

May 2010

SustainabilityNow is the monthly bulletin from **Sustainability South West (SSW)**, the region's independent Champion Body for sustainable development. SSW is a registered charity and its Mission is:

'To champion and assist action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: resilient, healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits.'

Leaders must navigate a genuinely sustainable path through the cost cutting

How can we ensure that the latest decisions on cost cutting will target the most unsustainable activities and not the most sustainable activities?



It is crucial that cost cutting should not only save money now but also in the future. Cuts must steer us towards a more secure and resilient future. This can only be achieved by applying of a full set of sustainability assessment criteria.

Through the 10 SustNav sustainability principles (www.SustNav.org.uk) Sustainability South West (SSW) now offers a new sustainability assessment tool which helps identify and prioritise the least sustainable activities - which may have potential for cost cutting. It will also identify most sustainable initiatives which most deserve protection.

The lesson of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and new reports on ecosystems is that cutting costs on environmental protection now will actually cause immense economic, social and environmental costs further down the line. SSW has written to decision makers, including MPs and Ministers, to propose that a credible sustainability audit must be adopted if the current round of spending cuts can credibly claim to be achieving 'good value for money' in the long term. We have offered them a free guide which we've copied below for you.

Sustainability assessment criteria for cost cutting

How it works...

1. If the answers are largely positive to the questions below, on the activity/project you are assessing, it is a sustainable activity which deserves support.
2. If the answers are largely negative, can the activity be amended to become a more sustainable activity?
3. If it can't, it doesn't deserve support and can be added to your list of potential areas for cost cutting.

The criteria

Will this activity/project...



Develop sustainability skills? Learning and sharing the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of sustainability, leading the way and inspiring others to follow – or the opposite?



Improve health and well-being? Taking a preventative approach by supporting healthy homes and workplaces; safe and green environments; and active, caring communities – or the opposite?



Reduce inequalities? At home and abroad by reducing inequality in access to: basic goods and services; work, learning and leisure opportunities; and a decent home – or the opposite?



Reduce natural resource use? By cutting greenhouse gas emissions, water use, waste and pollution; using natural assets wisely and increasing the use of renewable energy – or the opposite?



Support the move to a low carbon economy? By taking a low carbon approach to economic development, including jobs, innovation and enterprise, built development and renewable energy – or the opposite?



Reduce high carbon travel? By prioritising low carbon access/travel including walking, cycling, efficient public transport, ICT access and mobile/local service delivery and limiting flying - or the opposite?



Support local living? By using local goods and services and nurturing and celebrating the distinctiveness, diversity and heritage that make a place special – or the opposite?



Revive our life support systems? By protecting and supporting our natural ‘life support systems’: air, water, land and overall biodiversity – or the opposite?



Promote inclusion? By supporting wider, more informed participation in local and global challenges and involving all affected groups in decisions and developments – or the opposite?



Promote long term thinking? By taking proper account of changes on the horizon, including climate change, and thinking in a joined up way to arrive at more resilient solutions – or the opposite?

Follow SustNav on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/sustnav>.

This month's other *SustainabilityNow* headlines at a glance:

◆ [*How Sustainable Are We? Defra funded SSW project findings*](#)

◆ [*Tougher Climate Change Targets?*](#)

◆ [*Masterclasses from Sustainability South West, 24 June, Bristol*](#)

◆ [*Do One Thing...Make a Pledge to Help Biodiversity*](#)

Plus: ◆ [*The Sust'ometer*](#) ◆ [*On your Radar?*](#) ◆ [*Up & Coming...events around the region*](#)

How Sustainable Are We?



With project funding from Defra and supported by SWRDA, GOSW and South West Councils, SSW recently surveyed regional decision-makers to find out if and how sustainability informed decision making. SSW investigated just how much regional bodies and upper tier local authorities take account of sustainability in policy, decision making and delivery.

