

EU SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROGRESS REPORT – JUNE 2007

1. General Information

Compilation of this report was co-ordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on behalf of the UK Government and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

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2. SDS Policy Guiding Principles in the UK

Sustainable development policy in the UK is based on the following principles, which were agreed in 2005 as part of the UK's sustainable development strategy, *Securing the future* and are shared between the UK Government and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

Living within environmental limits: Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society: Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating opportunity for all.

Achieving a sustainable economy: Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

Promoting good governance: Actively promoting effective participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy, and diversity.

Using sound science responsibly: Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle- as well as public attitudes and values.

3. Progress on EU SDS key challenges

3.1 Climate change and clean energy

3.1.1 Future energy and climate change policy

The Government published a White Paper on Energy¹ in May 2007. This was informed by the conclusions of a major review of energy policy, *The Energy Challenge*² in July 2006. Consultations announced in this publication and in the *UK Climate Change Programme*. The Energy Review policy package is designed to deliver savings of 19 to 25 million tonnes of carbon per year by 2020, equivalent to the emissions of up to 15 million homes, and contributing ultimately to achieving the goal of a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide by 2050.

In recognition of the relevance of the challenge of climate change to a wide range of policies, the Government established an Office of Climate Change (OCC)³ in October 2006 as a shared resource for analysis and policy development, and reporting to a group of Ministers from all relevant Departments.

The OCC has been leading on the drafting and publication in March 2007 of a draft Climate Change Bill⁴, on which consultations will be completed in June. Subject to Parliamentary approval, this legislation will bind the UK's targets to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 in statute. It will also provide the legislative framework for an independent Committee on Climate Change, and put in place a credible long-term framework for emissions reductions, including five-year carbon budgets, beginning with the period 2008-12.

The UK took a significant step forward in raising global ambitions on tackling climate change with the publication of the independent Stern Review on the economics of climate change in October 2006⁵. A key finding was to demonstrate that the costs of inaction on climate change significantly outweigh the costs of taking action to mitigate the problem. The Review has significantly moved forward the debate on climate change and is a key lever in emphasising the need for action at home and internationally.

The UK's Local Government Association (LGA) set up a Climate Change Commission⁶ in March 2007 to consider how local government can further respond to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change. It will report in July 2007.

3.1.2 Kyoto Protocol commitments and emissions trading

The UK is on track to meet our commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 12.5% below 1990 levels in the period 2008-12. We have also set ourselves a more challenging domestic target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2010. The revised *UK Climate Change Programme*⁷, published in March 2006, sets out a number of

¹ www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39387.pdf

² www.dti.gov.uk/files/file31890.pdf

³ www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/060922b.htm

⁴ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/index.htm

⁵ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

⁶ <http://campaigns.lga.gov.uk/climatechange/home>

⁷ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/pdf/ukccp06-all.pdf

policies across the energy supply, business, household, transport, agriculture and public sectors to achieve these goals. Progress to date is set out in the UK's *Report on Demonstrable Progress under the Kyoto Protocol*⁸.

Emissions Trading remains at the centre of the UK's domestic and international efforts on climate change⁹. Under Phase I of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, the UK's National Allocation Plan (NAP) is set to deliver carbon dioxide emission savings of around 65 million tonnes from 2005 to 2007. This is around 8% below the current level of emissions from the 1,000 installations covered by the scheme. Under Phase II of the Scheme, which runs from 2008 to 2012, the Commission has approved a NAP for the UK designed to deliver carbon dioxide emission reductions of 29 million tonnes per year.

3.1.3 Renewable energy

The Government's White Paper on Energy¹⁰, published in May 2007 sets out how its policies, including proposals in the White Paper, will help increase the proportion of energy the UK sources from renewables to meet the revised EU targets.

These include, in particular: i) *in electricity generation*, by strengthening and modifying the Renewables Obligation (that aims to see renewables grow as a proportion of our electricity supplies to 10% by 2010, with an aspiration for this level to double by 2020), by reforming the planning system, and by removing barriers to the growth of decentralized electricity generation; ii) *in heat*, by publishing a Biomass Strategy, which identifies opportunities for increasing the use of renewables in energy production, and by announcing further work to develop a more strategic approach to heat; and iii) *in transport*, by requiring through the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (see paragraph 3.2.2) that an increasing proportion of our transport fuel should come from renewable sources.

A substantial proportion of the total European offshore wind, wave and tidal resource is located in Britain's waters. Studies estimate the generation potential of offshore wind alone at close to 1,000 terawatt hours (TWh) per year, equivalent to several times the UK's total electricity consumption. Currently the UK is unique in the world with a large demonstration programme of offshore wind where many UK companies are learning valuable lessons in installation and development of this technology, including consideration of any environmental impacts and how to mitigate these where necessary. The waters off Scotland hold up to one quarter of Europe's marine energy resource, and the Scottish Orkney islands host the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), where up to seven new wave and tidal device designs will be tested over the next few years.

3.1.4 Biofuels and Biomass Action Plan

The UK will introduce a Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation in 2008. This will require 5% by volume of transport fuels to be from renewable sources by 2010 and will aim to deliver carbon savings of approximately one million tonnes per annum from the road transport sector by 2010/11. Biofuels supplied in the UK will be subject to carbon and sustainability reporting in

⁸ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/progress/pdf/demonstrableprog-report06.pdf

⁹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/trading/index.htm

¹⁰ www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39387.pdf

order to encourage the most carbon efficient and sustainable fuels.

A UK Biomass Strategy¹¹, covering use of biomass for heating, cooling, electricity generation and transport fuels and a wide variety of industrial material applications was published in May 2007. Government also issued its response¹² to the 2 year review of the Strategy for Non Food Crops and Uses at the same time as the UK Biomass Strategy. This incorporates a refocused action plan for the continued promotion of sustainable growth in the bio-energy, renewable chemicals, plant-based pharmaceuticals and renewable construction material sectors.

3.1.5 *Transport emissions*

The UK Government is working in four ways to tackle emissions from transport: by reducing the carbon content of fuel, reducing the carbon emissions of vehicles, encouraging moves towards more environmentally friendly transport and where appropriate using emissions trading. Since its publication, the Stern Review has moved the international debate on climate change further, and its three-legged policy framework is a useful way of presenting and understanding the Government's policies on transport emissions:

- carbon pricing - through tax, trading or regulation e.g. including aviation in EU ETS, the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation;
- technology policy, for example the Low Carbon Transport Innovation Strategy (LCTIS), or voluntary agreements with manufacturers on new car CO₂ (VAs); and
- behavioural change, for example public transport investment, Smarter Choices, information and communication campaigns, social research.

3.1.6 *Energy Efficiency*

In parallel to the EU Action Plan, the UK will produce a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan in compliance with the provisions of the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive.

The Energy White Paper, *Meeting the Energy Challenge*¹³, published in May 2007, set out a package of measures that will improve the energy efficiency of our economy by around 10% between now and 2020. This is over and above the 25% improvement we already expect over that period. With implementation resulting in carbon savings of 7 – 11.7 MtC by 2020.

Key elements of the package include:

- improvements in metering and billing to allow consumers to make more informed choices about their energy use with all but the smallest businesses should have smart meters with visual displays within 5 years and domestic customers within 10 years.
- consulting on all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016.
- The introduction of the Carbon Reduction Commitment, a mandatory, auction-based emissions trading scheme for large (over 6000 MWh/year) non-energy intensive users, such as banks, supermarket chains and Govt departments.
- Introduction of Energy Performance Certificates for buildings
- Working with retailers and manufacturers to phase out inefficient light bulbs by 2011

¹¹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/energy/renewablefuel/pdf/ukbiomassstrategy-0507.pdf

¹² www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/energy/renewablefuel/pdf/nonfoodstrat-2yearreview.pdf

¹³ www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39387.pdf

- Continuation and ongoing development of a supplier obligation to 2020 to transform the relationship between suppliers and customers by shifting focus to provision for energy services rather than units of energy
- Launching alongside the White Paper, a proposal for a Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT)¹⁴ that will replace and extend the scope of the Energy Efficiency Commitment to include, in addition to energy efficiency measures, microgeneration and behavioural measures, and to introduce new approaches for innovation and flexibility.
- Continuing to support business and the public sector to cut carbon and save money through the Energy Savings Trust¹⁵ and the Carbon Trust¹⁶.

3.1.7 Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

Government continues to work in active partnership with industry to promote CHP, in particular through fiscal incentives. The Government and Ofgem¹⁷ have recently completed a comprehensive review of the incentives and barriers that impact on distributed generation including CHP¹⁸.

