. Climate change is perhaps the primary example of an issue where a joint initiative could capture greater public and political attention than fragmented action.

2.3.3 *The Contribution to Sustainable Development:*

Given public confidence in the role of NGOs on environmental and other issues and their increasing emphasis on forming innovative partnerships and in carrying out service delivery, there would seem to be considerable scope for expanding the contribution of NGOs in delivering sustainable development.

If we are indeed moving to an age of 'active citizenship' and an 'enabling state' (and) if one of the pre-conditions for this is the renewal of civic society both of which are clearly fundamental to sustainable development, then the role of NGOs and the wider voluntary sector is clearly fundamental.

(1) [1] Partnership Alchemy: New Social Partnerships in Europe, Jane Nelson & Simon Zadek.

(2) Partnerships In the Company of Partners, David Murphy and Jem Bendell

2.3.4 *Recommended Actions for Increasing the Contribution of NGOs to Sustainable Development*

To enhance the contribution of NGO activity to sustainable development, the following actions are recommended. Additional issue specific recommendations are provided in Sections 3 to 7.

Action:	By Whom:
Integration of Issues: Encourage further integration of social, environmental and economic issues in the work of UK NGOs.	NGOs / SDC
Partnership Working: There are an increasing number of partnerships between NGOs and other sectors (notably business). It is important that the effectiveness of these partnerships is debated and reviewed, to establish greater understanding among NGOs (and other groups) of the criteria for successful partnerships.	NGOs / SDC
Increased co-operation between NGOs: UK NGOs may be able to exert greater influence on government, and indeed others, by uniting on issues of common interest. Organisations should examine the scope and likely benefits of further co-operation - for example, on issues such as climate change, which are being addressed by a large number of NGOs.	NGOs
Public Attitudes to Sustainable Development: The SDC could assess strategies for shifting public attitudes towards sustainable development, and the role that can be played by government, business, NGOs and others.	NGOs / SDC / DETR

3. *PARTICIPATION, LEADERSHIP AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT*

3.1 *INTRODUCTION*

Participation, leadership and increased democracy are key tests both of our ability to work towards and success in achieving sustainable development. Agenda 21 (Chapter 8) describes objectives and activities for integrating environmental and developmental decision making at all levels and in all ministries. It emphasises the need for everyone to take responsibility and act to change their behaviour, and in particular their production and consumption patterns. **This needs to be supported by leadership in making difficult or unpopular decisions and in creating an enabling framework for individual and co-ordinated action.**

The need for participation and active citizenship is supported by the Devolution Bill, which provides the framework for decentralisation of policy and development to the regional level, and internationally through conventions such as Aarhus, which require greater access to environmental information and wider participation by all interested parties in environmental decision making.

At a practical level, the experience of trying to implement different parts of the sustainability agenda (e.g. regeneration, transport policy, climate change) demonstrates that, without active participation in identifying what sustainability means and how we can move towards it, there is little ownership of the solutions or commitment to the changes required.

This section, assesses how far leadership, partnerships for co-ordinated action and public participation by regional and devolved government, the private sector and NGOs are actively contributing to sustainable development.

3.2 *PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

3.2.1 *Regional and Devolved Government*

The Regional Development Agencies are explicitly tasked with contributing to the achievement of sustainable development (see Section 2.2) but are also expected to provide a leadership role in addressing a number of related policy themes including: need for a clear strategic regional approach and leadership; integration of funding sources into a single pot; co-ordination and partnership to allow communities and other agencies to contribute to and shape regional development activities.

In England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, national and regional statutory organisations have been working in partnership to make progress –

in terms of integrating sustainable development into regional development strategies and in developing action plans and specific projects to promote sustainable development. E.g. Environment Agency secondees to the RDAs and partners working on the development of EU Structural Fund Programmes, regional development strategies and Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks.

There are also increasing signs of 'joined up' government in the regions amongst different departments and organisations with different 'core' functions, working together to promote integration of economic, social and environmental objectives. However, there is still further scope for increasing awareness of sustainable development amongst personnel in regional government bodies, particularly in terms of practical ways of integrating economic, social and environmental objectives in their programmes and projects.

Regional and national assemblies and executives and sustainability Round Tables are in some cases taking a strong lead in encouraging organisations in the regions (at the regional and sub-regional level) to become more engaged in sustainable development.

The regional development activities of these organisations are also placing a strong emphasis on encouraging community strategies and community led regeneration which integrates local social, environmental and economic development objectives. Regional bodies are also undertaking many initiatives (in partnership with local authorities) to promote local public and business participation for sustainable development, e.g. via Local Agenda 21 initiatives.

At present, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these activities, not least because many of these initiatives have been implemented relatively recently, and also because the behaviour of individuals and businesses is clearly influenced by many factors other than the activities of regional statutory organisations. Nevertheless, the fact these regional organisations are themselves increasingly participating in activities to promote sustainable development and encouraging others to do so, suggests these organisations will assist progress.

3.2.2 *The Private Sector*

In the most basic terms the aim is to influence the supply and demand of goods and resources, to reduce adverse environmental impacts, and thereby move towards a position of sustainable production and consumption. Ultimately, market based actors should be aware of the impact of their actions and be in a position where the parameters underlying their decisions point towards the most sustainable option.

Leadership and Co-ordination

There is some evidence that the private sector is prepared to provide leadership in sustainable development where the advantages to doing so are clear. Examples of positive leadership are shown in the box below.

Box 3.1:   *Examples of positive leadership*

- **Involvement of chief executives** in fora where SD are discussed such as the Prince of Wales Trust, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Green Alliance, RSA etc;

- **Co-ordinated efforts to develop Sector Sustainability Strategies** as encouraged by DTI. So far 2 (construction, chemicals) of the 9 key sectors identified by DTI have produced strategies. The Water and construction sectors have worked together to develop a set of sustainability indicators for their sector. While these initiatives could provide a useful framework for individual company reporting, there has been a reluctance, particularly in the water sector, to use this a basis on which external stakeholders could make cross comparisons between individual companies.

- **Negotiated Agreements:** A wide range of industry sectors are currently involved in negotiating voluntary agreements with Government to achieve environmental improvements, for example, in relation to the Climate Change Levy. Sectors that enter into voluntary energy efficiency agreements will be eligible for tax reductions. Approximately 30 sectors are currently in talks with government.

There are also isolated examples on individual companies providing leadership in the sustainable development field, for instance:

- **As an aid to repositioning**. Shell and BPAmoco developing sustainability strategies while repositioning themselves as 'energy' rather than oil and gas companies. There appears to be more commitment to the strategic vision than rolling out SD throughout the organisation.

> - *'The last thing we should ever do is define ourselves as an automaker … In the future we may be selling mobility, rather than cars'* **Bill Ford Jr, Chairman, Ford Motor Company**.
>
> - *'We simply cannot survive for long if we remain so out of tune with our consumers' perceptions, and the next generation's attitudes'* **Sir John Browne, Group Chief Executive, BP Amoco.**

- **In the financial sector** (Coop Bank, Prudential, and a growing number of green unit trusts) are capturing a small niche market for green investors; there has so far been limited moves towards sustainability for larger banks or greening of conventional pension funds. Indeed there is anecdotal evidence that even where a Bank has an environmental policy, its employees or customers are not aware of it.

- **Corporations as Citizens**. Generally there appears to be limited engagement of major businesses as active 'citizens' but there are a few examples of businesses taking an active stance. For instance the 'Citizen Esso' programme which brings together its commitments to community, education and environmental action (Action on Trees, Action on Energy Efficiency) as a framework for corporate support to NGOs.

However, in general a leadership role in SD seems to be restricted to a few key companies who wish to be seen as 'best in class' rather than widespread adoption of sustainability principles in second tier companies or SMEs in each sector.

Evidence from the performance of the 29 UK Companies quoted on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index suggests that environmentally performing companies are also performing reasonably in financial markets.