While most recognised sustainability drivers within their organisations and reported that sustainability did inform decision making to a degree, many felt the mixed messages from central government compromised progress. As one participant reported, ***“The challenge remains to bring greater cohesion to government policies and overcome inconsistencies and contradictions which become evident at local and regional level.”*** Participants frequently identified efforts on carbon savings and energy efficiency but overall little progress with wider sustainability goals. This reflects the focus on carbon reduction in legislative and performance measures such as the Carbon Reduction Commitment and performance indicators for local government.

Participants also reflected on the impact of Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships. Feedback suggested that these had provided an opportunity to facilitate a more holistic approach to service delivery but lacked clear political direction and directives to integrate sustainability into decision-making and delivery.

The recommendation most endorsed by participants was that ‘Central government departments should support the regions by applying a consistent definition of sustainable development across departments’.

Whatever the changes to regional and local governance, the key challenge to the new government remains – to provide a clear, consistent definition and approach to sustainability in order to embed it in all government policy and delivery. For more information please contact the SSW office.

Tougher climate change targets?

The Times wrongly reported this week that EU will set tougher climate change targets despite the failure of the Copenhagen summit to agree legally binding international targets to replace the Kyoto protocol. Although the report was incorrect, it highlighted the debate over the economical impact of increasing climate change targets – higher fuel bills and economic disaster or a stimulated green economy? The Climate Group, an environmental business lobby group, claims that the higher target would stimulate so much investment in green technology it could slightly increase GDP and create 1.1 million jobs across the EU by helping create low-carbon industries that could export their technologies.

Masterclasses from Sustainability South West, Thursday 24 June, Bristol

Two CPD accredited half-day courses from the region's champion of sustainability – each promoting collaborative, efficient and sustainable working.



The masterclasses will provide:

- A refresher on sustainability thinking and key issues and an overview of the latest sustainability drivers – political, social, economic and statutory
- An introduction to a simple and accessible decision-making tool and hands-on opportunity to undertake a basic sustainability assessment
- A relaxed and supportive environment in which to explore sustainability issues and to network



Morning masterclass (10:30-13:30 ending with networking lunch*)

'Making sense of sustainability'

A general working session on applying sustainability principles to your activities. Bring along a project, strategy or plan outline to see how it shapes up on sustainability.

Course fee: private and public sector £99 (two places for £150); VCS £75 (two places for £115)

Relevant for: any individual who wants to enhance their sustainability understanding and gain practical understanding of how to apply sustainability thinking to their work.

Afternoon masterclass (12:30-16:00 starting with networking lunch*)

'Sustainable decision-making and cost saving surgery'

Hands-on support in applying sustainability principles to your current cost-cutting decisions – to maximise benefits and minimise pitfalls. Session will include an exercise to a) assess the relative sustainability of activities to inform cuts and avoid costly mistakes b) maximise the sustainability of activities going forward.

Course fee: private and public sector £120 (two places for £200); VCS £90 (two places for £150)

Particularly relevant for: public sector workers who are facing or administering spending cuts

**locally sourced lunch from the award winning Bordeaux Quay restaurant*

Learning Outcomes: This training will give you experience of applying sustainability thinking to decisions and/or project planning for both individual and partnership activities. Online support is available to help participants to implement their learning. You will receive a CPD 'certificate of attendance' and points towards your learning record.

Comments from participants:

“Thank you, for the CPD certificate and the training day; felt like we were in the hands of skillful, intelligent, sympathetic and patient but incisive facilitators.”

“I came away with a great understanding of principles and measures to assess sustainability.”

“A eureka moment about a project I worked on.”

“I can now take this tool and use it in all aspects of my project and development work.”

NB. **Bespoke, in-house training** is also available for groups of up to 20 people – cost effective, accessible training at your workplace (or a venue of your choice). Please contact SSW for further information and booking form. Email info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk or telephone **0117 929 0989**.

