

# Chapter 2

## Helping People Make Better Choices

### The facts

- ▶ 30% of people claim to care about companies' environmental and social record; but only 3% reflect this in their purchases<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Whilst 90% of people know that drinks cans can be recycled, only 50% say they have actually ever done it<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ *"The Government leading by example will have a galvanizing effect for other sectors"* (consultation response to 'Taking it on', KPMG, 2004)
- ▶ 60% of Britons think that global warming would be best tackled at a global level. Just under 1 in 10 people (9%) think it would be best tackled by individual households<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Cycling in London has risen by 30% since the introduction of the congestion charge<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Co-Op Bank, 2000

<sup>2</sup> NOP World research for WRAP, 2004

<sup>3</sup> BBC/ICM, July 2004, poll on climate change, at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/0/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/28\\_07\\_04\\_climatepoll.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/0/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/28_07_04_climatepoll.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)



## Summary

Behaviour changes will be needed to deliver sustainable development. However, attitude and behaviour change is a complex subject. Information alone does not lead to behaviour change or close the so-called “attitude-behaviour gap”. This chapter introduces a comprehensive behaviour change model for policy making, which will be applied in all priority areas. One of the key elements of the new approach is the need to engage people close to home. The new Community Action 2020 – Together We Can programme, to be launched later this year will support communities to work together to make the world more sustainable for themselves and future generations.

## Taking it on consultation responses

The majority of respondents recognised the importance of education, information, taxation, regulations, media campaigns and Government leadership as ways of changing behaviour. However, a few responses noted the limitations of these approaches when used individually, stating that they worked better as a package of measures tackling a variety of barriers at once.

## 1. Our approach

We all – governments, businesses, families and communities, the public sector, voluntary and community organisations – need to make different choices if we are to achieve the vision of sustainable development. What we have done in the past has led to some

*“Information does not necessarily lead to increased awareness, and increased awareness does not necessarily lead to action. Information provision, whether through advertisements, leaflets or labelling, must be backed up by other approaches.”*

**Demos & Green Alliance, 2003**

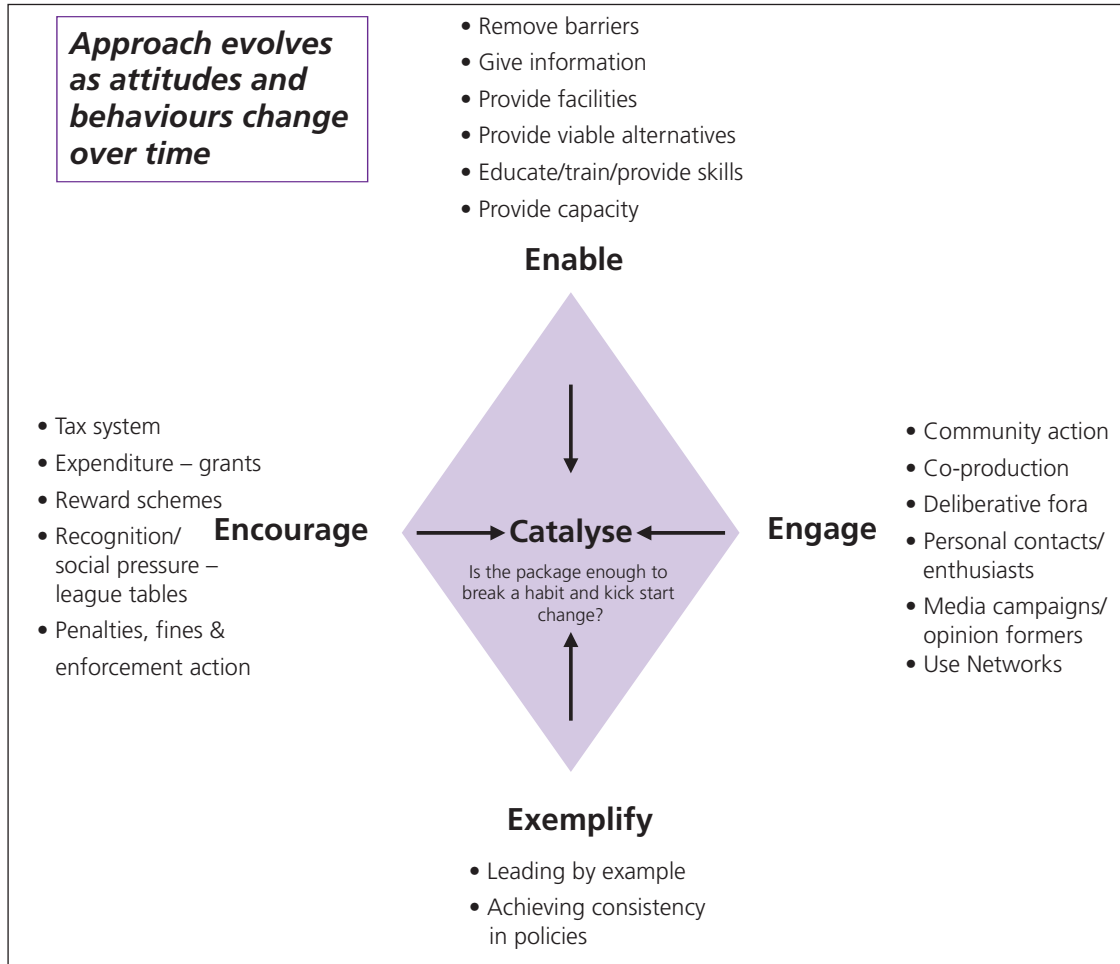
significant changes but failed to make that fundamental shift. In this chapter we propose a new approach based on research<sup>5</sup> on what influences the way we choose now. This brings together the levers that we have and gives greater recognition to some of the social and practical factors that influence and limit our choices – and recognises that we need a much more active approach to change habits.