> Research into the linkages between shareholder value and environmental performance, undertaken by Innovest Strategic Value Advisors for different sectors, show that stock performance is higher for companies ranking high on the EcoVALUE'21 index than the companies with a low environmental performance.
>
> The research showed, that companies in the petrol sector which ranked in the top half of the EcoVALUE'21 index performed 20% better than the companies in the bottom half of the index. In the chemical sector, the spread was up to 65%. The importance of environmental performance for the shareholder value is also important in sectors, where the relative environmental risk is smaller. In the Telecommunication sector, the spread in stock performance was at 30% and for the computer sector up to 40%.

However, this may be as much associated with the market's recognition of the quality of management required to perform well against the five corporate sustainability performance principles - innovation, governance, shareholder satisfaction, leadership and social responsibility - than any proof that a move towards Sustainable development improves the bottom line for businesses.

Participation and partnership

Most major businesses do, however, recognise the benefits of working in partnership with others, through relationships with individual NGOs, and engagement with regional or local sustainability processes, such as:

- **Partnerships with NGOs** for PR benefits, technical advice or direct delivery of projects on the ground (e.g. BATs Biodiversity Actions Partnership with Kew, Fauna and Flora International, Earthwatch *et al* Esso's action on trees) and with community groups for the delivery of regeneration projects (e.g. Groundwater Trust sponsorship from large Plc's).

- **Regional sustainability fora**. The water companies (e.g. Northumbria Water, Severn Trent) have engaged in regional sustainability fora in the North West and North East, while the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce has taken a leading role in the regional study of climate change impacts and priorities for adaptation in the Midlands.

- **Engagement in stakeholder consultation processes** to identify the issues and potential economic/environmental/technical and socially acceptable solutions to contentious problems (e.g. Shell stakeholder dialogue over North Sea oil rig decommissioning, BP EAs for new pipelines etc)

- **Raising awareness of sustainability and educating their customers**. The energy utilities, under regulatory pressure to supply their quota of green electricity have attempted to educate consumers to tempt them to pay premium tariffs for green electricity. Water companies have tried the same approach to educate consumers of the need for water meters. However, in

non-regulated sectors this appears to be seen as more the domain of government or NGOs.

The need to work in partnership with NGOs and the community is closely tied to the benefits that this delivers in avoiding conflicts and providing a 'license to operate' in the communities where they already or wish to operate.

3.2.3   *NGOs*

Leadership

The major environmental NGOs have always provided strong leadership in the policy debate at national and international level on key environmental themes: WWF on climate change; FOE on air quality / transport; RSPB on sustainable agriculture and protected areas; CPRE on integrated transport etc. To some extent each of these major NGOs has embraced sustainable development, but maintained a focus on their key themes within this framework.   For instance WWF and FOE have placed increased emphasis on the social impacts of environmental problems in their public advocacy work. However the number of such initiatives/examples of this approach remains relatively few.

In addition a more recently established set of NGOs have been established with a specific sustainable development remit either at the regional level e.g. Sustainability South West, Sustainability North West or at a sectoral level e.g. Sustain in the agricultural sector, Transport 2000 in the transport sector. Forum for the Future and a few much smaller NGOs are unusual in promoting sustainable development as a theme to businesses.

At a local level there is more evidence of NGOs successfully bringing together the positive linkages between social, environmental and economic issues. Community regeneration activities undertaken by organisations such as Groundwork have combined improvements to the physical environment with social and economic benefits such as employment, skills enhancement, strengthening community organisations, and tackling social exclusion.

They have provided leadership by :

- engaging with consultation processes on national and regional documents on sustainable development and submitting consultation responses;
- undertaking their own research and producing policy documents to lobby government, the EC and the European Parliament for more sustainable consumption or production practices;
- participation in meetings, round tables and regional fora and contribution to drafting of local strategies, action plans and Agenda 21 documents;
- educating businesses, employees and citizens in how to implement sustainable development at a practical level (see box).

> Global Action Plan (GAP) enables people to take practical environmental action at work, home, school and in the wider community. Over the past three years GAP have run large-scale employee environmental awareness programmes with the Halifax, Environment Agency, CIS, British Aerospace and a number of utilities and a successful SME initiative called Environment Champions.

In addition NGOs working collectively across traditional interest lines have attempted to provide leadership on cross cutting issues with great relevance to sustainable development. Significant examples include the Jubilee 2000 initiative on Third World Debt and the Real World initiative. NGOs focused on issues as diverse as constitutional change, environment, development and poverty. Other cross cutting issues such as climate change, Genetically Modified Foods and Trade and Environment have the scope to bring together coalitions of NGOs but have so far failed to generate co-ordinated action on the same scale.

Partnership

Environmental NGOs and community/voluntary groups have become increasing involved in partnerships for delivering sustainable development. For instance:

- **Urban regeneration**. Government has placed increasing emphasis on involving NGOs, voluntary organisations and the community in regeneration projects, most recently via participation in local strategic partnerships. This has been driven in part by the findings of the Social Exclusion Unit whose research concluded that the failure to establish community ownership has been a primary cause of previous failures in community regeneration. This trend has led to a concern in some quarters that the independence of the NGOs is reduced as a result.

Partnership Initiatives between NGOs and business. There has been a notable increase in the number and scale of such initiatives since the mid 1990's. While NGOs have always worked with businesses which provide funding in cash or kind to deliver their own projects, there are now signs that NGOs (such as WWF and Forum for the Future) are working more as partners with business and influencing them to deliver their SD agenda (e.g. through the Climate Savers and Natural Steps programmes, Forest Stewardship Programme). Supporters of these initiatives argue that NGO campaigning is often a necessary but not sufficient driver for change, and that partnerships can deliver effective progress. Several recent publications have argued the case for these partnerships. [1] The impact of these partnerships is currently the focus of "Innovation through Partnership", a research project led by the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability, and supported by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Public participation

NGOs play a role in widening public participation in sustainable development by:

- raising public awareness through their campaigning activity. The impact of NGO campaigning on the relationship between citizens and government is disputed. NGOs typically argue that their activities provide an opportunity for public involvement, and increase public access to decision-making. While this is hard to refute, **others have argued that the overall impact of campaigning by single issue pressure groups has been to reduce public confidence in government and hence the prospects for public participation.**

- lobbying government to increase public participation in decision making (e.g. the Fabian Society) or by promoting improved public access to information and reform of national and local democratic processes (i.e. Campaign for Freedom of Information, Charter 88, Liberty) .

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 *Regional and Devolved Government:*

- National and Regional Assemblies need to continue to encourage Regional statutory bodies and regional partners to engage effectively in promoting sustainable development.

- Regional statutory bodies should undertake internal activities to increase understanding and commitment to promote sustainable development amongst their personnel – including training on how to integrate economic, social and environmental objectives in regional development projects and initiatives.

- Regional statutory bodies should continue to undertake initiatives to demonstrate to businesses the benefits of developing / changing their activities to promote sustainable development.

- Need for greater involvement of companies in regional sustainable development initiatives from RSDFs through to implementation of projects, particularly in the areas such as urban regeneration.

There are many ways in which government might act to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to involve the wider public in delivering sustainable development.

- **One that is strongly supported by NGOs is increased public access to information. The government has published a draft Freedom of Information Bill. However this has been strongly criticised as inadequate**

(1) Partnership Alchemy: New Social Partnerships in Europe, Jane Nelson & Simon Zadek.

by many NGOs, and parliamentary time has not yet been found for the Bill in the current Parliament.

Actively involving NGOs in national/regional SD policy discussions so that while their views can be made known on single issues, they are encouraged to take a more holistic view and understand the potential contradictions with other agendas and look for more 'win win' sustainable solutions.

**4.   ACCESS INCLUDING TRANSPORT, MOBILITY AND THE PLANNING/
LAND USE DIMENSION**

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the context of sustainable development, concern about the environmental impacts of transport has widened to include issues such as social access and mobility. Attention has focused on road transport in particular and to a lesser extent travel by air, along with widespread debate over the quality of and level of provision of public transport in both rural and urban areas.

Transport is an important sustainability issue both in itself and because of the broader issues that it raises in terms of behavioural change, actual government policy and the role of consumers and business.