Previous clients include – Government Office for the South West, The South West Regional Development Agency, Wessex Water, The Strategic Health Authority, Bristol City Council, Plymouth City Council, Exeter City Council, Natural England, Somerset County Council, Dorset County Council, South Somerset District Council and Defra



Do One Thing...Make a Pledge to Help Biodiversity

It is the International Year of Biodiversity and 22 May celebrated the International Day of Biodiversity. New EU funded research has proven useful in expanding the existing valuation database on biodiversity with up-to-date figures available to help to calculate a more accurate figure for the global value of biodiversity and ecosystem services – ‘Further Developing Assumptions on Monetary Valuation of Biodiversity Cost Of Policy Inaction (COPI)’: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/biodiversity/pdf/ieep_alterra_report.pdf.

And to do your bit for biodiversity, why not make a pledge (visit www.biodiversityislife.net/?q=do-one-thing for more ideas)?

- Create a wildflower meadow or plant a window box (Royal Horticultural Society www.rhs.org.uk/)
- Enjoy the seasons and the changes each month by going for a walk
- Don't mow your lawn – an untidy garden encourages wildlife
- Become a beekeeper – join a local association and learn about bees (<http://bit.ly/ly71l>)
- Get close to wildlife with the RSPB (www.rspb.org.uk/datewithnature/)
- Go on an Ancient Tree Hunt (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/take-part/ancient-tree-hunt/Pages/ath.aspx)
- Eat organic (www.soilassociation.org/)
- Apply for an allotment from your local council, or turn over some of your garden to grow your own
- Visit a roost this summer to help the National Bat Monitoring Programme (www.bats.org.uk/), or plant night flowering blossoms in your garden to encourage bats to visit
- Create a log pile in a shaded area of your garden where insects can make a home

- Give £15 to the Woodland Trust to plant a tree for you, or plant your own wood full of native trees such as oak, ash or hazel (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/support-us/plant-a-tree/Pages/new-forest.aspx)
- Tackle some invasive species with the National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk)
- Get out of the office! Local Wildlife Trusts offer opportunities for groups of employees to undertake team tasks such as pond-building or maintenance, fence or path construction, clearing invasive scrub, cutting or planting trees (www.wildlifetrusts.org/)

Sussed!

👍 **Bournemouth and Poole are offering free bus passes** to visitors wanting to explore Dorset's countryside without adding to carbon pollution. Visitors are encouraged to go car free and keep traffic congestion to a minimum during the first week of the school summer holidays. The passes will be available at Green Tourism Business Scheme accredited hotels within the two resorts, on a first-come-first-served basis, one per guest.

👍 **Community governance** The South West boasts some good recent examples of community governance: Wiltshire Council has run local health and wellbeing public involvement programmes in 18 Community Areas and is running free info days in June to share new approaches of community governance; Projects in Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bristol have enabled individuals to be local Community Champions; while Community Researcher training is giving groups the tools to make a strong case on local issues in North Somerset, Devon, Torbay and Wiltshire.

👍 **Equality Grants Fund** Following an Empowering Communities Equality South West report, examining structures for enabling equality groups to be heard within public sector policy making and service provision, a grant fund was taken up by eight areas in the South West. Grants were used for developing new equality networks as well as sustaining or developing existing ones. For further information and to view a copy of the report, visit: www.creatingexcellence.org.uk/mod-Downloads-index-req-viewdownloadaddetails-lid-324.html.

So Last Century...

👍 **European Forests** The European Environment Agency has published a report on forest ecosystems. It reveals that woodlands are still under threat from unsustainable management practices, pollution, climate change and urban transport networks. See: www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eea_report_2008_3.

👍 A new report from the UN on **The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity** (TEEB) will reveal that the real cost of damaging nature is ten times that of maintaining its well-being! Rather than treating nature as a luxury, the evidence suggests that environmental protection should be at the heart of financial planning. Let's hope that thinkers in policy and the treasury under the new Coalition government are taking notes. Full story: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/21/un-biodiversity-economic-report.

On Your Radar?

The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF)

LCF is a fund for community and environmental projects, primarily within 10 miles of landfill sites. The aim is to 'offset' some negative impacts of living close to a site by allowing Landfill Operators to pay some landfill tax liability to a not-for-profit environmental organisation. See www.entrust.org.uk/ for more info.

