



**Sustainable**  
Development Commission

**A Better Quality of Life  
within Environmental Limits**

**SDC Business Plan  
2010-2011**



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# 1. Foreword

This Business Plan sets out in detail the Sustainable Development Commission's priority areas of work for the coming year, as drawn up by our commissioners and staff.

The SDC is strongly committed to an ambitious work programme, which aims to support the four governments of the UK in putting sustainable development at the heart of all they do.

Critically, while this Plan sets out the work of the SDC over the coming twelve months, it also highlights the pivotal role that sustainable development needs to play if the government is going to find its way out of the modern day policy labyrinth it finds itself in.

If we look at our economy, we can see that it is still under enormous pressure. At the same time, fresh questions are being asked about the quality of life in our communities and longstanding inequalities in health and in our wider society.

In the public sector, government is facing pressures as it seeks to reduce public spending, even as it engages with new thinking on how better to organise itself. And outside of government, in our communities and in business, we face challenges in how to convince an increasingly sceptical audience about the need to make changes in the way we run our lives and businesses to make them resilient and sustainable in the long term.

From our perspective at the head of an organisation that has one foot inside government, but also a remit to convene wider groups outside of Government to support delivery of sustainable development in households, communities and businesses, the challenges of what to do next are many, but the areas to focus on are clear.

Our programme of work is based around five outcomes which stem from a set of questions. As part of the development of this plan we asked a range of stakeholders - including MPs, senior civil servants, other stakeholders from across business, the wider public sector and NGOs, as well as our commissioners and staff - what they saw as the big questions being faced by government.

Their questions: about how to make the economy sustainable; about the real challenges of staying

within environmental limits; about how government can better organise itself to factor in economic, social and environmental issues as one, both in the short and long term; about issues of fairness, quality of life and wellbeing; and, about how to engage with the public on living in a sustainable way, will be where the SDC focuses its attention in 2010/11.

This Business Plan builds on the track record of the SDC. Through our scrutiny and advisory work we have already helped Government to make savings over the last three years of over £60m in energy, water and waste costs. Alongside this we have provided support and advice to government on how to tackle some of the many critical issues it faces.

The task for the SDC is not only about working with national government. The international perspective is hugely important to us, and we will be working with our equivalents in other countries in the EU and worldwide, and with the Department for International Development, to ensure that our work here is well informed by developments elsewhere, and vice versa.

In our role as advisor to the UK, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments, we know that we have our work cut out, but also that we now have the benefit of 16 years of experience of bringing practical solutions into government to work alongside these governments to make sustainable development a reality in the UK.



Will Day  
Chair



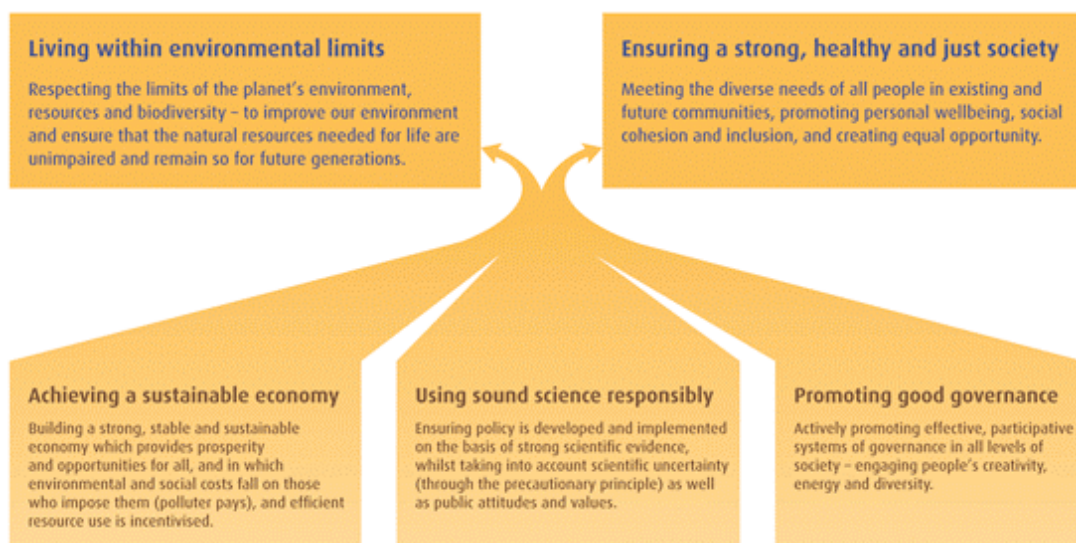
Andrew Lee  
Chief Executive

## 2. About the Sustainable Development Commission

The Sustainable Development Commission holds Government to account to ensure that, in everything it does, it properly balances the needs of society, the economy and the environment on which we all rely. Our aim is to work with Government to ensure a better quality of life for everyone today, without endangering the chances of future generations.

We are the only organisation charged with reporting publicly, independently and impartially on how well the Government's decisions contribute towards a secure future for everyone.

We take as our starting point the five principles of sustainable development agreed by the four Governments of the UK (below):



For the UK Government the SDC has an official watchdog function, scrutinising progress on the implementation of its sustainable development strategy: monitoring targets on the sustainable management of the Government estate and procurement. We combine this with providing policy advice and helping to build capability across a range of departments.

The SDC performs a similar scrutiny and advisory role for the Scottish Government, providing an annual independent review of progress on sustainable development, and advice and capability building on a range of issues.

The SDC's Wales team work closely with the Welsh Assembly Government - with its statutory duty on sustainable development - providing it with policy advice, capability building and independent assessment to help make sustainable development the central organising principle of government.

In Northern Ireland, the SDC works closely with the Government, providing specialist advice and capability building, helping to deliver the Executive's new Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan.

### Our Structure

In February 2009 the SDC became an executive non-departmental advisory body (NDPB) and a public limited company, equally owned by the UK Government; the Scottish Government; the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

In 2009/10 the SDC began putting in place new systems to meet its obligations as a separately constituted legal organisation, work that will continue through 2010/11. This status change gives the SDC a much clearer relationship with the four governments, and greatly strengthens our accountability to society in

delivering value for the £4.5 million of public funds we use.

We are governed by a Framework Agreement drawn up between the four governments and the SDC, which guides the work of the SDC's Board and Management Team.

Alongside the Board sit our 16 Commissioners who come from a mix of academic, scientific, business and NGO backgrounds. As a commissioner led body, our Commissioners are closely involved the delivery of our programme, and they also meet together in plenary to discuss our work, engage in deliberation and problem solving, and challenge each other and the SDC as a whole.