The UK has commissioned a study to examine the need and scope for setting up simplified electricity supply licences and exemption arrangements governing small-scale CHP and renewables operations and the cost and benefits of these operations.

3.1.8 Carbon dioxide capture and storage

A number of carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) projects are now being developed to store carbon in the sub seabed of the North Sea. These require regulatory certainty to go forward but are prevented or inhibited by the OSPAR convention, a marine protection treaty covering the NE Atlantic and its sub seabed, as currently worded. The UK, France and Netherlands are co-sponsors of Norwegian amendment proposals to achieve this. The annual meeting of the OSPAR Commission in June 2007 will decide whether to accept the proposed amendments, which will then need to be ratified by seven contracting parties to come into force. CCS is also being discussed under the Review of the European Climate Change Programme and is likely to be brought within the scope of the scheme post 2012. The UK has notified the Commission of its intention to include CCS Within Phase II on a unilateral basis (Member States can opt in other activities and gases unilaterally within the current Directive).

The UK will launch a competition to develop commercial scale demonstration of CCS in the UK. When operational, early in the next decade, this will make the UK a world leader in this important technology. The UK CCS Regulatory Task Force will be consulting on options for preparing the regulatory environment for the whole CCS chain later in 2007.

¹⁴ www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/cert2008-11/index.htm

¹⁵ www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

¹⁶ www.thecarbontrust.co.uk

¹⁷ Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, the regulator for Britain's gas and electricity industries.

¹⁸ www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39025.pdf

3.2. Sustainable transport

3.2.1 Sustainable transport and economic growth

The UK Government is reviewing its strategy processes and delivery for transport in the light of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and the Eddington Transport Study¹⁹ on the long-term links between transport and the UK's economic productivity, growth and stability, within the context of the Government's broader commitment to sustainable development.

3.2.2 Environmental impacts of transport

The Government's policies for reducing the impact of travel on the environment are focused on: i) reducing the fossil carbon content of fuel, such as via the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation, under which 5% of transport fuel sold in the UK will have to come from renewable sources by 2010²⁰; ii) increasing the fuel efficiency of vehicles²¹; iii) encouraging moves towards more environmentally friendly transport²²; and iv) working towards the inclusion of transport in emissions trading schemes.

Many local authorities have incorporated transport policies within wider carbon reduction or energy strategies. Specific actions taken to improve the environmental impacts of transport include:

- urban congestion charging and road pricing policies
- promotion of public transport, walking and cycling in local transport plans
- sustainable land use planning policies
- promotion of clean fuels such as biodiesel
- fleet health initiatives (via the Energy Saving Trust for example)

In Scotland, policy on sustainable transport is taken forward in the context of the *National Transport Strategy*²³ (December 2006), which sets out three strategic outcomes: improving journey times and connections, reducing emissions, and improving the quality, accessibility and affordability of public transport. Sustainable transport is a common theme across these outcomes, and the Scottish Executive is working with a range of partners to increase active travel (cycling and walking) and to reduce fossil fuel use and emissions. The Executive is investing substantially in public transport and working on measures to shift freight off roads and onto rail and waterways. Active traffic management systems are being used to improve traffic flow and consideration is being given to demand management measures such as road pricing, parking policies and road space reallocation.

3.2.3 Transport and air quality

Measures to implement the Government air quality target are set out primarily in its 2000 *Air Quality Strategy*²⁴. The objectives for four of the seven pollutants set out in the target throughout

¹⁹ www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/eddingtonstudy/

²⁰ www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/environment/rtfo/

²¹ www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/environment/

²² www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/

²³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/04104414/0>

²⁴ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/strategy/index.htm

the UK in 2006 continue to be met. However, at some locations, long-term reducing trends for nitrogen dioxide and particles are flattening out or even reversing due to increasing primary emissions of nitrogen dioxide. Options for a number of additional new policy measures to improve air quality further were set out in a consultation document issued in 2006. A final revised Strategy is planned for the summer of 2007²⁵.

3.2.4 *Transport noise*

Reducing transport noise will be covered in Government plans for issuing a combined National Noise Strategy covering both environmental and neighbourhood noise by the end of 2007²⁶.

3.2.5 *Shift towards environment friendly transport modes*

An example of efforts to encourage a shift towards sustainable travel is the Government's *Smarter Choices* campaign²⁷. A 5-year project ending in 2009 aims to demonstrate the effect that a sustained package of *Smarter Choice* measures can have when coupled with infrastructure improvements. Three towns were selected as showcases, and interim results from the first two years of the project have shown that in the target population area of some 24,000 households, car trips have reduced by 10% with similar increases in walking, cycling and public transport use.

Cycling England²⁸ is funding and working with six local highway authorities to develop an exemplary physical environment for cycling, supported by a comprehensive range of 'soft' measures to encourage more people to cycle.

3.2.6 *Road safety*

The Government's Road Safety Strategy *Tomorrow's roads – safer for everyone* established plans to meet casualty reduction targets for Great Britain by the end of 2010. Full year data for 2005 shows we are on track to meet these targets²⁹.

3.3. Sustainable consumption and production

3.3.1 *Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production*

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is one of the four priority areas for action set out in the UK's national Sustainable Development Strategy. We promote SCP in a variety of ways and a comprehensive list is at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp/actions/index.htm. Examples include:

- Developing the evidence base through a research programme of over 40 projects, covering key areas such as sustainable food, business environmental performance, behaviour change, the overseas impacts of consumption, and measurement of SCP.³⁰
- Establishing a Business Taskforce on Sustainable Consumption and Production to help

²⁵ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/strategy/index.htm

²⁶ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/ambient.htm

²⁷ www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/

²⁸ www.cyclingengland.co.uk/demotowns.php

²⁹ www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/strategytargetsperformance/

³⁰ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp/scp-advisorygroup/index.htm

develop ideas for practical action on key aspects of SCP³¹.

- Addressing the challenge of behaviour change through publicity, such as the Government guide to greener living³², and independent advice from our Sustainable Development Commission and National Consumer Council (see their publication *I Will if You Will*³³), and the *Every action counts*³⁴ campaign, launched in 2006, to encourage Community Groups to take simple actions such as 'travel wisely' and 'shop ethically'.
- Raising awareness of individual actions through the *Act on CO2*³⁵ campaign, and the first Climate Change Citizens' Summit³⁶
- Allocating £7.1m over 2005-08 from our Environmental Action³⁷ fund to help voluntary and community sector groups deliver a wide range of SCP outcomes.
- Participating in the UN's *Marrakech Process* on SCP, leading the International Task Force for Sustainable Products³⁸, and funding UNEP to develop a manual to help countries draft national SCP strategies.

3.3.2 Sustainable products

In addition to our work in the UN with the International Task Force for Sustainable Products, the UK is also addressing the environmental impact of products by:

- Using our Market Transformation Programme³⁹ to develop the knowledge base and policy briefs on sustainable products.
- Starting to develop product 'road maps' to focus in more detail on how we plan to address the environmental impacts associated with the lifecycle impacts of key products.

3.3.3 Green public procurement

In March 2007, the UK published its *Government Sustainable Procurement Action Plan*⁴⁰, following the recommendations of a business-lead Sustainable Procurement Task Force. The Plan presents a package of actions to deliver the step change needed to ensure that Government supply-chains and public services will be increasingly low carbon, low waste, water efficient, respect biodiversity, and deliver our wider sustainable development goals. At a local government level, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), Society of Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) and WRAP have produced a guide on sustainable procurement⁴¹.

3.3.4 Environmental technologies and eco-innovation

The UK is developing a number of activities to help utilise the potential of innovative technologies for encouraging sustainable development. Examples include:

- Establishing in November 2006, jointly between Defra and the Department of Trade and

³¹ www.cpi.cam.ac.uk/scptaskforce/index.htm

³² www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenerlivingaquickguide/DG_064391

³³ www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/I_Will_If_You_Will.pdf

³⁴ www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/

³⁵ www.defra.gov.uk/news/issues/2007/climate-0326.htm

³⁶ www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/070512a.htm

³⁷ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/eaf/index.htm

³⁸ www.itfsp.org/

³⁹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/mtp/index.htm

⁴⁰ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/SustainableProcurementActionPlan.pdf

⁴¹ www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/69979

Industry (DTI) a Commission on Environmental Markets and Economic Performance. The task of the Commission is to consider how to further stimulate sectors that can make a significant contribution to environmental outcomes and productivity⁴²

- Working with stakeholders to improve access to finance for environmental technologies – a report with recommendations to Government was published in February 2007⁴³.
- Developing proposals for an Innovation Platform in SCP that will initially focus on developing the capability for UK industry to deliver low-impact buildings. This will help to reduce carbon emissions, address a growing market, and bridge known innovation gaps that currently prevent industry from meeting these market needs.
- Tasking the UK's business-led Environmental Innovations Advisory Group⁴⁴ to identify practical measures to tackle barriers to innovation in the environmental industries sector, and to mobilise key stakeholders. A second phase of demonstration projects will be launched and current pilots will be completed by summer 2007.

