EURES Institut für regionale Studien in Europa
Institute for Regional Studies in Europe
Institut de recherches régionales en Europe

Long-term and Cross-cutting Issues in European Governments and Parliaments

United Kingdom

Preface

This country report is one part of a comprehensive report presenting the results of an inquiry concerning the institutions, methods and procedures used by governments and parliaments throughout Europe for dealing with long-term and cross-cutting issues. The study was conducted by the *EURES institute* on behalf of the *Office for Technology Assessment of the German Parliament (TAB)*.

Especially the concept of `Sustainable Development` requires a long-term and cross-cutting perspective. Therefore governments and parliaments in many countries are looking for new approaches to deal with these issues. In this context the project aimed at collecting a wide range of information about the institutions and the methods used by them for tackling long-term and cross-cutting issues.

Consequently, this report can also be used as a handbook. It should foster an international exchange of information and experiences concerning these questions. We are confident that the provided information is of practical use for organisations and experts involved in long-term and cross-cutting issues. Unfortunately some parts of the report exist only in a German version. A desirable complete English translation would require to find a source for additional funding

This country report contains:

- A brief country profile (Kurzbericht) concerning (a) the general political framework (political system and political culture) and (b) a summary of the way the country basically tackles long-term and cross-cutting issues (German)

- A country study on long-term and cross-cutting issues prepared by a country expert (English)

- A compilation of detailed characterisations of long-term and cross-cutting institutions within the country (English)

More information both concerning the project and the other parts of the report Is provided on http://www.eures.de/r38.

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6 Großbritannien

Fläche:	243.307 km^2
Einwohner:	59.009.000
Bruttosozialprodukt je Einwohner (1997) in US$:	20.870

6.1 Kurzbericht

6.1.1 Übersicht

Großbritannien ist demokratietheoretisch gekennzeichnet durch das „Westminster-Modell" mit weitreichender zentralstaatlicher Machtfülle und Dominanz der Regierung gegenüber dem Parlament.

Unter diesen Bedingungen verwundert es nicht, dass die im europäischen Vergleich hohe Zahl an Langzeit- und Querschnittsinstitutionen fast ausschließlich an die Regierung gekoppelt sind (Ausnahme bildet hier das `Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology` (POST)) und diese auf verschiedenen Gebieten mit Informationen versorgen und beraten. Einige dieser Institutionen stehen in direktem Zusammenhang bzw. sind Ergebnis der britischen Nachhaltigkeitspolitik, dem heute wichtigsten Ansatz zur Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen.

Mit dieser Fülle an Institutionen ist jedoch vielfach das Fehlen einer übergreifenden Querschnittsperspektive verbunden. Auf alle Fälle handelt es sich bei Großbritannien um ein für die Fragestellung dieser Studie wichtiges Land.

6.1.2 Der politische, kulturelle und institutionelle Kontext[1]

Demokratietypus:	Majoritär
Staatsoberhaupt/ Regierungssystem:	Monarch / Parlamentarische Demokratie
Partizipation ges. Interessen / Politikstil:	Pluralismus / eher konsensuell
Direktdemokratische Elemente:	Keine
Staatsaufbau / Stellung der subnationalen Ebenen:	Unitaristischer Staatsaufbau / langsam zunehmende Einbeziehung regionaler Ebenen in zentralstaatliche Politik
Politische Kultur:	Voluntarismus, lange zivilgesellschaftliche Tradition;

Politisches System

Das „Westminster-Modell" ist der klassische Modellfall einer *Mehrheitsdemokratie* und kann als demokratietheoretischer Gegenpol zur Konsensusdemokratie à la Schweiz begriffen werden.

Damit ist die angelsächsische Demokratie v.a. durch folgende Merkmale gekennzeichnet:

- Stark konzentrierte Exekutivmacht durch die Alleinregierung der Mehrheitspartei

- Klare Dominanz der Regierung gegenüber dem Parlament

- Asymetrisches Zwei-Kammer-System, klare Dominanz des Unterhauses

- Weitreichende Parlamentssouveränität

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[1] Vgl. im folgenden v.a. Länderstudie UK; (Sturm 1999); (Schmidt 1997).

- Keine direktdemokratischen Elemente

- Zweiparteiensystem (mit Einschränkungen)

- Mehrheitswahlrecht

- Unitaristischer Staatsaufbau

Konstituierendes Element des britischen politischen Systems ist die Parlamentssouveränität. In diesem Verfassungsverständnis ist das Parlament einziger und unteilbarer Ort der politischen Machtausübung. Auch ist damit das politische System auf eine streng repräsentative Form festgelegt; das Parlament bindende *direktdemokratische Instrumente* kennt die britische Verfassung nicht.

Innerhalb des Unterhauses übt die Regierung mithilfe ihrer Parlamentsmehrheit die uneingeschränkte Kontrolle aus. Die Opposition ist nicht in die politischen Entscheidungen eingebunden, fungiert vor diesem Hintergrund als „Regierung auf Abruf" und sieht ihre Hauptaufgabe in der öffentlichkeitswirksamen Auseinandersetzung mit der Regierung. Das britische Unterhaus ist somit eher ein Redeparlament.

Die Einbeziehung der (überwiegend pluralistisch strukturierten) gesellschaftlichen Interessen erfolgt in erster Linie durch Kanäle zwischen Interessenvertretern und der Regierung. Trotz der Tatsache, dass letztere über eine hohe politische Durchsetzungsfähigkeit verfügt, gibt es doch für gesellschaftliche Akteure zahlreiche Möglichkeiten, ihre Vorstellungen in den politischen Prozess einzubringen. Der *Politikstil* ist in vielen Bereichen *eher konsensorientiert*. Allerdings mit der Folge, dass Verhandlungsergebnisse vielfach unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit zustande kommen.

Aus der Logik der Parlamentssouveränität ergibt sich zwangsläufig, dass Großbritannien nur als zentralistisch organisierter Staat zu denken ist. Zumindest kann es in dieser Tradition keine subnationalen Ebenen mit unveräußerlichen, verfassungsrechtlich verbrieften politischen Kompetenzen geben. In jüngerer Zeit wird von der Regierung jedoch zunehmend die Notwendigkeit einer regionalen und kommunalen Entwicklung unter Einbeziehung der subnationalen Ebenen anerkannt. Eine erste Konsequenz war die Reetablierung eigener politischer Vertretungen insbesondere für Wales und Schottland sowie die Ausweitung deren administrativen Zuständigkeiten (Devolution).

Politische Kultur

Ein grundlegendes Element der britischen politischen Kultur ist der ausgeprägte Voluntarismus, d.h. das Zutrauen in die selbstregulierenden Kräfte der Gesellschaft. Insofern blickt Großbritannien auf eine lange zivilgesellschaftliche Tradition zurück mit einer gossen Eigenständigkeit gesellschaftlicher Gruppen.

Auf der kommunalen Ebene kann diese Selbstbestimmungstradition im übrigen auch mit der stark unitaristisch-hierarchischen Staatsstruktur in Konflikt geraten. Die ausgewiesene Politik der kommunalen Entmachtung zugunsten des Zentralstaats unter der Regierung Thatcher bspw. hat auch eine Gegenbewegung der Kommunen zur Folge gehabt: Gerade in diesem Zusammenhang dabei von besonderem Interesse, dass sich die britischen Gemeinden das Instrument der `Lokalen Agenda 21` zunutze machten, um sich auf diesem Wege neue Handlungsmöglichkeiten am Zentralstaat vorbei zu verschaffen. Somit hat in Großbritannien sehr früh eine im europäischen Vergleich intensive Dynamik zur Umsetzung nachhaltiger Entwicklung auf kommunaler Ebene eingesetzt. Später wurden auch auf nationaler Ebene größere Anstrengungen in dieser Hinsicht unternommen (siehe unten). Die Kommunen können jedoch als wichtiger Vorreiter der britischen Nachhaltigkeitspolitik angesehen werden.

6.1.3   Die Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen

Der Umgang mit Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen erlebt in Großbritannien v.a. im Zuge der Etablierung des Leitbildes der nachhaltigen Entwicklung im Gefolge der Rio-Konferenz 1992 eine besondere Dynamik. Insofern konzentriert sich die britische Länderstudie überwiegend auf die institutionellen Entwicklungen im Zuge der Nachhaltigkeitspolitik Großbritanniens.

Entwicklung

Nach UNCED war die britische Regierung eine der ersten nationalen Regierungen, die eine Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie formulierten. Dies geschah 1994 mit „Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy". Mit der Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie wurden das `British Panel on Sustainable Development` als Beratungsorgan für die Regierung sowie der `UK Round Table on Sustainable Development` geschaffen. Letzterer hatte partizipativen bzw. konsultativen Charakter.

Auf den Regierungswechsel 1997 folgte die Vorbereitung zu einer Revision bzw. Neuauflage der Strategie. Begleitet wurde diese durch einen Konsultationsprozess quer durch alle gesellschaftlichen Bereiche, der u.a. in dem Dokument „Opportunities for Change" resultierte.

1999 wurde die neue Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie veröffentlicht. Institutionell wurde diese begleitet durch die Zusammenführung des `British Panel on Sustainable Development` und des `UK Round Table on Sustainable Development` zur `Sustainable Development Commission`. Neben der Commission sind zahlreiche weitere Langzeit- und Querschnittsinstitutionen innerhalb der Regierung bzw. im Auftrag der Regierung v.a. beratend tätig.

Gesellschaftliche Akteure

Relevanz der gesellschaftlichen Akteure

Nationales Parlament	● ● ●
Nationale Regierung	● ● ●
Medien / Öffentliche Debatte	● ●
Forscher und Forschungsinstitutionen	● ● ● ●
NGOs	● ● ● ●
Unabhängige Stiftungen / Think Tanks	● ● ● ●
Wirtschaft	● ● ●
Gewerkschaften	● ● ●
Regionale Regierungen und Institutionen	● ● ●
Europäische Union	● ● ● ●
OECD	● ● ●
Weltbank	● ● ●
andere internationale Organisationen	● ● ●

Bewertung: Dominic Stead

Interesse gesellschaftlicher Gruppen an Langzeit- und Querschnittsthemen

	Umweltthemen	*Soziale Entwicklungen*	*Technologische Entwicklungen*	*Strukturelle ökonomische Entwicklungen*	*Nachhaltige Entwicklung (integrierter Ansatz)*
Öffentlichkeit	● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●
Forschung	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Parlament	● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Regierung	● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●

Bewertung: Dominic Stead

Zunächst einmal muss angemerkt werden, dass die Bewertung der Relevanz der verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Akteure in Großbritannien heterogen ausgefallen ist. Während einige der Befragten dem Parlament und der Regierung eine eher untergeordnete Rolle in Bezug auf die Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen zuwiesen, sahen andere diese als zentrale Akteure an.

Ein einheitlicher Befund ist dagegen die große Bedeutung von Forschungsinstitutionen. Dabei existiert eine intensive Verbindung zwischen Institutionen der Langzeit- und Querschnittsforschung und der Regierung. Die britische Exekutive hat sich ein im europäischen Vergleich umfangreiches Netz an wissenschaftlichen Forschungs- und Beratungseinrichtungen geschaffen, welches in weiten Teilen direkt für die Regierung arbeitet und von der Regierung finanziert wird. Die wichtigsten Institutionen wurden in den 90er Jahren geschaffen und sind z.T. Ausdruck und Folge der britischen Nachhaltigkeitspolitik (wie bspw. die `Sustainable Development Commission`).

Innerhalb dieser festgefügten Strukturen haben es unabhängige Forschungsinstitutionen vergleichsweise schwer, die Politik in Regierung und Parlament zu beeinflussen.

Schwierigkeiten und Hemmnisse

Die britische Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie enthält eine breite Palette an allgemeinen Verpflichtungen, jedoch wenig quantitative Ziele und klare Aufgabenverteilungen. Es werden bereits existierende Initiativen beschrieben sowie begleitende Prinzipien formuliert. Gleichzeitig benennt die Strategie weitere Akteure - wie bspw. die Wirtschaft, lokale und regionale Verwaltungen - und deren Rolle bei der Umsetzung einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung. Auf der zentralstaatlichen Ebene sind bislang jedoch hauptsächlich prozedurale und institutionelle Aktivitäten in Angriff genommen worden.

Konkrete Maßnahmen werden im Rahmen der Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie in hohem Maße der Verantwortung der regionalen und lokalen Administrationen zugeordnet. Diese Weiterleitung der Verantwortung geht dabei häufig jedoch nicht mit ausreichender zentralstaatlicher Unterstützung einher. Auch sind lokale politische Akteure unter britischen Bedingungen vielfach in einer eher kurzfristigen Perspektive verhaftet.

Die ausgeprägte Institutionalisierung insbesondere von wissenschaftlichen Beratungsorganen, die der Regierung zuarbeiten, weist auf eine nach wie vor starke Sektoralisierung der britischen Politik hin. Trotz der vergleichsweise ambitionierten und schnellen Bemühungen um eine Umsetzung der Beschlüsse von Rio ist die Etablierung des Leitbildes „nachhaltige Entwicklung" als übergeordneter, politikintegrierender Ansatz offenbar noch nicht gelungen.

6.1.4   Ansätze, Organisationen und Erfahrungen[2]

Der wichtigste Ansatz zur Institutionalisierung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen in Großbritannien ist die britische Politik zur Umsetzung einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung, namentlich die nationale Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie.

Die 1994 unter der konservativen Regierung als verhältnismäßig zügige Reaktion auf die Verpflichtungen von Rio formulierte erste Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie zeitigte die Etablierung des `British Panel on Sustainable Development` und des `UK Round Table on Sustainable Development`. Trotz dieser Institutionalisierung entfaltete sie jedoch in der Folge kaum politische Wirkung.

Mit dem Regierungswechsel 1997 ging auch eine „Reanimierung" der Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie einher. Deren Revision geschah unter Konsultation zahlreicher gesellschaftlicher Gruppen, indem diese Stellungnahmen zum Entwurfstext der Strategie einbrachten. Institutionell ist dieser zweite Anlauf v.a. mit der Gründung der `Sustainable Development Commission` (durch die Zusammenführung des `British Panel on SD` und des `UK Round Table on SD`) verbunden.

Über die Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie hinaus, ausgelöst in erster Linie durch den Regierungswechsel und einer damit verbundenen grundlegenden politischen Neuorientierung, findet eine weitere Institutionenbildung im Bereich von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen statt. Zu nennen sind hier insbesondere:

`Social Exclusion Unit`: Eine vom Premierminister 1997 eingerichtete Beratungseinrichtung, interministeriell und aus verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Organisationen zusammengesetzt, beschäftigt sich primär mit Aspekten der Armutsbekämpfung und sozialen Ausgrenzung.

`Commission for Integrated Transport`: 1998 ins Leben gerufene Institution zur Implementierung einer integrierten Transport-Politik unter Einbeziehung von Umwelt- und Gesundheitsaspekten.

