

## Welcome to the second edition of *Sustainability Now*

Another month, another sustainability round-up from your sustainable development Champion Body SSW...and what a month! Flooding has affected many parts of the region with mass disruption to rail, road, water and electricity infrastructure. The chaos caused is a stark reminder of the costs of not acting on climate change – yet disappointingly the recently published government review of ‘sub-national and economic regeneration’ includes scant reference to low carbon approaches... (see ‘Regional ‘shake-up’ below for our reaction). This month’s *Sustainability Now* headlines at a glance:



- Regional ‘shake-up’ – our reaction
- Regional Climate Change Action Plan
- SSW’s Sustainability Summit 2007 – key messages emerging
- Sustainable tourism – ‘Future Footprints’ summer campaign gets underway
- *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* woos private sector
- National Trust goes up a gear
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- On your radar?
- Up & Coming
- Over to YOU

As a network of influential individuals your feedback on *Sustainability Now* is very valuable. You can send comments to [info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk](mailto:info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk) and view back issues at [www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability\\_now](http://www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability_now) (let us know if you’ve colleagues who need adding to our e-distribution list). **Please note SSW’s new office details below.**

### Regional ‘shake-up’ – our reaction

On the 17th July the Government launched its ‘Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration’ setting out future plans for tackling economic disparity and improving the UK’s economic performance. The review places stronger focus on ‘city-regions’ and gives local authorities a greater economic role. It calls for single regional strategies led by Regional Development Agencies, co-ordinating jobs, growth, housing, planning and environmental objectives and adopting an overarching goal of economic growth. The RDAs are also set to coordinate all development funding and simplify business support services. Significantly the review proposes phasing out Regional Assemblies by 2010 – their ‘scrutiny’ role transferred to local authorities (report at [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending\\_review/spend\\_csr07/reviews/subnational\\_econ\\_review.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_csr07/reviews/subnational_econ_review.cfm)).

SSW’s response to the review has highlighted the need for an integrated 21st century approach to economic, social and environmental well-being. Economic growth at any social or environmental price will not secure a safe, fair or prosperous future. A framework which facilitates more socially-just prosperity within environmental limits is required. Given the urgency of averting runaway climate change – the biggest threat to prosperity ever faced – a low carbon approach will be fundamental (a safe and fair ‘carbon budget’ for the SW has already been calculated by SSW see [www.fairsharesfairchoice.com](http://www.fairsharesfairchoice.com)). The rest of SSW’s submission is summarised below (and can be read in full at [www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/ssw\\_on/proposed\\_regional\\_shake-up](http://www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/ssw_on/proposed_regional_shake-up)):

- **Development agenda:** A national ‘one size fits all’ approach and blunt measures of progress such as GDP are inadequate for addressing SW challenges eg sustainable affordable housing, low carbon access and sustainable management of our prized natural environment.
- **Leadership and democracy:** Sound governance of regional development and public engagement needs to be grounded in a strong understanding of global, regional and local issues.
- **Regional economy:** A resilient and sustainable economy *is* a low carbon economy, which maximises business resource efficiency; provides sustainable homes and workplaces; uses locally generated renewable energy, strengthens local economies and facilitates the transition to low carbon sectors.
- **A single regional strategy:** This will only succeed if focussed on delivering sustainable development which responds to social, economic and environmental issues in an integrated way (the current SW ‘integrated regional strategy’ does not resolve economic, social and environmental incompatibilities). We are concerned that sustainable development commitments made in other regional documents/strategies may be lost and that RDAs may not be sufficiently equipped to deliver a genuinely sustainable single integrated strategy.