3.4. Conservation and management of natural resources

3.4.1 Resource efficiency

The UK has developed a range of SCP indicators, including of resource use, to support its national Sustainable Development Strategy. These can be found at www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/national/consumption-production.htm.

3.4.2 Natural resources management

The UK Government's Ecosystems Approach Project⁴⁵ is working to develop, with stakeholders, a more strategic approach to policy and decision making on the natural environment. This work will draw on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment⁴⁶, explicitly acknowledging its role in providing not simply an evidence base for policy making, but also a new conceptual framework for decision making across sectors. The ecosystems approach will help to provide an integrated framework for looking at whole ecosystems in policy making, to ensure the continued supply of ecosystem services vital to our health, economy and well-being.

Examples of key developments designed to improve the management of renewable resources and to avoid their overexploitation include:

- On 3 July 2006, the Secretary of State called for a new focus on *One Planet Farming* which aims to develop a profitable and competitive domestic farming industry which is a positive net contributor to the environment, while reducing the environmental footprint – at home and abroad – of our food consumption.
- Significant progress, in line with the Water Framework Directive, towards developing River Basin Management Plans, including: strengthening engagement through Defra's WFD Stakeholder Forum; and issuing guidance to the Environment Agency, as competent authority, on river basin management⁴⁷.

⁴² www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/061108c.htm

⁴³ www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/docs/publications/514/Cleancapital.pdf

⁴⁴ www.dti.gov.uk/sectors/environmental/EIAG/page10066.html

⁴⁵ www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/natres/rationale.htm

⁴⁶ www.maweb.org/en/index.aspx

⁴⁷ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/wfd/index.htm

- Completion of revision of the UK's *Air Quality Strategy* in the light of consultations and further data arising from a review of the strategy in 2006 that set out options for a number of measures for further consideration, with benefits to public health, potential to reduce health inequalities and help protect natural and semi-natural habitats and ecosystems⁴⁸.
- Development of a new Soil Strategy, taking stock of progress under the *First Soil Action Plan for England 2004-2006*⁴⁹ (published in May 2004) as well as emerging priorities for soil protection on maintaining soil carbon and the recycling of organic wastes to land.
- The Welsh Assembly Government published in 2006 its Environment Strategy for Wales and its supporting Action Plan setting the strategic direction for the next 20 years. It provides the framework within which to achieve an environment which is clean, healthy, biologically diverse and valued by the people of Wales.
- A one-stop Environmental Advisory Service⁵⁰ for local authorities to share good practice.

3.4.3 Halting biodiversity loss

In November 2006, Defra published *Working with the Grain of Nature – Taking it Forward*⁵¹, a review of progress made to date under the England Biodiversity Strategy, and a forward look at actions over the coming years to help achieve the target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010. Data on progress on against the UK Biodiversity Action Plans was published jointly by the Government and the Devolved Administrations in June 2006⁵². This showed that 22% of the priority habitats and 11% of the priority species are increasing, and that more priority species are showing improved trends than in past reports in 1999 and 2002.

The UK has played an active role implementing decisions from the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in March 2006, including contributing towards the WSSD target to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. Practical actions have included funding biodiversity projects in developing countries via the UK's Darwin Initiative⁵³. This year the Initiative has funded 41 new projects totalling £2.7m.

3.4.4 Forestry

The key programmes and actions for delivering sustainable forest management are set down in individual country strategies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These, together with the UK Forestry Standard, constitute the UK's National Forest Programme which was launched in 2003 and is currently under revision.

During 2006, a consultation process was undertaken as part of the review of the 1998 England Forestry Strategy⁵⁴. The main messages emerging from the consultation were: that woodlands have a role to play in adapting our ecosystems to climate change; and sustainable woodland and tree management in both rural and urban areas can deliver a wide range of public benefits – but that the achievement of this relies on an economically viable forestry sector. The new strategy will be published in summer 2007.

⁴⁸ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/strategy/index.htm

⁴⁹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/land/soil/pdf/soilactionplan.pdf

⁵⁰ www.eas.local.gov.uk

⁵¹ www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/biostrat/index.htm

⁵² www.ukbap.org.uk/library/Reporting2005/UKBAPReport05.pdf

⁵³ www.darwin.gov.uk/

⁵⁴ www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/forestry-strategy/index.htm

Following extensive public consultation, the Scottish Forestry Strategy was reviewed and published in October 2006 setting out a vision for the forestry resource to become a central part of Scotland's culture, economy and environment. Recent forestry initiatives contributing towards sustainable development include the development of a forest sector climate change action plan, a *Timber Development Programme* to get the most from Scotland's increasing and sustainable timber resource, work to develop an efficient wood fuel supply chain to support biomass, funding to reduce the number of timber lorries on fragile rural roads, a second phase of the *Woods In and Around Town* initiative, publications on *Woods for Health* and *Woods for Learning*, and the forestry Commission's sustainable development action plan, *Greenerways*.

Under the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan, Defra will spearhead the introduction of a regulation to stop illegal timber being imported from volunteer partner countries⁵⁵. From 2009 Departments will be required to purchase only timber from sustainably managed forests or with a FLEGT licence; from 2015 only timber from sustainably managed forests will be acceptable.

A report on UK implementation of commitments from the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, and on indicators for sustainable forest management was completed in March 2007.

3.4.5 Waste

In May 2007, the Government published its *Waste Strategy for England 2007*⁵⁶, which will be an essential part of the drive to tackle climate change.

The main points of the strategy include: i) more effective incentives for individuals and businesses to recycle waste, leading to at least 40% of household waste recycled or composted by 2010, rising to 50% by 2020; ii) a greater responsibility on businesses for the environmental impact of their products and operations through, for example, a drive to minimize packaging, and higher targets for recycling packaging; iii) a new national target to reduce the amount of household waste not re-used, recycled or composted from 22.2 million tonnes in 2000 to 12.2 million tonnes by 2020; iv) new approaches to facilitating people to opt-out of receiving direct mail; v) working with retailers to reduce the environmental impact of carrier bags; vi) initiatives to see recycling extended from the home and office and taken into public areas like shopping malls, train stations and cinema multiplexes; vii) examining proposals to ban certain types of waste, such as biodegradable and recyclable waste from being put into landfill sites; viii) an increase in the landfill tax escalator by £8 per year from 2008 until at least 2010/11; and ix) measures to facilitate an increase in the proportion of municipal waste – waste collected by local authorities, mainly from household – that is used to generate energy, from 10% today to around 25% in 2020.

The Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee⁵⁷ (LARAC) promotes waste reduction and recycling. It has 428 members from authorities in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. It facilitates information exchange and assists with technical information and advice to promote best practice in waste management.

⁵⁵ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/internat/forests/index.htm

⁵⁶ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/strategy/strategy07/index.htm

⁵⁷ www.larac.org.uk

In Scotland, the National Waste Plan⁵⁸ published in 2003 sets out waste policy up to 2020. Since 2000-01, significant investment has seen Scotland's recycling rate rise from 4.5% to 24.4% in 2005-06. Building on progress in increasing municipal recycling rates, the Scottish Executive outlined in March 2007 its intention to move up the waste hierarchy and to tackle commercial waste through a detailed Household Waste Prevention Action Plan and a Business Waste Framework.

3.4.6 Agriculture

The Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy (SFFS)⁵⁹ is a long-term plan for the future development of the sector, which aims to deliver economic, environmental and social objectives within an over-arching sustainable development context. The SFFS provides the framework to deliver a UK farming sector which is profitable in the marketplace, continuing to produce the majority of the food we consume; making a positive net environmental contribution, notably in respect of climate change, but also more widely; and being responsible managers of the landscape and the natural assets that underlie it. In relation to climate change, the UK's Climate Change Programme (published in March 2006) sets out a series of commitments for the agriculture, forestry and land management sectors⁶⁰. See also section 3.5.2 of this report for more on food.