4.2   PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.2.1   Regional and Devolved Government

A wide range of initiatives are underway in the regions relating to the sustainability of transport, improved mobility and access.

Regional Transport Strategies/Regional Planning Guidance: Regional Planning Bodies (i.e. Conferences or Chambers/Assemblies), working with the Government Offices for the Region, in close partnership with RDAs, are now directly responsible for the development of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG).   As part of the process of preparing RPG, the Regional Planning Bodies must now prepare a complementary Regional Transport Strategy, which should take into account the Government's Integrated Transport Strategy [1] .   Regional Transport Strategies must provide regional priorities for transport investment and management, across all modes, to support the regional strategy, as well as guidance on, amongst other things, public transport accessibility criteria, parking standards and demand management measures (eg congestion charging and workplace parking levies). In so doing, they provide a clear framework, something which has not existed until recently, for the development of Local Transport Plans, Structure Plans, Part 1 UDPs and the plans of private sector transport providers and operators.

For Regional Transport Strategies to be effective, it is recognised that they must actively involve the full range of stakeholders, including regional partners, relevant government bodies and agencies, the Strategic Rail Authority, transport providers and operators, transport user committees, environmental organisations, disabled groups and health bodies etc.

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(1) DETR (1998) A New Deal for Transport:Better for Everyone, The Government's White Paper on the Future of Transport.

Multi-Modal Studies: A number of multi-modal studies are being undertaken across the country which will further inform the development of Regional Transport Strategy. They have emerged as a way of identifying solutions to problems identified on certain parts of the strategic trunk road network. They examine the role of all relevant modes of transport and demand management measures, in an area or corridor, in order to establish which solutions best meet the objectives for sustainable development within the region. As part of process of evaluation, each option must be appraised against the Government's five New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) objectives for sustainable transport - namely, economy, safety, the environment, accessibility, integration. As with Regional Transport Strategies, the multi-modal studies also involve a strong element of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The results of the first tranche of multi-modal studies will feed into additions to/amendments of RTS in 2001/2002.

Development Agency Activities: Regional Development Agencies are expected to work in close partnership with Regional Planning Bodies in the development of Regional Transport Strategy. RDAs, the WDA, the LDA, the Scottish Executive, the Northern Ireland Executive, Government Offices for the Regions and SRPs have action plans relating to improvement of infrastructure and transport. These typically contain some positive actions to promote more integrated and sustainable transport. However, these action plans also refer to specific transport projects which do not appear to promote sustainable development and instead appear to reflect a continuation of the reliance of road based transport.

Overview of Contribution to Sustainable Development:

The activities of regional bodies relating to transport (e.g. the Regional Transport Strategies and RDA action plans) contain strategic commitment to and guidance on delivering a more sustainable and integrated transport system. The introduction of a tier of government in the regions with a clear remit to develop transport strategy has filled a void which previously existed between national and local levels of transport planning. It is hoped that the Regional Transport Strategies will provide a clear framework for the implementation of sustainable transport priorities at a ground level.

However, the brand of regional development being promoted by regional statutory bodies still appears to be predominantly road based and positive steps being taken to promote more sustainable transport may only partially offset the expected increase in road use and traffic volumes.

The Government's decision to fast-track a number of bypass, widening and junction schemes prior to the completion of multi-modal studies has led some commentators to suggest that a shift away from the sustainable transport agenda is occurring in favour of road building. In support of this, commentators also cite the 200 major local road improvements set out in the Government's recently issued 10 Year Transport Plan [1] and its

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(1) DETR (2000) Transport 2010, The 10 Year Plan..

announcement, after final submission of Local Transport Plans for 2000, of an additional ten road schemes for supplementary bids [1].

The Government, however, points out that where it has fast-tracked road schemes, it will still respect the findings of the multi-modal studies. Some commentators question how this is possible though.

A conclusion to be drawn from this is that the ability of regional government to facilitate more sustainable transport is strongly affected by the stance central government is taking at any particular time and, of course, public behaviour.

4.2.2   *The Private Sector*

The Government's transport strategy, set out in its White Paper *A New Deal for Transport* (July 1998), is intended to shape "a new future for sustainable [more integrated] transport in the UK". The notion of managing transport in a sustainable manner is nowadays becoming more of a priority for private sector companies in light of the Government's commitment to tackle the problems of congestion and pollution.

Business to Take a Lead:

The Transport White Paper states the Government's expectation that business "makes the most effective use of transport in a way which supports sustainable development". The Government sees the strategy being delivered through a "shared responsibility" and "partnership in action".

Greater Pressure on Private Sector to Manage Transport in a Sustainable Manner:

The Government has recently set out a £180 billion 10 year spending programme (Transport 2010, The 10 Year Plan (July 2000)) to assist in the implementation of its transport strategy and the achievement of an integrated transport system.

In addition, in order to generate revenue to deliver a more integrated transport system and at the same time reduce unsustainable single occupancy car journeys, the Government is allowing local authorities to levy congestion charges (charges for access to traffic congested areas) and workplace parking charges (charges based on the number of workplace parking spaces an employer has available) on road users and businesses alike. The revenue from these charging schemes will be hypothecated for investment in transport for a period of 10 years.

While the Government's commitment to these measures appears to waiver from time to time, depending on public opinion polls and the vociferousness

(1) Local Transport Today (7 December 2000) Critics Attack Dusting Down of Road Schemes as Shift from Sustainable Transport Agenda.

of popular press articles about a forgotten nation of car drivers, these new powers have not gone unnoticed by private sector companies.

> To give an idea of the possible effect of these two measures on a private sector company, congestion charging or workplace parking could cost a private sector company with a large company car or commercial vehicle fleet in the realms of millions of pounds a year. By way of illustration, taking workplace parking charges as an example, it has been suggested that these could range anywhere from annual charges in the order of £250 per workplace parking space to as much as £3,000 in central areas of London. For a company which has 500 employees driving to work, charges at the higher end of the scale could give rise to annual costs of up to £1.5m for workplace parking, were local authorities to exercise their powers in this respect.

It is true that many local authorities are cautious about using congestion and workplace parking charges, as they see them as being politically contentious. However, given that around 30 authorities [1] certainly are interested in using the powers and the potential costs to companies involved, there is a need for companies to look hard at how they can service customers, receive supplies, make deliveries and move employees whilst making less journeys.

How Are Companies Responding - What Has Been Achieved to Date?

Very few companies have developed company wide policies on sustainable transport, covering all relevant aspects of their operations and activities. A review of 30 FTSE-100 company websites selected at random revealed that only seven had any policies relating to transport (UniLever, United Biscuits, BP-Amoco, BT, British Airways, Scottish Power and P&O).

Where these policies exist, they tend not to address sustainable transport in an holistic way (i.e. by covering all aspects of customer access, employee travel and the transport of goods and supplies), but rather deal with various ad hoc issues like minimising emissions, alternative fuels or efficient logistics. A common tendency is for recognition of the impacts to be given, but with very little information on what the company in question is actually doing about the impacts.

There is evidence from our work with the private sector that more and more companies wish to develop appropriate sustainable transport policies and to articulate these (to employees, shareholders, the public and relevant statutory bodies) through environmental reporting. These companies are partly responding to Government policy pressures and also seeking to be seen as environmentally and socially responsible and to develop their profiles accordingly. Our website review also established that BT has a consultation paper on developing an integrated transport strategy – not surprisingly perhaps, this focuses very much on the role of IT and telecommunications in reducing the need to travel. Unilever also has a specific transport policy, backed up my measures and statistics.

(1) Local Transport Today (December 1999) and Personnel Communication with LTT (August 2000).

Overall, we believe that the position at present is:

- through Government policy, there is now a much greater impetus/pressure for companies to start managing transport in a more sustainable way than ever before;

- the response by companies to this impetus/pressure, in terms of developing coherent company wide sustainable transport policies is currently being slow to develop;

- where companies do address transport issues in their environmental reporting these often relate to ad hoc issues (eg "co-incidental" environmental benefits achieved through operational efficiency measures) rather than the full spectrum of sustainable transport issues arising from a company's operations and activities.