Traditional regulation has been a driver of higher environmental standards and rising levels of social protection. It will continue to have a role to play. The Government’s approach to regulation means looking for alternatives to “classic” command and control regulation – through advice, voluntary agreements and use of economic instruments – such as taxes or trading schemes. Where regulation



- <sup>5</sup> ▶ Jackson, T, 2005. ‘Motivating Sustainable Consumption – a review of evidence on consumer behaviour and behavioural change’ at [www.sd-research.org.uk/documents/MotivatingSCfinal.pdf](http://www.sd-research.org.uk/documents/MotivatingSCfinal.pdf)
- ▶ Andrew Darnton, for Defra, March 2004, ‘The impact of sustainable development on public behaviour’ at [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk) (publications page)
- ▶ Andrew Darnton, for Defra, May 2004, ‘Driving public behaviours for sustainable lifestyles’ at [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk) (publications page)
- ▶ Prime Minister Strategy Unit, February 2004, ‘Personal Responsibility and Changing Behaviour: the state of knowledge and its implications for public policy’ at [www.number10.gov.uk/files/pdf/pr.pdf](http://www.number10.gov.uk/files/pdf/pr.pdf)
- ▶ Demos and the Green Alliance, for Defra, December 2003, ‘Carrots, sticks and sermons: influencing public behaviour for environmental goals’ at [www.green-alliance.org.uk/publications/PubCarrotsSticksSermons/](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/publications/PubCarrotsSticksSermons/)

remains the best option, the best results will be delivered through regulations which are focused on outcomes and are backed up by clear information and consistent enforcement<sup>6</sup>.



While there will continue to be a very important role for regulation and enforcement, regulation alone will not be able to deliver the changes we want to see. We need to make sure that we are using the levers available in a consistent way. The new strategy therefore focuses on the need to **enable, encourage and engage** people and communities in the move toward sustainability; recognising that Government needs **to lead by example**. The diagram above sets out what the elements under each of these headings could comprise.



*A cyclist enters London's congestion charge zone*

While these elements are all necessary for change to take place they may not be sufficient to bring about the changes we need when behaviour is entrenched. In these circumstances, we may need to go further and think about how we design policies to **catalyse** people to behave differently. Over time the aim is for the new behaviour to become the norm. That in turn can open up further possibilities for progress.

London's congestion charge provides an example of how this model can work in practice. A combination of charging, combined with increased provision of buses was introduced with a huge amount of accompanying publicity. It has had effects that have been far greater

<sup>6</sup> The Better Regulation Task Force was established in September 1997. It is an independent body that advises Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement accord with the five Principles of Good Regulation: Proportionality; Accountability; Consistency; Transparency; Targeting.

than originally forecast. There has been a 30 per cent reduction in congestion as people consider alternatives including public transport with an increase of 29,000 bus passengers entering the zone in the morning peak.

Government recognises the need for a comprehensive and consistent approach if we are to change deep-seated habits<sup>7</sup>. We have applied this approach across the priority areas set out in following chapters. This is key to delivering sustainable development, but there are synergies with many other areas – for example, the emphasis on healthier lifestyles in the Public Health White paper or the Home Office’s agenda on civic renewal.

There is also a lot of innovative activity going on at local level and through programmes funded by the Government’s Environmental Action Fund.

A three-year project, **ChangeLAB – Changing Lifestyles, Attitudes and Behaviour** – creates a European-wide knowledge base about effective local interventions to influence behaviour in sustainable directions, particularly regarding waste, transport, energy and water use. Funded under the EU’s Interreg IIC programme and led by Surrey County Council, ChangeLAB involves eight partners from Member States.