UK rural development programmes for 2007-2013⁶¹ will build on work already taking place within the farming industry to make farming more sustainable. UK rural development programmes fund targeted support for activities such as capacity building and skills development. Agri-environment schemes, notably Environmental Stewardship in England and Tir Gofal in Wales, fund farmers to deliver effective environmental management on their land and provide valuable public benefits such as to biodiversity and landscape.

3.4.7 Marine

In March 2007, the UK Government published a Marine Bill White Paper, *A Sea Change*⁶², setting out proposals for: planning and licensing activities in the marine area; how to take forward marine nature conservation proposals; modernising marine fisheries management; and a new marine management organisation which will improve the marine environment and promote integrated coastal zone management.

The UK Government also recently consulted on *Fisheries 2027 – towards a contract for marine fisheries*⁶³ which sets out long-term proposals in relation to marine fisheries. The Devolved Administrations each have or are developing strategies for sustainable fisheries.

⁵⁸ http://www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/nws/guidance/national_plan_2003.pdf

⁵⁹ www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/index.htm

⁶⁰ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/pdf/ukccp06-all.pdf

⁶¹ www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/rdp07_13/progdocs.htm

⁶² www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marinebill-whitepaper07/marinebill-whitepaper.pdf

⁶³ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/fish-2027/index.htm>

3.5. Public health

3.5.1 Wellbeing

The Government has commissioned research on wellbeing measures and influences on wellbeing, and on the relationship between wellbeing and sustainable development⁶⁴. Following the research, we have established a specialist cross-Government group, with the aim of publishing a provisional set of wellbeing indicators in July 2007.

NHS Scotland is developing a set of national mental health and wellbeing indicators to be published in 2007. The set will be used to create a summary mental health profile for Scotland.

Work on the suicide reduction strategy continues, and the suicide rate in England has fallen to its lowest recorded level. Pilot projects are exploring improved access to psychological therapies.

3.5.2 Food

The Food Industry Sustainability Strategy (FISS), drawn up with the aid of a Stakeholder Group, sets out how all those involved in the food and drink industry beyond the farm gate in England can, through the widespread adoption of best practice, help achieve sustainable development. The FISS was launched on 26 April 2006. As part of the FISS, research was commissioned from AEA Technology to review the validity of 'Food Miles' as an indicator for sustainability. *The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development*⁶⁵ was published on 15 July 2005.

The UK is undertaking a range of initiatives to investigate what improvements consumers would like to see in relation to food labelling⁶⁶.

3.5.3 Animal health & welfare

The Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain⁶⁷, launched in 2004, underpins everything that Government is doing on animal health and welfare. It has been, for example, shaping work on greater responsibility and cost sharing on the costs of animal diseases, on better contingency planning for disease outbreaks and better veterinary surveillance, all of which can help reduce the risk of diseases that impact on public health.

3.5.4 Health determinants and lifestyle-related and chronic diseases

The UK has developed strategies and action plans at national level, such as *Health Challenge England – next steps for Choosing Health*, launched in October 2006. For actions across the UK, see the following websites:

- England: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Healthandsocialcaretopics/index.htm
- Scotland: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health
- Wales: new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/hcw/?lang=en
- Northern Ireland: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/php/health_promotion.htm

⁶⁴ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/priority/wellbeing.htm

⁶⁵ <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles/default.asp>

⁶⁶ www.food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/researchandreports/

⁶⁷ www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/default.htm

Regional Public Health Groups work alongside public health colleagues in the National Health Service (NHS), local authorities and other agencies to improve and protect their local population by addressing all determinants of health - such as diet, housing, the economy, transport and mental health - and factors that create health inequalities within their region. Multi-agency networks enable regional public health groups to build a strong health component into regional programmes such as crime, economic development, transport, education and skills, housing, environment and regeneration.

The Healthy Communities Programme⁶⁸ will run over two years until early 2008. It aims to build local authority capacity to work with local communities to tackle local health inequalities, provide leadership to promote well being and foster a joined-up approach to health improvement across local government itself.

The Local Government Authority and the UK Government have agreed a shared priority on health⁶⁹ that aims to promote healthier communities and narrow health inequalities by targeting key local services, such as health and housing. A group of ‘pathfinder’ local authorities were identified to address this shared priority with the aim of building capacity of local authorities, working with Primary Care Trusts and regional partners, demonstrating measurable improvements in the development, use, access and impacts of services.

3.5.5 Environmental pollution & health

Following consultation during 2006, the UK will publish a revised Air Quality Strategy in July 2007⁷⁰ to address the estimated health costs of air pollution to the UK of up to £20 billion each year.

Information on environmental pollution and adverse health impacts in the UK is available on the Health Protection Agency⁷¹ and Environment Agency⁷² websites. Health impacts of climate change in the UK are addressed in a report by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology: www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/POSTpn232.pdf

3.5.6 Sustainable development and the National Health Service

In February 2006, the UK launched the NHS Good Corporate Citizenship Assessment Model⁷³. This web-based tool builds on and pulls together guidance and resources to help National Health Service (NHS) organisations improve their sustainability in six key areas: transport, procurement, facilities management, employment & skills, community engagement and new buildings. It shows in practical ways how the NHS has contributed to health and sustainable development, with real life examples of how it has contributed in areas such as local regeneration, healthy sustainable procurement and helping to tackle climate change.

⁶⁸ www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/5152337

⁶⁹ www.lga.gov.uk/ProjectHome.asp?lsection=59&ccat=951

⁷⁰ www.airquality.co.uk

⁷¹ www.hpa.org.uk/

⁷² publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0905BJOV-e-e.pdf

⁷³ <http://www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk/>

3.6. Social inclusion, demography and migration

3.6.1 Welfare reform

In the face of greater global competitiveness, the UK approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion is a reform agenda designed to deliver security throughout the lifecycle by balancing flexibility and fairness. The first strand of this agenda is the UK's labour market policy framework, focusing on active labour market policies; policies that make work pay; and policies that reduce barriers to work. This is set out in more detail in the UK's National Reform Programme⁷⁴. The second strand is the work carried out to increase social inclusion and reduce in particular child poverty, as set out in the UK's National Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report⁷⁵. The final strand is skills.

At European level the UK along with other Member States submitted a National Action Plan⁷⁶ as part of the National Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report in September 2006. The UK's National Action Plan on social inclusion for the period 2006-08 sets out four policy priorities. These are:

- eliminating child poverty: the UK Government has set a target of eradicating child poverty in a generation and halving it by 2010, through action to ensure financial protection for families, support for parents entering the labour market and action to break cycles of deprivation, e.g. early years support, education, healthcare;
- increasing labour market participation, in particular by easing the transition to work and by action to tackle barriers to working including ill-health, disability, skills and age;
- improving access to quality services, ensuring that services meet the needs of service users and are delivered in a way that assists in tackling social exclusion; and
- tackling discrimination, in particular against ethnic minorities and disabled people.

3.6.2 Social cohesion

In 2005, the UK Government published *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society, a cross-government strategy on increasing race equality and community cohesion*⁷⁷. Examples of action taken under the strategy include: Connecting Communities Plus, which is a funding programme of £18m over three years supporting the delivery of *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society*, and; a Commission on Integration and Cohesion, which is a fixed-term advisory body considers it how local areas can develop practical approaches to build integration and cohesion.

The UK will continue to deliver social cohesion through our focus on generating economic prosperity, more and better jobs and tackling social exclusion and poverty.

3.6.3 An aging population

The UK has proposed reforms to our pensions system to encourage more people to work longer and save more for their retirement, and are making changes to our welfare state to get more people off benefits and into work.

⁷⁴ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/426/00/lisbon_natreform151006.pdf

⁷⁵ www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/socialprotection/

⁷⁶ www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/nap/WorkingTogether.pdf

⁷⁷ www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501928

To balance people living longer on more generous pensions, we are going to gradually ask people to work longer before retiring. We will be gradually increasing women's State Pension Age by five years between 2010 and 2020 to equalise it with that of men at age 65. We are also proposing to gradually increase the state pension age for all in line with increasing life expectancy to 68 by 2046. Details of UK pension reform are included in the National Report on strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion⁷⁸ and the National Reform Programme⁷⁹.