Green Travel Plans at Major Traffic Generating Sites:

It is also becoming increasingly common for companies to develop Green Travel Plans for specific sites. A Green Travel Plan comprises a range of measures which encourage employees to get to and from work, and travel during the working day, without undertaking single occupancy car journeys, typically taking the form of both "carrots" and "sticks". Their main contribution is to tackle congestion impacts which typically arise during rush hour periods.

Green Travel Plans are sometimes developed simply because a company wishes to manage movements in and out of a site in a responsible way. However, it is more often the case that they are developed in response to conditions attached to planning permissions for new or expanded developments which have associated restrictions on new parking spaces.

Whatever the motivation, Green Travel Plans are becoming increasingly common and certainly have the potential to contribute to more sustainable use of transport. Examples of high profile companies who operate well regarded Green Travel Plans are the Boots Company (Nottingham) and Pfizer (Sandwich). Both companies have appointed full time transport co-ordinators. Experience on GTPs in Scotland is provided in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1:   *Green Commuter Plans - Do they work?*

The information below is based on work carried out for the Central Research Unit of the Scottish Executive by Napier University.

Main findings:

- GCPs can work and make a significant contribution to modal shift at the site level. At the local road network level, however, the impact is much less clear.

- Over the timescale of the project, at two of the case study organisations, Hewlett Packard and the Royal Bank of Scotland, the proportion of staff driving alone to work fell by some 6% and 10% respectively. This was the result of a GCP.

- GCPs are shown to be successful when:

    – A *site specific* problem with congestion, parking and/or transport-related staff recruitment exists.

    – A supportive organisational culture is present.

    – Staff are dedicated to running the GCP within the organisation.

    – Joint working between organisations is used to lobby public transport operators.

    – GCP measures in the form of incentives and disincentives are combined - such as public transport ticket discounts with restricted on-site parking - to help achieve a large modal shift.

- The biggest barrier to a successful GCP is the lack of a site specific problem. If 100% of staff drive alone to work but there is no site specific parking, congestion or recruitment problem then the employer is unlikely to devote resources to changing the situation. Policy makers must therefore decide whether or not they wish to "create such conditions" through the use of the planning or local taxation system.

- Other barriers to GCPs can be overcome by skilful marketing of alternative modes of transport and by careful presentation of the GCP so that it gains internal political support.

- The introduction of GCPs may never have been needed, had all large employers been able and willing to locate in areas well-served by public transport and where there is limited parking; in this sense a GCP may be treating the symptoms rather than cause

Policy Recommendations:
A number of policy recommendations stem from the research, as follows:
- Policy makers should be realistic about the level of modal split that can be achieved by GCPs, and about the numbers of organisations likely to adopt them. Organisations with an existing problem should be targeted for advice and assistance.
- With careful and co-ordinated land-use and transport planning, the problems that cause organisations to develop GCPs may not occur.
- GCP successes should be well-publicised to the Public Transport industry, since there is still some scepticism about GCPs amongst operators.

It is difficult to determine how much of a contribution Green Travel Plans will make to reducing congestion impacts and contributing to more sustainable transport use. It partly depends on take-up and the ambitiousness of the Green Travel Plans.   As a guide to the extent to which business should be looking to manage journeys to work, the Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment (ACBE) recommends that "companies look to reduce by 10% the total number of people commuting to and from work, alone, by car" [1]. To put the target in context, a change in traffic flows on a road of between 5% and 10% is quite likely to have an effect on the efficient operation

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(1) ACBE (1998) **Interim ACBE Report on Integrated Transport Consultation Paper**.

of that road [1]. To give an idea of what can be achieved by a Green Travel Plan, at the Boots Company Nottingham site, 35% of the 6,500 employees based at the site arrive by a mode other than a single occupancy car trip.

It is likely that Green Travel Plans will become even more widespread amongst private sector companies in the future in light of requirements in the revised PPG 13 to prepare Green Travel Plans for certain types/size of development. In its Transport White Paper, the Government envisages that employers can play a major part in contributing to sustainable transport by reducing the number of work-related journeys undertaken by car. The research carried out by the Scottish Executive summarised on the previous page would appear to offer only partial support for this view. The Government sees Green Travel Plans produced by businesses as a key way to "alert people to the problem and solutions".

Location of Major Traffic Generating Sites:

A fundamental tenet of the Government's transport strategy (and the principle of sustainable development) is the co-ordination of land use and transport planning in decisions concerning the siting of development. For example, the Government is keen to ensure the vitality and viability of urban areas and town centres. It believes that there are opportunities in such areas for a more balanced mix of residential, work, commercial and leisure land uses as well as opportunities for greater patronage of public transport and more walking and cycling trips.

Attitudes in Grocery Retailing

Some private sector companies can be seen to embrace this approach wholeheartedly. Grocery retailing provides an example of a sector where town centre siting can meet business performance requirements and at the same time make a very considerable contribution to the vitality and viability of such areas. A company like Waitrose (part of the John Lewis Partnership) sees itself very much as a town centre operator. Most of its stores are located on High Streets or within urban shopping centres, despite the difficulties and constraints this can sometimes present with respect to dissimilar and complicated urban sites. It believes that the provision of high quality food stores in town centre areas makes it much easier to live and work in such areas without recourse to a car. Companies like Sainsbury's (Sainsbury's Local) and Tesco (Tesco Metro) are also contributing to more sustainable patterns of living through town centre store location, although a large part of their store development programme still focuses on out of town sites which rely principally on access by car.

Considerable thought goes into the lines which are offered at these town centre stores to take account of their size and bulk and how easy they will be to carry for people walking or using public transport.

At the other end of the spectrum, companies such as Walmart, the owners of Asda, are more dependent on out of town stores to provide the necessary floorspace for their type of bulk retailing. Walmart has been placing pressure on the Government to relax its co-ordinated approach to land use and transport planning (ie sequential testing for urban development sites).

This type of pressure is likely to continue since some consumers will want to shop in stores that offer low prices, even if this means the existence of more out of town stores. Walmart would argue that it is

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(1) Institution of Highways and Transportation (1994) **Traffic Impact Assessment Guidelines**.

simply trying to meet a market need which is being hampered by excessive regulation. So far the Government is sticking to its sequential testing policy for urban development sites.

There are certainly opportunities for companies, through location decisions, to meet business performance requirements while contributing to more sustainable patterns of living.

Use of More Sustainable Modes of Transport:

While many companies may not necessarily have a coherent sustainable transport policy, or operate Green Travel Plans, they will often tend to have a number of measures in place which serve to make it easier for the employers to use modes of transport other than the car. These measures might include free or subsidised public transport travel, interest free loans for bicycles and financial incentives not to use a car/work parking spaces. Examples of companies operating in the UK which adopt some of these measures include Coca-Cola Schweppes, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Allied Dunbar, Thames Water and BAA.   These types of measure will generally always make a positive contribution to reducing car based travel.

On the freight side, it is an increasing trend for companies not traditionally associated with rail transport (ie companies not associated with bulk commodities like coal or aggregates) to use this mode nowadays. While this is the exception rather than the rule, it is certainly an encouraging trend worthy of mention.   Iceland, the grocery retailer, is one such example. Parcel Force is another. Parcel Force is using piggyback rail services (lorry trailers on rail wagons) between the South East and Scotland which it calculates is saving 700,000 road based lorry miles per annum. There are opportunities for other companies to follow the lead set by these companies in transferring freight from road to rail.

4.2.3 NGOs and Transport

NGOs with a sustainable transport remit are chiefly concerned with lobbying, with raising public awareness and, nowadays, with working in partnership with Government at all levels. Principal sustainable transport concerns of NGOs are:

- protecting the environment (or an aspect of it, eg biodiversity, rural communities) from expanding transport infrastructure/traffic growth through better environmental appraisal;

- greater emphasis in transport planning on the role of traffic demand management (coupled with better investment to encourage less use of cars and lorries);

- promoting greener/healthier patterns of travel amongst employers and the public and more sustainable patterns of living; and

- ensuring access for all.