Commissioners are recruited as public appointments and are appointed by the Prime Minister with the agreement of the Devolved Administrations. The Commissioners and Board are supported by staff across offices in London (Whitehall), Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, managed by Chief Executive Andrew Lee and the SDC's Management team.

## **Our Approach**

The SDC works as one organisation with the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive. We believe that sustainable development is the only way to achieve positive, long-term solutions for all, by balancing the needs of people with those of the environment on which we depend. The SDC aims to achieve positive change through scrutiny, capability building and policy advice.

Although it has been important at times for the SDC to throw the spotlight on issues which are difficult or uncomfortable, our work with Government is generally most effective using capability building, when we work very closely alongside officials and Ministers – developing new approaches to policy together and thereby fostering enhanced knowledge, attitudes and understanding. Using these different approaches, often in close combination, is what gives the SDC its unique character and value – no other organisation works quite in this way and so closely with, yet independent from, Government itself.

A key factor in sustainability is bringing the needs of future generations into current decision making. We will achieve this in our own work by ensuring that we bring a youth voice into the design and delivery of key pieces of work.

### 3. Our Five Strategic Outcomes

To prepare this new Business Plan, during the Autumn of 2009 we undertook an extensive engagement exercise with stakeholders across Government, Parliament and through our *SD Panel* – which includes more than five hundred sustainability professionals. We asked what people saw as the key challenges that would face Government after the UK Election and where they felt the SDC could help.

This engagement helped us to focus our work around five key questions identified by our stakeholders, and our programme of work aims to help government make significant progress on resolving the many complex issues encapsulated within these questions.

They are:

- **How can Government better organise itself to deliver more sustainable outcomes?**
- **How can Government support a transition to a sustainable economy?**
- **How can Government ensure that our society stays within environmental limits, while creating sustainable places?**
- **How can Government ensure that policies reduce disadvantage rather than having a disproportionate impact on sections of our society?**
- **What can Government do to support action in communities and business that encourages changes to people's behaviour and which enables more sustainable lives?**

From these questions we identified five main themes:

- **Making Government more sustainable**
- **The transition to a sustainable economy**
- **Shaping sustainable places**
- **Fairness in sustainable development**
- **Enabling more sustainable lives.**

These five themes represent some of the most important challenges and “wicked issues” being tackled by government. Each will require new and innovative thinking, and new ways of working which cut through the barriers between departments and between national policy and local action. Accordingly the SDC will use them as the strategic driver for its business planning in the years ahead.

In this section we describe each of the five and set down outcomes for each in terms of the sorts of changes we would like to help to achieve in Government and the Public sector by virtue of the SDC's work. We intend to work towards these outcomes by establishing trusted and high-level relationships with the relevant decision makers, underpinned by the projects and activities we do ourselves and supported by forging strategic alliances and stronger relationships with a network of organisations who are key players in each of the five themes. These are the five conversations we want to have with Government, Business, and the Public and Third Sectors.

## Making Government more sustainable

Sustainable development creates opportunities to improve the way that Government works. It requires a strategic, joined up approach alongside a high level of ambition around the scale and pace of change. Also necessary are long term planning, sophisticated and transparent performance management, decentralisation and democratic engagement, and effective partnership working - at all levels of government.

The SDC is uniquely placed to assist this improvement programme - being close to, but independent from government, being able to bring a long term perspective and see opportunities to connect agendas across economic, environment and social portfolios within and between departments.

## The transition to a sustainable economy

The events of the last two years have revealed the huge risks inherent in the current global financial system. At a deeper level, there is growing recognition that we need to build a new and more responsive economic model if we are to respond to three imperatives: reducing global poverty, enabling us to live within environmental limits (of which carbon is but one), and moving beyond GDP as the predominant way of trying to measure quality of life.

The SDC's *Prosperity without Growth?* described this dilemma and has joined Joseph Stiglitz's *Beyond GDP*, the work of the Sarkozy Commission, and many others in helping to open up a serious dialogue about the nature of the transition needed.

**Outcome:** That Government has the systems and capability to make its policy and operations more sustainable.

Our principal Whitehall focus for this work will be the Cabinet Office, Treasury, No. 10 and Defra, though of course it affects every department and all public sector bodies.

This work is also particularly relevant to our work with the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government where our scrutiny work takes account of governance and performance measures.

**Outcome:** That Government is actively identifying and implementing new policies and programmes to aid the transition to a more sustainable economy.

Our principal Whitehall focus for this work is the Treasury, as well as the Cabinet Office, the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

This outcome is also particularly relevant to our work with the Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government. We are working with all three devolved administrations on Economic Renewal or Green New Deal initiatives.

## Shaping sustainable places

The notion of place is a cornerstone of sustainability. In our villages, towns and cities, our physical infrastructure has a huge impact on the way we are able to live our lives. Too often, places lock their citizens into unsustainable and high carbon lifestyles by restricting the choices they can make. Such places do not enable people to shape the communities that they live in.

Whether it is the type of houses they live in or their ability to access goods or services, these choices can have a huge negative impact on people's mental and physical wellbeing and the natural environment that sustains them.

In our rural areas, there are overlapping and often competing demands for land use for food production, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, leisure, water storage and flood protection and much else. The SDC has worked on both sides of this continuum – looking at the built environment and the pressures on our countryside and planning systems.

## Fairness in sustainable development

A headline principle of sustainable development enshrines the importance of ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. All policy, including on the environment, should aim to reduce inequalities between and within different sections of society in order to establish fairer, more successful communities.

In a time when resources are severely constrained it is critical that Government has a better understanding of where substantial co-benefits and synergies can be achieved by policies to tackle health, poverty, crime and disadvantage.

**Outcome:** That Government has identified and is implementing new policies and programmes which better enable sustainability to be built into all spatial aspects of decision making in the urban and rural environment and enhance the natural environment.

Our principal Whitehall focus for this work will be Defra, and the Departments for Communities & Local Government and Energy and Climate Change.

This work is also particularly relevant to our work with the Welsh Assembly Government which commissioned the SDC's 2009 report into a *Low Carbon Wales* and to our ongoing work with the Scottish Government on planning, food, health and land use.

**Outcome:** That Government is able to use sustainable development to create policies that tackle disadvantage at the same time as reducing emissions or improving environmental quality.

Our principal Whitehall focus for this work will be the Departments of Health, Transport, Education, and Energy & Climate Change.

## Enabling more sustainable lives

Behaviour change has become something of a holy grail for Government in its quest for a low carbon and more sustainable society. Since the publication of *I Will if You Will* (SDC/NCC), which set out the case for collaborative and mutually supportive action from government, business and society, a great deal of work has been done.