The UK launched its strategy on ageing in March 2005. Examples of activities include:

- Eight LinkAge Plus pilots⁸⁰ are experimenting with how to join up government for older people. These pilots are all led by older people.
- 'Individual Budgets' are being piloted to give older people the power to decide the nature of their own services, by giving them money directly and allowing them to choose how and when they pay for and receive services.
- The Partnership for Older People Projects⁸¹ are funding innovative approaches which will provide more low-level support and care in the community, to improve the health, well-being and independence of older people.

3.6.4 *Increasing labour market participation*

The UK is continuing to move forward actions in light of the European Youth Pact. The UK Government published a Green Paper in March 2007 on the benefits of young people staying in education, and launched a consultation on raising the compulsory participation age to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015 (i.e. 100% of 17 year-olds participating in education and training by 2015). A comprehensive programme of reform is set out in a Further Education White Paper (March 2006).

The New Deal for Young People has already helped find over 850,000 jobs for young people and contributed to a two-thirds reduction in young people claiming unemployment benefits for more than six months. The Government has also taken a number of steps to help young people develop the enterprise skills and aspirations necessary to start up and grow their own business.

The UK has also set a target of increasing the employment rate for lone parents to 70%, equivalent to getting 300,000 more lone parents back into work. And finally, the UK has set an ambition of 1 million fewer people on incapacity-related benefits (sickness benefit) by introducing new condition management and job-search support through Pathways to Work, and a new Employment and Support Allowance which will encourage claimants to prepare for or seek work where appropriate.

New Deal 50 Plus continues to provide tailored job-search help for those aged 50 and over. Around 170,000 older people have been supported in their return to work through the programme.

⁷⁸ www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/socialprotection/

⁷⁹ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/426/00/lisbon_natreform151006.pdf

⁸⁰ www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2006/jul/pens063-030706.asp and

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070522/text/70522w0023.htm#070522106006291

⁸¹ www.dh.gov.uk/en/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/OlderPeoplesServices/DH_4099198

3.6.5 Skills

*Skills in the UK: the long-term challenge*⁸², published in December 2005 showed that while the UK has a strong economy and world-leading employment levels, its productivity trails some of its key peer economies. Poor skills are a key contributor to this problem.

The UK government is currently considering its response to the Leitch Review⁸³ which reported in December 2006. The review recommended stretching targets for improving the UK skills profile at all qualification levels. More specifically, it recognised the importance of addressing the needs of those with low and no skills both in the workforce and those who are workless and included specific recommendations regarding the better integration of employment and skills systems and increasing the amount of in work training provided through Train to Gain.

3.6.6 Demography and planning

In May 2007, the UK published a White Paper on planning, *Planning for a sustainable future*⁸⁴. This will improve the current planning system to help deliver sustainable communities and to better address the long-term challenges of climate change, natural resource use and globalisation.

National planning policy is supported by Regional Spatial Strategies⁸⁵. These set out a broad development strategy for a 15-20 year period for each region across England (in London it is the Spatial Development Strategy, better known as the London Plan). The responsibility of the regional planning bodies is to monitor the implementation of the RSS and review it where necessary. A key part of this process is to understand the current and future demographic changes and resulting needs and competing uses throughout the region and how these relate to and shape the current and future vision and objectives for sustainable development planned for the region. The RSS also provides a spatial framework to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents, Local Transport Plans and regional and sub regional strategies and programmes that have bearing on land use activities, including air quality, education, energy, health and strategies to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The Welsh Assembly Government has developed a Wales Spatial Plan, setting out a 20 years strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions, underpinned by the core values of sustainable development.

The Academy for Sustainable Communities⁸⁶ (ASC) was set up in April 2005 as a national and international centre of excellence for the skills and knowledge needed to create strong, prosperous, sustainable communities.

⁸² www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1FE/8E/pbr05_leitchreviewexecsummary_255.pdf

⁸³ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/523/43/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

⁸⁴ http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/669/PlanningforaSustainableFutureWhitePaper_id1510669.pdf

⁸⁵ Spatial planning is about influencing the nature of places and how they function in a sustainable way

⁸⁶ <http://www.ascskills.org.uk/pages/about-ASC>

3.7. Global poverty and sustainable development challenges

3.7.1 International environmental governance

The UK is a co-chair of the EU informal working group on IEG aimed at further developing the EU's position on strengthening international environmental governance, including the UN System Wide Coherence debate and the upgrading of UNEP to a UNEO. Within this role we are responsible for drafting papers, facilitating dialogue between member states, outreaching with others. The UK is member of the French led 'Friends of UNEO Pioneer Group' aimed at building political momentum and support for the UNEO objective.

In line with our support for a stronger, more predictable financial base for UNEP, the UK is increasing its contribution to the Environment Fund, which currently stands at £4.2 million per annum. The UK has also increased its financial support for the fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) by 15% to £140 million.

3.7.2 Aid

The UK has set a timetable to reach 0.7% ODA/GNI⁸⁷ by 2013 and is expected to reach at least the minimum level in both 2006 and 2010.

To help meet the UK's international poverty reduction objectives through environmental protection, Budget 2007 announced an allocation of £800m to the Environmental Transformation Fund (ETF), jointly run by the Department for International Development (DfID) and Defra. As an initial project the ETF will provide financial support of £50 million for a groundbreaking ten-country initiative across central Africa to prevent the destruction of the second largest rainforest in the world. Led by Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai, it will help the livelihoods of 50 million people now under threat.

3.7.3 International trade and investment

The UK takes a number of actions to improve the sustainability of international trade, including:

- Pushing, through the Doha Development Agenda, for an end to all forms of export subsidy and substantial reductions in trade-distorting support and agricultural tariffs.
- Leading an OECD Task Force that published guidance on using Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in development cooperation in May 2006. This material is now actively being used by a range of donor agencies including the European Commission.
- Following the Voluntary Principles, an initiative to promote human rights in the operations of security services working for extractives companies in developing countries.
- Working to ensure that the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to be agreed between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are appropriately designed and implemented to bring new trade and development opportunities to these countries.
- Contributing at least €15m under the first phase of the provision of infrastructure for Africa through the Africa Infrastructure Consortium which focuses on accelerating Africa's internal trade and integration into the world economy.

⁸⁷ Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a proportion of Gross National Income (GNI)

3.7.4 *Promoting sustainable development in EU external policies*

The Sustainable Development Action Plan⁸⁸ for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) sets out the UK's strategy for promoting SD in our relationships with other countries.

The Welsh Assembly Government published in 2006 its *Wales for Africa*⁸⁹ Framework for action on international sustainable development.

The LGA European and International Unit actively supports the strengthening of local democracy, local governance, sustainability and poverty eradication with local government partners in a range of developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. It also supports individual local authorities linking up with local government partners in developing countries to support progress in these issues, including through technical cooperation, economic links, professional development programmes, and schools exchanges.

The UK Local Government Alliance for International Development – a group of five local government agencies⁹⁰ – aims to enhance the understanding and competencies of the Alliance and wider UK local government about international development issues and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) so that they are better placed to help local authorities in developing countries to build capacity and improve local practice.

3.7.5 *International environmental management*

The UK has been a strong supporter of the EU Energy Initiative for poverty eradication which provides policy advice to the Commission on energy for development. The UK, along with the Netherlands, Germany, France, Sweden, Finland and Denmark are supporting the establishment of a resource centre that will significantly enhance the EUEI's capacity for policy dialogue.

The approach adopted by the UK for initial implementation of the Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management (SAICM) has been to review how existing activities may be utilised or expanded to deliver Strategic Approach objectives. Existing activities include:

- UK and EU chemicals regulatory controls
- The UK chemicals delivery plan on attaining the targets set at WSSD
- Working with other country partners through the UK Sustainable Development Dialogues (see section 5)
- The UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum
- The UK was the first country to contribute to the Quick Start Programme trust fund
- The UK is the WEOG Regional Focal Point for the Strategic Approach.

The UK has seconded a National Expert to the European Commission to assist in the implementation of the EU Water for Life Initiative (EUWI) which was established to increase the effectiveness of EU funding for water in Africa, Latin America, the Mediterranean and the Neighbouring States. Following NGO criticism, the UK and German Governments agreed to co-fund a review of the EUWI, for completion in 2007. The UK leads the Finance Working Group and has provided financial support to the Country Dialogue on Ethiopia.

