

SustainabilityNow



October-November 2008

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.'

Where should Sustainability sit in the Regional Shake up?

Guest Editorial: Jonathon Porritt, Chair, UK Sustainable Development Commission and President, SSW



It's all change in the English Regions! Regional Assemblies are to be abolished, Government Offices are being cut right back to a set of core strategic functions, and Regional Development Agencies may (or may not!) be constituted as the official regional Planning Bodies, and will take over responsibility for a new integrated strategy (both the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy will disappear as such, and will be merged in one new strategy).

Local Authorities will continue to act as scrutiny bodies for the RDA (though exactly how, without an Assembly, it works, remains a mystery), and RDAs will be expected to devolve a lot of their budgets and responsibilities down to the local level.

I wish I could tell you that this is all good news from a sustainable development perspective, but it isn't. The new combined Strategy will be primarily economic – central government seems to have entirely forgotten the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks it so enthusiastically pioneered a few years ago. As we know, RDAs have little democratic legitimacy at the regional level (with all appointments made by Ministers), which does make it difficult to see how they will fill this role properly.

All of which, yet again, makes the role of independent champion bodies such as Sustainability South West all the more critical!

SSW has been charged with consulting with stakeholders to prepare recommendations on how best to embed sustainability principles into the new regional arrangements. This is likely to be a challenging task! So I do hope that very many of you will contribute your views.

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

- ◆ **Embedding sustainability 'post SNR' – your views needed! Feed-in form available online**
- ◆ **Upcoming Events: Sustainability & Transport in the SW + GreenSpace on GreySpace Agenda**
- ◆ **Going low carbon**
- ◆ **'Heritage' module live on Shaper**
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Embedding sustainability into the region 'post SNR' – Feed-in form available online

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' 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 on Sustainable Development (SD)

*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)

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/news/shaping_a_sustainable_future_post_snr_consultation_form_available/ to ensure your opinions help inform a set of draft recommendations. The deadline for input is **Friday 16 January 2009**.

Key questions to consider include:

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 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?

Stakeholder Event – Sustainable Transport and Access in the New Regional Make Up

SSW invites you to a stakeholder event to consider how sustainability principles can most effectively be embedded in transport and access in the new regional arrangements following the SNR. The aim of the day is to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by the proposed new regional changes and how we better embed sustainability in transport and access within new structures and processes. The panel will include representation from GOSW, SWRDA, SWRA and speakers will outline the current challenges and barriers to progress with contributions from Glenn Lyons of UWE, Centre for Transport and Society, SW Public Health Observatory and others. Date: **Wednesday 3 December, 10.00am – 3.30pm, Guildhall Exeter**. Places are limited - please contact info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk for further details and to book your place. This stakeholder event is part of SSW’s SNR work.

Planting GreenSpace on the GreySpace Agenda: improving quality, increasing resources, delivering sustainable communities

CABE Space, GreenSpace SW Regional Forum, Natural England and SSW are working together to help develop Green Space



standards and integrate Green Space into Local Area Agreements / Multi Area Agreements, regional strategies, sub-regional partnerships and the planning process. Information events will be held on **Friday 21 November, Tamar Science Park, Plymouth** and **Thursday 27 November, Ashton Court, Bristol** and are open to those involved in green space policy, planning, design and management. Places are limited, to book a place, please email Leanne Scholey, lscholey@green-space.org.uk.

Going low carbon is monkey business



The number of supporters of the regional low carbon initiative *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* (www.fairsharesfairchoice.com) has now risen to well over 1,200 (businesses, organisations, groups and individuals – including many SW MPs and councillors). At Paignton Zoo's recent 'Green Solutions Festival' members of the public were able to 'sign up' to the campaign and receive guidance on reducing their emissions, and living within a 'fair share' of carbon. New supporters include North Devon Council, the Totnes Nappy Company and Flutterbies (educational toys).

Heritage module goes live on the Shaper

A new module has gone live on the region's online sustainable development framework – the Sustainability Shaper (www.shapersw.net). The **Heritage module**, supported by English Heritage and delivered in partnership with SSW, was launched on 30 October at Gants Mill, Somerset. It provides an online resource for people living and working in the historic environment to learn more about adopting sustainable practices. For a heritage checklist, case studies, resources and links, visit www.shapersw.net/rsdf.php?ID=79&category=79&stylesheet=style.



