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***LEADING BY EXAMPLE? NOT EXACTLY.***

**Government lags behind sustainability targets**

With rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, serious water wastage, and poor fuel & waste records, Government is struggling to manage its own affairs sustainably, according to a report published today by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC).

Covering an area of over a quarter of a million hectares, emitting about as much CO<sub>2</sub> as Liverpool and with overall responsibility for more than £100 billion, the UK Government is required to meet sustainability targets to ensure its resources are managed responsibly and our money spent wisely. Assessed for the first time by the SDC, Government watchdog on sustainable development, *Leading By Example? Not Exactly* takes issue with poor performance and patchy data on a series of key targets:

- In the same year that the Government claimed to take a global lead on climate change, total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Government Departments have actually increased, and only one Department has processes in place to assess the risks that climate change and variable weather will bring to planned developments.
- Despite the Government's mantra to business - 'measure it to manage it' – most Departments failed to provide proper data on the amount of waste they produced (making it impossible to evaluate whether they met recycling and composting targets), and the total amount of fuel they consumed.
- Most Departments failed to meet the water-saving target for their offices, resulting in serious water wastage and unnecessary costs. The worst-performer, the Cabinet Office, was way off the water-saving target – using the equivalent of 72 kettles of water per person, per day, in offices alone.

However, there are some hopeful signs. *Leading By Example? Not Exactly* finds that encouraging progress has been made in a few areas:

- Most of Government has already met its 2008 target to source 10% of energy from renewables.
- A good proportion of Government has already met the March 2006 target for at least 10% of its fleet of cars to be alternatively fuelled.

- All Departments that had undertaken new build or refurbishment included sustainable development clauses (such as preference for developing brown field sites) in contracts, and all Departments are now developing procurement strategies to oversee the environmental impact of their contracts.

*Leading By Example? Not Exactly* also appraises the performance of individual Departments, highlighting the good progress made by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Office of National Statistics, but criticising the poor performance of nine Departments who failed more than 50% of their targets (Cabinet Office, Law Officers' Departments, Department of Health, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Department for Work & Pensions, Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Department for Education & Skills, Department for Transport, and Department for Constitutional Affairs).

Jonathon Porritt, Chairman of the Sustainable Development Commission, says: "There are some truly hairy findings here. It's particularly worrying that the Government isn't getting to grips with the same sustainable management measures that it has so enthusiastically imposed on the private sector. That's not to say that there aren't some genuine attempts being made – we were particularly struck by the dedication of a few brave individuals dotted across Departments – but it's all far too piecemeal. Government urgently needs to ramp up its efforts to get sustainable development where it should be: at the very core of all its operations."

To download a copy of *Leading By Example? Not Exactly*, visit [www.sd-commission.org.uk](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk).

ENDS

#### Notes to Eds

- Central Government started developing a systematic framework for monitoring the sustainable management of its own Estate in 2002 – the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate (known as the Framework). This established common targets across Government in key operational areas such as energy and waste, against which Departments report annually.

- Until now, Government has reported its own performance against the Framework, co-ordinated by the Sustainable Development Unit in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy signalled that this task would transfer to the SDC in its new role as SD watchdog, to provide an independent assessment of the Government's progress.
  
- The SDC report assesses Government progress for the year April 2004 to March 2005. The SDC contracted PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to independently manage data collection and the development of the report. The SDC provided a commentary, a 'traffic lights' analysis system and departmental ratings based on the PwC report.
  
- The SDC report - *Leading By Example? Not Exactly* - gives Government red marks against performance on waste, water, and commitments to sustainable development, and amber warnings against performance on energy, travel, procurement, estate management and biodiversity.
  
- Log onto [www.sd-commission.org.uk](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk) to download free copies of:
  - The SDC report - *Leading By Example? Not Exactly* – which includes a 'traffic lights' analysis and Departmental star ratings system
  - Sustainable Development In Government Annual Report 2005 (prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers)
  - A 60-second overview
  - Q & As
  - Departmental summaries
  - Raw data