⁸⁸ [www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/SDAP%20Final%20version%20\(corrected\).pdf](http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/SDAP%20Final%20version%20(corrected).pdf)

⁸⁹ <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/intdevelopment/walesforafrica/?lang=en>

⁹⁰ <http://international.lga.gov.uk/lg-alliance>

4. Progress on EU SDS cross-cutting issues

4.1. Education

Education will drive the behaviour change essential for the UK to meet the four priorities set out in the UK SDS (see section 6). The sustainable development action plan⁹¹ for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) strategy, *From Here to Sustainability*⁹², set out the key actions being taken by the UK to embed sustainable development in the policy and operations of the UK's education sector. Sustainable schools teach by example – reinforcing what is taught through the curriculum by their ethos and practical actions – e.g. energy saving, recycling and community cohesion. Actions include:

- increasing awareness of sustainable procurement options within the schools sector
- investing £110 million over the next three years to test even higher standards for new and refurbished schools to reduce their carbon emissions, in some cases to carbon neutrality
- publishing a framework and consultation for schools, along with resources such as an evaluation tool for schools, a website and range of resources for teachers, guidance for governors and bursars, the Detective kit for pupils to use to measure their school's carbon footprint, and a competition led by *We Are What We Do* for children to develop their own version of the book *Change the World for a Fiver*.
- Opening up school facilities to local communities, with a particular emphasis on bringing services together to make it easier for schools to work with the specialist or targeted services in the local community that some children need. These extended services are being developed as part of new school building design.
- Linking capital funding to sustainability criteria

Sustainable development is a compulsory part of the national curriculum in science, geography, citizenship and design and technology. Teacher resources are being produced to support teachers to embed sustainable development throughout the entire curriculum. For older pupils, vocational diplomas offer a new opportunity to incorporate sustainability/environmental learning, for example in the Land based and environmental diploma.

An awareness of the natural world is being developed for different age groups. Curriculum aims are supported by guidance which emphasises that maximum use should be made of the outdoors, particularly the natural environment, at all times of the year. For example, for young children learning goals have been introduced such as "Observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world" and 'Find out about their environment and talk about those features they like and dislike'.

The Welsh Assembly Government published in 2006 its strategy Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, an action plan to help ensure that the principles of sustainable development are built into every aspect of our day to day life.

*Learning for our future*⁹³, published in July 2006, sets out Scotland's first wave of actions in support of the global programme to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable

⁹¹ www.dfes.gov.uk/aboutus/sd/docs/SDAP%202006%20FINAL.pdf

⁹² <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/ourbusiness/strategy/from-here-to-sustainability-lsc-strategy-for-sustainable-development.pdf>

⁹³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/25143907/0>

development into all aspects of education and learning – the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

4.1.1 Higher Education and universities

Higher Education Funding Council for England published, *Sustainable development in higher education*⁹⁴, in July 2005 following public consultation, setting out their approach to promoting the sustainable development agenda and including a strategic statement and action plan. HEFCE are currently undertaking a strategic review of sustainable development in higher education, which will be published in late 2007.

HEFCE are also taking a number of other actions to facilitate capacity building and the development and sharing of best practice, which include:

- using their website to raise the visibility of existing sustainable development resources.
- funding three Centres for Excellence in Teaching in Learning (CETLs) related to sustainable development
- promoting a sustainable approach to capital spend through the new Capital Investment Framework (CIF) to distribute capital funding from 2008.
- working with stakeholders to investigate the value of producing sector specific BREEAM templates to encourage sustainable construction and refurbishment.
- funding the development of good practice through a sustainable development stream of its Leadership, Governance and Management fund⁹⁵. Examples of projects funded include: helping the higher education sector to improve building design, minimise energy and water consumption and waste generation, and reduce transport impacts⁹⁶; EcoCampus to pilot an environmental management system designed for the further and higher education sectors⁹⁷; a guide promoting improved biodiversity management in higher education⁹⁸; a 'how to' guide on ethics for all universities and colleges⁹⁹; translating current debates in UK universities on internationalisation, globalisation and sustainable development into challenges for strategic leadership and change management.

On curriculum issues, the Higher Education Academy has an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) working group to encourage the embedding of ESD within the curriculum.

4.2. Research and development

4.2.1 Sustainable development research

The UK continues to support a Sustainable Development Research Network¹⁰⁰ that aims to promote sustainable development research, and strengthen the links between providers of research and policymakers across government, in order to improve evidence-based policymaking to deliver the UK government's objectives for sustainable development.

⁹⁴ www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_28/

⁹⁵ www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/build/lgmfund/

⁹⁶ www.heepi.org.uk/

⁹⁷ www.ecocampus.co.uk/

⁹⁸ www.eauc.org.uk/index.cfm?zID=71

⁹⁹ www.cihe-uk.com/ethicsPR.php

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.sd-research.org.uk/>

4.2.2 *Research contributing to sustainable development*

The Government's science budget, amounting to £3.2bn in 2006-7, is administered by the Office of Science & Innovation and provides funds for the Research Councils. The Research Councils support basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training across the sciences and humanities. They fund a variety of research work, both individually and through Cross-Council programmes, which has the potential to impact on a broad range of sectors both nationally and internationally.

In addition the Office of Science and Innovation's Foresight Programme, which aims to provide challenging visions of the future, to ensure effective strategies now is starting a project on Sustainable Energy Management in the Built Environment. This project will explore how the UK built environment could evolve to help manage the transition over the next five decades to secure, sustainable, low carbon energy systems.

The Technology Strategy Board (TSB) plays a key role jointly with business in supporting research and innovation which responds to the sustainability agenda. Since the Board was established over two years ago, it has funded collaborative research and development projects in areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, non-food crops, waste management, resource efficiency and environmentally friendly transport.

A number of Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) bringing together academics and business have been supported by the Board, including on resource efficiency, integrated pollution management and low carbon & fuel cell technology. The Board is also taking forward Innovation Platforms, in conjunction with a number of Government Departments, which act as a sophisticated supplier relations tool by targeting R&D spending on areas where government has a long-term procurement priority to address major societal challenges such as traffic congestion, low carbon vehicles and buildings.

A major recent initiative is the establishment of the Energy Technologies Institute, which aims to provide the UK with a pre-eminent, world-class means for delivering energy technology research. It will connect the best scientists and engineers working in academic and industrial organisations, within the UK and overseas. It will be funded jointly by public and private sectors, and has so far over £312.5 million in funding commitments from the private sector.

4.2.2 *7th Framework Programme*

The UK Government funds a support service¹⁰¹ for UK-based organisations interested in exploiting the opportunities provided by FP7 including a website, helpline and a network of National Contact Points (NCPs).

4.3. Financing and economic instruments

Government needs to ensure that any intervention is effective in achieving its objectives, and that the benefits are likely to justify the costs. Economic instruments are one of many ways in which governments may intervene. There are five key principles of using economic instruments for environmental policy, which the Government set out in its 2002 publication, *Tax and the*

¹⁰¹ www.fp7uk.dti.gov.uk/

*environment: using economic instruments*¹⁰²:

- The decision to take action must be evidence-based;
- Any intervention must take place at the appropriate level (subsidiarity);
- Action to protect the environment must take account of economic and social objectives;
- Action on the environment must be as part of a long-term strategy;
- The right instrument must be chosen to meet each particular objective;
- Where tax is used, it will aim to shift the burden of tax from 'goods' to 'bads'.

Since 1997, the Government has introduced a range of economic instruments that support sustainable development objectives:

- instruments to incentivise business energy efficiency: the renewables obligation; the climate change levy; and Carbon Trust's Energy Efficiency Loans scheme for SMEs;
- instruments to encourage consumer choices for energy efficiency, such as reduced VAT rates on professionally-installed energy-saving materials; the provision of information through the Energy Saving Trust;
- the Energy Efficiency Commitment;
- mechanisms to encourage energy efficiency in buildings including regulation such as Building Regulations; the Code for Sustainable Homes; and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive; and
- Instruments to incentivise low carbon transport, including the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation and the Voluntary Agreements on new car fuel efficiency¹⁰³.
- In July 2005, the Government announced a major review of the economics of climate change, led by Nick Stern the Head of the Government Economic Service. The Stern Review reported to the Chancellor and Prime Minister in October 2006, and brings together the latest science on climate change and employs economic methods to assess both the human and environmental impacts of, and responses to, climate change.

The Stern Review argues it is essential to find a way of avoiding dangerous climate change. Markets will not achieve this alone. There may be a risk of collective action failures in co-ordinating responses to this problem as the entire world will benefit from actions to reduce emissions even if they have not contributed towards them. Stern suggests that 3 elements of policy are needed for an effective global response to climate change:

- creating a common carbon price across countries, through trading, tax or regulation - which ensures that emissions reductions are delivered in the most cost effective way;
- encouraging innovation and R&D to bring forward a range of low carbon technologies;
- removing barriers to behavioural change especially to encourage energy efficiency.