Some examples of how NGOs are addressing these concerns are discussed below.

Lobbying for Better Environmental Appraisal in Transport Decision-making: Certain NGOs have tried to ensure the provision of more sustainable transport by lobbying for better appraisal, or more awareness of a particular sustainability issue, in Government transport decision making.

An example of this is provided by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) which has, for a number of years, lobbied the Government and the European Commission for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be used to inform decisions concerning transport. The RSPB believes, quite rightly, that consideration of the environmental effects of transport at a strategic level, rather than at a project level, enables effective alternatives to less sustainable transport proposals such as "predict and provide" road building to be identified at an early stage.

The RSPB has also recently been involved, along with the WWF, English Nature and The Wildlife Trusts in lobbying for greater account to be taken of biodiversity impacts in Government transport decision making. It has set out relevant guidance in Biodiversity Impact, A New Approach [1] . The guidance provides a good example of NGOs working in partnership with Government agencies, in this case English Nature.

Promoting the Role of Traffic Demand Management: At the time the last Government administration was pushing through it's Roads Programme in the late 80's and early 90's a number of NGO's opposed the programme and lobbied for more sustainable solutions to the problem of rising road traffic growth.

Examples include the CPRE, Friends of the Earth (FoE) and the Transport 2000 Trust (Transport 2000). The position they took was that it is not sustainable to keep meeting demand for road travel by continuing to build roads and that demand management (with investment in public transport and rail freight) could in many cases provide a viable alternative.

These NGOs have had some success in their lobbying. Many road schemes in the Roads Programme were put on hold during the latter stages of the last Government administration with a view to looking at demand management alternatives. The present Government administration has pioneered the multi-modal study approach to address problems on the trunk road network and demand management is a major feature of these studies. NGOs like the CPRE and FoE are often consulted during multi-modal studies as relevant stakeholders and are becoming part of the established set-up.

(1) WWF, RSPB, EN, The Wildlife Trusts (2000 - check) **Biodiversity Impact, Biodiversity and Environmental Impact Assessment, A New Approach**.

Green and Healthy Travel: Transport 2000 has become a well regarded source of information and practical ideas for bringing about more healthy and sustainable travel behaviour. Through attendance at high profile transport and environment sector conferences and the publication of guidance and toolkits, it is becoming very effective at promoting practical sustainable transport advice to the right target audience.

Transport 2000 Healthy Transport Tool Kit

- *Transport 2000* has recognised that hospitals are major generators of road traffic at a regional scale. It has produced a Healthy Transport Toolkit [1] for reducing car trips to NHS facilities. The toolkit has been produced in conjunction with Our Healthier Nation, UNISON, the Health Education Authority, Health at Work in the NHS and Partnerships for Green Commuting.

- It provides advice on setting targets, appropriate measures (travel plans, car sharing, car park management, public transport, patient and visitor travel etc) and most importantly provides real life examples of where measures have been applied and indicates their effectiveness.

- The toolkit is interesting too because it provides an example of NGOs and the Government working in partnership in that it is endorsed (with forewords) by the Ministers for Transport and Health.

Another example of this is Transport 2000's Employers' Guide to Green Commuter Plans [2]. This is again endorsed by the Government and provides a range of practical advice aimed at an appropriate target audience, in this case employers and journeys to work which account for a very large proportion of peak hour road traffic.

Sustrans is another example of an NGO which concerns itself solely with promoting more sustainable travel behaviour, chiefly walking and cycling. In order to implement its sustainable transport strategies effectively, it needs to work in close partnership with local government and has established close ties. Its principal activities are described below.

Sustrans is a charity working on practical projects to encourage people to walk and cycle more, so as to help reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects. *What does Sustrans do?* Sustrans' flagship project, the National Cycle Network, was opened in June with 5000 miles of continuous traffic-free routes and traffic-calmed and minor roads, running right through urban centres and reaching all parts of the UK. The National Cycle Network is a Millennium Commission project supported by £43.5m of National Lottery funds. It involves over 400 local authorities, as well as businesses, landowners, environmental bodies and others. The Sustrans Safe Routes to Schools project enables and encourages children to cycle and walk to school by improving street design, calming traffic, creating traffic-free spaces and linking with the National Cycle Network.

Where we are now:

(1) Transport 2000 (1998) **The Healthy Transport Toolkit, A Guide to Reducing Car Trips to NHS Facilities**.
(2) Transport 2000 (1997) **Changing Journeys to Work, An Employers' Guide to Green Transport Plans**.

- NGOs have had some success in getting sustainable transport issues considered in Government decision making on transport.

- A partnership approach between NGOs and the Government is emerging in promoting sustainable transport;

What needs to be done:

- NGOs need to continue to try to affect a change in public behaviour and attitudes to transport since these are the source of the unsustainable transport problems and the solutions;

- In many ways the vigour with which the Government's policies on sustainable transport are implemented will tend to reflect what the public wants - NGOs will need to be vigilant in countering any divergence by the Government from its stated sustainable transport policies (e.g. announcing road schemes before the findings of multi-modal studies have been reported);

4.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.1   Regional and Devolved Government:

There is clearly a need for the Government to stand by the sustainable transport commitments it set out in its Transport White Paper and for significant action by businesses and the public to bring about more sustainable transport and patterns of behaviour.   However, key issues for regional government, in terms of promoting sustainable transport, point to the need for the following actions.

Actions:	By Whom:
Ensure that regional partners genuinely engage each other in developing sustainable Regional Transport Strategy, despite sometimes having competing objectives (e.g. Regional Planning Bodies/sustainable transport versus rapid economic regeneration)..	RDAs, Regional Chambers, GOs and regional partners.
Facilitate exchange of experience in developing and implementing sustainable transport projects at regional and local levels.	SDC
Ensure that regional and local government organisations implement the strategic commitment of Regional Transport Strategies and Regional Planning Guidance into more sustainable transport at a ground level - i.e. turn the commitment into action.	Sub-regional partners & local authorities.
Ensure that local actions to improve transport fit within the framework established by Regional Transport Strategies.	Sub-regional partners, local authorities, Regional Chambers.
Ensure that road building programmes and approved schemes reflect the Regional Transport Strategies and the findings of multi-modal studies.	DETR, RDAs, SRPs, Regional Chambers, Local Authorities.

Ensure that transport initiatives delivered by regional and sub-regional statutory bodies take account of and aim to promote sustainable development.	Regional SD Roundtables, Regional Chambers, SRPs, Local Authorities.

4.3.2   *Private Sector Actions*

Actions:	By Whom:
Companies need to develop a more coherent company wide approach to sustainable transport covering all aspects of their business where transport has a significant overlap – not just those on which it is relatively easy to report.	Businesses, DTI, DETR, CBI.
Greater investigation of the feasibility of using rail to transport goods as an alternative to HGVs.	Businesses, DTI, DETR, transport providers.
Research into opportunities for companies to meet business needs while reducing the need to travel (site location, internet based home delivery services, employee home working etc).	DETR, DTI, SDC.
More widespread take-up of Green Travel Plans is needed at sites which generate significant traffic.	Businesses, developers, site mgmt companies, RDAs.

4.3.3   *NGO Actions*

Actions:	By Whom:
Continue to scrutinise and apply pressure on government (local, regional and national) in order to increase the sustainability of transport plans, strategies and projects.	NGOs
Continue to develop, deliver and disseminate examples of best practice in sustainable transport projects.	NGOs
Continue to help develop and deliver local and community based transport projects.	Local authorities, NGOs
Increase public awareness of transport / sustainability issues and the role of individuals, households and neighbourhoods.	NGO, SDC, Local Authorities.
Expand work undertaken in partnership with companies to introduce practical green transport initiatives.	Businesses and NGOs.