Climate Change Bill

In late October, the Climate Change Bill had its 'third reading' (passing 463 votes to 3!) in the House of Commons. Aviation and shipping emissions will now be considered in carbon targets, although currently there is no "agreed methodology" on attributing them. There is also concern on levels of reductions to be made in the UK, with the door open to the purchase of carbon credits rather than necessary changes being made here. At the same time, Sir Nicholas Stern (author of the influential review of the economic impacts of climate change) has been writing about the current economic crisis, noting that the problem had been "decades in the making" and shows that the longer a risk is ignored the worse the result. He suggests that the crisis and greater awareness of climate change provide an opportunity 'to lay the foundations for a world of low-carbon growth'.

UK commits to cutting greenhouse emissions by 80%

In his first major announcement since being appointed Energy and Climate Change Secretary, Ed Miliband has committed the UK to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, (as recommended by the Climate Change Committee). Mr Miliband also pledged to amend the new *Energy Bill* to include a feed-in tariff to support small-scale renewables (as successfully adopted in 17 European countries, particularly Germany). Such a scheme could be just what is needed to achieve the 'rapid deployment' of renewables technologies called for in the recent RegenSW analysis of how this region could achieve the Governments' 2020 energy targets (*The road to 2020*). The new Energy Secretary also addressed affordability of energy, and fuel poverty, warning energy companies that unless they demonstrate action to end overcharging for customers on pre-payment meters, Government would consult on legislation to end unfair pricing.

Experts warn of energy crisis

The UK could suffer an energy crisis similar to the current financial crash if energy infrastructure is left to develop in response to market forces, independent experts have warned. The Claverton Energy Research Group warned at its conference at the weekend that current world governments' energy policies are inadequate to meet growing global energy demands. Declining North Sea gas and oil outputs and unsecure gas supplies put the UK particularly at risk, the group added. It predicts that the country could suffer energy shortages as early as 2015 if action is not taken now to secure energy supplies. They believe an entirely renewable electricity supply for Europe is not only possible, but affordable.

Sussed!

👉 **Carbon standard for business.** 'PAS 2050' will allow businesses to assess the carbon footprint of their goods and services. The standard (launched by BSI British Standards, the Carbon Trust and Defra), is a way of counting greenhouse gas emissions embedded in goods and services across their life cycle – from raw materials, through manufacture, distribution, use and disposal. The aim of the standard is to help businesses move beyond managing their own emissions to look at the opportunities for reducing them in the design, making and supplying of products. This will then help in making goods and services which are less carbon intensive and ultimately new products with lower carbon footprints

👉 **Zero Waste Week** Activities run during Zero Waste Week, 20-26 October, included the Cornish Real Nappy Company giving parents the chance to try washable nappies for free. Zero Waste is impossible for parents to achieve whilst using disposable nappies, which make up 2.6% of all household rubbish. Washable nappies not only have environmental benefits but can save parents hundreds of pounds.

👉 **Get Recycling!** EU states will have to recycle half of their household waste and almost three quarters of their construction waste by 2020 after the EU Council adopted new waste regulations. The Waste Framework Directive is intended to prevent the creation of waste, cut landfill and promote the reuse and recycling of rubbish.

So last Century...

👉 **Hands off the Lottery!** Despite promises to the contrary, the recent cut in this year's Lottery funding to fund the 2012 Olympics could have a detrimental impact on community projects. See the Number 10 website <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Lottery-Funding> for details of a petition on the issue.

👉 **World is facing a natural resources crisis worse than financial crunch** The world is heading for an "ecological credit crunch" far worse than the current financial crisis because humans are over-using the natural resources of the planet, according to the just released 'Living Planet report' from the conservation group WWF. The report calculates that humans are using 30% more resources than the Earth can replenish each year, which is leading to deforestation, degraded soils, polluted air and water, and dramatic declines in numbers of fish and other species. As a result, we are running up an ecological debt of \$4tr (£2.5tr) to \$4.5tr every year - double the estimated recent losses made by the world's financial institutions.