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is the UK's preferred carbon pricing mechanism and forms the central component in the Government's domestic policy framework to tackle climate change. The Government has sought to complement the EU ETS with a range of national measures with the most appropriate intervention - tax, regulation, and spending or information policies in each circumstance.

¹⁰² www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D54/07/adtaxenviron02-332kb.pdf

¹⁰³ Voluntary targets on new car fuel efficiency agreed between European Commission and the automotive industry.

4.4. Communication

4.4.1 Engaging the public on climate change

Approximately 40% of CO₂ emissions in the UK stem from actions taken by individuals. The UK Government is giving a big push on engaging with consumers on action to tackle climate change through a campaign launched in March 2007. The multi-media campaign comprises of a range of events including a Citizens' Summit on Climate Change, on-line, press and TV advertising, the launch of a web-based CO₂ calculator, a new short film and an educational brochure. The aim of these events is to improve the public's CO₂ literacy in the first phase of the campaign, moving on in the second phase to encourage individuals to change towards more pro-environmental behaviours. The events all carry the common brand, "Act on CO₂"¹⁰⁴.

5. Progress on implementation of WSSD commitments

We have been facilitating the implementation of the Ministerial High Seas Task Force on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (2006) recommendations, which are practical actions to increase data sharing and improve fisheries management and enforcement internationally.

In July 2006, the UK published updated plans for delivering the commitments made by the UK Government at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002. The plans set out the intermediate steps needed to meet the longer term aims. They also outline progress so far.¹⁰⁵

The UK's WSSD commitments are integrated into the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The Strategy includes a table of the UK's international priorities for sustainable development including those arising from WSSD, Doha, Monterrey and the Millennium Development Goals. Progress is monitored as part of follow-up on the strategy as a whole.

Sustainable Development Dialogues

The UK Government has set up a series of Sustainable Development Dialogues¹⁰⁶ with key emerging economies (China, India, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa) to accelerate implementation of WSSD commitments, through mutual learning on how to incorporate sustainable development values into government policy.

The Dialogues are a cross-government initiative that is starting to deliver on the UK's 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy objective to be an international leader on sustainable development issues.

Multi-Stakeholder partnerships

In the build up to the Summit, the Prime Minister announced five sectoral initiatives in March 2001. These are partnerships for the delivery of sustainable development between government

¹⁰⁴ www.defra.gov.uk/news/issues/2007/climate-0326.htm

¹⁰⁵ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/international/wssd/deliveryplans2005.htm

¹⁰⁶ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/international/dialogues

and wider stakeholders, including NGOs and business. The initiatives cover financial services, water, tourism, energy and forestry.

Since the Summit the UK Government has continued its support for Type II partnerships¹⁰⁷, reporting on UK Partnerships on the first and second anniversary of the Summit, and partnerships figure prominently as a means of implementation in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005. The UK Government has demonstrated visible leadership internationally, participating in the Rome (2004) and Marrakech (2005) International Partnerships Fora, and many UK Government-involved partnerships participating in the annual CSD Partnerships Fair.

The Learning Network on Partnerships (LNP) was established as a cross-departmental resource by in April 2005. The LNP seeks to provide a platform for information exchange, capacity building, policy dialogue and a further embedding of more effective partnership models across UK Government. Since its launch the LNP has responded to members requests by holding customised 'Partnership Surgeries' for REEEP¹⁰⁸ and PECE¹⁰⁹. In October 2005, the Network hosted a WSSD Partnerships Review to look at progress on UK-engaged international sustainable development partnerships three years after WSSD. The objective was to introduce the varied UK-engaged partnerships to each other, share lessons and learnings - both process and policy - and, identify areas of synergy with other partnerships with a view to improving overall effectiveness and achievement of WSSD goals.

Funding the delivery of WSSD commitment

The International Sustainable Development (ISDF) is a fund used to accelerate implementation of commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), through initiatives in three key areas:

- The Sustainable Development Dialogues (SDDs) with the rapidly developing countries of China, India, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, plus stronger efforts to engage with Russia on environmental issues;
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as Partners for Environmental Co-operation in Europe (PECE)¹⁶, contributing to delivery of Defra's international SD priorities;
- Accelerating delivery of WSSD commitments on which Defra leads (oceans, fisheries, biodiversity, chemicals, agriculture and sustainable consumption & production).
- Multilateral activities, such as the UNECE's environment sub- programme, to which the UK currently gives political or legal support under the Environment for Europe process.

¹⁰⁷ Projects that help civil society to contribute to the implementation of sustainable development goals

¹⁰⁸ Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership – structures policy initiatives for clean energy markets and facilitates financing for sustainable energy projects.

¹⁰⁹ Partnership for Environmental Cooperation in Europe - brings together UK-based organisations from public sector, business and civil society to promote sustainable development in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

6. Elaboration of NSDS

6.1 Process and organisation

6.1.1 Introduction

The first UK Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)¹¹⁰ was published in 1999. The current SDS, *Securing the Future*, was launched in March 2005 by the Prime Minister. It reflects a shared framework for sustainable development policy agreed by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, set out in *One future – different paths*, containing a common purpose, as well as shared principles and priorities. *Securing the Future* also contains detailed commitments from Government departments for delivery of the strategy in England. Separate strategies cover delivery in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Scotland's sustainable development strategy, *Choosing our future*¹¹¹, was published in December 2005. It is structured around four broad themes – the well-being of Scotland's people, supporting thriving communities, protecting Scotland's natural heritage and resources, and Scotland's global contribution – supported by measures to support learning and communications and to ensure governance and delivery. A detailed implementation plan was published in June 2006, accompanied by regular published progress reports. A revised Scottish sustainable indicator set was announced in July 2006 and is reported on via the web. The new Administration which took office following elections in May 2007 has reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development in delivering its five new strategic objectives for government – wealthier and fairer, healthier, smarter, safer and stronger, and greener. The implementation plan is under review in the light of this new programme and approach.

In Wales, Welsh Ministers are required by law to promote sustainable development in the exercise of the Welsh Assembly Government's functions and produce a 'Scheme'¹¹² setting out how it is to be done. An SD Action Plan is also produced to detail how they will implement commitments in the Scheme. The Assembly Government's second SD Scheme and Action Plan were published in 2004 and are due to be reviewed following the elections in May 2007.

Northern Ireland's first sustainable development strategy, *First steps towards sustainability*¹¹³ was published in May 2006. An action plan setting out detailed implementation has also been published. Northern Ireland work closely with the Republic of Ireland on an All-Island approach, particularly on cross-border environmental protection.

The Government's strategy for strengthening regional delivery of sustainable development in England is set out in *Securing the Regions Futures*¹¹⁴.

6.1.2 Governance

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has responsibility for championing sustainable development across all levels of Government.

¹¹⁰ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm

¹¹¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/12/1493902/39032>

¹¹² <http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/strategypublications/strategypubs/935748/?lang=en>

¹¹³ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/sustain-develop.pdf>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/documents/securing-the-regions-futures.pdf>

A ministerial committee on sustainable development, chaired by a Defra Minister, but with Ministers from across Government, takes decisions, e. g. on targets for Government operations, sustainable procurement by the public sector, and reports to the cabinet committee on energy and the environment.

A programme board chaired by Defra and made up of senior officials from the main delivery Departments, the Sustainable Development Commission and the Devolved Administrations meets on a quarterly basis to monitor progress against strategy commitments and co-ordinates policy across Departments. It is supported by a working group. A further senior board and working group co-ordinate work on sustainable operations and procurement.

The Sustainable Development Commission¹¹⁵ acts at arms-length from Government as an independent advisor, advocate and ‘watchdog’ on sustainable development. In its ‘watchdog’ function it reports publicly on Sustainable Development Action Plans. These are published documents in which each Government Department sets out its contribution to implementing the strategy and to wider sustainable development considerations. It also reports on how Government meets its sustainability targets for its own operations and estates and it publishes in-depth reports on sustainable development aspects of Government policy or of Government institutions.

The creation of *Securing the Future* brought in contributors from across Departments and stakeholders from all sectors and a broad range of interest groups. A very broad public consultation exercise¹¹⁶ took place that made use, among other methods, of web-based approaches and structured workshops, including at regional and local level.