5.   *IMPROVING ECO-EFFICIENCY WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON*
             PRODUCTION

5.1   *INTRODUCTION*

Eco-efficiency is not synonymous with sustainable development although the
two are sometimes talked of as if they were inter-changeable. Eco-efficiency is
closely related to a series of methodologies and concerns relating to resource
use and the impacts associated with the production, use and disposal of
products. **Eco-efficiency is about using fewer resources per unit of product
- and it not necessarily about reducing overall resource use.**

5.2   *PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

5.2.1   *Regional and Devolved Government*

Initiatives to promote eco-efficiency are being taken by many regional
government and statutory bodies throughout the UK, driven by the clear
policy message that eco-efficiency contributes to business competitiveness, as
well as bringing environmental improvement and social benefits for
communities and employees. **However, at times these appear to have been
poorly co-ordinated within regions and there is a need for better at the
regional level in the future - in order to avoid duplication, enhance the
quality of support provided to businesses.** Furthermore, many businesses
have not yet become engaged in these initiatives. Similarly, only a minority of
the public / consumers appear to have become engaged in many activities to
promote eco-efficiency.

It should be recognised that regional budgets for this activity are at the
moment constrained by existing central government budgets. In view of this,
it is important that regional governments are increasingly working with each
other, and external support providers, in order to enhance the co-ordination
and effectiveness of the support provided to businesses in the area of eco-
efficiency.

**There are also significant opportunities for regional government and public
sector partners to adopt eco-efficiency in their internal operations - for
example, in schools and hospitals.**

It is important that initiatives to promote eco-efficiency are firmly integrated
in regional development strategies and action plans, in areas such as
businesses development, skills and learning; and that activities to effectively
co-ordinated in order to make best of use available resources.

5.2.2   *Private Sector*

Eco-efficiency in production has been promoted vigorously by UK and EU
governments and an increasing number of companies are exploring and
adopting ways of re-designing products and processes in order to improve

eco-efficiency of products throughout their life cycles. Reports from Government programmes such as 'Envirowise' (previously known as the Environmental Technology Best Practice Programme) and from organisations such as the Environment Agency indicate that a growing number of companies have adopted improved pollution control and waste minimisation activities where there is a clear regulatory or financial driver.

However, many companies have still not address the issue of eco-efficiency and only a small minority of companies (often the larger manufacturing companies, rather than SMEs) have gone further towards redesigning their products and production processes.

The adoption of 'environmental good practice' may lead to a reduction of environmental impacts, but is unlikely to lead to the scale of improvements necessary to achieve sustainable development (e.g. Factor 10). Whilst the environmental good practice adopted by many companies (e.g. waste minimisation and energy audits) are valuable incremental steps towards sustainable development, these actions tend to represent 'minimisation', rather than 'sustainable development'. Whilst any progress is good news, more significant changes are required in order to achieve sustainable development.

Production eco-efficiency is also inextricably linked with supply-chain effects, looking both up and down the chain. Upstream, many businesses (particularly retailers) are using questionnaire surveys to gauge supplier performance, with social issues also beginning to form part of this analysis. Actually using the findings of such inquiries to inform purchasing decisions is also becoming more common, thus placing pressure on other companies to begin thinking about eco-efficiency, although often the trade-off between choices on sustainability and cost is made on purely commercial grounds.

There are, however, concerns that eco-efficiency will not move the private sector towards sustainability as no matter how much more efficient the use of resources involved in each product becomes, gross consumption is still increasing and with this resource usage. Until businesses are not required to sell more to ensure survival, the problem of increasing resource usage is likely to continue.

Despite progress by a minority of companies, there remains a real need for the bulk of businesses to adopt significant improvements in eco-efficiency in order to shift towards sustainable development. However, at present the legal and market drivers to encourage this behaviour, and therefore also the business case, are undeveloped.

5.2.3   *NGOs*

The issue of eco-efficiency has been given little relatively attention by UK NGOs and does not appeared to have been a primary focus of NGO activity. However, some national environmental NGOs such as Forum for the Future, WWF and the Green Alliance have lobbied government to adopt a national indicator of eco-efficiency, and carried out some research to support this

objective. In addition, a number of NGOs, such as Groundwork, have been involved in delivering advice to companies (including SMEs) on eco-efficiency.

It is notable that national government has been the primary focus of NGO lobbying on eco-efficiency, since it is ultimately individual businesses that are the primary agents of changes in eco-efficiency. The UK Government (Cabinet Office) has recently initiated a major study on eco-efficiency. This may result in further initiatives that will contribute to increased eco-efficiency by businesses.

NGO campaigning activity has also highlighted the more fundamental challenge that underlies the concept of eco-efficiency: defining sustainable levels of resource use. Friends of the Earth has published a book on this issue, and have lobbied government to tackle excessive resource consumption in the UK identified by this publication.[1]

'Enough', the anti-consumerism campaign, have also sought to highlight these issues through public awareness raising work, in association with other environmental groups.

(1) [1] Tomorrow's World, Britain's Share in a Sustainable Future (D Mclaren, S Bullock, N Yousuf)

5.3   *RECOMMENDATIONS*

In order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development in the field of eco-efficiency, the following actions are recommended.

Actions:	By Whom:
Regional and Devolved Government:	
Develop regional work on economic strategies, competitiveness, studies on the environment-economy relationship and the RSDF into regional blueprints for 'eco-efficient' regions.	RDAs, GO, WDA, South East, NIE, DETR, DTI
Firmly integrated eco-efficiency projects and guidance into action plans to deliver regional economic strategies.	RDA, GO, WDA, SE, NIE, SBS.
Ensure that actions to promote eco-efficiency are integrated / co-ordinated and their results effectively disseminated.	RDA, GO, WDA, SE, NIE.
Regional government should seek to improve the eco-efficiency of its own operations - eg. areas such as energy and waste minimisation.	All regional government bodies.
Private Sector:	
Participate in Government and regional initiatives (eg. waste minimisation, product labelling, ISO 14001, EMAS) support improvements in eco-efficiency.	Businesses, CBI, trade associations, Chambers of Commerce.
Report on eco-efficiency performance / initiatives.	As above.
Develop sector specific programmes, guidance and strategies for increasing eco-efficiency.	Businesses, DTI, DETR.
NGOs:	
Continue to undertake research and campaigns to highlight the need for improved resource management.	NGOs, DETR.
Develop partnerships with individual companies or sectors to provide expertise and external stakeholder input on eco-efficiency issues.	NGOs
Ensure that NGO activities to support SME eco-efficiency are fully integrated with the activities of organisations such as the SBS and regional government.	NGOs

6. HEALTH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Human health is determined by a number of factors including life style, nutrition, socio-economic status, access to health care and environment. **Healthy environments and healthy populations are inter-dependent. Despite this, health protection and the environment have traditionally been seen as separate policy domains**.

Set out below, are areas of policy and activity and some related health impacts:

- Macro-economic: income distribution and level; changes in labour market; changes in cost of living, food and housing; effects on health sector.

- Agriculture: Effect of subsidies on levels of pesticide use and as a result levels of residues, farm incomes and rural way of life.

- Industrial: Use of hazardous substances; occupational health & safety requirements.

- Energy: effects of atmospheric pollution / emissions.

- Housing and social: Inadequate housing; overcrowding.

Policy Context:

The White Paper 'Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation' was launched in 1999 and has the twin aims of: improving health and reducing health inequality. The strategy focuses on the four main causes of premature death and avoidable ill health: cancer, coronary heart disease and stroke, accidental injury and mental illness. Together they account for 75% of deaths under the age of 75. The aim of the White Paper is that by achieving targets in each priority area by 2010, as many as 300 000 deaths will have been prevented. The targets are as follows:

- "Cancer: To reduce the death rate from cancer in people under 75 by at least one fifth".
- "Coronary heart disease and stroke: To reduce the death rate from coronary heart disease and stroke and related diseases in people under 75 by at least two fifths".
- "Accidents: To reduce the death rate from accidents by at least one fifth and to reduce the rate of serious injury from accidents by at least one tenth".
- "Mental Health: To reduce the death rate from suicide and undetermined injury by at one fifth".