Daneben spielen noch weitere – bereits seit längerem existierende - Institutionen zur Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen eine Rolle:

`UK Foresight Programme`: Seit 1994 existierendes wissenschaftliches Forschungs- und Beratungsprogramm im Bereich der Zukunftsforschung. Auftrag ist, auf der Basis von prospektiven Analysen politikrelevante Maßnahmenvorschläge zu entwickeln und so den Informations- und Erfahrungsaustausch zwischen Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft und Regierung zu verbessern. Sowohl Langzeit- als auch Querschnittsorientierung ist in hohem Maße gegeben. Das `UK Foresight Programme` scheint damit auch im europäischen Maßstab ein überaus innovativer Ansatz zu sein.

`Global Ennvironmental Change Programme` (GECP): 1991 initiiertes Programm zur Forcierung eines sozio-ökonomischen Zugangs zur Umweltproblematik. Das GECP unterhält ein Forschungscenter.

`Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution`: Ein seit 1970 bestehendes unabhängiges Beratungsorgan, welches das Königshaus, das Parlament und die Regierung primär im Hinblick auf Umweltthemen informiert und berät.

Der zentrale Ort zur Erforschung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen am britischen Parlament ist das `Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology` (POST). Es berät die Parlamentarier grundsätzlich zu wissenschaftlich-technischen Themen sowie im Bereich der Technikfolgenabschätzung.

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[2]   Vgl. a. Abb. 1 innerhalb der Länderstudie UK.

Vergleichender Überblick über die Institutionen

Organisation	Abkürzung	Abkürzung (englisch)	Bedeutung	Innovations grad
Commission for Integrated Transport	CfIT	CfIT	**XXX**	**XXX**
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council / UK Economic and Social Research Council	EPSRC / ESRC	EPSRC / ESRC	**XXXX**	**XXXX**
Foresight Programme			**XXX**	**XXXXX**
Global Environmental Change Programme	GECP	GECP	**XX**	**XXX**
Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology	POST	POST	**XXX**	**XXX**
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution	RCEP	RCEP	**XXX**	**XXX**
Social Exclusion Unit	SEU	SEU	**XX**	**XXX**
Sustainable Development Commission	SDC	SDC	**XX**	**XXXX**

Bewertung: Dominic Stead

Genannte Institutionen mit detaillierter Beschreibung

EPSRC, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Foresight Programme

GECP, Global Environmental Change Programme

POST, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology

RCEP, Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

Social Exclusion Unit

Sustainable Development Commission

Weitere genannte Institutionen

Commission for Integrated Transport

6.1.5   Fazit

Großbritannien hat ein umfangreiches Netz an Langzeit- und Querschnittsinstitutionen insbesondere in den 90er Jahren geschaffen. Einige davon stehen in direktem Zusammenhang mit der nationalen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie, andere sind aus anderen – eher sektoraleren – politischen Bedürfnissen heraus entstanden.

Diese Institutionen gruppieren sich (bis auf POST) um die nationale Regierung - Ausdruck des zentralstaatlichen politischen Systems, welches der jeweiligen Regierung eine außergewöhnliche Machtfülle überträgt. Dabei spielt die regionale und kommunale Ebene eine im Zuge jüngster Regionalisierungsansätze zwar zunehmend bedeutender werdende Rolle; letztlich bleiben die Regionen und Kommunen in ihren Bemühungen jedoch auf die Unterstützung des Zentralstaats angewiesen.

Die Existenz einer solchen umfangreichen „Institutionenlandschaft" macht Großbritannien im Rahmen dieser Untersuchung zu einem interessanten und potenziell näher zu betrachtenden Land. Gleichzeitig wird deutlich, dass die Vielfalt an Institutionen wiederum mit einer Sektoralisierung der Aufgaben- und Zuständigkeitsbereiche einher geht und einem Querschnittsanspruch damit gerade widerspricht.

6.2   Dominic Stead / David Banister: Introducing Long-Term, Cross-Cutting Issues into National Policy: the Case of Sustainable Development in the UK

6.2.1   Introduction

This paper reports on the experience of introducing sustainable development, a long-term, cross-cutting issue, into national policy in the UK. It begins by presenting the background and history of sustainable development issues in UK policy-making (section 2), and describes some of the main actors involved in the policy-making process, and highlights their relationship with government (section 3). The principles and approaches underpinning the development of UK sustainable development policy are outlined in section 4. The report then considers some of the organisational issues relevant to sustainable development, arranged around four key themes: (i) consistency; (ii) supportive taxes, regulation and other policy instruments; (iii) information and involvement; and (iv) research and advice (section 5). This is followed by a brief overview of the indicators of sustainable development used in the UK (section 6), an example of relatively recent innovation in relation to sustainable development policy. Section 7 presents an evaluation of sustainable development policy and practice in the UK, focusing primarily on the responses to the 1998 consultation on the UK sustainable development strategy.

6.2.2   History and Context

In 1992, representatives of more than 170 countries met at the 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro to discuss how to achieve sustainable development. They agreed a plan of action, *Agenda 21*, and recommended that all countries should produce national sustainable development strategies[3]. The UK was one of the first to produce a national strategy by 1994[4].

Soon after the change of government in 1997, the intention to prepare a new strategy for sustainable development was announced. A consultation document, *Opportunities for Change*, was published in February 1998[5]. Supplementary consultation documents on particular aspects of sustainable development were also produced[6]. The Government also consulted on a set of headline indicators of sustainable development[7]. In May 1999, the new UK strategy for sustainable development was published[8]. Despite its title, it is not a strategy in the sense of setting over-riding objectives, targets and timetables which other government departments, regional and local authorities must meet: there are no new quantitative targets or timetables, reflecting the very broad scope of the document, and the consequent need to secure the

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[3]   Agenda 21 – Action plan for the next century, was endorsed at United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

[4]   UK Government (1994). *Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy*. HMSO, London.

[5]   Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1998). *Opportunities for Change. Consultation paper on a revised UK Strategy for Sustainable Development*. DETR, London.

[6]   Supplementary consultation documents were:

DETR (1998). *Sustainable business*. DETR, London (March).

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (1998). *Tourism – towards sustainability*. DCMS, London (April).

DETR (1998). *Making Biodiversity Happen*. DETR, London (June).

Forestry Commission (1998). *The sustainable management of forests*. Forestry Commission, Fareham (July).

DETR (1998). *Sustainable construction*. DETR, London (February).

DETR (1998). *Sustainability Counts*. DETR, London (November).

[7]   DETR (1998). *Sustainability Counts*. DETR, London.

[8]   UK Government (1999). *A better quality of life – a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*. CM 4345. The Stationery Office, London.

approval of other Ministers for specific new policy commitments[9]. The document describes itself as a 'catalyst for change', and a 'framework' to 'guide' policies. It limits itself to describing a number of existing initiatives; sets out ten general guiding principles; promises a number of future actions (most of them institutional or procedural rather than substantive); and identifies what other actors (business, local authorities, the regions) should do. More concrete action is subject to the monitoring of 150 indicators of sustainable development, including 14 'headline' indicators (see also section 6).

The new strategy built on the earlier 1994 document but gave more emphasis to the social dimension of sustainable development alongside economic issues, the environment and resource use. The issue of devolution was also given more emphasis. The new strategy recognised that the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland present new opportunities for innovation in sustainable development policies and strategies which reflect local institutions, landscape, culture and way of life. While the responsibility for international agreements and for matters such as taxation remain with the UK Government, much domestic policy is (or will be) devolved:

- in Scotland, policy is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. In February 1999, the Government published *Down to Earth*[10], which outlines major issues of sustainable development for Scotland;

- in Wales, the National Assembly for Wales has a duty to 'make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development'. In February 1999, the Welsh Office organised a National Conference on Sustainable Development, to discuss how this duty could be fulfilled[11];

- in Northern Ireland, many issues relating to sustainable development will be matters for the new Assembly. In December 1998, the Government published for public comment a draft Regional Strategic Framework, *Shaping Our Future*, which addresses a range of economic, social, environmental and community issues[12]. The issues in the draft Framework are relevant to the delivery of sustainable development in Northern Ireland through the Assembly.

Where matters are devolved, it is the responsibility of the new administrations to decide how to proceed in the light of particular circumstances and the needs and wishes of the people. Thus, while some of the policies described in the national (UK) strategy apply to the whole of the UK, others are exclusive to England. Reflecting this, many descriptions of policy initiatives in the strategy focus on action in England, but some references are also included to parallel policies and related examples in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Sustainable development clearly requires international co-operation on matters such as trade, the relief of global poverty, and environmental problems. For the UK, the European Union is especially influential. *Towards Sustainability*, the fifth Environmental Action Programme of the European Union, was adopted in 1992[13]. The Programme sought to integrate environmental concerns into other policy areas in order to achieve sustainable development.

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[9]   Farmer, A., Skinner, I., Wilkinson, D. and Bishop, K. (1999). *Environmental Planning in the United Kingdom. A Background Paper for the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.* Institute for European Environmental Policy, London (available online at http://www.rcep.org.uk).

[10] The Scottish Office (1999). *Down to Earth: A Scottish Perspective on Sustainable Development.* The Scottish Office, Edinburgh.

[11] A report of the Welsh Office Conference is available from the Welsh Office (see http://www.wales.gov.uk).

[12] Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland (1998). *Shaping Our Future. Towards a Strategy for the Development of the Region. Draft Regional Strategic Framework.* HMSO, London.

[13] Commission of the European Communities (1992). *Towards Sustainability: a European Community programme of*

Changes to the Treaty of Rome, agreed in the Treaty of Amsterdam, give sustainable development a much greater prominence in Europe, by making it a requirement for environmental protection concerns to be integrated into EU policies. The Treaty states that the particular objective of this requirement is to promote sustainable development. At the Cardiff European Council in June 1998, EU Member States reaffirmed their support for integration of environmental concerns into policy making, endorsing the principle that major policy proposals by the European Commission should be accompanied by appraisal of their environmental impact. Many of the policies in the current UK sustainable development strategy have been shaped (to some degree) by decisions at European level, for example on the single European market or on environmental policy.

6.2.3   Main Actors[14]

Sustainable development is an issue which permeates a wide range of government policies, and is not the responsibility of a single government department or unit (although in the UK the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions takes the lead on many issues). The issue of sustainable development draws on a complex nexus of organisations both within central government and across a wide network of other bodies, both public and private. Some of the main organisations involved are listed below. A selection of these are described in more detail in Appendix 1, and their relationship to the government is illustrated in Figure 1.

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)

All Directorates of DETR have responsibilities towards the environment and hence sustainability. *The Sustainable Development Unit* within the DETR has a remit to promote sustainable development right across Government. It is responsible for the review of Sustainable Development Strategy which has produced the current White Paper Opportunities for Change. It services the Cabinet Committee on Environmental Issues ("ENV") chaired by John Prescott, and its Officials' Subgroup ("ENVO") chaired by an official from the Cabinet Office; also the Green Ministers' Group chaired by Michael Meacher and its corresponding meetings of officials; responsibility to report to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee "*to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development, to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House*". The Unit is responsible for environmental appraisal across Government, for Local Agenda 21, for international aspects of sustainability examined by the Government Panel on Sustainable Development (chaired by Sir Crispin Tickell), for liaison with the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development, the Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment, and 'Going for Green'. It is also responsible for the Service Level Agreement on Sustainable Development agreed between the Government Offices for the Regions and DETR/DTI.

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policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development. COM(92)23 Final. Office for Official Publications of the European Commission, Luxembourg.

[14]   Some material in this section is taken from a DETR-commissioned report – Richards, S., Sullivan, H., Gaster, L., Coulson, A., Leach, B. and Barnes, M. (2000). *Cross-Cutting Issues in Public Policy and Public Service.* Report for Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. School of Public Policy, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham (a summary is available from http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/cross/ccpps/index.htm).

The Environment Agencies

The Environment Agencies were formed in 1996, as a result of the 1995 Environment Act, the Environment Agency for England and Wales and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency are Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs). They inherited the functions of the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, and the waste regulatory functions of local authorities, as well as some parts of the then Department of the Environment. These include the powers to grant or refuse licenses for industrial processes. They have a legal duty to promote sustainable development, and the Secretary of State produced guidance in 1996 on how this should be done. They have a right to recover the costs of pollution prevention (following the polluter pays principle). The Agency for England and Wales operates a three tier structure – at national, regional and area level – and is developing systems to integrate the activities that were formerly carried out by different bodies.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

Parts of the DTI of particular interest include the following:

- *The Environmental Directorate*, within the Industry branch of DTI, is responsible for co-ordinating the DTI's work on the environment. It is concerned, in particular, to improve the environmental performance of industry and so to improve its competitiveness, and to ensure that the Government's overall environmental policy takes proper account of the impact on business. It is centrally involved with promoting environmental management systems such as EMAS to industry. It manages the contract for the Environmental Technology Best Practice Programme (see below) with a joint steering arrangement with DETR, the CBI and the Engineering Employers' Federation among others. It provides (with DETR – see below) the secretariat for the Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment. The Directorate sponsors the environmental, recycling and waste management industries.

- *UK Foresight*. The purpose of Foresight is to:

  - develop visions of the future – looking at possible future needs, opportunities and threats and deciding what should be done now to make sure that we are ready for these challenges;

  - build bridges between business, science and government, bringing together the knowledge and expertise of many people across all areas and activities in order to increase national wealth and quality of life (see also Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

- *Invest in Britain Bureau*, located within the DTI's Regional and SME branch, is responsible for policy on, and execution of, UK inward investment promotion overseas, the UK handling of individual inward investment cases and the national aftercare programme for existing investors. It is also responsible for policy and funding for Regional Development Organisations, with whom it works very closely indeed. It is jointly managed by DTI and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)

While several Departments have an interest in the social aspects of sustainable development, it is worth including DfEE in the list because of the significance of employment factors.

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)

The SEU is not directly involved in sustainable development issues but provides another example of a unit concerned with cross-sectoral policy integration. It was set up by the Prime

Minister in December 1997. Its remit is to help improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. Most of its work is based on specific projects, which the Prime Minister chooses following consultation with other Ministers and suggestions from interested groups. The Unit is staffed by a mixture of civil servants and external secondees. They come from a number of Government departments and from organisations with experience of tackling social exclusion – the probation service, housing, police, local authorities, the voluntary sector and business.The Unit does not cover issues which are dealt with by one Government department only, or duplicate work being done elsewhere. It devotes time to participating in wider interdepartmental work that has a close bearing on social exclusion (see also Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

Government Offices in the English Regions

These were set up in 1994 to integrate the regional responsibilities of the then Departments of the Environment, Trade and Industry, Transport, and Employment. The first and third of these have been combined into DETR, and the fourth with Education, to become DfEE, but the Government Office's structures and responsibilities remain more or less unchanged. A typical Government Office retains a Competitiveness, Trade and Industry Directorate, a Skills and Enterprise Directorate, and an Environment and Transport Directorate.

Regional Development Agencies

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) have recently been created in the English Regions. They have responsibility for the Single Regeneration Budget, and also for the activities of English Partnerships (responsible for investment in land and the return of derelict land to beneficial use), the inward investment agencies which, as their name implies, work to attract inward investment, and some of the responsibilities of the Rural Development Commission. The remit of RDAs includes sustainable development (although this is not always foremost in their activities). RDAs do not have direct responsibilities for Discretionary Regional Assistance, or European grants, or for skills training, but work closely with the Government Offices to ensure that regional needs are met.