### Regional Climate Change Action Plan

SSW has submitted some overarching comments on the emerging regional climate change action plan, highlighting that this must seek to agree ambitious and definitive action to secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions within a short timescale i.e. the next 8-10 years. Our response can be read online at:

[www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/ssw\\_on/climate\\_change](http://www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/ssw_on/climate_change)

## SSW's Sustainability Summit 2007 – key messages emerging

### 3 topics of particular relevance and urgency for the SW were debated at SSW's 2nd annual summit:

- Leadership on climate change – the biggest threat our planet and region faces
- The SW's maritime environment in the context of the forthcoming Marine Bill and Severn barrage proposal
- Ensuring the integration of urban greenspace into the SW growth agenda

### Key messages from the Summit include:

- Stronger leadership at all levels, including in the region, is required to tackle climate change – with speaker Mark Lynas highlighting that some Government policies are leading us to a future that is a dangerous 4.5 degrees hotter. Special guest Satish Kumar (Editor of Resurgence magazine) reminded delegates that rapid increases in greenhouse gas emissions are down to 'man made' activities – we have the power to change how we act to keep temperatures within a safer 2 degree increase.
- A much more responsible and joined-up approach to managing our seas is required if our maritime environment is to have a sustainable future.
- Embedding enhanced healthy and productive urban green space networks within growth areas will be fundamental in supporting communities in towns and cities to be more sustainable.

## Sustainable tourism – 'Future Footprints' summer campaign gets underway

*Future Footprints*, the region's sustainable tourism visitor campaign coordinated by SSW, launched a kids' 'draw your own postcard' competition on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July at Bristol City Museum. Youngsters taking part are in with a chance of making and naming their very own ice cream, courtesy of Cornish ice cream makers Roskillys. Entrants are invited to draw their 'best day out' in the SW – supporting the *Future Footprints* campaign message to 'keep the South West special' by indulging in local food and treats\* and visiting nearby attractions by train, bus, bike and foot. Events are taking place across the SW this summer including a special schools launch held at Withycombe Raleigh C of E Primary School in Exmouth on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The competition winners will be announced in early October! (see [www.futurefootprints.org.uk](http://www.futurefootprints.org.uk))

\* for a new guide to buying really local souvenirs see [www.england-in-particular.info/goods/g-case3.html](http://www.england-in-particular.info/goods/g-case3.html)

## Fair Shares, Fair Choice woos private sector

Joining Jonathon Porritt (SSW President and SDC Chair), SSW attended the last CBI SW Environment Committee meeting on climate change – an opportunity to raise awareness of SSW's *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* low carbon movement to the private sector. Since the meeting key regional businesses, such as Flybe, Management Systems Modelling and Tenpin (the UK's largest bowling operator) have signed up to the principle of 'fair and safe carbon shares for all'. Check out FSFC workplace resources (and supporters) at [www.fairsharesfairchoice.com/workplace\\_coach.asp](http://www.fairsharesfairchoice.com/workplace_coach.asp) and don't forget you can share your organisation's low carbon story through the website too.

## National Trust goes up a gear

Membership of the National Trust has just reached an incredible 3.5 million and it has announced that it hopes to become a 'new green army'. The Trust aims to mobilize its vast public support to drive quality of life agendas and in particular to combat climate change which the Trust's Director General Fiona Reynolds describes as "the biggest challenge of our time". Conservation Director Peter Nixon explains "We have been cautious about expressing our voice loudly, now we have to engage in the public debate – if our knowledge tells us that expanding airports leads to problems then it is right we should say so." The Trust is a significant player in the SW and it has been a long time supporter of Sustainability South West. More power to their elbow!

### Sussed!



**Low carb homes** led by English Partnerships the 'Hanham Hall' site in Bristol is to be turned into very low carbon housing and work/retail space as part of the Government's 'Carbon Challenge' to house builders.



**Vision for SW businesses** the Envision scheme with helps businesses profit through resource and energy efficiency is to be extended beyond Objective 1&2 areas courtesy of a £800k cash injection from the SW Regional Development Agency.



**Organic boost** New Look and H&M are increasing their organic cotton ranges. The value of the UK organic cotton market is expected to surge by 50% in 2007.



**Yes, in my back yard!** Natural England's 'Let our Gardens Live' manifesto urges businesses, the public sector and individuals to tear up the paving in their gardens and let wildlife flourish. Great news for plants and animals and a good way to help lessen future flooding impacts too.



**Where's me jumper?** the Energy Saving Trust is urging householders, retailers and landlords to call time on gas-guzzling patio heaters which use on average more energy in 6 months than an oven hob does in a year!