At the launch of the White Paper, the Health Secretary stated that "the National Health Service has a big part to play but our strategy requires a three-way partnership between the whole government, local communities, families and individuals. None can succeed without the others". It was also recognised that Government policies and actions to tackle unemployment, low wages, poor housing, crime and pollution would be fundamental components of the policy framework to address the wider social, economic and environmental causes of ill-health.

Initiatives connected to the delivery of the strategy include: the Working Families Tax Credit; the New Deal; the Housing Investment Programme; the New Deal for Transport; and directly health related initiatives such as Health Action Zones and Healthy Living Centres. In addition, the White Paper launched the Healthy Citizens Programme designed to help give people the information they need to make informed decisions regarding their health.

At the same time as the publication of the White Paper, an action report entitled 'Reducing Health Inequalities' was published as a result of an independent inquiry in 1998. This too recognised that education, employment, housing, the environment and transport can all impact upon peoples' health and well-being.

Other Government strategies also highlight the relationships between health, social, environmental and economic circumstances. For example, the 'New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal' links the work of the NHS to activities of Local Strategic Partnerships.

6.2   *PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

6.2.1   *Regional and Devolved Government*

At the regional level, the key players are the National Health Trusts. There are growing signs of their interest in the broader health agenda and links are being forged with the National Assemblies, the RDAs, Government Offices and other regional partners. Examples include the health summit held by the Regional Chamber for Yorkshire and Humberside in 1999 and the work being done in the South West on a regional health observatory.

Health issues and the links to environmental and economic circumstances are also being included in a number of the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks. In addition, the issue of including health criteria and objectives has been raised in the context of sustainability appraisals of regional plans and programmes, as has the issue of Health Impact Assessments.

6.2.2   *The Private Sector*

According to the joint HSE / DETR publication 'Revitalising Health and Safety' (1999), each year more than 25 million working days are lost and over 25 000 workers forced to give up work due to work related accidents and ill

health.   This equates to an estimated £1.5 to £1.7 billion per annum, plus a further £3 - £7.7 billion from accidental damage to property and equipment. **Overall, the cost of work-related accidents and ill health is estimated at 1-2% of GDP.**

These figures indicate that ill-health and accidents at work are a serious issue for the private sector.

In Spring 2000, the Government launched its 'Work-Life Balance Campaign' which aims to raise employer awareness of the business benefits of introducing policies and practices which help employees help a better balance between work and the rest of their lives. The summary report of the baseline study (November 2000) highlights a number of interesting health/quality of life issues which indicate that the balance between work and 'life' is an increasingly important issue which will need to be addressed both by employers and by the Government.

Traditionally the focus on health within the private sector has focused primarily on health and safety at work issues relating to national standards and legislation. The broader aspects of employee well-being and quality of life have not been as widely appreciated or acted upon until very recently. There are the beginnings of signs that a more holistic approach to health and quality of life issues is beginning to emerge in some parts of the private sector.

6.2.3   *NGOs*

Organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree[1] Foundation and the Kings Fund have been active in highlighting the linkages between health, poverty and state of the physical environment.   They have also carried out work on the links between social exclusion and health in both urban and rural areas. Whilst not necessarily couching this work in terms of sustainable development, it clearly relates to the linkages between these issues.

Similarly, organisations involved in community development, such as the Community Development Foundation, Groundwork, the NCVO and the BTCV have carried out initiatives focusing on healthy life styles and the role of participating in community, social and environmental activities in promoting healthy living. Examples include, involvement in Government backed (New Opportunities Fund) 'Healthy Living Centres' and the BTCV's 'Green Gyms' initiative.

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(2) 'Reducing Health Inequalities in Britain - Mitchell and Dorling for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000.

6.3   *R*ECOMMENDATIONS

In order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development in the area of 'health', the following recommendations are highlighted.

Actions:	By Whom:
Regional and Devolved Government:	
Integrate the health sector into regional partnership working.	NHS Exec's, RDA, GO, National Assemblies.
Develop methodologies for applying health impact assessment to regional plans and programmes.	DoH, DETR, RDA, GO
Regional partners should investigate / quantify the regional impacts and relationships between health, economy, social conditions and the environment.	NHS Exec's, RDA, GO, National Assemblies,. DoH.
Private Sector:	
Business needs to be encouraged to address not only HSE issues but also work/life balance issues.	Businesses, CBI, trade associations, trade unions, DfEE, DTI, HSE, DoH.
NGOs:	
Continue to develop projects and capacity to work on health and quality of life issues at the community level.	NGOs
Build on existing research into the linkages between health and environment .	NGOs
Assist in the local delivery of Government initiatives and services relating to health issues.	NGOs
Partners could hold a conference to discuss experience to date in tackling the broader health agenda in both rural and urban areas.	NGOs, SDC, NHS Trusts, DoH etc.

7.	*FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION, WITH A FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LAND USE*

7.1	*INTRODUCTION*

The UK food chain is estimated to be worth £57bn and to employ more than 3 million people and therefore sustainable food production and consumption are central to achieving sustainable development in both rural and urban areas. The Food sector contributes to:

- **Economic benefits**: Agricultural production only contributes £7bn pa to GDP and provides approximately 600,000 workers (full and part-time). However, economically viable agriculture is a key contributor to individual incomes (with farm subsidies accounting for about 1/3 of farm incomes in 1999) and sustainable rural communities. In order to avoid de-population there is a need for secure incomes for farmers, farm workers and other rural people and industries dependent on them.

- **Quality of life**. Food production sustains rural communities and makes an important contribution to health and quality of life. With increasing affluence and interest in life style there is a growing demand for high quality, diverse food.   Public interest in food safety continues to grow (see box) with an expectation that safe, healthy, affordable food should be available to everyone.

> A Food You Can Trust survey 2000 by Mintel found that 43% of consumers are concerned about BSE/CJD, which is even higher than during 1998, when the crisis was at its peak.   75% percent of those questioned said they would buy organic food if it was not so expensive.

- **Environmental sustainability**. Sustainable agricultural can make a major contribution to land management and improved environmental outcomes (soil management, water pollution, water resources management, biodiversity and landscape). However, much of UK agriculture is not currently environmentally sustainable[1]. Improving the eco-efficiency of food production (energy use in cultivation, livestock rearing, processing, distribution and pre and post consumer packaging per unit of food) could make a major contribution to achieving eco-efficiency elsewhere in the economy.

While the combination of regulation, advice, information and incentives have resulted in a reduction in some adverse environmental impacts of agriculture, others, such as loss of biodiversity in the wider countryside continue since the vast majority of the farmed countryside is subject to commodity payments. The area under agri-environment schemes is low (under 10%) and the area so far converted to organic farming even smaller (only 1.5 % was converted or in conversion by April 1999).

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(1) Aspects of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Policy - UK Round Table for Sustainable Development, July 1998.

Food production is also considered an important sustainability theme because many of the related issues - animal welfare and diet during housing, transport and in abattoirs, the use of GMO plants and animals, ethical trading - are emotive ones capable of mobilising interest across NGOs and local interest groups in surprising coalitions.

Organic agriculture is seen by many as a way of addressing the environmental, social and economics issues associated with unsustainable farming. As well as reducing environmental impacts and providing consumers with products that they perceive as healthier and more ethically produced, they are seen as a means of re-establishing direct links between consumers and farmers and increasing their share of the price paid for the final product. The market for organics is currently fast growing (retail sales have doubled annually over the last 3 years and were worth £550 million by 2000 and expected to reach £1 billion by 2001). However, an estimated 75% of organic consumption in the UK is still imported (Soil Association).

'Local' produce (which may or not be organic) can also support the local economy, the viability of rural areas, deliver environmental benefits (e.g. by reducing food miles travelled and supporting valued landscapes etc) and restoring consumer trust in food.