Advisory Groups

Many different bodies have been established to help change the climate of opinion on sustainable development. Some examples are listed below.

- *The British Panel on Sustainable Development* was set-up in January 1994 to provide independent advice to the Government on strategic sustainable development issues. Each year the Panel reported directly to the Prime Minister on a number of topics of its own choosing and the Government responded officially to the Panel's recommendations. In May 1999 the Government announced that the Panel and the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development were to be subsumed into a new body, the *Sustainable Development Commission* (see also Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

- *The Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT)*. The role of CfIT is defined in the UK's 1998 Transport White Paper: "*to provide independent advice to Government on the implementation of integrated transport policy, to monitor developments across transport, environment, health and other sectors and to review progress towards meeting our objectives*" (see also Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

- *The Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment* was first set up in 1991 "to provide for dialogue between Government and business on environmental issues. It

comprises leading business people, is serviced by the DTI and DETR, and reports annually on progress.

- *Going for Green* is a national campaign to increase awareness of the environment, and to promote activities that will enable everyone to take part in activities which will preserve and protect the environment. It is funded by DETR and the private sector.

- *The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP)* is an independent standing body established to advise the Queen, the Government, Parliament and the public on environmental issues (see also Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

Local Authorities

Local Authorities are widely involved in environmental matters in terms of all aspects of local concern – through Local Agenda 21, as waste collection authorities also involved in waste minimisation and recycling, as the guardians of structure plans and unitary development plans (subject to appeals to the Planning Inspectorate of DETR), as transport planning authorities, as planning authorities responsible for development control over particular projects, as landowners and promoters of economic development in their areas, and they also have responsibility for monitoring air pollution.

Research

Research, analysis and innovation are fundamental for identifying more sustainable options for the future. The UK Research Councils have supported various research projects on sustainable development. Examples include:

- the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Global Environmental Change Programme, from 1991 to 2000, which focused on the role of social science on global environmental research (see also Appendix 1 and Figure 1), and the ESRC's new 'Delivering Sustainability' programme;

- the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's (EPSRC) programmes on sustainable cities, waste minimisation, integrated transport and sustainable manufacturing.

Chambers of Commerce

The more active Chambers, and their associated Business Links, play an active part in promoting environmental and waste audits for small firms in their areas, and environmental business clubs which promote good environmental practices.

Figure 1. Relationship of Selected Main Actors to the Government
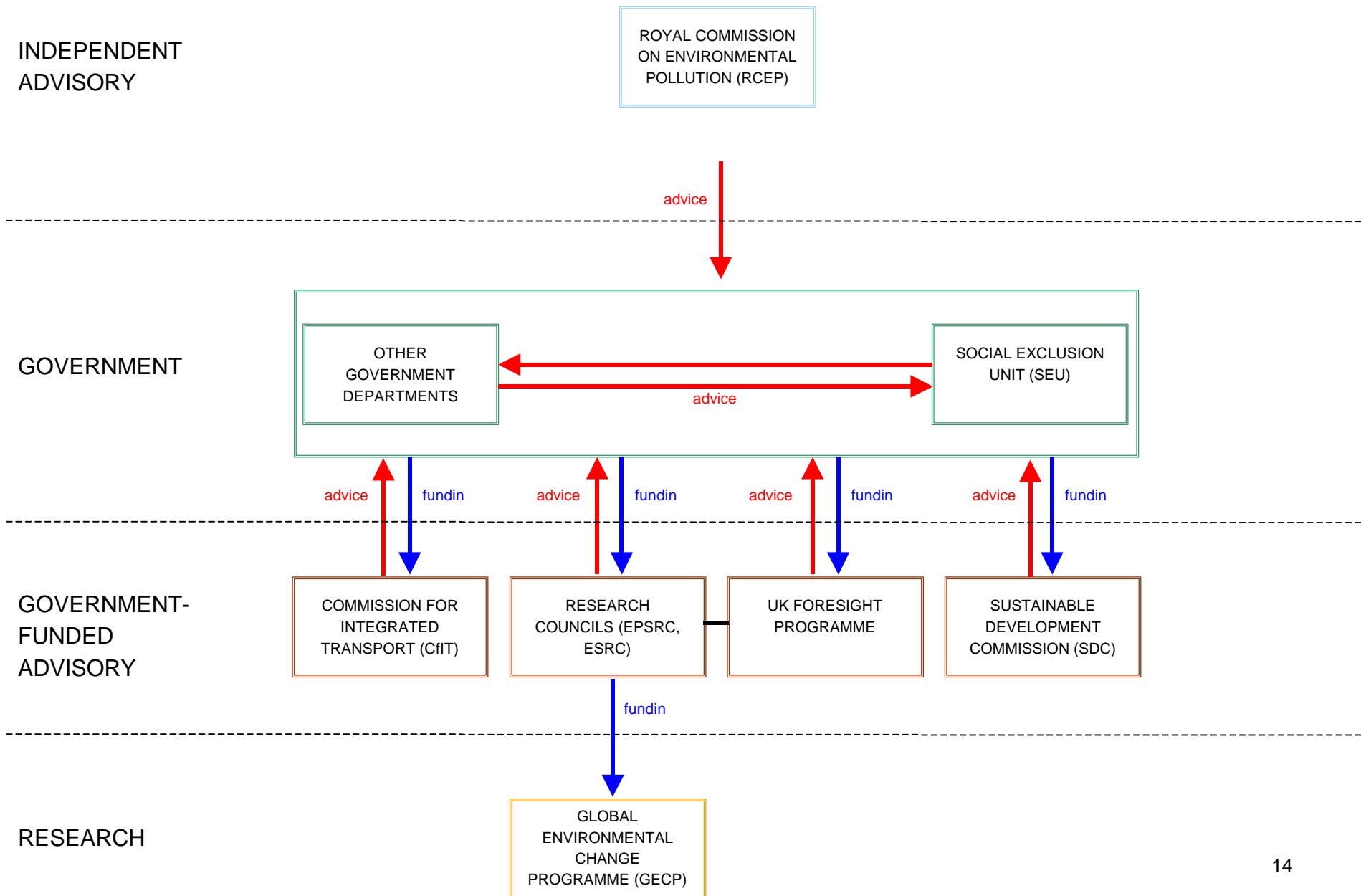
6.2.4   Principles and Approaches[15]

Guiding Principles

The UK sustainable development strategy concentrates on setting key objectives, supported by indicators and targets. National policies also take account of ten principles and approaches which reflect key themes from the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[16]*, the 1994 sustainable development strategy, and also responses to the consultation document, '*Opportunities for Change*'[17]. Some of these approaches are based on established legal principles[18]. The ten principles comprise:

1. *Putting people at the centre*. Sustainable development must enable people to enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. In the words of the *Rio Declaration*, 'human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development'.

2. *Taking a long-term perspective*. Sustainable development thinking cannot restrict itself to the life of a Parliament, or the next decade. Radical improvements have to begin now to safeguard the interests of future generations. At the same time we must meet today's needs – for example, people need warm homes, which at present means using predominantly fossil fuels.

3. *Taking account of costs and benefits*. Decisions must take account of a wide range of costs and benefits, including those which cannot easily be valued in money terms. In pursuing any single objective, disproportionate costs should not be imposed elsewhere. Public values, the timing of costs and benefits and risks and uncertainties should be taken into account.

4. *Creating an open and supportive economic system*. Sustainable development requires a global economic system which supports economic growth in all countries, so creating the conditions in which trade can flourish and competitiveness can act as a stimulus for growth and greater resource efficiency.

5. *Combating poverty and social exclusion*. Eradicating poverty is indispensable for sustainable development. The UK must help developing countries to tackle widespread abject poverty. In the UK, everyone should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, through access to high quality public services, education and employment opportunities, decent housing and good local environments.

6. *Respecting environmental limits*. Serious or irreversible damage to some aspects of the environment and resources would pose a severe threat to global society. Examples are major climate change, overuse of freshwater resources, or collapse of globally significant fish stocks. In these cases, there are likely to be limits which should not be breached. Defining such limits is difficult, so precautionary action needs to be considered.

7. *The precautionary principle*. The *Rio Declaration* defines the precautionary principle as 'where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent

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[15]   Some material in this section is taken from the 1999 UK strategy for sustainable development.
[16]   The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
[17]   DETR (1998). *Opportunities for change. Consultation paper on a revised UK Strategy for Sustainable Development.* DETR, London.
[18]   Such as Article 174 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.

environmental degradation'. Precautionary action requires assessment of the costs and benefits of action, and transparency in decision-making.

8. *Using scientific knowledge.* When taking decisions, it is important to anticipate early on where scientific advice or research is needed, and to identify sources of information of high calibre. Where possible, evidence should be reviewed from a wide-ranging set of viewpoints.

9. *Transparency, information, participation and access to justice.* Opportunities for access to information, participation in decision-making, and access to justice should be available to all.

10. *Making the polluter pay.* Much environmental pollution, resource depletion and social cost occurs because those responsible are not those who bear the consequence. If the polluter, or ultimately the consumer, is made to pay for those costs, that gives incentives to reduce harm, and means that costs do not fall on society at large. At the same time, it may not always be possible for everyone to bear all such costs, particularly for essential goods and services.

Approaches

The UK sustainable development strategy discusses the role of economic, social and environmental capital principles and approaches to give full weight to economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, stating that:

> *"An economy in long term recession is not sustainable. Nor is a situation where many people are denied opportunity and face poverty and exclusion. Development which ignores the essential needs of the poorest people, whether in this country or abroad, is not sustainable development at all."*

The idea of economic capital, and the need to conserve it, is a familiar concept to most people. Social and environmental capital are less familiar.

Social capital consists of the skills and knowledge, health, self-esteem and social networks of people and communities. The failure of some UK urban renovation schemes of the recent past, which concentrated on physical investment alone demonstrate the importance of building social capital as well as bricks and mortar.

Environmental capital provides the third side of the triangle. Policy decisions and individual development decisions must consider the full economic, social and environmental impacts, as well as the cumulative impacts on economic, social and environmental capital. Some decisions may require trade-offs between economic, social and environmental capital. However, there may be opportunities where it is possible to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives simultaneously. On the issue of environmental capital, the sustainable development strategy states that the government's aim is to prevent further overall deterioration, and to secure enhancements which contribute to an overall improvement in quality of life, which means environmental indicators moving in the right direction, alongside similar trends in economic and social indicators.

Throughout the UK strategy, there is emphasis is on developing economic and social capital while exercising sound stewardship over our environmental capital. The strategy states that this approach will underpin the government's policies for sustainable development, and the way in which it applies the principles and approaches described above.

6.2.5   Organisational Issues[19]

In this section, some of the organisational issues relevant to sustainable development are considered, including policy mechanisms, the responsibilities and the activities of different organisations in developing and implementing policy. The section is divided into four key themes: (i) consistency; (ii) supportive taxes, regulation and other policy instruments; (iii) information and involvement; (iv) and research and advice.

Consistency

The UK government states in its sustainable development strategy[20] that it aims to put sustainable development on the agenda of every government department's work through:

- a cabinet committee on the environment, which co-ordinates policy on sustainable development;

- the system of 'green ministers', whose job is to oversee systems for integrating the environment into each department's policies and operations[21];

- an inter-departmental group on international development to promote consistency on issues relevant to developing countries;

- an environmental audit committee has been established to consider how policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development;

- appraisal systems which look separately at the economic, environmental, health, transport, regulatory and equal opportunities aspects of policies[22]; and

- the 1999 White Paper *Modernising Government* commits the Government to produce and deliver an integrated system of impact assessment and appraisal tools in support of sustainable development, covering impacts on business, the environment, health and the needs of particular groups in society[23].

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[19]   Some material in this section is taken from the 1999 UK strategy for sustainable development (see below).

[20]   UK Government (1999). *A better quality of life – a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*. CM 4345. The Stationery Office, London.

[21]   In May 1998, the 'green ministers' agreed a framework from which Departments have drawn up their own strategies for improving environmental performance. The introduction of environmental management systems across Government is likely to help improve performance further.

[22]   The government has strengthened mechanisms for environmental appraisal, including new policy guidance for government departments (DETR, 1998, Policy Appraisal and the Environment) and is concerned with identifying the impacts of policies on different groups in society, particularly women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled, and ensuring that findings are taken into account in policy making (Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment Guidelines, 1998, issued jointly by Home Office, the Department for Education and Employment and the Cabinet Office).

[23]   UK Government (1999). *Modernising Government*. CM 4310. The Stationery Office, London.

Box 1. Road Proposals – new approach to appraisal
The UK government has developed a new approach to the appraisal of road scheme proposals. Schemes, and other projects, are assessed against criteria of environmental impact; safety; economy; accessibility (to public transport services, for example); and integration with land use and other transport proposals and polices. This approach allows options for solving transport problems to be compared and decisions taken in the light of environmental, social and economic impacts. The new approach has been developed in consultation with English Nature, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency (formerly the Countryside Commission). Development is continuing so that it can be applied to other modes of transport.

Supportive taxes, regulation and other policy instruments

The UK sustainable development strategy outlines a government commitment to explore the scope for using economic instruments, such as taxes and charges, to deliver more sustainable development, stating that:

> *"Such measures can promote change, innovation and efficiency, and higher environmental standards. They are a way to put the 'polluter pays' principle into practice, although care is needed to consider the impact on competitiveness and the social consequences: for example, ensuring that the price of essential goods like fuel or water does not lead to hardship for the least well-off."*

The government has also promised reforms to the tax system to deliver "*a more dynamic economy and a cleaner environment: shifting taxes from 'goods' like employment, towards 'bads' such as pollution*". A statement of intent on environmental taxation was published by the Treasury in 1997[24].

The UK strategy states that subsidies, including tax relief, also have a role in some circumstances. For example, the 1999 Budget increased funding for the Government's rural transport fund to £120 million for the next two years, to extend the range of public transport services in rural communities.

Where new regulation is used, it must conform to the government's principles of better regulation, which means that new regulations must be:

- targeted at the problem;

- clear and simple to understand;

- applied consistently,

- proportionate to the problem and the circumstances of individual businesses, voluntary groups and others; and

- enforced effectively and constructively by a body accountable for its conduct[25].

The government has also set out its intention to continue to consider the scope for voluntary agreements with industry. It has, for example, asked the aggregates industry to deliver an improved package of voluntary measures which address the significant environmental costs of aggregate extraction. If the industry is unable to deliver, then an aggregates tax will be imposed.

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[24] HM Treasury (1997). *Environmental Taxation – Statement of Intent.* HM Treasury Press Office (02/07/1997), London.
[25] Cabinet Office (1998). *The Better Regulation Guide.* Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit, London.

Which instrument is appropriate will be determined on a case by case basis, taking account of economic, social and environmental consequences. The government has decided not to proceed with a national tax or charges on water pollution since research has shown that this may not be the most effective way of securing targeted improvements in water quality. Often the best solution will be to mix instruments.