### So last century...



**Local shop?** Patrick Holden – Soil Association CEO and organic farmer – has shared the truth behind some local produce stickers, revealing that carrots he supplied to Sainsburys were trucked to E Anglia and back before being sold locally. [www.guardian.co.uk/supermarkets/story/0,,2111468,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/supermarkets/story/0,,2111468,00.html)



**Carbon confusion in Home Office!** We didn't know whether to laugh or cry at a 'vox pops' on carbon footprints in a recent internal Home Office newsletter. Whilst some Home Office staff were clued up on carbon, one suggested, "If you thought too much about the environment you'd never go anywhere and that's no life!" (oh the irony!) whilst another had been told that a 2 hour flight was equivalent to an average drive to the airport.

## On your radar?

**How green is your region?:** a new Campaign to Protect Rural England/Friends of the Earth/WWF sponsored report on the environmental sustainability of Regional Spatial Strategies and Regional Economic Strategies. The report will be a useful reference for informing plans for a new single regional strategy. View it at [www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing\\_notes/how\\_green\\_is\\_my\\_region.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/how_green_is_my_region.pdf)

**Climate adaptors** If you're concerned primarily with adaptation strategies for climate change (rather than mitigation strategies) don't forget to check out the South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP) web pages at [www.oursouthwest.com/climate](http://www.oursouthwest.com/climate) SWCCIP will be welcoming new manager and co-ordinator, Alex Webb, on 28<sup>th</sup> August.

**Get Your hands Dirty!:** a new web-based teacher's resource supporting use of the 'outdoor classroom' including growing food and rearing animals on school grounds. See [www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools)

**Tipping point or turning point?:** MORI have released the latest stats (based on a UK representative sample) on the British public's attitudes towards climate change. The results make for mixed reading with the vast majority of respondents believing that the climate is changing and being concerned about it, but still less than half agreeing that this is mainly down to human beings. Full results at [www.ipsos-mori.com/publications/srireports/climatechange.shtml](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/publications/srireports/climatechange.shtml)

**Are those the new sustainable development indicators in your pocket?** Free pocket-sized copies of Defra's 2007 SD indicators report are now available from Defra Publications (tel. 08459 556000 or e-mail [defra@cambertown.com](mailto:defra@cambertown.com) quoting product code PB12683). The indicators – covering everything from health and housing to education and the environment – demonstrate progress in some areas, for instance recycling, along with worsening trends such as the growth in childhood obesity and in greenhouse gas emissions from aviation. The publication and data will also be available soon on the Government's SD website at [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk)

## Up & coming...

SW Wildlife Trusts are asking individuals and organisation across the SW to join them in staging 200+ climate friendly events – from local food picnics to ecohome open days – to celebrate **Climate Friendly Fortnight** (15-30 September). The aim is to share ideas for climate friendly living and demonstrate the support for action on climate change, including trusts showcasing their own work to help wildlife adapt. Email [climate@swwt.org.uk](mailto:climate@swwt.org.uk)

## Over to YOU

Remember – we're your friendly, 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 problems in adopting a more sustainable approach let us know so we can feed back messages on your behalf. You can also tell us about key regional events coming up over the next month so we can include this in our next edition of *Sustainability Now*.

**Contact us at:** [info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk](mailto:info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk) **Deadline for submissions: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August**

## Other news from Sustainability South West

More SSW news available on our new look website at:

[www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk](http://www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk)

...regular updates on SSW coordinated projects available from:

*Fair Shares, Fair Choice* – the SW's growing low carbon movement

[www.fairsharesfairchoice.com](http://www.fairsharesfairchoice.com)

*Sustainability Shaper* – the SW's new sustainable development framework

[www.shapersw.net](http://www.shapersw.net)

*Future Foundations* – the SW's sustainable construction charter

[www.futurefoundations.co.uk](http://www.futurefoundations.co.uk)

*Future Footprints* – the SW's sustainable tourism visitor campaign

[www.futurefootprints.org.uk](http://www.futurefootprints.org.uk)

*Sustainability Now 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 action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits.'*