Some Government Departments, Defra in particular, have built up a sophisticated understanding of the values and motivations of many different groups of people and the ways in which behaviour change might happen. The SDC is keen to build on this work and support Government in finding innovative ways to encourage, support and enable people to make better choices for themselves and live more sustainable lives.

**Outcome:** An empowered Government confidently developing new ways to enable people to adopt sustainable lifestyles.

Our principal Whitehall focus for this work will be the Cabinet Office and Defra.

This work is also particularly relevant to our work with the Scottish Government where the SDC is actively supporting its Climate Challenge Fund, and Northern Ireland where the SDC is supporting work on sustainable consumption.

## 4. Our projects for 2010-11

Having decided what changes we would like to see over the next few years, we here set out the projects that represent the first steps towards these outcomes.

Although listed separately and grouped under the five headings, it is the combined results of all these projects which will take us forward. All projects are expected to support two or more of the five outcomes, (See table below).

Each project has clearly defined aims to help the SDC track and report progress to government and our stakeholders. In addition we will set ourselves a number of [indicators](#), which we will use to track performance.

Alongside this work with government, this business plan includes a number of critical areas of work that we will undertake to make ourselves a more efficient and effective organisation which represents excellent value for money in constrained times. This includes financial management, staff management and communication.

Of vital importance for the SDC is how we work across our four offices, and across the different elements of our remit.

There are 29 projects in all across our Whitehall Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland offices. All 29 will require joint working, information sharing, communication and learning across the four offices of the SDC, to ensure that our work is useful to the government of each nation.

For devolved teams, this is important to ensure that we can bring in expertise from staff and commissioners across the UK, as well as rely on a central resource that provides communication, finance and human resources support and expertise.

For our Whitehall teams, this ensures that we make use of expertise developed by our devolved teams, and that we understand what is happening in each of the four governments: something of particular importance given that many of the issues we work on are devolved policy areas.

For the whole organisation this means that we can use the different parts of our remit (scrutiny, capability building and advocacy/policy advice) as tools that help us in achievement of agreed outcomes. When we

work with parts of government, they need us to operate in a consistent manner, to understand how we use the different parts of our remit, and to be able to see how they are being used consecutively.

This approach makes the SDC very responsive. The work we do is usually developed with parts of government, and we are on hand to provide advice, capability building and project support as requested. We are flexible in our approach and set up to respond to requests from Government for help in tackling particular issues and problems.

## SDC 2010-11 Work Programme Summary

This diagram shows the five main outcomes which will drive our work, and the contribution we expect each project to make towards them.

Work led from our Devolved offices	Making Government more sustainable	The transition to a Sustainable Economy	Shaping Sustainable Places	Fairness in sustainable development	Enabling more Sustainable Lives	Work led from our Whitehall office
						1.1a:UK Government SDiG reporting
1.1b: Welsh Government SDiG reporting						
1.1c: Scottish Government SOGE framework						
1.1d: Scottish Procurement Plan Review						
						1.2: UK Sustainable Development Indicators
1.3: Scottish Fourth Annual Assessment						
1.4: NI SD Implementation Plan						
						1.5 New Government Architecture for SD
						1.6 Localism and Sustainable Development
						1.7: UK Government advice on SDAPs
						1.8: Capability Support Programme
						2.1: Sustainable Investment Models
						2.2: Jobs & Skills in a Sustainable Economy
						2.3: Prosperity without Energy Growth
2.4: Green New Deal (NI & Scotland)						
2.5: Wales Economic Renewal Programme						
						3.1: Environmental Limits in Land Use Planning
						3.2: Equal Value
						3.3: Planning Scrutiny and Advice
3.4: Low Carbon Wales						
3.5: Zero Carbon Hub Wales						
3.6: Sustainable Construction (NI)						
3.7:Scottish Transport Review						
						4.1: Fairness in Low Carbon Policy
						4.2: Forging a Preventative Health System
						4.3: DfE Programme
4.5: Scottish Good Corporate Citizenship						4.4: DH Programme
						5.1: Enabling Sustainable Lives
5.2: Sustainable Consumption (NI)						
5.3: Scottish Climate Challenge Fund						
5.4: Partnership with SSDF & Cynnal Cymru						

Dark Blue: primary outcome

Mid Blue: strong linkages across outcomes

Light Blue: some linkages

## Making Government more sustainable

**Outcome: That Government has the systems and capability to make its policy and operations more sustainable.**

As with all the projects in this Business Plan, the SDC will work with Government to develop practical solutions to the challenges it faces, including through recommendations for change in the selected policy areas. Additionally, by combining strategic assessment and advice, the SDC will help Government understand its *overall* performance, the conditions that drive that performance, and the key challenges it must overcome to raise ambition levels and make significant performance improvements.

The SDC will focus its work here on the following areas:

### **1.1a Continuing to report on the UK Government's operations and procurement performance in line with our watchdog role**

To support Government in reducing its own impact, and reporting transparently on public sector performance, the SDC will provide commentary on the Government's performance against its own Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate targets (SOG<sub>E</sub>), as well as give more in-depth assessment and advice on priority areas such as the Government's aim to cut its own carbon emissions by 10% within 12 months.

### **1.1b Developing a Sustainable Development in Government reporting system in Wales**

2010 will see publication of the first recommendations report and the Second Wales Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) Assessment report. It is expected that these two reports will inform the considerations of the Assembly Government's Strategic Performance and Delivery Board in the setting of 2011/12 operational targets.

The SDC will test, analyse and evaluate the data presented, and will work with departments to further sustainable working across the Welsh Assembly Government.

### **1.1c Developing a Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOG<sub>E</sub>) Framework for Scotland and a Scottish Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) report**

The SDC has been in discussion with the Scottish Government with a view to developing an improved framework for corporate performance and ensuring effective scrutiny. This work will continue during 2010/11.

### **1.1d Reviewing and supporting effective implementation of the Scottish Sustainable Procurement Plan Review**

In 2009, the Scottish Government published its Scottish Procurement Plan. In 2010/11 the SDC will support the Scottish Government's Procurement team in delivery of the Plan and as part of the Fourth Assessment review implementation.

### **1.2 Advising Defra and HMT on the changes needed to Government's Sustainable Development Indicators Set**

For Government departments to measure how sustainable their policy decisions are, a robust set of indicators is needed. The SDC will work with Defra and HMT to ensure that the forthcoming review of these indicators gives a clear picture of sustainability in the UK. As part of its watchdog function, the SDC will also report publicly on the impact of Government policies on making the UK more sustainable.