Where the aim of policy instruments is to limit pollution, it may sometimes be necessary for those producing the pollution to incur higher expenditure on abatement equipment. In the long term, however, the aim should be to move to cleaner processes, rather than adding on clean-up equipment. The new set of sustainable development indicators includes an indicator of expenditure on pollution abatement[26]. Increases in such expenditure are not, in themselves, a sign of sustainable development but it is argued that such an indicator can help to show up unsustainable trends if taken in context with other indicators.

Box 2. Mixing instruments for better outcomes

1. Household energy efficiency and fuel poverty aims are secured by grants for energy saving investment and by information campaigns. A reduced VAT rate on energy saving materials under grant schemes for the less well-off was introduced in July 1998; the Government has asked the European Commission to consider changes to EU law to allow a reduced rate on energy saving materials in other circumstances.

2. Reducing the proportion of waste going to landfill involves regulation on landfill site design and operation, the landfill tax and the promotion of alternative means of waste management, such as recycling.

Box 3. Economic instruments for sustainable development

The UK government has identified several measures to secure more sustainable development through economic instruments, including:

- a fuel duty differential in favour of 'ultra-low sulphur diesel';

- a commitment to increase duty on petrol and diesel each year by 6% above inflation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from road transport[27];

- a proposed levy on the use of energy by business by 2001[28] on a revenue neutral basis (offset by cuts in employers' national insurance contributions, £50 million of support to encourage business investments in new environmental technologies and renewable fuels, and lower rates of tax for certain energy intensive sectors agreeing targets for improvements in energy efficiency);

- a long term, revenue neutral reform of company car taxation to remove the incentive to drive additional business miles, and encourage the take up of more fuel efficient vehicles;

- a reduction in Vehicle Excise Duty to £100 for cars with the smallest engine sizes from June 1999; and

- an increase in the standard rate of landfill tax to £10 per tonne from April 1999, which will increase by £1 per tonne each year for at least the next five years.

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[26] UK Government (1999). *A better quality of life – a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*. CM 4345. The Stationery Office, London.

[27] the so-called 'fuel duty escalator' was abandoned in 1999.

[28] subject to further consultation with industry.

Information and Involvement

Improved awareness of sustainable development can be a powerful tool for change. In March 1998, the government launched the 'Are you doing your bit?' campaign in England, focusing on specific issues related to sustainable development to show people how they can influence their local and global environment. Early themes covered climate change and energy efficiency, transport and air quality. In 1999, this campaign was extended to packaging, waste and water conservation, and the links between transport and health. A commitment has been made by the government to reinforce the campaign's messages by working with public bodies, voluntary organisations, business and trade unions[29].

In 1998, the Government set up the Sustainable Development Education Panel, whose remit is '*to work together to identify gaps, opportunities, priorities and partnerships for action in providing Sustainable Development education in England, and highlight good practice*'. Its work includes activities in schools, further and higher education bodies, as well as in the workplace and at home. The Panel's first Annual Report sets goals for the next ten years, and makes recommendations to a wide range of stakeholders[30]. The Panel has made recommendations on sustainable development education to the National Curriculum review, setting out what children should know about sustainable development by certain ages.

The government has also indicated that it will consider the potential of methods for education and involvement (such as consensus conferences and citizens juries) highlighted in the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's 1998 report on *Setting Environmental Standards[31]*. A *People's Panel* has been established, consisting of 5,000 people selected at random from across the country, as a way of seeking views on how to improve public services.

The government's Freedom of Information Bill, currently being debated in parliament, could bring new rights to information, including improved rights to environmental information[32]. The UK Environment Agency is developing a new pollution inventory to replace the current Chemical Release Inventory in order to provide more information on industrial processes and substances released to the environment.

Box 4. The Children's Parliament on the Environment

The government launched a competition for 10-11 year old schoolchildren in 1998 as an opportunity for schools to develop children's understanding of sustainable development and the democratic process. Children from 3,500 schools registered to take part in the competition, which involved essay writing and debating competitions. Six winners from each region took part in the Children's Parliament, where the children were able to question government ministers and present their action plan to the prime minister.

Research and Advice

Research, analysis and innovation are fundamental for long term change. Much takes place in the private sector and the UK government has pledged to continue to encourage this through schemes to support research and development and the spread of best practice and networking.

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[29]   UK Government (1999). *A better quality of life – a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*. CM 4345. The Stationery Office, London.

[30]   DETR (1998). *Sustainable Development Education Panel: First Annual Report, 1998*. DETR, London.

[31]   Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (1998). Setting environmental standards. CM 4053. The Sationery Office, London.

[32]   the Freedom of Information act when introduced will implement provisions on environmental information in the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, signed by the United Kingdom in 1998.

The Comprehensive Spending Review, which outlined UK public spending plans between 1999 and 2002, identified £1.4 billion over three years in funding for science[33].

Sustainable development is an underpinning theme of the UK Foresight programme[34]. The next stage of the Foresight Programme focuses on three issues: the ageing population (see Box 5); manufacturing changes in the next twenty years; and crime prevention. These are being considered across a number of different sectors, including: the built environment and transport; chemicals; defence and aerospace; energy and the natural environment; financial services; the food chain and industrial crops; healthcare; information, communications and media; materials; and retail and consumer services.

An increasing amount of government support through the Research Councils has sustainable development as a theme. Physical and biological sciences, engineering, economics and social sciences are all relevant. (see also section 3). In addition, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) has tested a technology assessment system for scientists applying for funding of research involving genetic modification, as a way of encouraging scientists to think through the likely alternative outcomes from their research. The assessment was developed by BBSRC's counterpart in The Netherlands. The Dutch assessment system encourages scientists to consider the social, economic and moral consequences of their science during the process of formulating new research projects. Under the Dutch system, scientists are asked to consider likely effect of their proposed project on a variety of potential target groups including producers, suppliers, trade unions, environmental organisations, animal protection groups, consumers, religious organisations, central and local government, political groups, developing countries and international organisations. A structured questionnaire the scientist through a process of assessing the benefits and disbenefits of the proposed research to each group[35].

Box 5. Preparing for an ageing population

The increasing age of the population will affect many aspects of sustainable development. The Foresight programme will be looking at issues such as healthcare provision, transport, and retail, consumer and financial services specifically from the perspective of the needs of an ageing population.

6.2.6 Innovation[36]

One example of innovation in relation to sustainable development policy in the UK is the use of indicators. A first set of national sustainable development indicators were produced by the UK government in 1996[37]. The new strategy for sustainable development of 1999 set out a new set of around 150 indicators, which will be at the core of future reports on progress. Some indicators remain from the earlier set, whilst new indicators have been included, particularly to reflect

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[33] UK Government (1998). Modern Public Services for Britain: Investing in Reform. Comprehensive Spending Review: New Public Spending Plans 1999-2002. The Stationery Office, London.

[34] the Foresight programme looks at future needs, opportunities and threats, and how developments in science could help the UK to meet these challenges, promote wealth creation and create a better quality of life (see http://www.foresight.gov.uk).

[35] Starkey, P. (1997). Using Science. In: Jacobs, M. (ed.). Greening the Millenium? The New Politics of the Environment. Blackwell, London, pp.123-129.

[36] Some material in this section is taken from the 1999 indicators of sustainable development (see below).

[37] Department of the Environment (1996). Indicators of Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom. HMSO 1996.

social issues. A separate document explaining the indicators in more detail was published later in 1999[38].

An important new element of these indicators is a subset of key headline indicators, intended to focus attention on what sustainable development means, and to give a broad overview of whether the UK is achieving a '*better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come*'.

Before launching these headline indicators, there was a consultation process in 1998 on the government's proposals[39]. Over 650 written responses were received, and research was also conducted using focus groups. Almost all those who commented supported the initiative and the general scope of the indicators, although changes to the specific proposals, and additional indicators, were suggested. In the light of these responses, the government reviewed the headline indicators, and concluded that an additional indicator of the level of crime should be added, and that the indicator of social investment should be extended to include investment in all assets. The government's summary of the main messages from these headline indicators is reproduced in Appendix 2.

The sustainable development strategy states that the government's aim is for all the headline indicators to move in the right direction over time or, where a satisfactory level has been reached, to prevent a reversal. Where a trend is unacceptable, the government will adjust policies accordingly, and will look to others to join it in taking action.

6.2.7   Evaluation

The evaluation of sustainable development policy and practice in the UK focuses primarily on the responses to the 1998 consultation paper on sustainable development[40]. The material in this section is divided into four main themes: (i) general; (ii) appraisal of policies and programmes; (iii) institutions; and (iv) environmental management and procurement.

Responses to the 1998 consultation paper on sustainable development on other themes (including issues and objectives, sustainable goods and services, sustainable communities, managing the environment and resources, economic instruments and environmental planning) are summarised in Appendix 3. In addition, recent publications by the UK Roundtable highlight areas of policy making that could be improved from the perspective of sustainable development (Appendix 4).

General

The principle of integration is widely seen as fundamental to the sustainable development strategy. There are consistent calls for decision-making across central and local government to better reflect sustainable development objectives. A number of respondents suggested that the over-arching purpose of the strategy should be to establish internal processes for making policies and practices across Government more in tune with sustainable development objectives.

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[38]   DETR (1999). *Quality of Life Counts*. The Stationery Office, London.

[39]   DETR (1998). *Sustainability Counts*. DETR London.

[40]   Some material in this section is taken from responses to the 1998 Consultation paper on a revised UK Strategy for Sustainable Development (source: http://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/quality/analysis/index.htm).

Appraisal of Policies and Programmes

There was widespread support for consistent appraisal of all Government policies and programmes against sustainable development or environmental criteria. This was generally perceived to be a top priority for new Government guidance and/or regulation. The key requirements for the appraisal process expressed in comments were that it should be systematic, transparent and simple to conduct.

Many local authority respondents suggested the use of a simple checklist to for assessing projects and proposals. For example, Leicester City Council has developed a checklist for appraisal of all projects or proposal with a total value of £1 million or more. The results of the appraisal are included in the relevant committee reports and a panel of experts advises project officers how they can improve the sustainability of their proposals where necessary. Other respondents suggested a 'multi-criteria analysis' coupled with public consultation.

In addition to individual policy appraisal, there was broad support for each government or local authority departments to publish an annual sustainability audit. Some respondents extended this recommendation to all government agencies and non-departmental public bodies. A smaller number of respondents suggested benchmarking different parts of government against each other to encourage improvement.

There was some divergence of opinion on whether policy appraisal should be based on environmental or broader sustainable development criteria. A number of respondents suggested that policy appraisal should systematically take into account environmental, social and economic factors. Others, such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England, favoured existing methodologies such as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The need for policy appraisal to be supported by training for officials and elected representatives was frequently highlighted. A wide range of respondents suggested that this training should be broad in scope, taking in the principles and practical tools for sustainable development. In some cases, the recommended areas for training extended to community involvement techniques. Many respondents saw such training as an essential requirement if sustainable development principles are to take root across government.

Institutions

There was strong support from a broad constituency for sustainable development to be made a key objective of all Government departments, statutory agencies, and other public bodies at national, regional and local levels. Some respondents called for this duty to be supported by statutory guidance.

Within central government, there were comments on a range of institutional mechanisms for ensuring effective integration, such as:

- Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee. This was mentioned only a by few respondents but all of these welcomed its establishment. Suggestions included broadening its remit to sustainable development and giving it the power to assess the performance of all government departments against pre-determined sustainable development targets. There was also the suggestion that the Committee should also draw upon local experience by auditing Local Agenda 21 activity.

- Strong political leadership. There were recurrent suggestions that strong political leadership is required to drive sustainable development principles into the heart of Government. In addition to calls for firm, public and top-level commitment to sustainable development, several respondents recommended new institutional arrangements to put help turn the agenda into action. These included moving responsibility for sustainable development into

the Prime Minister's Office; a new Cabinet minister responsible for co-ordinating sustainable development policy; a separate co-ordinating body with a sustainable development ombudsman; a Select Committee on Sustainable Development and a new Department of Natural Resources.

- Green Ministers. The role of green ministers was little commented upon. However it was suggested that these ministers should: (i) adopt a more 'creative and pro-active role', giving systematic attention to policy appraisal and ensuring implementation of the sustainable development strategy across government; (ii) have sufficient responsibility to screen departmental policies for their environmental impact; and (iii) set and publish specific targets to reduce the impacts of their departments plans, policies, programme and in-house activities.

Environmental Management and Procurement

There were recurrent recommendations for central and local government to 'lead by example' by adopting environmental management systems and using its power as a purchaser to improve environmental practice in industry and commerce. Specific suggestions include:

- all public bodies to have certified environmental management systems;

- incorporating sustainability criteria in all public contracts;

- integrating sustainable development criteria into the local authority 'Best Value' initiative;

- encouraging all government suppliers to adopt environmental management systems; and

- incorporating sustainable building techniques and renewable energy into the government estate.

6.2.8   Conclusions

This paper has outlined the experience of introducing sustainable development, a long-term, cross-cutting issue, into national policy in the UK. The UK was one of the first to produce a national sustainable development strategy (in 1994), and has since produced a second updated strategy (1999), together with a set of sustainable development indicators. There is common support within all government on sustainable development. The Conservative government produced the first UK strategy on sustainable development in 1994 in response to the requirements of the Rio summit in 1992. This strategy has been further pursued by the current Labour government with an updated document relating to many aspects of sustainable development. There are strong links with industry and there is also widespread support from environmental groups and non-governmental organisations, and many other groups within the local society. Local Agenda 21 (LA21) is an important aspect of the UK sustainable development strategy at the local level but limited support and resources has meant that the impact of LA21 has been quite limited in real terms.

Sustainable development is an issue which permeates a wide range of government policies, and is not the responsibility of a single government department or unit (although in the UK the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions takes the lead on many issues). The issue of sustainable development draws on a complex nexus of organisations both within central government and across a wide network of other bodies, both public and private. Sustainable development is now central to planning policy in the UK and the regional development agencies are a new force in determining the sustainability priorities. However, these new agencies take a very broad definition of sustainability and some of them place it at a lower level of their concerns. Their main priorities are to encourage inward investment and the

growth of jobs within their areas. Furthermore, the House of Commons Environment Audit Select Committee has recently criticised the government for failing to put the environment at the heart of the political agenda[41]. The Select Committee reported that clear targets for greening government have not been set, and called for the creation of a new environmental watchdog to hold Whitehall departments to account.

In the UK, there are links between sustainable development and science and technology. This is principally a responsibility of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) and other standing committees. These act as a focus for a more scientific debate on issues related to sustainable development and these organisations draw on research from universities, some of which has been specially commissioned and related to sustainable development. A good example of this is the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's (EPSRC) initiative on sustainable cities. There are new committees which have been set up specifically to look at issues related to sustainable development. The most important of these is the Sustainable Development Commission.

The UK sustainable development strategy concentrates on setting key objectives, supported by indicators and targets. National policies also take account of ten principles and approaches which reflect key themes from the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, the 1994 sustainable development strategy, and also responses to the 1998 public consultation document on sustainable development. The sustainable development strategy discusses the role of economic, social and environmental capital principles and approaches to give full weight to economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

There has been research into the development of long-term targets and indicators for sustainable development, and the means by which these can be achieved. However, the reality is often different to the intentions, and much of the responsibility to act for actual target achievement and the setting of targets and directions has been handed down from central government to the regions and to local government. Often this devolution of power has boosted the notion of responsibility, but it has not been accompanied by the necessary powers and much discretion is still evident. The public often do not feel very well-informed or interested in pushing the agenda forward, and the commitment to setting or achieving challenging targets for sustainable development has not taken place. Most of the local politics has taken a much shorter-term view rather than a longer-term perspective.