👉 **Wasting lunchtime!** The British public is dumping more than two million tonnes of perfectly edible food in landfills every year, according to a new study. The food is being binned as we reach for the easy option of shop-bought sandwiches and take away meals, according to the Government-backed Waste & Recycling Action Plan (WRAP). The amount of food wasted this way is costing British shoppers over £5bn each year, says the study.

Contact SSW for more info on the source of any story.

On your radar?

Flying in the face of climate change: exploring the paradox of climate concerned frequent flyers

The Energy Saving Trust (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) has published a new report suggesting that tackling personal aviation emissions will be a challenge to reaching emissions targets. 'Frequent flyers' are responsible for a disproportionate amount of carbon emissions, and targeting this group could lead to substantial reductions in CO2 emissions. Focus groups and surveys revealed 42% of frequent flyers thought that a carbon allowance would be attractive as a way to reduce emissions, as popular as swapping a short haul holiday for a holiday in the UK (41%). Swapping a number of short haul flights for one longer haul flight appealed to 30%, and holidaying in the UK instead of a long haul flight 31%. The regional carbon reduction initiative *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* promotes living within a fair carbon budget and provides suggestions such as these to help people make informed choices about their carbon spending. See www.fairsharesfairchoice.com for more information.

Free Advice, Grants and Low Interest Loans for Home Renewable Energy in Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire Council has teamed up with Severn Wye Energy Agency to launch SG Futureenergy – a renewable energy advice scheme which provides free advice, grants and low interest loans to homeowners. A helpline will give impartial advice and help identify the most suitable renewable technology for your home (and reliable local installers). Grants and loans will be available to help towards the cost of installing a range of technologies. To find out more, call SG Futureenergy Renewable Energy Advice Service on 01594 544119, email renewables@swea.co.uk or visit www.swea.co.uk and click on grants for renewables.

Up & coming...

TUC conference: 'Green and Decent Work' 14 November, 2pm - 4pm, University of Gloucestershire

Speakers include: John Monks, General Secretary European Trades Union Congress and SSW Director, Leslie Watson. More info at www.tuc.org.uk/events/detail.cfm?event=3001®ional=8

Creating Food Futures Workshop: 14 November, Bristol

This workshop will explore issues raised in the new book "Creating Food Futures: trade, ethics and the environment" (Gower/Ashgate), such as: Organic farming and its impact on the community; Local or global sourcing; the roles of supermarkets; Fairtrade; UK and international perspectives. Speakers: Barny Haughton (Bordeaux Quay) and two of the book's co-authors. See www.asp-online.org/events/foodfutures/eventdescr.pdf

Equality Day, 18 November, Coaver Conference Hall, County Hall, Exeter

This year's 'Strategic Intelligence Equality Day: the evidence' is hosted by InDevon, a South West Observatory Local Intelligence Network. The programme includes a range of speakers on Deaf Awareness; Religion & Belief; Young People & Health; Older People's Employability; Migrant Workers; and Domestic Abuse. Register via email at strategicintelligence@devon.gov.uk stating any access, parking, dietary or other needs.

Social Enterprise Day: 20 November, and RISE AGM and SW Trade Fair: 1 December, Bristol

Social Enterprise Day is a national day to celebrate and promote social enterprise - businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need. The day aims to encourage people to be enterprising and to turn their ideas into something real as well as celebrate and recognise the work of existing social entrepreneurs in the UK. The voice for South West social enterprise is RISE – RISE AGM and SW Trade Fair will be held on 1 December in Bristol, in partnership with Co-operatives SW. See www.enterpriseweek.org.uk/get_involved_in/social_enterprise_day for more on Social Enterprise Day and www.cooperatives-uk.coop/live/cme2372.htm for info on the Trade Fair. Social Enterprise Day forms part of Enterprise Week (17-23 November, www.enterpriseweek.org.uk/)

Independent and Indispensable: The future for South West Social Purpose Organisations

South West Forum's Annual Conference takes place on 25 and 26 November at The Connaught Hotel, Bournemouth. Speakers include Debra Allcock Tyler, Directory of Social Change; Ben Bradshaw MP, Minister for the SW; Faith Davey, Age Concern England; Nick Hurd MP, Shadow Minister for Charities, Voluntary Bodies & Social Enterprise and Peter Wanless, Big Lottery Fund. More details at www.southwestforum.org.uk/

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 26 November 2008

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.

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