### **1.3 Delivering an authoritative Fourth Scottish Annual Assessment**

Since 2007 the SDC has conducted an annual assessment of sustainable development in Scotland, looking across policy delivery, governance and operational performance. 2010 will see the SDC publish its fourth such assessment, which will act as a strategic review of government performance across the preceding four years.

To be effective in exercising this scrutiny role, the SDC will engage closely with parts of the Scottish Government to assess progress and

make recommendations on actions needed to deliver sustainability in Scotland.

**1.4 Playing a key role in the development and delivery of an effective Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Implementation Plan**

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Government hopes to approve its new Sustainable Development Strategy, the first such document since the establishment of the current devolved government. This Strategy will be complemented by an Implementation Plan, under which Departments will set out their contributions to the outcomes of the Strategy.

The SDC will support the Northern Ireland Executive's Sustainable Development Unit in coordinating this Implementation Plan, providing unique expertise and advice.

**1.5 Advising the UK Government on the structures and processes necessary to provide effective governance of its sustainable development programme**

Working with Defra, the Institute for Government and other stakeholders, the SDC will provide evidence of the benefits of adopting sustainable development principles to create more effective, efficient and sustainable government.

**1.6 Providing Government with evidence of the efficiencies and improved democratic accountability that can be gained by delivering local services that meet the needs of local communities in a more sustainable way**

The SDC will evidence what services need to be mandated and what can be delegated in order to give power and responsibility to local communities. Working with Government, this evidence will be used to provide advice on appropriate next steps to enable more efficient, effective and more sustainable delivery of public services.

**1.7 Providing UK Government departments with advice on the formulation of their Sustainable Development Action Plans, and appraisal of the finalised documents**

In 2010/11 the SDC will work in partnership with departments to ensure their plans are working towards the highest standards of sustainability.

**1.8 Develop a programme of advice and support to help Government build the capabilities within the civil service to drive necessary sustainable performance improvements within government departments**

This programme will draw on findings from across the five Themes of SDC's work, involving teams from across the UK. The aim is to identify the key levers for change in government leadership, structures and processes. The SDC's work here will initially focus on providing advice to the UK Government's Skills Unit on how sustainable development criteria might be embedded into the new Core Competence Framework for civil servants currently being developed.

To help develop ideas for this initiative as well as to co-ordinate discussions across departments on capability building for civil servants, the SDC will continue to co-chair with the National School of Government the newly created Pan-Government Group for Capability Building, made up of representatives from all major government departments.

## The transition to a more Sustainable Economy

**Outcome: That Government is actively identifying and implementing new policies and programmes to aid the transition to a more sustainable economy.**

In 2009/10 the SDC published its landmark report *Prosperity Without Growth?* Since this time, we have continued to focus our research on key elements of a sustainable economy and how to build a new and more responsible business model. In 2010/11 we will focus on sustainable investment, jobs and skills and how the lessons of this original work impact on the role of energy in our economy.

The SDC will focus its work here on the following areas:

### **2.1 Working in partnership with HMT, BIS and DECC in work to investigate Sustainable Investment Models which have the potential to drive the transition to a more sustainable economy**

Investment for sustainability is a crucial area. If we are to see the economy support more sustainable outcomes, a critical factor will be how to stimulate and direct investment into more sustainable activities when credit is limited and there is need to take urgent action on climate change and move to a low-carbon economy. A critical question is how to develop sustainable financial products so that individuals can invest in the infrastructure needed to support a sustainable economy.

We will build on our 2009/10 Delivering Neighbourhood Retrofit project and produce a research report on individual and community scale options for investment that could better support local and regional investment.

Alongside this, we will bring together economic specialists on new investment models with key stakeholders such as HMT, the finance and investment sector, DAs and regions to explore the benefits of new approaches to macroeconomic thinking which reflect a more sustainable approach to the economy.

### **2.2 Developing guidance to Government on Jobs and Skills in a Sustainable Economy, looking at ways in which the transition to a more sustainable**

**economy could be managed to direct employment to hard-to-reach areas, and support new patterns of working and work/life balance**

Labour and labour productivity play a critical role in the running of our economy, but questions about increasing levels of consumption and the resource intensity of our economy render it necessary to open up discussion on what alternate approaches to employment government can utilise. At the root of this challenge is the reality that there may be less paid work in the economy and controversially it may mean changes in employment either through a new orientation of sectors or a change in job structures. The Commission will bring together a range of thinkers on the role of jobs in our economy to aid Government thinking and policy development in this area.

### **2.3 Conducting in-depth research to explore the potential for energy demand management and behaviour change to play a much more significant role in delivering carbon reductions**

Energy generation and use is one of the underpinning pillars of our economy. But *Prosperity Without Growth?* tells us that decarbonisation of our economy is an insufficient response to reducing the impact of energy use in our economy and that energy demand reduction is needed. This project will research how energy demand management and behaviour change might play a more important role in moving our economy to a sustainable model.

### **2.4 Working with partner organisations to advocate the transition to a sustainable economy for Northern Ireland and Scotland**

Utilising our unique role as the trusted conduit between Government and the private sector, the SDC is playing a key role in making recommendations to the Northern Ireland Executive and Scottish Government on the

Green New Deal agenda. We will continue to be involved in the Green New Deal groups, those on Employment and Skills and Public and Commercial Buildings. Each group will be making recommendations to government on the green new deal agenda. Drawing on wider knowledge and experience from across the SDC, our teams will bring expertise and a sustainable development perspective to the workings of these groups.

## **2.5 Providing advice, support and evidence to the Welsh Assembly Government's Economic Renewal Programme so that the Welsh economy better delivers wellbeing and social justice within environment limits**

The Commission will draw in the considerations and findings of its UK-wide work on Sustainable Investment Models and Job and Skills in a Sustainable Economy - as well as through engaging government, business, social and environmental partners in Wales - to provide the Assembly Government with evidence and policy advice to inform its ongoing Economic Renewal Programme.

## Shaping Sustainable Places

**Outcome: That Government has identified and is implementing new policies and programmes which better enable sustainability to be built into all spatial aspects of decision making in the urban and rural environment and enhance the natural environment.**

The SDC will focus its work in the following areas:

### **3.1 Supporting the UK Government in developing a clearer set of principles for embedding environmental limits in a wide range of land use planning documents and policies**

In taking on this work the SDC will use its convening role to bring together a range of stakeholders including Government, NGOs, key statutory agencies and planning professionals to develop a shared understanding of the concept of environmental limits together with the key issues to consider in its application in decision and policy making processes. This work will be of relevance to Defra, Natural England, the Infrastructure Planning Commission, CLG, DECC, HMT and BIS.