However, central government has tried to get away from the annual round of decision-making and move towards a strategic long-term perspective by producing a series of 10-year plans and commitments for investments in particular sectors. This is an advance, as it allows for more stability in the planning and resource allocation decisions. Media is also important in influencing the debate on sustainable development, and it has been successful in the recent past in highlighting the differences between individual and community values. There seems to be a strong direction within the media to place individuals, freedom and the workings of the market ahead of broader based issues relating to community, welfare and social values. There has also been some institutional change, particularly in large companies where environment issues are placed higher up, but not yet at the top of the agenda. But despite these positive moves, there is still inertia and concern over the new agenda of sustainable development, unless it can be combined with clear competitive advantages. Firms need convincing on this if they are to be persuaded to move away from their sole concern with budgets and meeting financial performance objectives.

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[41] House of Commons (2001). *Environmental Audit Select Committee First Report*. The Stationery Office, London (http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200001/cmselect/cmenvaud/67/6702.htm)

These are the main promoters of sustainable development, partly because they are the levels at which the main decisions are made on the policy and the implementation, but also as the Government has a responsibility to reply explicitly to Royal Commissions (such as the RCEP) that are set up to investigate particular issues related to the environment. In addition to responding to the Royal Commission's recommendations on current plans and future problems, there are also the Standing Advisory Committees, and they have to participate fully in select committee activities and answer questions from parliament. Thus, sustainable development seems to remain high on the political agenda.

In terms of the opponents, there is resentment against increased taxation from business and industry, and to some extent from all private individuals. Business and industry are in support provided that employment is seen as part of the sustainable development agenda. All parties are against increases in overall taxation, particularly as it relates to labour and production. But there is beginning to be some positive support for increases in taxes on consumption, provided that the net total taxation rate does not increase from its current levels. As examples, the recent changes in landfill taxes, the taxes on fuel (including the new carbon tax on industry), and the fuel duty escalator (now ended) are all examples of switching taxes onto use and consumption. It is becoming increasingly recognised that there must also be choices available to users, or, to put it another way, that 'sticks' must be matched by 'carrots' (e.g. use of the revenues from road pricing to promote public transport). Industry and business are anxious about additional costs and the effect that this would have on their competitiveness.

Think tanks are perhaps less important in recent sustainable development debates. They have lost their position close to government, and are now of secondary importance to government insiders and advisors. They operate both at the right of government (for example IEA – the Institute for Economic Affairs) and at the left (for example IPPR – the Institute of Public Policy Research). One of the main concerns about these agencies is the quality of their research and the means by which new or radical ideas can be generated. Their role is perhaps more limited in the new forms of develoved government decision-making. There has been a growth in policy-centred research at universities and some new policy directions have come from here. For example, the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) programmes on governance, cities and environment have been influential in determining policy agendas, and many academics are now helping in defining the means by which cross-cutting approaches to policy making can be introduced.

There is a lack of recognition (and perhaps knowledge and a shortage of skills) of the long-term implications of the continued growth in consumption. As a result of this, the level of the public debate on these issues is limited, although this is not totally unexpected because the process is new and innovative. A key element in the success of any cross-cutting policy is that it should be empowering and involve a wide constituency. This in turn means that levels of education and the availability of the necessary knowledge and skills must be at the heart of the process. There is circularity here in that progress cannot be made until certain conditions are met but those conditions will never be met until progress is made.

Most local authorities are structured and operate in a sectoral way, and there is little incentive to reform this structure because power, budgets and responsibilities are well established according to this structure. Any change to current structures would require a Royal Commission and several years of discussion, and any new thinking would probably have to come from inside. One important opportunity could be the new Regional Development Agencies and their potential for changing thinking. At the national level, the responsibilities of the DETR are huge as they cover environment, transport, regions, rural areas and so on. This has allowed a more cross-cutting approach to policy making to be established at the central level, but it is very large. It is likely that some responsibilities will be devolved to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) –

in particular those for the regions and for more research through the Foresight programme. A new rural agency may also be set up.

There still seem to be several areas difference between the UK and the EU, and part of the political debate is where the power base resides, the single currency and 'eurofederalism'. There is a suspicion of Europe and any proposals for the transfer of more power from the UK to Brussels is being resisted. This may possibly reduce the effectiveness of cross-cutting agendas and progress towards sustainable development if that becomes part of the European agenda. The principles of subsidiarity are important here.

The organisational issues relevant to sustainable development in the UK have been considered in this paper around four key themes: (i) consistency; (ii) supportive taxes, regulation and other policy instruments; (iii) information and involvement; and (iv) research and advice. A summary of these are presented in Box 6.

One example of innovation in relation to sustainable development policy in the UK is the use of indicators. A first set of national sustainable development indicators were produced by the UK government in 1996. The new strategy for sustainable development of 1999 set out a new set of around 150 indicators, which will be at the core of future reports on progress. Some indicators remain from the earlier set, whilst new indicators have been included, particularly to reflect social issues. The 'headline indicators' of sustainable development are presented in Box 7.

Box 6. Summary of organisational issues

- Creation of all new public bodies to include consideration of specific remit on sustainable development

- Integrated appraisal system in support of sustainable development

- Taking better account of needs of women, through the work of Women's Unit

- Further use of economic instruments for sustainable development, including new energy levy

- Reinforced public awareness campaign, *Are you doing your bit?*

- Improved rights to environmental information

- New Sustainable Development Commission

- Sustainable development as a key theme of new Foresight programme

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Box 7. Summary of 'headline indicators'

- Green housekeeping in Government

- Women in public appointments and in senior positions

- Prices of key resources (e.g. fuel, water)

- Real changes in the cost of transport

- Enforcement of regulations (to be developed)

- Public understanding and awareness

- Individual action for sustainable development

- Awareness in schools (to be developed)

- Expenditure on pollution abatement

Appendix 1

Roles and Activities of Selected Organisations

Organisation	Role	Activities
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP)	The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution is an independent standing body established to advise the Queen, the Government, Parliament and the public on environmental issues.	The Commission's advice is mainly in the form of reports which are the outcome of major studies. The current study is investigating Environmental Planning. In June 2000, the report on Energy and the Environment (Energy – The Changing Environment) was published. Occasional news releases are issued on matters the Commission considers of special importance or which arise out of its studies. Commission Members are appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister.
Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT)	The role of CfIT is defined in the UK's 1998 Transport White Paper: "to provide independent advice to Government on the implementation of integrated transport policy, to monitor developments across transport, environment, health and other sectors and to review progress towards meeting our objectives".	reviewing and monitoring progress towards objectives and target laid out in the White Paper; continuing and refreshing the transport policy debate; fostering consensus amoung practical providers; identifying and disseminating examples of best practice from home and abroad; advising on developments in Europe, including relevant EU initiatives; and advising on the role of existing and emerging technologies.
UK Foresight	The purpose of Foresight is to: develop visions of the future – looking at possible future needs, opportunities and threats and deciding what should be done now to make sure that we are ready for these challenges; build bridges between business, science and government, bringing together the knowledge and expertise of many people across all areas and activities in order to increase national wealth and quality of life.	Panels are at the heart of the Foresight programme. They bring together representatives from business, the science base, the voluntary sector and government to consider the future and make recommendations for action. Each panel is supported by a number of [task forces] which look in more detail at specific areas. There are two kinds of panel: thematic panels address broad social and/or economic issues which might drive wealth creation and affect quality of life in the future; and sectoral panels focus on business sectors or broader areas of activity and carry forward the work of existing panels, as well as tackling new issues.

Organisation	Role	Activities
Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)	The British Panel on Sustainable Development was set-up in January 1994 to provide independent advice to the Government on strategic sustainable development issues. Each year the Panel reported directly to the Prime Minister on a number of topics of its own choosing and the Government responded officially to the Panel's recommendations. In May 1999 the Government announced that the Panel and the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development were to be subsumed into a new body, the Sustainable Development Commission.	reviewing how far sustainable development is being achieved in the UK in all relevant fields, and identifying any relevant processes or policies which may be undermining this; identifying important unsustainable trends which will not be reversed on the basis of current or planned action, and recommending action to reverse the trends; deepening understanding of the concept of sustainable development, increasing awareness of the issues it raises, and building agreement on them; and encouraging and stimulating good practice.
Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)	The Social Exclusion Unit was set up by the Prime Minister in December 1997. Its remit is to help improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. Most of its work is based on specific projects, which the Prime Minister chooses following consultation with other Ministers and suggestions from interested groups. The Unit is staffed by a mixture of civil servants and external secondees. They come from a number of Government departments and from organisations with experience of tackling social exclusion – the probation service, housing, police, local authorities, the voluntary sector and business.The Unit does not cover issues which are dealt with by one Government department only, or duplicate work being done elsewhere. It devotes time to participating in wider interdepartmental work that has a close bearing on social exclusion.	The Unit reports directly to the Prime Minister and is located within the Cabinet Office. In preparing its reports, it draws extensively on research, external expertise, good practice and promising ideas. Members of the Unit visit and consult widely with local authorities, business, the voluntary sector and other agencies, and people who have direct experience of social exclusion. Within the civil service, the Unit works very closely with Departmental officials and Ministers and the Prime Minister's Policy Unit. The Unit's remit covers only England, but it keeps in close touch with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland devolved administrations, who are represented on the Unit's Ministerial Network. There are separate strategies for tackling social exclusion in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Global Environmental Change Programme (GECP)	The Global Environmental Change Programme was set up in 1991 and ended in March 2000. The original objectives were to bring social science expertise to bear on global environmental research and, at the same time, to take environmental concerns to the heart of the social sciences.	The Programme provided a research centre, as well as grants, fellowships and studentships. It involved several hundred people, ranging from established academics through to younger researchers. UK researchers involved in economics and social science established a pre-eminent position in the international community through support from the Programme.

Organisation	Role	Activities
UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)	The EPSRC mission is: to promote and support, by any means, high quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in engineering and the physical sciences; to advance knowledge and technology, and provide trained engineers and scientists, to meet the needs of users and beneficiaries thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom and the quality of life of its citizens; and to provide advice, disseminate knowledge, and promote public understanding in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences.	promoting and supporting research advancing knowledge contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom and the quality of life of citizens; and providing advice, disseminating knowledge, and promoting public understanding.
UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)	The ESRC is the UK's largest independent funding agency for research and postgraduate training into social and economic issues. Established by Royal Charter in 1965, ESRC's goals are to: support high-quality research and postgraduate training that will contribute to economic competitiveness, the quality of life and the effectiveness of public services and policy; ensure that researchers have the training, resources and infrastructure to continue to make advances, including the necessary datasets and methodologies; and broaden the public's knowledge and understanding of the contribution that the social sciences can make to policymakers, businesses and the public at large.	promoting and supporting research advancing knowledge contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom and the quality of life of citizens; and providing advice, disseminating knowledge, and promoting public understanding.

Appendix 2

Main Messages from the UK 'Headline Indicators' of Sustainable Development[42]

Our economy must continue to grow. We need increased prosperity, so that everyone can share in higher living standards and job opportunities in a fairer society. We must close the gap between productivity and incomes in the UK and those in North America and much of western Europe. Abandoning economic growth is not a sustainable development option: to do so would close off opportunities to improve quality of life through better healthcare, education, and housing; to combat social exclusion; to revitalise our cities, towns and rural areas; and to protect and enhance our environment.

But sustainable development is more than just economic growth. The quality of growth matters, as well as the quantity. Some forms of growth are more sustainable than others. There are environmental limits to some economic activities: processes which result in greenhouse gas emissions, for example. The Government has to set a framework: not to constrain economic activity but to channel it into more sustainable patterns, to make sure that the price of growth is not environmental decline or social injustice. We must achieve economic growth alongside improvements in the other indicators.

Investment is vital to our future prosperity. In the past, the UK has invested too little – in modern plant and machinery as well as research and development. Investment has not always been of sufficient quality – for instance, large projects that failed to deliver value for money. We also have to invest in 'social assets' such as railways, buses, hospitals, schools, water and sewerage. Both total investment and social investment have been declining as a proportion of GDP. Investment in the UK is relatively low compared with many other industrialised countries: in 1996 the UK invested 16% of GDP compared with, for example, 17% in France, 18% in the US and 21% in Germany[43]. Our competitiveness has suffered as a result.

Employment enables people to meet their needs and improve their living standards, and makes the best use of human resources. In Spring 1998, the employment rate was about 73% of people of working age. Of those out of employment, many were not looking for work and were relatively unlikely to do so, and there are still too many workless households and long term unemployed people. Providing employment opportunities for all is the single most effective means of tackling poverty and social exclusion. We have to boost skills and competitiveness to provide opportunities for the jobs which are essential to break cycles of poverty and dependence on welfare.

There has been a steady improvement in the proportion of young people gaining formal educational qualifications. But too many still have no formal qualifications on leaving school. Around one fifth of adults have low literacy and numeracy skills. We have to equip people with the skills to fulfil their potential in the knowledge driven society on which our future depends.

Average life expectancy in the UK is increasing. It compares well with most industrialised countries, although people in the UK do not live as long as those in countries such as France, Italy or Sweden[44]. And health inequalities exist: on average, men in the lowest social classes

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[42] UK Government (1999). *A better quality of life – a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*. CM 4345. The Stationery Office, London.

[43] OECD (1997). *National Accounts Volume 1, 1960-1996*. OECD, Paris.

[44] life expectancy: comparisons with France, Italy, Sweden based on 1995 figures from: United Nations Development Programme (1998). *Human Development Report*. UNDP, Geneva.

die around five years earlier than their counterparts in the highest. We have to improve the health of the population overall, and reduce health inequalities.

Housing is a key component of quality of life. Poor quality housing causes harm to health, and is often associated with other social problems. Most housing in the UK is in good condition but in England, for example, about 1.5 million homes are judged unfit to live in. We need to reduce the proportion of unfit stock, and improve quality overall – for example its energy efficiency and state of repair.

Crime, and fear of crime, continues to be a worry for many people. Dealing with social exclusion and environmental decline will help tackle the causes of crime, alongside measures to strengthen families and tackle drug misuse. Crime imposes economic costs, reinforces social exclusion and can hasten the environmental decline of neighbourhoods. We need to reduce both crime and people's fear of crime.

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental threats facing the world. In the UK, emissions of the main gases which cause climate change have fallen slightly in recent years. UK emissions of carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas) per head are similar to the European average and half that of the United States, and around twice the average for the world as a whole. We must continue to reduce our emissions now, and plan for greater reductions in the longer term.

We have to control air pollution in order to reduce risks of harm to human health and damage to the environment. On average, on more than 10% of days air pollution exceeds the no harm levels which are based on expert advice on the effects of air pollution on human health. This figure is too high. The Government, through its National Air Quality Strategy, has set challenging objectives to reduce air pollution and to ensure that air quality continues to improve through the longer term.

