

SustainabilityNow

December 2008

Festive Greetings from Sustainability South West!



SustainabilityNow is a monthly bulletin from Sustainability South West, the region's independent Champion Body for sustainable development. SSW is a charity and its Mission is: 'To champion and assist action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits.'

Festive greetings from Lapland (accept no substitutes)!

I had this polar bear in the back of my sleigh last week. I'd spotted him looking rather sorry for himself on a small iceberg and offered him a lift. Anyhow, he starts telling me about global warming and how his ice is melting fast. By the time I dropped him off I could scarcely manage a "ho, ho, ho" and he had got me thinking...

We've all got to do our bit, tighten our belts – ah hem – etc. So for this Christmas I have made some changes to green up my act. Firstly, I have decided to favour local produce for my Christmas dinner – well Prancer was becoming a bit of a liability anyway (What sauce does go best with roast reindeer?) And then I've changed the feed for the rest of them, so hopefully – reduced methane emissions all round?! Oh and I've also decided to re use last year's red coat rather than order a new one (hope my bloomin waistline hasn't expanded again...). Solar power is a bit unpredictable up here at this time of year (and I'll never get planning permission for a wind turbine – you know what it's like for 'valued' landscapes...) but it's not too far to Norway's forests by sleigh, so I'm installing a wood chip boiler in the New Year.

Anyway folks, one thing we shouldn't skimp on, in my view, is the festive tippie – so don't forget to leave me out a tot of your finest Somerset Cider Brandy this year (& Rudolph has requested organic carrots if poss).

Ho, Ho, Ho!
Santa

P.S. Here's to a 'no' decision on Heathrow's 3rd runway – I'm finding the UK's airspace way too crowded already!

This month's other SustainabilityNow headlines at a glance:

◆ **Planting Places South West local greenspace awards – NOW OPEN**
◆ **Embedding sustainability 'post SNR' – last chance to arrange workshop** ◆ **The Region Is Changing – Opportunities for Transport and Access?** ◆ **New Years Resolution: Fair Shares, Fair Choice new website January launch** ◆ **Festive Wordsearch!** ◆ **Over to YOU!**

Planting Places South West local greenspace awards – NOW OPEN



Sustainability South West's second annual Planting Places awards to celebrate top examples of greenspace across the South West of England are now OPEN. The awards recognise the input and influence that all of these spaces have in supporting healthy, sustainable communities and the people who work to make them special.

Any public greenspace can be nominated for an award; this includes everything from parks, community gardens and allotments to green routes (ie cycle paths), playing fields and even cemeteries and rooftops. It can be privately funded, NHS Trust, community, conservation group or council land. But it must be free and accessible to the public, and for public use and enjoyment.

As well as an overall award, this year's 'best practice awards' will highlight top examples in: Engaging the Community, Supporting Biodiversity, Managing Flood Risk, Promoting Health and Well Being and Responding to Climate Change.

The awards are a fantastic opportunity for the region to showcase their greenspaces and demonstrate how important greenspaces are to communities, highlighting the many advantages such as the environmental and social benefits associated with them. So whether a small disused lot turned into an urban garden or a cemetery that supports local wildlife, we want to hear about it!

An awards ceremony will take place at the Architecture Centre, Bristol on 20 March 2009. The winners will also be highlighted in a special exhibition, which will be on display at the Architecture Centre throughout March as part of their Spring Green Programme.

Application forms are available on the Planting Places website

www.plantingplaces.org.uk or by emailing pplaces@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk. The deadline for entries is 5pm **Tuesday 27 January 2009.**

Planting Places is a partnership project coordinated by Sustainability South West to champion and celebrate local greenspaces and their importance in building sustainable communities. Supporters include the Architecture Centre; Natural England; Environment Agency; Arup and NHS South West.

Embedding sustainability into the region 'post SNR' – last chance to arrange workshop

Your help is needed to ensure sustainable development is embedded into regional arrangements following changes resulting from the current Sub National Review (SNR). SSW is leading a project under the 'Sustainable Development Transition and Transformation Fund' (Funded by Defra and the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and supported by the SW Regional Assembly (SWRA) and Government Office for the South West (GOSW)) to consider how this is achieved, looking at areas such as:

- The South West 'Single Regional Strategy' process
- The SW Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) criteria
- SW Regional Challenge and Scrutiny - independent SD expertise
- The RDA Tasking Framework and monitoring for the SW
- SW Local Authority capacity / expertise or Sustainable Development (SD)

Make your voice heard in the debate! Individuals and organisations are invited to fill in the **electronic consultation form** on our website at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk to ensure your opinions help inform a set of draft recommendations. **The deadline for input is Friday 16 January 2009.**

Key questions to consider:

1. New Single Regional Strategy (SRS) – How can the region build on any existing regional frameworks concerned with embedding SD principles to inform the SRS?
2. Effective SD Challenge- How can the region ensure there is capability and expertise for independent and effective challenge – which integrates social, economic & environmental priorities by embedding SD principles – rather than focussing on individual stakeholder themes?
3. Sustainability Appraisal - How can independent sustainability appraisal be strengthened?
4. Regional Champion Body (RCB) / SSW – Government believes that RCBs “have an important role in delivering SD in the regions”- how should SSW's role be maximised to support the region under the new arrangements to ensure it is fit for purpose?
5. How can local authorities (LA) / Local Strategic Partnerships / any new LA Leaders Forum be supported to build their own capacity on SD given their new role in the proposed new regional arrangements?
6. How can SD principles be integrated into criteria for the Regional Funding Allocation process? (Economic Development, Housing, Transport)
7. How can SD principles be better embedded into SWRDA's Tasking Framework/ monitoring?
8. Do the SW SD principles capture your stakeholder group priorities and how can the approach taken to delivering your priorities also support the wider

set of principles to contribute to an integrated approach for a sustainable future?

SSW is also holding **consensus building workshops** with key regional networks and groups between now and mid-January. This work will challenge, take into account and build on existing activity to embed sustainability into policy and delivery in the region. If you are holding a meeting or conference and can add an item on the SNR to the agenda or would like to arrange a meeting specifically for this, please get in touch by email at info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk or phone 0117 900 1751.

The Region Is Changing – What are the Opportunities for Transport and Access?

SSW recent stakeholder event looking at the ‘**Opportunities and Challenges to better Embed Sustainability in Transport and Access in New Regional Arrangements**’ brought over 40 regional representatives together to look at what the new regional make up will mean for transport and access. The event focused on the new integrated regional strategy, which gives responsibility for regional planning to SWRDA and its partner body of local authority representatives - combining the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy, capacity, funding and the new regional bodies.

A number of stakeholders questioned whether the new arrangements would have any significant impact arguing that central government has not relinquished meaningful power to the regions (exemplified by Secretary of State recent changes to Regional Spatial Strategy – a document that had been endorsed by the region after extensive consultation); the new arrangements do not change this status quo. There was also much discussion of the credibility gap, that contradictions and inconsistencies in government thinking and policy at national level create a muddy vision – which does not support clear and credible regional thinking on transport, access and sustainability.

A number of workshops identified the lack of requirement for regional and national sustainability principles to be applied to strategy and funding criteria, and that the growth agenda is in danger of creating a ‘business as usual approach’.

The key recommendations that came out of the days workshops will form part of the work SSW is undertaking on behalf of Defra, GOSW & SWRDA under the Sustainable Development Transition and Transformation Fund - Embedding sustainable development principles into future regional arrangements.

New Years Resolution: Fair Shares, Fair Choice new look website launching in January – watch this space for launch activities!



The number of supporters of the regional low carbon initiative *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* (www.fairsharesfairchoice.com) has risen to well over 1,200 (businesses, organisations, groups and individuals – including many SW MPs and councillors). If you have yet to add

your name to the campaign, get in touch and be featured when the new look website is unveiled at the end of January! Email us at info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk with your sign up details (name/organisation, county and email) or for more information.

Festive Wordsearch! You don't need to spend money to have fun this Christmas – check out our wordsearch of free* activities to enjoy (*bike and book required!)

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WORDS TO FIND

(words can be found in all directions!)

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|------------------|-------------------|
| BEACHCOMB | MUSIC |
| BIRDWATCH | RAMBLE |
| CYCLE | READ |
| DANCE | SING |
| HUG | SOCIALISE |
| JOKE | STARGAZING |
| LAUGH | VOLUNTEER |
| MUSEUMS | WRITE |

Over to YOU

Remember – we're your independent sustainability champs – and as an independent charity we're here to act as a critical friend for the common good. If you're involved in action for sustainability – let us know and we can champion it! Equally if you're experiencing barriers to adopting a more sustainable approach let us know so we can feed back messages on your behalf. Also let us know about local and regional events coming up over the next month for inclusion in the next edition. **Contact us at info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk**
Deadline for submissions: close of Wednesday 8 January 2009.

Other news from SSW available from: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

Regular updates on **SSW coordinated projects** available:

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – the SW's growing low carbon movement
www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainability Shaper – the SW's sustainable development framework
www.shapersw.net

Future Footprints – the SW's sustainable tourism visitor campaign
www.futurefootprints.org.uk

Planting Places – networks for SW urban greenspace project
www.plantingplaces.org.uk

Feedback: As a network of influential individuals your feedback on *Sustainability Now* is very valuable. Send comments to

info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk (let us know if colleagues would like to be added to the e-distribution list).

Back issues: at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability_now

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Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of SSW's membership as a whole.

Sustainability South West, 2 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EH t. 0117 900 1751 f. 0117 900 1909 www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

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