### **3.2 Advising the UK Government on the new approaches to habitat compensation**

Following SDC research, commissioned by DECC, on the concept of Equal Value with regard to the Severn Tidal Project, the Commission will convene key stakeholders to debate and develop thinking on novel approaches to habitat compensation. Key areas of investigation will include approaches to addressing competing land use demands with biodiversity obligations under EU Habitats Directive.

### **3.3 Ensuring that English planning processes, at national and sub-national levels are consistent with sustainable development principles**

The Commission will support the UK Government in work creating a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system. We will scrutinise and advise

on planning policy, including the proposed reforms to the planning system such as the new National Planning Framework and any new process to determine applications for major infrastructure projects.

### **3.4 Working in partnership with the Wales Spatial Plan Area Groups in implementing the findings from the SDC's Low Carbon Wales report**

In late 2009, the SDC published its *Low Carbon Wales* report which set out the steps that the Welsh Assembly Government, alongside local and regional partners, needs to take across Wales' regions to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2010/11 the focus of the SDC will be in supporting each Spatial Plan Area Group in developing an action plan and commencing their implementation. In addition, the SDC Wales team will be providing advice and advocacy to the UK and Scotland teams on the approach taken, and its applicability to other planning systems in the UK.

### **3.5 Engaging with the construction sector in Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government to support its aspiration for zero carbon homes from 2011, and provide technical support to the construction sector**

The Welsh Assembly Government has a stated policy aspiration to make all new homes in Wales 'zero carbon' by 2011. To facilitate this, the SDC will continue its work engaging with the construction sector, and providing technical support through launch of an online hub in 2010/11.

### **3.6 Embedding sustainable construction with private and public partners, so that Northern Ireland sees both increased awareness of, and greater adherence to, sustainable standards for construction and infrastructure projects being developed in Northern Ireland**

It is clear that the Northern Ireland Executive is grappling with a number of issues around major infrastructure and regeneration projects. These will involve major spending and implementation plans being formulated over the next year. The SDC believes that there is a real opportunity to use these developments to utilise sustainable development good practice in both construction and how the infrastructure encourages sustainable actions on the ground.

### **3.7 Supporting and advising the Scottish Government as it refreshes the Scottish Transport Strategy, through publication of a Scottish Transport Review**

The Scottish Government's own Climate Change Delivery Plan demonstrates that current proposed action on reducing emissions from transport will be insufficient to keep emissions reductions on track. The Government's existing Transport Strategy is likely to be refreshed in 2010 to take account of a changing policy environment, and the SDC wishes to see Government develop a more consistent, integrated and sustainable approach to transport policy making and delivery.

## Fairness in Sustainable Development

**Outcome: That Government is able to use sustainable development to create policies that tackle disadvantage at the same time as reducing emissions or improving environmental quality.**

The SDC will focus its work here on the following areas:

### **4.1 Explore how fairness can be achieved as a policy aim in the context of environmental limits and wider sustainable development**

Focusing on one or two policy areas such as transport, energy and climate policy, the SDC will engage government and other stakeholders to identify where substantial co-benefits and synergies can be achieved between policies that help us to live within environmental limits (particularly climate change) and policies which reduce inequalities in health, poverty, crime and other disadvantage.

We will then seek to work in-depth with departments to test these ideas in actual policy programmes which they are embarked on to assess how any tensions that may arise between fairness and environmental objectives can be resolved.

The main output will be a practical and holistic framework (or set of guidance notes and recommendations) which can be used to help inform decision making.

### **4.2 Building on the SDC's work for the Marmot Review and exploring how a transition to a more preventative approach to tackling health inequalities might be practically and politically feasible**

Launched in February 2010, the UK Government's Marmot Review is a landmark document in work on health inequalities. The SDC contributed to this Review and has also published its own recommendations. We plan to use our close relationship with the Department of Health (DH) and stakeholders to engage audiences in further discussion on how

a sustainable development approach is vital to tackling health inequalities both for the current and for future generations.

### **4.3 Continuing our agreed and funded programme with the Department for Education (DfE), using the model of embedded SDC time to build capability and co-develop more effective policies**

SDC has worked for a number of years to provide capability support and policy advice to DfE. We will continue this work in 2010/11, supporting the department on a range of issues and projects as it seeks to integrate sustainable development principles into its work.

### **4.4 Continuing our agreed and funded programme with the Department of Health, using the model of embedded SDC time to build capability and co-develop more effective policies**

SDC has worked for a number of years to provide capability support and policy advice to DH. We will continue this work in 2010/11, supporting the department on a range of issues and projects as it seeks to integrate sustainable development principles into its work.

### **4.5 Supporting NHS Scotland through delivery of a Scottish Good Corporate Citizenship model**

In 2009/10 the SDC secured funding to develop and deliver a Scottish programme based on the successful Good Corporate Citizenship model. This model - developed by the SDC for use across the health service in England - has been very successful at supporting health organisations to integrate sustainable development into their operations and management. Following pilot schemes run with two Scottish health boards, 2010/11 will see the programme launched in Scotland. As part of this launch the SDC will provide advice to the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland about ongoing support and delivery of this work.

## Enabling more Sustainable Lives

**Outcome: An empowered Government confidently developing new ways to enable people to adopt sustainable lifestyles.**

Any Government is more likely to take the action needed to drive sustainable improvements if it feels it has strong support from the public for its policies. This work is therefore aimed at helping Government develop a better understanding of the synergy between policy development and public support for that policy, to help it find intelligent ways to encourage, support and enable people to make better choices and lead more sustainable, healthier lives.

There is already a significant body of research on various aspects of the behaviour change to enable people to live more 'sustainable lives'. Despite all the evidence and advice given to government on the changes needed to achieve more sustainable lives, whether it be 'nudging', social marketing, or incentives, there remains a sizeable gap between this and Government action.

Depending on explorations with key government stakeholders including Defra, DECC, DfT, CLG and Cabinet Office, the SDC intends to focus its work initially on:

### **5.1 Producing a summary of the key evidence available on the needs and challenges facing government in seeking to act on the advice it has already received.**

The SDC's research would draw on our unique inside track position, as well as our ability to convene external partners and our existing work. A major focus will be to encourage cross-departmental learning and working, and encourage a less reductionist view of sustainable behaviours. Pragmatically we will focus on areas that have the most impact in terms of sustainability – our homes, the food we eat and mobility.