Road traffic has risen steadily in past decades. If no action is taken, it could increase by more than a third over the next twenty years. To prevent that, we need to meet people's needs for access and economic progress in better ways. New technologies and cleaner cars will be part of the solution, but new approaches to travel, living and working will also be needed.

Nearly 95% of rivers in the United Kingdom are of good or fair quality; in Scotland and Wales the proportion is even higher. There is still room for improvement; in the longer term, we must ensure that pressures such as climate change and rising household demand for water do not lead to an overall deterioration in quality.

Populations of farmland and woodland birds are in long term decline, although populations of some other birds, such as open water birds, have been stable or rising. Birds are good indicators of the health of the wider environment, and we must take action to reverse these declines.

Sustainable development involves re-using previously developed land in order to protect the countryside and to encourage urban regeneration. The Government's target is for 60% of the additional houses in England to be built on previously developed land or provided through conversions by 2008; elsewhere in the UK the balance may be different. A large increase in households is projected to form in England over the next twenty years. This means that, even with such rates of re-use, creating patterns of development that are more sustainable is a major challenge.

Households, commerce and industry in the UK produce about 145 million tonnes of waste a year. The amount of domestic waste, in particular, has increased steadily. While waste is only a

partial measure of resource use, tackling waste is important if we are to achieve the improved resource efficiency essential for sustainable development.

Appendix 3

Summary of Responses to the Consultation Paper on Sustainable Development[45]

Issues and Objectives

- Support for the inclusion of the social dimension

- Concerns that issues of poverty, education and health are not given sufficient coverage

- Broad support for the principle of setting challenging, measurable targets for each key policy area

- Support for local targets that are set according to local conditions (but integrated within a national framework)

- Support for targets related to process as well as outcomes (e.g. participation levels)

- Support for an indicator of community well being and quality of life

- Calls for targets to be set through a consultative process

- Calls for regular reports on progress in meeting targets, and regular strategy reviews

Sustainable Goods and Services

- Support for best practice programmes

- Wide interest in market transformation concepts

- Support for company environmental or sustainable development reports, which include performance data and information on both social and environmental issues

- Polarised views on whether company reports should be mandatory

- Calls for a simplified, more effective eco-labelling system

- Calls for stronger controls on green claims by producers

Sustainable Communities

- Calls for sustainable development objectives to be integrated into the planning system

- Calls for regional and planning policy guidance and development plan policies need review from a sustainable development perspective (including many specific suggestions about reform of planning applications and procedures)

- Calls for sustainable development principles to be integrated with 'Best Value' initiatives

- Many comments that the integration of sustainable development and the planning process hinges on public participation and community empowerment

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[45]   source: http://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/quality/analysis/index.htm

- Strong support for performance indicators for planning polices, such as: journey to work length; accessibility, including to open spaces; fossil fuel consumption and brownfield/greenfield land utilisation

- Comments that the most sustainable patterns of development are self-contained, compact, urban, brownfield or 'thriving' rural communities

- Many specific suggestions for changes in building control and the planning system; good building design and good practice ideas

- Calls for efforts to make existing dwellings more energy and water efficient

- Strong support for systems that allow on-going accountability to communities, decentralisation of decision-making, 'true' local democracy (and considerable cynicism about whether this will be delivered)

- Support for changes to the Single regeneration Budget (SRB) regime and for increased flexibility in the use of landfill tax

- Strong support for Local Economic Trading Schemes (LETS) and other linked ideas

- Comments that accessibility in terms of transport, provision of services and access to local employment and housing is very important for rural areas

- Support for the adoption of Local Agenda 21 plans and for LA21 to become a statutory duty of local authorities (with associated funding and other assistance)

- Support for a wide range of initiatives to encourage a 'bottom-up' approach to decision making and increased local involvement in sustainable development

- Wide support for education and public awareness

Managing the Environment and Resources

- Support for an integrated approach to addressing the environmental, economic and social aspects of energy production and use, and strong support for a strategic, target based approach at national level

- Support for a strengthened programme for research an development into renewable energy

- Comments that transport is a key priority in relation to air pollution policy

- Calls for water resource issues to be taken into account more seriously in planning decisions, and for the review of the water abstraction licensing system

- Comments that water metering merits further consideration

- Calls for an integrated approach to policy making across all media and sources of marine pollution

- Strong support for reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

- Calls for the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) to be strengthened and the Wildlife and Countryside Act reformed

- Support for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Fund and local action plan processes

- Calls for the relationship between planning and biodiversity, wildlife and habitats protection to be reviewed

- Broad support for eco-labelling schemes such as Forestry Stewardship Certification (FSC)

- Strong support for a levy on virgin aggregates and a review of the minerals planning framework

- Support for promoting increased use of recycled aggregates

- Calls for rural development and environmental issues to be brought into the heart of agriculture policy

- Support for encouragement of local food production and consumption

Economic Instruments

- Strong and widespread support for the use of economic instruments to achieve sustainable development objectives, providing that social impacts can be managed

- Strong support for the hypothecation of revenues from green taxes and revenue/cost neutrality

- Comments that attention should be paid to enforcing current regulations

- Support for economic regulators being given a duty to promote sustainable development

Environmental Planning[46]

In a recent study of the role of UK planning and environmental management systems to provide a coherent and accountable system for protecting the environment and delivering a sustainable future, the following were identified as important issues[47]:

- the need to improve current environmental planning systems, to reduce compartmentalism and improve integration of environmental, land use, spatial, transport and other sectoral issues (this was a common concern in all the case study countries);

- identifying the most effective means of achieving sustainable development (in the sense that it is interpreted in each country) within current or proposed environmental management and planning systems;

- the need to simplify complex and fragmented legislative and institutional frameworks, or to find appropriate mechanisms to improve vertical and horizontal co-ordination;

- the value of clear national strategy or objectives for achieving sustainable development (as in Sweden, The Netherlands and New Zealand); and

- the potential to improve current monitoring and environmental information programmes and the value of doing so.

The study also identified interesting features of planning systems outside the UK that are worthy of further investigation. These include:

- integrated regional policy statements;

- environmental compensation for green field development;

- non-statutory visions;

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[46] see also the recommendations of the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development on environmental planning (Appendix 4).

[47] Seaton, K. and Nadin, V. (eds.) (1999). *A comparison of environmental planning systems legislation in selected countries*. Occasional Paper 8. University of the West of England, Centre for Environment and Planning, Bristol (available online at http://www.rcep.org.uk).

- environmental penalties;

- national and regional coastal planning statements; and

- environment courts.

Appendix 4

Recommendations of the Roundtable on Sustainable Development on Recent Selected Issues

Environmental Planning[48]

The land use planning system has a crucial part to play in securing sustainable development. The creation of new buildings and changes in the use of land shape the physical world of the future and influence the way people will live their lives in it. The planning system is one of the few current mechanisms which clearly links national goals with local ones; which gives an opportunity for issues to be examined 'in the round'; and which allows, indeed encourages, public participation in decision making. These positive existing traits of the system reflect the concept and process of sustainable development. It is important that they are retained and developed further.

Local planning authorities are not masters of their own destiny. The national governments play a significant role in the preparation of plans by local authorities and decide individual applications in cases they call in. National planning policy guidance should have sustainable development at its heart (as should the planning system as a whole), not as a bolt on extra.

Much development that society needs does not happen without public investment. Yet, public investment is managed through almost unrelated processes, at both the national and local levels. Some Government-funded developments in fact run counter to sustainable development goals.

One of the most powerful strengths of planning, as a deliverer of sustainable development, is the discretion in the hands of decision takers to weigh all the aspects of the development – social, economic and environmental – in reaching a decision. But that discretion can be constrained by other, more detailed, codes and regulatory regimes.

Market forces are very good at identifying and delivering relatively short-term economic benefits. But they cannot be relied upon to deliver the social and environmental components of sustainable development, except where those components contribute to the profitability of the development itself. Nor do they necessarily deliver the best long-term outcomes: realisation of the community's vision. The Round Table welcomes the attempts that have been made to secure a longer term vision to guide decisions on where and how to develop, but notes that those who own the system, and the public, often find it hard to look beyond the immediate planning application. The system remains reactive and fails to inspire people and developers to work together for a sustainable society.

The Round Table believes that it is time to develop a new approach to planning, which would start from a process of rigorous consultation. Decisions need to be taken at the most appropriate level of competence. At regional and national levels new ways of engaging the interest of the public will be needed. At local government level, the planning process can use

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[48]   UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development (2000). *Response to RCEP consultation Planning for Sustainable Development in the 21st century*. UKRSD, London.

active community-led processes to identify the kind of community (and its physical manifestation) that people want to see evolve in the next twenty years. It would go on to guide, encourage and incentivise communities and developers to work within the spirit of this plan, rather than seeking to drive ahead on their own lines against the spirit of sustainable development or the plan.

The proposed local authority community planning process could provide a powerful local mandate for the land use planning system. The Round Table believes that formal links should be established between these two planning processes, and this should be central to the Government's community planning proposals.

The guiding instrument for these approaches should be a new duty for local authorities in respect of sustainable development, which the Round Table and others have urged. We welcome the provisions of the current Local Government Bill (clauses 2-4) which take a step towards this, including a power for authorities to enter into partnerships with other bodies which could be significant in the context of the Royal Commission's study. But we have urged the Government to go further, and to:

- give local authorities the principal purpose of promoting the long term economic, social and environmental well being of their areas in an integrated way, thereby contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK as a whole;

- require authorities to prepare sustainable development strategies for promoting the long term economic, social and environmental well being of their areas;

- give authorities a broad power to do anything necessary to promote the economic, social or environmental well-being of their areas, having regard to sustainable development;

- require authorities to report on the effectiveness of their sustainable development strategies and the exercise of their power.

How these powers and strategy should be integrated with the planning system is a key issue. As the Round Table conceives it, the sustainable development/action plan should not be a replacement or substitute for national planning guidance, regional planning guidance, or development plans. It should inform and guide them at the appropriate level. It should also guide and influence all the other relevant functional and spending plans of local and national government. A sustainable development strategy should be the central strategy, and the focus around which political leaders seek to establish consensus on key actions which can be taken forward with major developers as drivers for change in their areas.

A stronger role for positive land use planning will also require some stronger tools to deliver positive results – tools for land assembly and decontamination, tools to ensure that developments address all the local social and environmental impacts they impose, economic instruments to discourage greenfield development where suitable brownfield sites could be made available, and more imaginative building regulations to force the pace of change towards truly sustainable buildings.

The Round Table invites the Royal Commission to consider the following specific problems:

- Lack of connection between vision and practice

- Planning guidance not reflecting the sustainable development agenda

- Decisions not taken at the right level of competence

- Inappropriate trade-offs, eg between environmental assets and economic gains from development proposals

- Lack of integration between land use plans and public investment policies

- Lack of integration between land use plans and other controls

- Technical failures of the planning system

- Culture of the development professions and control systems

Economic instruments to promote sustainable development[49]

The case for progress towards a modernised, sustainable economy is persuasive. Economic instruments for the delivery of environmental and wider sustainable development objectives can play an important role. They are in many cases the most efficient and effective means for achieving a desired objective. They have been shown to work in a wide variety of contexts, in many countries. There is a strong case for further developing their use in the UK. While some initiatives have been developed, it is essential that additional credible policy initiatives are made ready for implementation early in the next Parliament. It is important to maintain momentum in this area.

But economic instruments are rarely effective alone. They need to form part of complementary packages of measures which may include regulation, negotiated agreements, public and consumer information, specific use of the revenues raised by a tax and general public spending programmes. There is a need to target economic instruments, as part of such packages, at those areas where the UK sustainable development indicators show we have most progress to make.

Though much progress has been made in introducing economic instruments for sustainable development, the barriers to faster progress have been considerable. These barriers stem from concerns about social equity, international competitiveness and the environmental inefficiency of some economic instruments. Some of these concerns result from real impacts, others are about perceived impacts. Measures exist which can mitigate these impacts and help overcome barriers, though it is often easier to deal with the real rather than the perceived concerns. In the case of real impacts, there are successful examples of mitigating measures and complementary packages of measures from the UK and internationally. For perceived impacts, there needs to be a process for handling the identification, development and implementation of a tax or other instrument, and building support for it.

The Round Table believes that the process by which sustainable development taxes and associated measures are identified, developed, negotiated and introduced is fundamental to whether they are able to be introduced effectively. The principles of such a process are explored in the report.

A sustainable modernised economy could be characterised by:

- an approach to fiscal, monetary and spending policy that generates economic growth in a context of macroeconomic stability

- social policy which ensures that everyone can contribute to wealth-creation and have a share in its benefits

- companies in which innovation is culturally embedded and which continually improve their competitiveness by exploiting new technologies and market opportunities

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[49]   UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development (2000). *Not too difficult! Economic instruments to promote Sustainable Development within a modernised economy.* UKRSD, London.

- companies which use innovation to improve environmental and social performance, in ways which cut their business costs, and which develop the technologies and expertise to find profitable solutions to environmental and social problems at home and abroad

- informed consumers

- a continuous process of technical and structural change towards sunrise technologies and industries, which enhance the skills and knowledge-base of the labour force, stimulate employment and reduce adverse environmental and social impacts

- a taxation system which focuses on taxing 'bads' (resource use, waste and pollution) and encouraging 'goods' (employment, technological development)

- an international economic context which includes trade policy which is consistent with and promotes sustainable development.

To achieve this means seeking long-term strategic change in the economy. This report focuses on the use of sustainable development economic instruments to help achieve such change and demonstrates how short-term barriers to progress can be addressed in ways which are economically, socially and politically manageable.

Areas which particularly need attention to reverse unsustainable trends, and where economic instruments may have a part to play, include: energy, traffic and transport, agriculture, waste management, consumption and consumer behaviour, and poverty and social exclusion.

The Round Table makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1.

The Government should initiate processes of updating the Sustainable Development Strategy and integrate these more closely with the Budget and spending planning processes. For each main objective of the Strategy, targets and timetables for improvement should be established, particularly where the indicators show that the present situation is unsustainable or that trends are in the wrong direction. Business groups, consumer organisations, social charities and NGOs should be widely and actively consulted on the mechanisms for achieving the sustainability targets, possibly after the publication of Green Papers or strategy documents. Economic and policy analysis should then identify where and to what extent economic instruments including taxes would be the most efficient and effective means of delivering the targets.

Recommendation 2.

The theoretical and pragmatic arguments provide a strong argument for using at least some of the proceeds of environmental taxes to provide incentives for relevant environmental improvements; and there is great presentational advantage in trying to use the remainder of the proceeds in a fiscally neutral way, ie to reduce other taxes, and improve the overall balance of the tax structure. The Treasury should always give sympathetic consideration to these possibilities when it introduces a new sustainable development tax proposal.

Recommendation 3.

The Government should consider, before introducing any sustainable development economic instrument, its possible impact on the competitiveness of UK firms (including the UK as a whole).

Recommendation 4.