New training opportunities

Shift Bristol is a new organisation providing practical training in community led action on sustainability and local resilience in the context of rising oil prices and climate change. Courses include working with local currencies, community energy projects, innovative group dynamics solutions and more. See www.shiftbristol.org.uk for details.



Soil Association Organic Food Awards

Deadline for entries to the 2010 awards, now in its 22nd year, is 4 June. Application form and info at:

www.soilassociation.org/Businesses/Marketingsupport/Awards/OrganicFoodAward2010/tabid/682/Default.aspx.

SMK Campaigner Awards

SMK helps campaigners create positive and lasting social change. The 2010 SMK Campaigner Awards are now open for entries. Award categories include: Consumer Action, Environment, Local Campaigner, Social Inclusion and Transport. Winners will receive bespoke training and development opportunities. Deadline for applications: midday, 28 June. For more info visit:

www.smk.org.uk/smk-awards-2010.

Quality of Life in Europe

The European Commission has published quality of life survey findings of 75 European cities. Service of transport, health and education scored well. See: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_277_en.pdf.



World Oceans Day, 8 June

This year's theme, Oceans of Life, focuses on our ocean's great diversity of life and how everyone can help in its conservation. The day will aim to raise awareness about the importance of the ocean by showing them ways to reduce their negative impact on the ocean, by reducing CO2 emissions. See <http://theoceanproject.org/wod/>.

Green Transport Week, 13 – 20 June

The aims of Green Transport Week are: to raise awareness of the impact travel has on the environment; to make people think about their own travel choices, and to show government that people care about green transportation issues. For lots of event ideas, see: www.eta.co.uk/green_transport_week.

Recycle Now Week 21 – 27 June

The focus of this year's Recycle Now week is small waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). For the Recycle Week Campaign Guide visit:



[www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Recycle Week 2010 Campaign Guide.8d0956e8.8609.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Recycle_Week_2010_Campaign_Guide.8d0956e8.8609.pdf).

Find out what you can do today at:

www.recyclenow.com/what_can_i_do_today/recycle_week_events.html.



National insect week 21 – 27 June

The aim of the week is to raise awareness about local biodiversity and why it is so important. There will be various events and activities held throughout the country. To find out what's going on in your area visit www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk/.

Up & Coming...Events around the region

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in Cornwall Conference, 4 June, Eden Project

The day brings Council rep's together with the renewable energy industry, landowners, large energy consumers and community groups to highlight opportunities for generating renewable and low carbon energy in Cornwall. Fee: £25. To book: email membership.sw@co-operative.coop/call 01884 266892.

World Environment Day, 5 June

The theme of UN's WED 2010 is "Many Species. One Planet. One Future." Its aim is to raise worldwide awareness of the environment, encourage political attention and action, and enable people to become agents for change in support of sustainable and equitable development. WED activities in the SW include:

- **The Stroud Festival of Nature**, Startford Park, Stroud
- **Devon Wildlife Trust Wildlife Festival**, The Piazza, Plymouth City Centre
- **Swashbucklers of the Sea**, Oceanarium, Bournemouth Aquarium

To find out about all registered activities, visit:

www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/activities/.

Bristol Festival of Ideas, programme running now until 8 July

A wide range of talks in Bristol (see www.ideasfestival.co.uk/?page_id=10 for all event listings) includes:

- **Britain in a Future of Climate Change**, Marek Kohn and Jon Turney, 18:15-19:15, 7 June, Watershed Media Centre, in association with the South West Regional Development Agency
- **Food Rules for Healthy People and Planet**, Michael Pollan, 19:40-21:00, 7 June, Watershed Media Centre, in association with the Soil Association.

Adapting to Climate Change Week, 7-11 June, South West

Information about the 4th annual Climate South West Adapting to Climate Change week is available at: www.oursouthwest.com/climate/events.htm. Events in the region include:

- **Stormwater Management in a Changing Climate: Water Attenuation Solutions for the Built Environment**, 8 June, Genesis Centre, Taunton
- **Climate Change and Peak Oil – why we should act now**, 8 June, University of Exeter
- **Devon Environmental Business Initiative Awards launch**, 10 June, Dart's Farm, Topsham.