The SDC would then provide advice to Government on the next steps needed, which might include some further research on specific

topics, as well as any actions that could be taken immediately.

Any role that the SDC might have here will very much depend on the outcomes of our initial work, but could include action research to explore current government practice in policy development and implementation in specific areas such as homes, transport and food; and determining what 'good' looks like by drawing on case studies from across the UK or the international arena.

### **5.2 Producing an advisory report for Government on the theme of Sustainable Consumption in Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland's current Programme for Government contains a target to produce a strategy on sustainable consumption. Alongside the proposed Sustainable Development Implementation Plan, it is critical that measures to deliver aspects of what we call Sustainable Lives, are embedded within both the Strategy and the Implementation Plan.

### **5.3. Supporting Scottish communities to take action on climate change on behalf of the Scottish Government through the Climate Challenge Fund**

2010/11 is the last year of the Scottish Government's three year £29m Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). CCF supports communities throughout Scotland in taking action to reduce their climate change impact. Since the Fund's inception, SDC Scotland has had a central role in supporting the communities receiving funding through a programme of learning and networking events. In 2010/11 our priority will be supporting information sharing and learning, and encouraging longevity and resilience within these communities. We will also support the Scottish Government in evaluating the scheme, to inform any decisions on future schemes or support.

#### **5.4 Working in partnership with the Scottish Sustainable Development Forum and Cynnal Cymru**

In 2008, the SDC took on the secretariat role for the Scottish Sustainable Development Forum (SSDF). The Forum focuses on creating strong alliances and improving partnerships between individuals, organisations and businesses engaged in sustainable development. The membership acts as an important engagement network for the SDC and the Scottish Government. The Business Plan for 2010/11 is focused on promoting public debate on sustainable development issues through a web forum and regular events, and the highlighting of sustainable development initiatives across Scotland through the Scottish Green List.

Our Wales Team will work closely with Cynnal Cymru to bring advice to the Assembly Government and practitioners on behaviour change based on the findings of key stakeholders throughout Wales.

The SDC will also support information sharing and coordination between Cynnal Cymru and SSDF.

## 5. Supporting the delivery of our programme

To support delivery of our wider programme for Government, the SDC needs strong Resources and Communications teams able to deliver on the finance, human resources and communication requirements of the SDC's four offices.

Within the Resources team, a significant element of work will be building on measures put in place in 2009/10 as part of the SDC's change of status from an advisory to an executive non-departmental public body. This change saw the SDC become a limited company, and take on new responsibilities. In autumn 2009, the SDC's Framework Agreement was finalised and signed by the SDC and the four governments which each own a quarter share in the organisation.

Within the Communications team, 2009/10 saw the start of work to refresh our website, which will be completed in 2010/11.

The Resources & Communications Teams support the needs of the SDC, its stakeholders & its staff. Their purpose is to help others carry out their primary roles and to enable the SDC to satisfy stakeholder demands.

Northern Ireland Vice Chair and a second Scottish Commissioner

- Implement appropriate internal policies and procedures integrating those inherited from Defra with good practice elsewhere, to produce "fit for purpose" versions that reflect the unique needs and demands of the SDC
- Integrate, as part of the SDC's business planning and governance processes, improved budgeting monitoring, workforce planning & risk management
- Develop a three year business planning model for the SDC from 2011 onwards
- Identify and implement an appropriate quality assurance model
- Update and refresh the SDC's public website and internal communications to better report on the SDC's own impacts, expenditure and structure, and to assist users in finding relevant information, and ensure all areas of the SDC's work are transparent and publicly available.

### Objectives

- To service effectively the SDC's Board and Audit Committee
- To advise the SDC's Management Team and support other managers and their staff
- To deliver corporate functions that enable the SDC to function efficiently and effectively
- To ensure transparent reporting of the SDC's own work and operations.

### Planned Activities for 2010-2011

The following activities are the specific work priorities (in addition to the various cyclical and ongoing tasks) considered the most essential during 2010-2011. The overall performance of the Resources & Communications teams will be assessed on achieving completion or, at the very least, making significant progression on all of these outputs.

- Support our Government members in appointing four new UK Commissioners, a

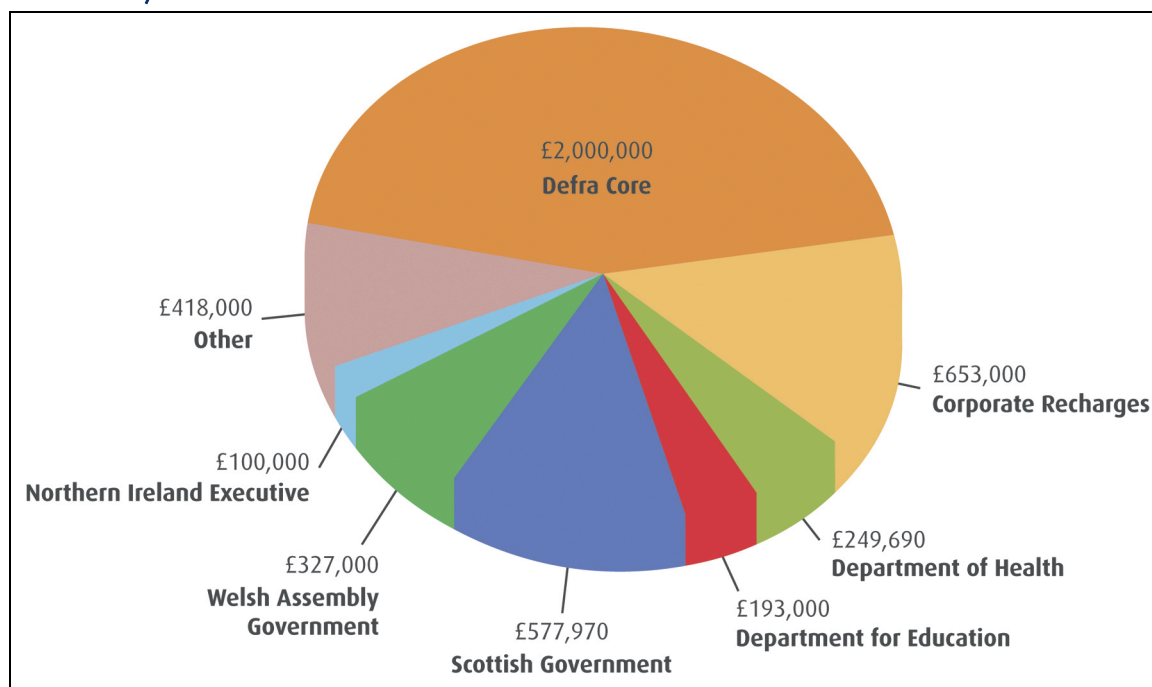
## 6. Budget and Resources

The figures below summarise the SDC's budgeted income and expenditure for the 2010/11 Financial Year.