The Round Table has found no evidence of significant effects of sustainable development economic instruments on macro-economic competition. But, where there is real evidence of

likely damage to competitiveness, the Government should adopt measures which give firms some flexibility in how to respond, for instance by:

- *setting an implementation date well ahead, and/or phasing in the instrument*

- *recycling revenues to the industry, e.g. for investment to reduce their liability to payment*

- *negotiating agreements with industry*

- *allowing exemption from the tax for specified groups or companies, in response to agreements to take action to improve environmental performance*

- *adopting a tradable permit system to minimise overall compliance costs and protect plant where abatement cost is high.*

Recommendation 5.

The Government should consider, before introducing a sustainable development economic instrument, what equity problems arise (undertaking research into its net impact on identified potentially vulnerable groups in terms not only of costs but also of benefits) and what measures might be taken to overcome them. Such measures might include:

- *smart tariffing such as lifeline tariffs, prices that are lower for low-income consumers than high-income consumers*

- *compensation via special allowances for the targeted source of pollution*

- *other forms of compensation not targeted at the source of pollution.*

Where the above measures are deemed inadequate, it may be necessary to consider the feasibility of excluding clearly identified vulnerable groups from the instrument, provided this does not wholly compromise its effectiveness. Information campaigns are important to ensure that measures which are not regressive are not seen as being so. Further research should be undertaken, after the introduction of a new economic instrument, to assess its actual impact on relevant groups.

Recommendation 6.

Economic instruments should be assessed for effectiveness in delivering sustainable development objectives. Where the instrument by itself is likely to be less than fully effective, associated measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness of delivery of the objective should be introduced.

Recommendation 7.

The Government should take a pro-active approach to establishing the public perception of the policy 'baseline' against which proposals for economic instruments are to be judged.

Recommendation 8.

Effective processes should be considered and adopted, based on the practical experience gained from past exercises in the consideration of environmental taxes.

Recommendation 9.

The Government should establish an independent, standing advisory body on sustainable development economic instruments, reporting to HM Treasury. If however, the Government rejects that recommendation, this function should be included in the remit of the new Sustainable Development Commission and the Commission be appropriately resourced to carry it out effectively.

Recommendation 10.

The Government, and the proposed advisory body, should give further consideration to whether powers to introduce economic instruments to tackle issues of sustainable development might appropriately be given to the devolved administrations or to local government.

Recommendation 11.

The UK Government should initiate further discussion between groups of countries about the way in which appropriate economic instruments introduced in each country might contribute to the joint solution of common problems of sustainable development.

Indicators of Sustainable Development[50]

The set of indicators published in *Quality of life counts* provides a robust and useful way of keeping track of the progress of sustainable development in the UK.

The most important single task now is to ensure that the headline indicators are given the continuing attention they need by the political world, by the media and by society at large so that they have an appropriate influence on decision-making and action.

Some of the indicators are flashing red. Action is needed now to correct unsustainable trends in climate change and traffic, in poverty and social divisions, in agricultural practices and in the production of waste. Setting targets for improvement and taking action to achieve them should be a top priority for Government, and for the whole of society. The adequacy of policies and programmes should be assessed by their ability to deliver progress on these sustainable development targets.

The indicator set and its presentation could be further improved. The Round Table makes some suggestions about this. The new Sustainable Development Commission will need to keep this work under close review.

The Round Table makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1.

The Government should establish a target for the mtch larger reductions of greenhouse gas emissions that will be needed to achieve what will be sustainable levels in the long term, up to the middle of the century, and should shape its policies to achieve a steady progression towards that longer term goal. Until that goal is reached or is in prospect the indicator signal should show red, and all parts of society should continue to be alerted to the need for progressively more vigorous measures and changes in behaviour to achieve the necessary changes.

Recommendation 2.

More specific targets for the reduction of road traffic growth should be established, along with targets for reducing CO_2 emissions from the vehicle fleet as a basis for assessing progress towards more sustainable patterns of transport.

Recommendation 3.

In addition to measuring progress against the poverty, health and crime indicators in Quality of life counts, further work should be put in hand to find indicators of total deprivation (perhaps on an area basis) and to use these to assess the overall effectiveness of policies on poverty, health and crime, and social exclusion. The 'z-scores' developed for urban policy in the 1970s could be of value in this context.

Recommendation 4.

In addition to monitoring the levels of capital formation and social investment, HM Treasury and other departments concerned should develop a methodology for assessing whether physical and social capital stocks are being maintained, and for setting appropriate investment targets to achieve this.

Recommendation 5.

MAFF and the other departments concerned should adopt a specific target to arrest the decline of farmland bird populations and should assess the adequacy and sustainability of the totality of their farm policies against their ability to deliver this target.

Recommendation 6.

Further efforts should be made to improve the data on waste so that targets and timetables can be established and monitored for the reduction of waste arisings, increase of recycling and recovery of energy from waste, and reduction of household waste to landfill.

Indicators are useful only insofar as they are used by Government and others to shape policies and influence behaviour. *Quality of life counts* gives the UK Government an opportunity to adopt an integrated joined-up approach to move these indicators in the right direction. It could assess the effects which all its main policies and spending programmes might have on the indicators (especially on each of the headline indicators), taking this as a template for considering how they could contribute to a sustainable future.

Recommendation 7.

Over the next year, the Government should consider the potential impact on the indicators and on sustainability of all key policy statements including:

- *the 2000 pre-Budget and 2001 Budget Statements*

- *the Spending Review*

- *the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*

- *the Climate Change Strategy*

- *the Urban White Paper*

- *the Rural White Paper*

- *the Waste Strategy*

- *Best Value in local government.*

Recommendation 8.

Above all, the Government should use the opportunity of the annual review of the indicators and the Sustainable Development Strategy itself to assess the adequacy of the whole range of other government policies and programmes to deliver sustainable development, and should initiate corrective action where the indicators are showing problems persisting

Improving the indicators

Recommendation 10.

In respect of the headline indicators, the Government should:

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[50]   UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development (2000). *Indicators of Sustainable Development*. UKRSD, London.

a) *whilst reporting on each of them every year, pick out key ones (with other associated indicators) for special emphasis each year, covering the full range on a 3-4 year cycle;*

b) *identify those departments and Ministers with responsibility for ensuring progress;*

c) *set targets, and milestones perhaps for every 3-5 years, in order to measure progress as tangibly as possible; in some cases setting not only firm targets for progress in the right direction but also aspirational aims which would achieve real sustainable development.*

In respect of indicators generally, the Government should:

a) *maintain the spirit of openness, which gives this first report so much weight, even if subsequent data were to indicate unwelcome trends;*

b) *make much greater use of forward projections and scenarios in order to indicate the possible effects of past, present and future actions and to demonstrate the consequences of current trends;*

c) *continue and develop the further analysis of indicators presented in chapter 5 of Quality of life counts, including the integration and uncoupling of trends;*

d) *develop more direct outcome indicators, alongside proxy indicators; particular areas for attention include the economy and transport;*

e) *continue to broaden the perceptual measures of quality of life which it has introduced;*

f) *continue to develop regional and sectoral sets of indicators, in co-operation with the relevant parties, preserving a degree of consistency with the national set whilst reflecting the diverse needs of each application;*

g) *develop indicators which measure the resource costs of the UK's consumption, to capture its hidden environmental and social costs and to take account of its international impact.*

Sustainable Development Policy in the UK Regions[51]

Some of the problems and challenges of sustainable development present themselves particularly clearly at regional level, and action at that level may be particularly important in advancing sustainability.

We are living through a renaissance of regional activity in England, and the prospects for advancing sustainability should be considerably enhanced. But amidst all the activity there is a dearth of capacity to integrate the various initiatives and to provide political leadership. Sustainable development is a very broad concept which involves bringing together many different issues and stakeholders. It is a process as much as a set of solutions, and depends on broadly based participation and consultation and debate leading to wide consensus on the right way to resolve issues and take action forward. It is thus an essentially political idea. But there is a democratic deficit at regional level, and by the same token there is a sustainability deficit. No one body is in a position to pull matters together and to take the leadership and responsibility for making it the key unifying concept at regional level.

The Government has said that it will allow people, region by region, to decide whether they wanted directly elected regional government. We believe that some such arrangement is a prerequisite for real progress towards sustainable development. To be more sure of progress, however, it would also be necessary to give any such body a specific and positive role in

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[51]   UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development (2000). *Delivering Sustainable Development in the English Regions*. UKRSD, London.

respect of sustainable development, as in the case of the National Assembly for Wales and the Greater London Authority.

Any prospect of bodies with regional political accountability lies several years in the future. In the meantime, a real step forward has been taken in number of regions by the establishment of regional round tables for sustainable development, as well as by the active involvement in sustainable development of the regional chambers. We believe that there is considerable potential in these emerging bodies (which might more appropriately be termed regional commissions for sustainable development), and that efforts should now be made to establish them more securely with a clear mandate, broad participation and secure funding. This must, however, be done in a way which recognises and protects the scope for regional initiative and ownership, including with respect to the appointment of members. This could be an important topic for the UK Sustainable Development Commission to address.

The Round Table welcomes the commitment of the Regional Development Agencies to the principle of sustainable development as set out in their strategies. The key test of the Agencies is in the implementation of the action plans that are now beginning to flow from the strategies; it is here that their commitment to sustainable development will work out in practice. RDAs will need to continue to work closely with partners at both a regional and sub-regional level to ensure that the improvement of the regions' economic performance, which the economic strategies seek, is not achieved at the expense of the social and/or environmental fabric of the region. To lessen the temptation to accept proposals for unsustainable development, it is essential that development which is sustainable should be identified and encouraged.

The Round Table has played a significant role in advising the Government on the evolution of national indicators of sustainable development and the way in which they can be used to monitor and stimulate progress and has supported development of regional indicators consistent with the national set. Its successor body, the Sustainable Development Commission, could play a similar role in assisting the development and use of regional sustainability indicators, perhaps linked with a review of Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks.

The report also includes some comment on arrangements for local government, which the Round Table has been involved with over recent months, including the contribution of Local Agenda 21 and the new statutory provisions for action to promote well-being and for community planning. Local authorities in each region will need to work closely with the RDA to promote the sustainable development of the region as a whole.

The Round Table makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1.

The current arrangement of regional institutions in England, differing between regions, does not have a sharp enough focus or strong enough leadership to deliver sustainable development. The Government should consider how the establishment of arrangements such as elected regional assemblies could give political leadership and a new impetus towards sustainable development in the regions. Any such bodies should have a specific and positive duty in respect of sustainable development.

Recommendation 2.

The Government should initiate discussions with relevant bodies and sectors of society in the English regions with a view to aiding the formation or consolidation of a round table or commission for sustainable development in each region, and ensuring that they have appropriate constitutions, mandates and resources to play an active part in building

partnerships for sustainability in each region. It should make available some funding for such bodies, perhaps on the basis of matching funds raised in other ways.

Recommendation 3.

The Sustainable Development Commission should consider what would be desirable qualities and roles for a regional round table or commission. These might include:

a) *a membership drawn from a wide range of public bodies, business and industry, the academic and voluntary sectors, NGOs and other regional interests – but who recognise the need for integrated solutions*

b) *funds drawn from a wide range of sources*

c) *championing the cause of sustainable development in the region*

d) *providing advice to the RDA and other regional agencies and decision takers*

e) *monitoring the development of the region from a sustainability perspective*

f) *assisting in the delivery of sustainable development, both by undertaking specific campaigns and programmes, and through members' organisations*

g) *providing a focus for consideration, adoption and promotion of the Regional Sustainable Development Framework.*

It is essential to allow for a range of bodies to emerge in response to regional initiative. The Commission will need to address the balance to be struck between central recognition and local initiative, especially as regards eligibility for central funding.

Recommendation 4.

The Sustainable Development Commission should consider its own relationship with regional bodies, including the RDAs and regional round tables or commissions for sustainable development, so as to strengthen their contribution to regional sustainability. This might include assisting the development of regional indicators of sustainable development and advice on the appraisal of projects and programmes (see recommendation 5).

Recommendation 5.

The Regional Development Agencies and other bodies should use a range of sustainable development indicators to measure and monitor the impact of their policies in the region. Targets and objectives should recognise the contribution regional policies make to the achievement of national policies. Investment programmes and projects, including a range of options, should be subject to sustainable development appraisal which include the 'hidden costs' to the environmental and social fabric.

Recommendation 6.

Many local and regional bodies are able and willing to contribute to policy formation and the monitoring of progress from a sustainable development perspective. The UK Round Table recommends that:

• *The Regional Development Agencies should work closely with partners from the statutory and voluntary sector to understand and respond to the sustainable development needs of their region. They should do so in a way which is sensitive to the different capacities and strengths of different kinds of organisation.*

- *The regional round tables or commissions should consider holding an annual sustainability conference in each region, at which key bodies account for their work over the past year and show how their strategies will develop in the future.*

Recommendation 7.

Recommendations 5 and 6 are addressed to the RDAs. Though having freedom to devise their own strategies and action plans, the Agencies are also given guidance by central Government. The Government should consider what amendments or additions to its guidance to the RDAs may be required to encourage them to comply with the recommendations and other comments in this report.

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6.3   Survey Results: Organisations and Experiences

Global Environmental Change Programme   **GECP**

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government ☐	head of state ☐	parliament ☐
primeminister ☐		
ministries ☐		

Various Relations. GECP is an independent research group funded by government
'independent' research council. It has tried to forge good working relationships with all
government departments will varying degrees of success.
The Global Environmental Change Programme was set up in 1991 and will end in March
2000. The original objectives were to bring social science expertise to bear on global
environmental research and, at the same time, to take environmental concerns to the heart of
the social sciences.

3. organisational structure

permanent ☐	public ☐	thinktank ☐
temporary ☑	academic ☑	committee ☐
from 1991	profit ☐	network ☐
to March 2000	nonprofit ☐	other ☐

specification	The research was funded through research competitions, mostly grants of 2-3 years.
annual budget	1.5 million pounds
permanent staff	0

4. Main activities

The Programme provided a research centre, as well as grants, fellowships and studentships. It
involved 400 people, ranging from established academics through to younger researchers. UK
researchers involved in economics and social science established a pre-eminent position in
the international community through support from the Programme.
The GECP office undertook the research coordination (coordinating the 400 researchers
involved in 150 research projects), and communicating with decision-makers in policy and
business and NGOs.

5. Issues treated

In its early stages, the Programme's biggest concern was with major global environmental
issues, such as climate change and biodiversity, which dominated the agenda at the 1992 UN
Conference on Environment and Development. The Programme increasingly turned its
attention to the implementation of sustainable development and in doing so research has
began to investigate smaller-scale measures and processes - at local, national and regional

levels - which contribute to the achievement of sustainability. These research challenges were addressed alongside the original concern of major global environmental issues.
(See also web site).

6. Working methods

main emphasis	expert knowledge	● ● ● ●				
	creativity	● ● ● ●				
	interaction	● ● ● ● ●				
selection			**treatment of issues**		**output**	
customer	● ●		internal	● ●	customer	● ● ●
own	● ● ● ●		experts	● ● ● ●	expert	● ● ● ●
public	● ● ● ●		customer	● ●	public	● ● ● ●
			public	● ●		

The Programme's work falls into five broad topic areas:
- Attitudes and social behaviour
- Business and the environment
- Environmental policy
- International issues
- Sustainability and resource management

7. Major Projects

(See the three documents on web site).