6.2. Strategic priorities and instruments

6.2.1 Key themes and challenges

The four priorities identified by *Securing the Future* are:

- Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Climate Change and Energy
- Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement
- Sustainable Communities

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy has three themes running through it which are particular strengths:

1) Getting serious about delivery: The UK SDS is owned by the whole of Government with clear commitments by each major Government Department set out in departmental action plans. Governance groups at official and Ministerial level support co-ordination of policies and monitoring of progress across Government. Annual public reporting on a wide set of indicators enable all stakeholders to judge whether it is making a difference. The strong independent SD Commission provides additional external scrutiny, advocacy and capacity-building.

2) Government leading by example: The UK Government recognises that it needs to lead by

¹¹⁵ www.sd-commission.org.uk/

¹¹⁶ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/finalsummary.pdf

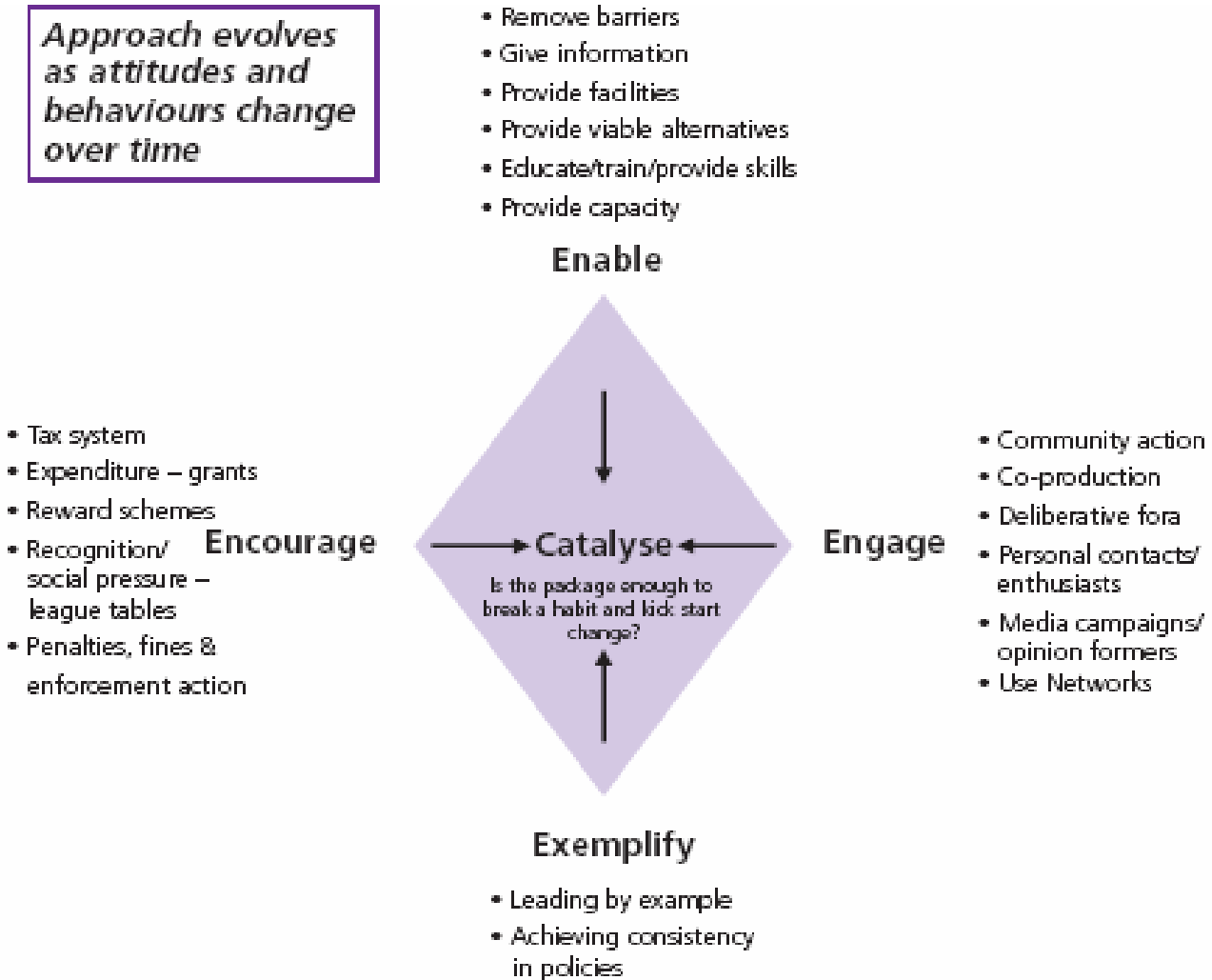
example if it is to ask businesses and citizens to change their behaviours. The strategy, for example, makes clear commitments on sustainable operations on the Government estate and on sustainable procurement. In this, area over the last year, new ambitious targets have been set and agreed across Government.

3) Involving people: The strategy is clear that regional and local levels need to be involved as well as central Government. This effort to involve people goes right down to communities and individuals. Through the Every Action Counts programme for example, Government made £2m funding available in 2006/07 to community and voluntary sector organisations for adopting and championing more sustainable behaviours.

6.2.2 Instruments

Securing the Future outlines an evidence-based approach to achieving behaviour change, as expressed in the behaviour change model on the next page. While it is clear that regulation continues to have a role, it suggests that a package of policy approaches needs to be put together under the headings ‘enable’, ‘engage’, ‘encourage’ and ‘exemplify’. This may still not achieve behaviour change where behaviour is deeply entrenched. In this case policy design needs to go further to catalyse people to behave differently and will need to use a large range of instruments.

Approach evolves as attitudes and behaviours change over time



6.2.3 *State of play*

An update on the national sustainable development indicators was published in July 2006¹¹⁷. Compared with the position in 1999, 53 measures show improvement (representing over half of those for which it is possible to make an assessment), and 24 show little or no change.

6.2.4 *Comparison to the EU SDS*

The latest revision of the UK SDS was adopted prior to the renewed EU SDS, but was developed in line with international commitments including the former EU SDS. The main challenges identified in the UK SDS are complementary to those in the EU SDS.

6.3. Monitoring and evaluation

6.3.1 *Reporting cycle and indicators*

A set of 20 framework indicators apply to the UK. Further indicators apply for individual country strategies. In selecting the UK framework indicators, measures were chosen that:

- are linked to the purpose and priorities within the UK Framework
- are agreed as high priorities by the UK Government and Devolved Administrations
- have UK coverage (though there are some data constraints)
- have trends available
- highlight challenges, and
- are statistically robust and meaningful.

The UK Government Strategy, covering England and non-devolved matters, outlines 68 indicators, including the 20 framework indicators. These indicators are reported on annually as a printed publication *Sustainable Development Indicators In Your Pocket* and on the internet¹¹⁸. They are broadly consistent with the EU-level indicators developed by Eurostat. The UK has been strongly involved in the development of the EU-level indicators through membership of the Eurostat Task Force and Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators.

The Sustainable Development Commission monitors cross-Government and departmental progress towards sustainable development, in particular by carrying out biennial ‘State of the Nation’ progress reports and three annual thematic in-depth reviews of public service¹¹⁹.

UK Government Departmental Public Service Agreements also measure progress towards individual outcomes. New agreements are being developed for 2008-10. We will be exploring how we can use the new set to drive and measure further progress on key sustainable development outcomes.

6.3.2 *Impact assessment*

On 2 April 2007, the UK Government announced a new Impact Assessment (IA) process aimed at increasing transparency and improving regulation. The IA process provides a sharper focus on assessing the costs and benefits of policy proposals. Guidance for the new IA process asks policy

¹¹⁷ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/data-resources/documents/sdiyp2006_a6.pdf

¹¹⁸ www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/index.htm

¹¹⁹ www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/watchdog.html

makers to take account of the full range of costs and benefits (economic, social and environmental) of policy proposals and to monetise these impacts as far as possible. In addition, the summary page of the new impact assessment template specifically asks policy makers to indicate the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions arising from the policy proposal.

The Government is also investigating the application of the ecosystem approach to policy-making¹²⁰ (see section 3.4.2).

6.3.3 Evaluation and peer review

The UK has participated in peer reviews of strategies, including one of the French NSDS in 2005 and is currently considering the best timing and format for a peer review of its strategy.

The Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) was established in November 1997 and is responsible for reporting to Parliament on the extent to which UK Government policies and programmes contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development. www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/environmental_audit_committee.cfm The National Audit Office also provides evidence to EAC investigations.

¹²⁰ www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/natres/phase2.htm