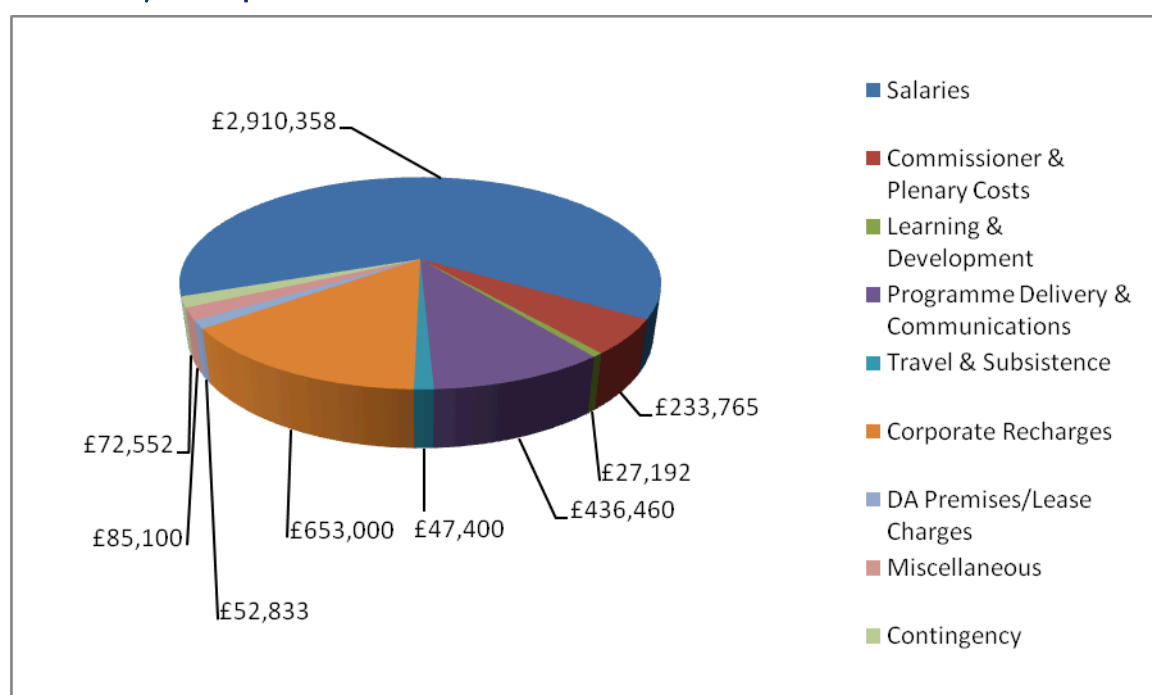
Core funding of £2,000,000 comes from Defra to cover our Whitehall and UK work programmes. In addition core funding is received from the Scottish, Welsh and

Northern Ireland Governments. Alongside this funding, SDC has a track record of bringing in funding to support deliver of capability, scrutiny and advisory programmes of work. These projects are often co-developed by Government and receive additional funding from a range of sources.

### SDC 2010/11 Income



### SDC 2010/11 Expenditure



## 7. A flexible and accountable plan

This Business Plan has been produced at a time of considerable change. It has been developed on the assumption that the core income from Defra and the Devolved Governments, and the programme funding from the key Whitehall Departments with whom we work, will be forthcoming at the levels notified to us before the start of the 2010-11 financial year. However, it is also designed to be implemented flexibly as new priorities dictate throughout the year.

We will maintain a responsive and flexible approach by:

- Continuing to diversify our sources of income
- Building in review points at the end of the first and second quarters of the year at which expenditure could be put onto a lower track if external circumstances dictate
- Keeping a broad portfolio of projects in the Business Plan to maximise the chances of securing new income and being able to respond in a flexible way to the requirements of Government
- Ensuring that projects can be halted after the first stage of development if neither of the above proves to be the case
- Careful planning of workforce requirements so that we can make the most effective use of the core staff skills we have and work in a very flexible way to respond to changing circumstances. Working closely with other advisory bodies and NDPBs to ensure that every opportunity for sharing ideas and resources is explored and duplication avoided
- Being rigorously accountable by demonstrating clarity of outcomes, projects, value added to Government and prudent and efficient use of public monies at all times
- Demonstrating how the use of sustainable development principles by Government has resulted in more efficient operations and smarter policy making

- Increasing our value as a UK wide organisation by building upon our already strong relationships with the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government, and by having in place the Northern Ireland Vice-Chair.

We will track the progress of our Business Plan progress against outcomes ("Are we doing the right things?") as well as outputs ("Are we doing things right?"). We will also track progress against efficient use of resources both in terms of money and in the way we allocate staff and Commissioner time.

An account of our progress against the objectives laid out in this Plan will be published in our 2010/11 Annual Report.