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects
All sorts of methodological and theoretical innovations over the past ten years. (See the three documents for initial details, and full web site and over 1000 publications for fuller details).

9. Most interesting reports / publications
Above three reports, and also `The politics of GM Food` (see web site) and many others.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology   POST

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government ☐	head of state ☐	parliament ☑
primeminister ☐		
ministries ☐		

Internal body of both Houses of Parliament in the UK.

3. organisational structure

permanent ☑	public ☑	thinktank ☐
temporary ☐	academic ☐	committee ☐
from	profit ☐	network ☐
to	nonprofit ☐	other ☑

specification	Specialist support office.
main persons involved	Dr. Peter Border, deputy director, Health/medicine specialist; Dr. Sarah Pearce, IT and physical sciences specialist; Mr. Gary Kass, energy and environment specialist.
annual budget	approx £500,000
permanent staff	5
external consultants	none on a regular basis.

4. Main activities

POST is an office of the two Houses of Parliament (Commons and Lords), chared with providing balanced and objective analysis of science and technology based issues of relevance to Parliament. Their definition of science and technology is very road, and POST carries out studies in areas such as defence, transport, environment and health as well as science policy.
See also web site.

5. Issues treated

Science and technology as well as defence, transport, environment and health.

6. Working methods

main emphasis	expert knowledge	● ● ● ● ●			
	creativity	● ● ● ●			
	interaction	● ● ●			

selection		treatment of issues		output	
customer	● ● ●	internal	● ● ● ● ●	customer	● ● ● ● ●
own	● ● ● ●	experts	● ● ● ● ●	expert	● ● ● ●
public	● ● ● ● ●	customer	● ● ● ●	public	● ● ● ●
		public	● ●		

7. Major Projects

Comparing the Environmental Impacts of Alternative Proposals
This provides an example of one of the current activities of POST:
EU law requires that the environmental impacts of many development projects are assessed prior to that development going ahead. Increasingly, developers are required to provide evidence of the environmental impacts of alternative proposals, justifying the developers preferred option. However, there are no widely accepted methods for doing this, and the research will examine how this might be done.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects
Has recently been asked by parliamentary committee to take on role of informing Parliament on public consultation, etc on science and technology issues but not to articularte such activities itself.

9. Most interesting reports / publications
Examples of recent reports (since 1998) on environmental/sustainable development issues:
- Developing "brownfield" (previously developed) land
- Nuclear fusion issues
- The greenhouse effect
- Stimulating innovation in environmental technology
- Biodiversity and conservation
- Farm trials of genetically modified crops

10. Cooperation with other institutions
EPTA

Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution   **RCEP**

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government ☑	head of state ☑	parliament ☑
primeminister ☐		
ministries ☐		

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution is an independent standing body
established to advise the Queen, the Government, Parliament and the public on
environmental issues.

3. organisational structure

permanent ☑	public ☑	thinktank ☐
temporary ☐	academic ☐	committee ☐
from 1970	profit ☐	network ☐
to present	nonprofit ☐	other ☐

4. Main activities

The Commission's advice is mainly in the form of reports which are the outcome of major
studies. The current study is investigating Environmental Planning. In June 2000, the report on
Energy and the Environment (Energy - The Changing Environment) was published.
Occasional news releases are issued on matters the Commission considers of special
importance or which arise out of its studies. Commission Members are appointed by the
Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister.

5. Issues treated

Environmental issues.

6. Working methods

main emphasis	expert knowledge	● ● ● ●
	creativity	● ● ●
	interaction	● ●

selection		treatment of issues		output	
customer	●	internal		customer	●
own	● ● ● ●	experts	● ● ● ●	expert	● ● ● ●
public	● ● ●	customer	●	public	● ● ● ●
		public	● ●		

7. Major Projects

Adoption of the concept of best practicable environmental option or BPEO
Considered in the RCEP's Fifth and Twelfth Report.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

Environmental Planning
Currently under investigation by the Commission.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

Energy - The Changing Climate
The Commission's most recent report.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

9. Most interesting reports / publications
The First Report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution was published in
February 1971 and to date, 22 reports have been published.

Social Exclusion Unit   **SEU**

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government	☑	*head of state*	☐	*parliament*	☐
primeminister	☑				
ministries	☐				

The Social Exclusion Unit was set up by the Prime Minister in December 1997. The Unit is part of the UK Government which is answerable to the UK Parliament. Its remit is to help improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. Most of its work is based on specific projects, which the Prime Minister chooses following consultation with other Ministers and suggestions from interested groups. The Unit is staffed by a mixture of civil servants and external secondees. They come from a number of Government departments and from organisations with experience of tackling social exclusion - the probation service, housing, police, local authorities, the voluntary sector and business.The Unit does not cover issues which are dealt with by one Government department only, or duplicate work being done elsewhere. It devotes time to participating in wider interdepartmental work that has a close bearing on social exclusion.

3. organisational structure

permanent	☑	*public*	☑	*thinktank*	☐
temporary	☐	*academic*	☐	*committee*	☐
from	1997	*profit*	☐	*network*	☐
to	present	*nonprofit*	☐	*other*	☑

specification	The Unit reports directly to the Prime Minister and is located within the Cabinet Office. In preparing its reports, it draws extensively on research, external expertise, good practice and promising ideas. Members of the Unit visit and consult widely with local authorities, business, the voluntary sector and other agencies, and people who have direct experience of social exclusion. Within the civil service, the Unit works very closely with Departmental officials and Ministers and the Prime Minister's Policy Unit. The Unit's remit covers only England, but it keeps in close touch with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland devolved administrations, who are represented on the Unit's Ministerial Network. There are separate strategies for tackling social exclusion in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
main persons involved	MOIRA WALLACE, director of the SEU
permanent staff	50
external consultants	Not a constant figure as it depends on the nature of the projects were are undertaking. However, we trry to ensure that we have a number of representatives from external

> organisations in the Unit, such as from the voluntary sector, local government etc.

4. Main activities

The Social Exclusion Units remit is to help improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. The Social Exclusion Unit reports directly to the Prime Minister and is located within the Cabinet Office. In preparing its reports, it draws extensively on research, external expertise, good practice and promising ideas. Members of the Unit visit and consult widely with local authorities, business, the voluntary sector and other agencies, and people who have direct experience of social exclusion.

5. Issues treated

During its first two years, the SEU has reported to the Prime Minister on five key areas, and published reports on each, analysing the problem and making recommendations for action:
- Truancy and School Exclusion
- Rough Sleeping
- Neighbourhood renewal
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds not in Education, Employment or Training
(See also web site).

6. Working methods

main emphasis		expert knowledge	● ● ● ●		
		creativity	● ● ●		
		interaction	● ● ● ●		
selection		**treatment of issues**		**output**	
customer	● ● ● ●	internal	● ●	customer	● ● ● ●
own	● ●	experts	● ●	expert	● ● ●
public	● ● ●	customer	● ● ● ●	public	● ● ●
		public	● ● ●		

The UK Prime Minsiters chooses our new topics.

7. Major Projects

Neighbourhood Renewal
The Unit's report on neighbourhood renewal was published in September 1998(3). It gave a detailed picture of the concentration in poor neighbourhoods of a range of interlocking problems such as high levels of unemployment, crime and ill-health, and poor education. It showed how the gap with the rest of the country had widened, and analysed why previous initiatives to deal with this had failed.The report set out a range of issues on which urgent policy work was needed with the goal of bridging the gap between the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest. It announced the setting up of 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) to work on solutions, bringing together civil servants and outside experts. The SEU is now drawing together the work of the teams and other relevant initiatives into a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, being published for consultation in the spring, with the final Strategy to be published later this year.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

Bridging the Gap: new opportunities for 16-18 year-olds not in education, employment or training

Bridging the Gap was published in July 1999. It explains why so many young people are outside education, training and work for long periods after the school leaving age of 16, and why it matters that they are. It finds that while there is a clear structure for those who do well at school, the passage through the 16-18 years for those who have not - who are largely from disadvantaged backgrounds - is, by comparison, confused and lacking in clear goals and transition points. The report sets out an overview of an approach to significantly improve the chances of all young people, and a full action plan to achieve this. The approach dovetails with a range of measures being introduced by the Department for Education and Employment to encourage young people to stay in education, training or work with a strong education/training component until they are at least 18.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

Rough Sleepers Report
See web site.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects
The recommendations coming from our projects or reports take into account the views and experiences of socailly excluded people - who can be difficult to reach / consult. Our work is evidence/research based.

9. Most interesting reports / publications
Reports on these issues can be found on the SEU's website:
- Truancy and School Exclusion
- Rough Sleeping
- Neighbourhood renewal
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds not in Education, Employment or Training

10. Cooperation with other institutions
We work closely with many other Government Departments / Local Government / the Voluntary Sector.

Sustainable Development Commission   **SDC**

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government ☑	head of state ☐	parliament ☐
primeminister ☑		
ministries ☐		

The British Panel on Sustainable Development was set-up in January 1994 to provide independent advice to the Government on strategic sustainable development issues. Each year the Panel reported directly to the Prime Minister on a number of topics of its own choosing and the Government responded officially to the Panel's recommendations. In May 1999 the Government announced that the Panel and the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development were to be subsumed into a new body, the Sustainable Development Commission.

3. organisational structure

permanent ☑	public ☑	thinktank ☐
temporary ☐	academic ☐	committee ☑
from 1994	profit ☐	network ☐
to present	nonprofit ☐	other ☐

4. Main activities

The Sustainable Development Commission reports directly to the Prime Minister on a number of topics of its own choosing and the Government responded officially to the Panel's recommendations.

5. Issues treated

Issues covered in recent reports include:
- Sequestration of carbon dioxide
- World trade, investment and sustainable development
- Noise nuisance
- Ethical aspects of biotechnology and Genetically Modified Organisms
- Fisheries
- Environmental pricing and economic issues
- Environmental accounting
- Government procurement policy
- The contribution of good architectural design and use of materials
- Housing and land use planning
- Transport
- Education and training
- The impact of agriculture on biodiversity

6. Working methods

main emphasis	expert knowledge	● ● ● ●			
	creativity	● ● ●			
	interaction	● ●			

selection		treatment of issues		output	
customer	●	internal	●	customer	● ● ● ●
own	● ● ● ●	experts	● ● ● ●	expert	● ● ● ●
public	● ●	customer	● ●	public	● ● ● ●
		public	● ●		

9. Most interesting reports / publications

For a full publication list, see website at: http://www.open.gov.uk/panel-sd/

UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council / UK Economic and Social Research Council

EPSRC / ESRC

2618   355

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government ☐	head of state ☐	parliament ☐
primeminister ☐		
ministries ☐		

The ESRC is the UK's largest independent funding agency for research and postgraduate training into social and economic issues. Established by Royal Charter in 1965, ESRC's goals are to:
- Support high-quality research and postgraduate training that will contribute to economic competitiveness, the quality of life and the effectiveness of public services and policy
- Ensure that researchers have the training, resources and infrastructure to continue to make advances, including the necessary datasets and methodologies
- Broaden the public's knowledge and understanding of the contribution that the social sciences can make to policymakers, businesses and the public at large.

3. organisational structure

permanent ☑	public ☐	thinktank ☐
temporary ☐	academic ☑	committee ☐
from	profit ☐	network ☐
to present	nonprofit ☐	other ☐

4. Main activities

The EPSRC mission is:
- To promote and support, by any means, high quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in engineering and the physical sciences
- To advance knowledge and technology, and provide trained engineers and scientists, to meet the needs of users and beneficiaries thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom and the quality of life of its citizens; and
- To provide advice, disseminate knowledge, and promote public understanding in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences.

5. Issues treated

A wide range of social, environmental and economic issues. For more details, see the EPSRC and ESRC web sites: http://www.epsrc.ac.uk http://www.esrc.ac.uk

6. Working methods

main emphasis		expert knowledge	● ● ● ●		
		creativity	● ● ● ●		
		interaction	● ● ● ●		

selection		**treatment of issues**		**output**	
customer	● ●	internal	●	customer	● ●
own	● ● ● ●	experts	● ● ● ●	expert	● ● ● ●
public	● ●	customer	●	public	● ● ● ●
		public	● ●		

UK Foresight

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Foresight

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government ☑	head of state ☐	parliament ☐
primeminister ☐		
ministries ☐		

The purpose of Foresight is to:
- Develop visions of the future-looking at possible future needs, opportunities and threats and deciding what should be done now to make sure that we are ready for these challenges
- Build bridges between business, science and government, bringing together the knowledge and expertise of many people across all areas and activities in order to increase national wealth and quality of life.

3. organisational structure

permanent ☑	public ☑	thinktank ☐
temporary ☐	academic ☐	committee ☐
from 1994	profit ☐	network ☐
to present	nonprofit ☐	other ☐

specification	Panels are at the heart of the Foresight programme. They bring together representatives from business, the science base, the voluntary sector and government to consider the future and make recommendations for action. Each panel is supported by a number of [task forces] which look in more detail at specific areas. There are two kinds of panel: 1. Thematic panels address broad social and/or economic issues which might drive wealth creation and affect quality of life in the future; and 2. Sectoral panels focus on business sectors or broader areas of activity and carry forward the work of existing panels, as well as tackling new issues.

4. Main activities

Publications, dissemination events (workshops, seminars, etc.).

5. Issues treated

There are thematic panels on: ageing population; crime prevention; and manufacturing 2020. There are sectoral panels on: Built Environment and Transport; Chemicals; Defence, Aerospace and Systems; E-Commerce; Energy and Natural Environment; Financial Services; Food Chain & Crops for Industry; Healthcare; Information, Communications and Media; MarineMaterials; Retail and Consumer Services.
Sectoral Foresight activities are also being undertaken in other areas such as Marine and

Construction. All panels consider the two underpinning themes of 1) education, skills and training; and 2) sustainable development.

6. Working methods

main emphasis		expert knowledge	● ● ● ●		
		creativity	● ● ● ●		
		interaction	● ● ● ●		
selection		**treatment of issues**		**output**	
customer	● ● ●	internal	● ● ● ●	customer	● ● ●
own	● ● ● ●	experts	● ● ● ● ●	expert	● ● ● ●
public	● ● ● ●	customer	● ● ●	public	● ● ● ●
		public	● ● ●		

7. Major Projects

Foresight Programme (1994-1999)
The UK Foresight programme was launched in 1994 following a major review of Government science, engineering and technology policy. In 1995 the first set of visions and recommendations for action were published, followed by four years of development and implementation.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

Foresight 2015 (1999+)
Foresight 2015 brings people together to think about what might happen in the future and what is needed to prepare.
The methodology corresponds to the charactarisation in '6. working methods'

9. Most interesting reports / publications
For a full publication list, see web site at: http://www.foresight.gov.uk/servlet/Menu?id=799

Commission for Integrated Transport **CfIT**

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Relations   government,

Organisational structure   from 1999 to present

Commission for Integrated Transport **CfIT**