- Three out of four people buy local produce (which over 50% defined as within 10 miles of where it was bought)
- Farm shops, health food and wholefood shops and farmers markets all popular sources
- 75% would pay more for products which help conserve the countryside
- 70% were in favour of government legislation to force supermarkets to stock a certain percentage of local produce

Source: Survey of 500 consumers by ORC International June 2000 for 'Eat the View'

7.2 *PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

7.2.1 *Regional and Devolved Government*

Regional Government and statutory bodies are increasingly becoming involved in developing strategies and projects to support the growth of high quality, regional produce. These initiatives are focused on sustainability and providing some environmental benefits (e.g. reduced production and transport impacts), economic and social benefits for food producers and rural communities (e.g. market towns) and positive health benefits for consumers in rural and urban areas rather than on the most environmentally sustainable farming systems. Initiatives include the following:

- **Implementation of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR) and the England Rural Development Plan** which are committed to linking farm aid to environmental schemes. Regional plans are being developed by MAFF, CA, EN, FC and EH from April 2001 onwards. However, no guidance on

how to maximise environmental, social and economic benefits at the project level has yet been produced.

- **Regional food and drink strategies** are being developed in 'regions' such as Wales, the West Midlands and the South West by regional partnerships (RDAs, MAFF, CA, EA, private companies etc).

- **The Countryside Agency's 'Eat the View' initiative** promotes the link between local food (*environmentally beneficial, locally distinctive food which maintains the character and diversity of the countryside*) and farmers markets, regional food initiatives, tourist boards and Soil Association-supported local food initiatives.

- **Regional Food Initiatives** under Food From Britain such as Taste of the West, Taste of Anglia, Heart of England Fine Foods, 'Notts Nosh' which combine economic and environmental objectives based on support for joint marketing of quality foods.

- **Farmers Markets and Organic Box Schemes** are also supported by Local Authorities under Local Agenda 21.

Whilst regional government has an important role to play in this area, it must be recognised that many of these initiatives are demand led by consumer and retailer demand.

7.2.2   *Private Sector*

There has been increasing concentration of production and distribution capacity in the food sector over the last 20 years, giving rise to many unsustainable trends. For instance:

- Small farmer's margins have been squeezed by the combined forces of the changing CAP regime, the procurement policies of large retailers and increasing environmental regulation. In marginal farming areas farmers have either been forced to give up farming or diversify into on or off farm activities. Diversification can make a positive contribution to sustainable development but can create other environmental pressures in rural areas (increased visitor pressure, planning pressures etc).

- Average distance that food is transported increased 50% over the 20 years to 1998 to an average 123 Km.

- Over the same period out of town retailing grew so rapidly that by 1997 supermarkets accounted for 70% of sales of fresh fruit and vegetables.

At the farm level there is some evidence of a move to more sustainable practices:

- **Greater participation in agri-environment schemes** (reflecting increasing funding available for Countryside Stewardship and the Organic Farming Scheme).

- **An increasing proportion of farmers adopting sustainable farming practices** such as Integrated Crop Management and Integrated Farming Systems. The NFU Red Tractor logo is intended to promote better product assurance.

- **Increased demand for investment capital** for conversion to organics Triodos, the 'green' Dutch bank report a 260% increase in demand for conversion funds between 1999 and 2000 and a 50% increase in the number of applications. Based on this growing demand Triodos will launch an Venture capital fund for organics in the spring.

- **Success of Organic Box schemes** delivered direct to consumers. have been successful in cutting out the middleman, creating a stronger link between countryside and urban consumers and increasing margins for farmers.

- **Increasing involvement in 'farmers markets'** where local farmers and producers sell produce direct to the public. In 1997 there were no farmers markets in the UK. By late 2000 there were 200 farmers markets with a total turnover of £65 million a year. [1]

Amongst the food processing and retail business there are also growing signs of commitment to sustainable food production evidenced though:

- **A growing commitment to providing organic and 'low input' or local produce in major retailers**. Generally this is recognised as a fast growing niche market where premium prices can be charged. For most retailers (e.g. Sainsburys) some 80% of total organic produce is currently imported. Iceland has been alone in deciding to offer consumers no choice but organic vegetables and at no extra cost. However, Iceland's recent disastrous financial performance suggests that this is not yet a financially viable formula.

> Iceland stated that "nutritious food should be available to everyone" and took the radical step of converting all its frozen vegetable offering to organic at no additional cost to consumers.
>
> Sainsbury's is "totally committed to organic food". At the end of last year it revamped its initiative to support organic farmers, renaming it The Organics Partnership which includes suppliers and staff. Among other things the company provides price guarantees to organic milk producers, and runs a 'regionality' programme to source local produce.
>
> Asda - "just launched a £3 million, three year programme to help livestock farmers convert to organics. The company claims to be "committed wherever possible to buy from British suppliers".
>
> Tesco "predicts organic sales will exceed £1 billion by 2005". It funds an organic research centre at Newcastle University".

- **Increasing availability of private sector funding for conversion** to organics through price guarantees (Sainsbury's), conversion packages (Asda), and venture capital. Triodos has developed financial products and

(1) FoE, RDA Briefing 2: Farmers Markets, 2000

services specifically for farmers wishing to convert and will launch its venture capital fund in the spring and has launched its guide - Banking for an Organic Future - the first of its type.

- **A number of retailers have started to reopen city centre supermarkets** (Tesco, Sainsbury's). **<u>While this undoubtedly contributes to sustainability, the trend appears to reflect difficulties in getting planning consents for out- of-town-sites and recognition of the niche market for commuter lunchtime trade than any commitment to sustainability.</u>**

- **Companies are increasingly using supply chain measures** to encourage good sustainability practice amongst suppliers. The emphasis is on traceability and safety and is largely a response to continuing consumer alarm about BSE/CJD and GMOs.

- **Growing recognition that socially responsible human resource** policies make good business sense for operations in the UK and overseas- e.g. Investors in People and the Ethical Trade Initiatives

7.2.3   *NGOs*

The activities of NGOs on food production and consumption involve research and lobbying, public awareness raising and certification of products and processes. Key activities in this area have been:

- **Research and lobbying on the environmental and social impacts of conventional farming** and distribution systems by RSPB, CPRE, the Soil Association and Sustain amongst others. Much of this work has been influential on central government thinking, and fed into Agenda 2000 and the Rural White Paper.

- **Campaigning by NGOs on the dangers of GMOs, pesticides, BSE, growth hormones** etc which has been a contributory factor in raising the profile of these issues and so creating demand for healthier, safer, greener alternatives.

- **Lobbying on implications of imported food produce** for the producer communities and the global environment, e.g. through promotion of food miles schemes and fair trade initiatives (Traidcraft).

- **Research on farming systems** and how to reduce environmental impacts or enhance environmental benefits. For instance work on whole farm approaches using support mechanisms such as Set Aside and Countryside Stewardship has shown that if the 3% most marginal arable land (4 m ha) were taken out of production then biodiversity could be dramatically enhanced without affecting yields.

- **Product Certification**. The Soil Association is one of the NGOs most closely associated with labelling of organic produce and raising consumer awareness. All organic food producers abide by codes of practice

complying with UKROFS (The UK Register of Organic Food Standards) and EC Directive standards. However, there are a plethora of other 'environmentally friendly' products endorsed by NGOs where the claims are less easy to substantiate and which may be contributing to general consumer confusion.

7.3   *RECOMMENDATIONS*

There is still a lack of consensus over some of the key issues in this sector, what exactly sustainable food production and consumption means and whether organic production is the only way of achieving it.

Regional and Devolved Government: There is significant scope for regional government to promote and support expansion of more sustainable food chains through - for example, via regional food strategies incorporating initiatives to strengthen links between regional producers and consumers.

Regional government should also continue to expand assistance provided to agri-environment schemes (making use of the increased budgets under the Rural Development Plans) and streamline and disseminate these initiatives in order to encourage uptake amongst farmers.

Private Sector: In the private sector, food producers should continue to explore the business case for switching to more sustainable forms of production and continue to expand this production. Retailers need to continue their initiatives to raise awareness amongst consumers of the issues relating to organic produce and expand their purchasing of regional and organic produce.

NGOs: NGOs should build on the wide range of initiatives already undertaken in this area - including the support provided to organic producers and activities to raise public awareness of the sustainability issues relating to food production, consumption and rural land use.