## 8. Appendices

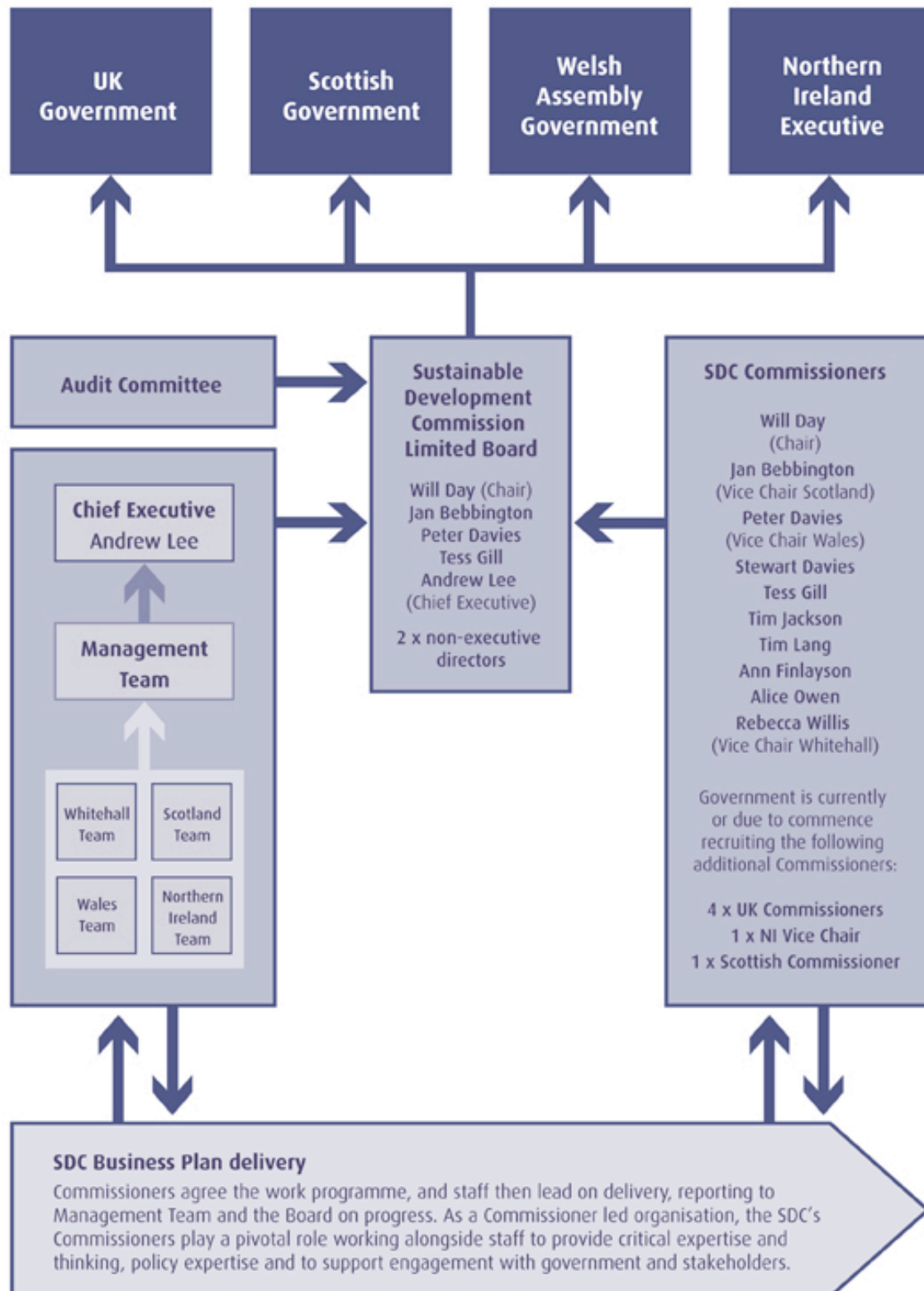
### Appendix One: Budget for 2010-11

The following table shows the SDC's Budget for 2010/11. This budget is made up of core funding from Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive, alongside project funding from a range of governmental sources. A graphic of this budget is shown in the main document.

<b>Income (by source)</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Defra Core	2,000,000
Corporate Recharges	653,000
Department of Health	249,690
Department for Education	193,000
Scottish Government	577,970
Welsh Assembly Government	327,000
Northern Ireland Executive	100,000
Other	418,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,518,660</b>
<b>Expenditure (by cost type)</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Salaries	2,910,358
Commissioner & Plenary Costs	233,765
Learning & Development	27,192
Programme Delivery & Communications	436,460
Travel & Subsistence	47,400
Corporate Recharges	653,000
DA Premises/Lease Charges	52,833
Miscellaneous	85,100
Contingency	72,552
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,518,660</b>

## Appendix Two: SDC's Structure

The figure below sets out the SDC's formal structure, showing the four member governments that jointly own the Sustainable Development Commission Limited; the Board and its Audit Sub-Committee that are responsible for the strategic management of the organisation; the Commissioners who sit together in plenary to direct our work programme; and our staff who lead on delivery of SDC's work.



## Appendix Three: Indicators

We will hold ourselves to account using a set of indicators to monitor progress against the agreed outcomes and projects set out in this business plan.

Indicator	Detail
1	<b>Government</b> - Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOG E): <i>To produce at least 6 case studies sharing success and use them to build Government departments' capability and improve their SOGE results.</i>
2	<b>Government</b> – Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG): <i>To have reported clearly on Government's operational performance across the SOGE framework and made credible recommendations to ensure that its Sustainable Operations Framework remains at a 4 star rating through ongoing improvements.</i>
3	<b>Government</b> - Sustainable Development Action Plans: <i>To ensure that 75% of all departments and agencies that have published SDAP progress reports in this financial year agree that their SDAP has influenced their Public Service Agreements (PSAs), Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) and/or high-level objectives.</i>
4	<b>Government</b> - Sustainable Development Action Plans: <i>To work with at least 25 Government departments and agencies on developing, improving or reviewing their SDAP.</i>
5	<b>Capability Building and Support</b> <i>To have contributed to the work of 40 Government working and or advisory groups.</i>
6	<b>Capability Building and Support</b> <i>To have been commissioned by 10 departments and/or public sector organisations to provide advice.</i>
7	<b>Capability Building and Support</b> <i>To ensure that the number of NHS organisations registered with the Good Corporate Citizenship Model grows from 58% to 75%.</i>
8	<b>Capability Building and Support</b> <i>To ensure that the gap between NHS organisations registering for GCCAM and those making use of the assessment tool falls, with use of the assessment tool rising from 30% to 60%.</i>

Indicator	Detail
9	<b>Capability Building and Support</b> <i>To have worked with 35 departments or public sector organisations through delivery of seminars, presentations and/or workshops.</i>
10	<b>Engagement and Communications</b> <i>To have held 15 events, including one with a keynote Ministerial speech.</i>
11	<b>Engagement and Communications</b> <i>To have seen 130,000 downloads of publications.</i>
12	<b>Engagement and Communications</b> <i>To have produced 10 major reports.</i>
13	<b>Engagement and Communications</b> <i>To increase membership of our Forum to 14,000.</i>
14	<b>Organisational Excellence</b> <i>To review the 2010 survey on staff attitudes and to set an appropriate indicator.</i>
15	<b>Organisational Excellence</b> <i>To meet the SDC's target of securing an additional £400,000.</i>
16	<b>Organisational Excellence</b> <i>To finalise, publish and implement the SDC's own Sustainable Development Action Plan.</i>
17	<b>Organisational Excellence</b> <i>To appoint and induct 6 new Commissioners.</i>
18	<b>Organisational Excellence</b> <i>To deliver 15 training sessions for staff in support of their learning and development.</i>



**Sustainable**  
Development Commission

**The Sustainable Development Commission is the Government's independent watchdog on sustainable development, reporting to the Prime Minister, the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales and the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.**

**Through advocacy, advice and appraisal, we help put sustainable development at the heart of Government.**

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