International Communities: A pipe dream or plausible models for sustainable living, 14:15-16:05, 9 June, University of Bath Richard Jurin (University of Northern Colorado) will deliver this CREE/Education and Sustainability Seminar. See: www.bath.ac.uk/cree/.

Devon BioBlitz, 11-12 June, Mothecombe

BioBlitz activities include a hunt to find as many different types of species as possible, a rockpool ramble and a big seaweed search. All activities are **free** and suitable for all ages. For more information visit:

www.opalexplornature.org/?q=node/651.

Entrepreneurship for Sustainability Materclass, 10-12am, 11 June, University of Gloucestershire

This **free** mastersclass with Elisabeth Bittner looks at developing entrepreneurship skills and improving sustainable development knowledge. Case studies will explore ways in which skills and behaviours can support sustainable development. For more information visit: www.glos.ac.uk/vision/sustainability/unurce.

Chagford Energy Fair, 12 June, Jubilee Hall, Chagford, Devon

CASE (Chagford Action for Renewable Energy) presents a **free** sustainable energy event featuring renewable energy suppliers, installers, presentations, information and an SSW energy competition. Visit: <http://chagfordhub.typepad.com>.



Festival of Nature, 12-13 June, Bristol Harbourside

A **free** festival from the Bristol Natural History Consortium providing wildlife enthusiasts of all ages the opportunity to explore, enjoy and get close to the natural world. Over 70 organisations will be running hands-on activities, giving information about local and global nature and biodiversity including SSW with a Fair Shares, Fair Choice (FSFC) climate change information and competition stand; Cycling City, offering free cycling advice and bike maintenance; Imax screenings at Blue Reef Aquarium plus a beer tent and local produce stalls and a talks programme including FSFC supporter, BBC Coast's Miranda Krestovnikoff and a special launch event, a Radio 4 recording of an episode of "Saving Species" on the night of 11 June. All activities are free. More information and full programme available from www.bnhc.org.uk/home/festival.



Our Coast and Public Health Conference, 16-17 June, Lifeboat College, Poole

The conference will focus on sustainable communities, bringing together organisations in the region that have an interest in a coordinated approach to environment, health, tourism and science. Participants will identify future challenges and explore how we could achieve an integrated approach to meeting them. See: www.hpa-events.org.uk/hpa/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=50061&eventID=109&eventID=109.

Planning for Amenity, 18 June, Cirencester

The SW region boasts some pioneering examples of how to enhance the value of existing open spaces and create new green spaces. Guest speakers for this RTPi event share experience, evidence, strategy formulation and delivery mechanisms. Fee: £75 visit www.rtpi.org.uk/ct/EVENT/864/11/events/864.

Is the Climate ready for change? 29 June, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol

Conference exploring the options available to Bristol for reducing its carbon usage and how communities, businesses and farms can work together to achieve a common goal. Delegate places are £56. For more information call Beverley Allen on 01285 889872 ext 2236.

Social Enterprise Leadership Summer School, 7-9 July, Wellington, Somerset

A summer school from RISE and Cosmic for organisations with social or environmental aims and trading at their heart. The event, designed to enhance and develop leadership skills, is an opportunity to learn from experts how to innovate your business and network. Can attend 1, 2 or 3 days (£45, £90, £120 + VAT respectively). Booking form and info at: www.rise-sw.co.uk/uploads/news/summerschool2010.pdf.

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, get in touch so we can feedback messages on your behalf. And let us know about local and regional events coming up over the next month for inclusion in the next edition. **Contact Freiny Miles** at Freiny.Miles@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk. **Deadline for submissions: close of 13 June 2010.**

Other news from SSW available from: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk
Follow SSW on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/sustsouthwest>

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

SustNav – Sustainability Principles to navigate your way to lasting solutions

www.SustNav.org.uk

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – campaign for fair, safe carbon shares for all

www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainable Health SW – supporting the region's NHS trusts

www.sustainablehealthsw.org.uk

Planting Places – linking greenspace and sustainability in the South West

www.plantingplaces.org.uk

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