- ▶ **In order to evaluate and share what works best in practice we are establishing a “behaviour change” forum across Government departments and other stakeholders. This will enable behaviour change to be better understood among policy makers; help behaviour-based policies to be more successful through greater policy coherence and evaluation; and promote understanding of behaviour change as a core policy skill.**
- ▶ **To share information and to help people help us take forward the new strategy Government sustainable development website: [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk) is being re-launched. This will be developed into a resource centre for those who want to take action to deliver sustainable development.**

The rest of this chapter sets out more detail on the tools and approaches we will use. In the chapters on the priorities we show how we will apply this integrated approach in practice.

## 2. Community Action 2020 – Together We Can

Action by citizens and communities is central to the implementation of this new approach. Government has already recognised this in its broader commitment to community engagement.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development, in 2002, called for a greater emphasis on action. And one of the messages of the research is that sustainable development often works best when driven by people working together. We can learn and change our behaviour more effectively in groups: Community groups can help tackle climate change, develop community energy and transport projects, help minimise waste, improve the quality of the local environment, and promote fair trade and sustainable consumption and production.

<sup>7</sup> A more detailed paper on the changing behaviour model is available on the Government’s sustainable development website – [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk)

The Home Office review of capacity building found that communities often do not have the skills or confidence to get involved and often do not have the support they need within easy reach. Better co-ordination is also needed within the voluntary and community sector and between national and local levels. Government's priorities for action in light of the review are set out in 'Firm Foundations: the Government's framework for community capacity building' (Home Office, 2004).

'Taking it on' responses supported the Home Office findings:

- ▶ "Sustainable development was not well understood by the community" (Focus Group)
- ▶ Communities need "more support from the local and county council" (Residents Association)
- ▶ One Environmental Forum wanted "community action groups and other interested parties to have a bigger say on council strategies", and
- ▶ The Regional Report from North East commented that there is "a lot of good work on sustainable development by local authorities through their development of Local Agenda 21 strategies."

*"We are social creatures, our behaviours are shaped and constrained by social norms and expectations. Negotiating change is best pursued at the level of groups and communities. Social support is particularly vital in breaking habits, and in devising new social norms and more sustainable patterns of consumption. Government can play a vital role in nurturing and supporting community based social change."*

**Motivating Sustainable Consumption,  
Professor Tim Jackson, University of Surrey**

- ▶ support young people's development
- ▶ increase community cohesion, intergenerational activity and race equality
- ▶ strengthen democracy
- ▶ revitalise neighbourhoods
- ▶ make the best use of schools, and
- ▶ improve public health.

In England, a cross-government action plan, '**Together We Can**' is being developed to increase community engagement in solving public problems and improving people's quality of life. Led by the Home Office, the action plan draws together activities across a wide range of public policies and will set out specific areas where people will be given support to engage more with the work of public bodies so that together they can:

- ▶ build safer communities
- ▶ reduce re-offending and raise confidence in the criminal justice system

This Sustainable Development Strategy shares the same interest in involving more people in achieving its goals as other policy areas in the Together We Can action plan. This common interest is to be taken forward by a new programme to be called **Community Action 2020 – Together We Can**. This will form a key strand in the Together We Can action plan. It builds upon experience gained from Local Agenda 21, launched at the Rio Summit 1992, which inspired communities across the UK which is still being pursued in some areas, and has delivered real benefits. The message from the consultation however was that Government needed to re-energise community action to achieve a step change in the delivery of sustainable development<sup>8</sup>.

Community Action 2020 – Together We Can is a programme of support for community action on sustainable development, implementing the Prime Minister's call for action.

Thousands of community groups are already making a massive contribution to improving quality of life in their area. By thinking globally and acting locally, together, we can make a huge difference – to our neighbourhoods, our quality of life, and the future of our children. In today's world, small individual actions can add up to big changes for the better at the national and even international level.

*“Many local communities understand the links between the need to tackle national and global environmental challenges and everyday actions to improve our neighbourhoods and create better places to live. In 1997 I encouraged all local authorities to work with communities and produce Local Agenda 21 plans by 2000. There was an overwhelming response: from County Durham to Wiltshire and from Redbridge to Cheshire, local people showed what could be done. Next year, as a key part of our new Sustainable Development Strategy, I want to reinvigorate community action on sustainable development.”*

**Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister  
– 14th September 2004**

► **The Government will launch Community Action 2020 – Together We Can later in 2005 as a catalyst for thinking globally and acting locally in communities across England**

Community Action 2020 – Together We Can will re-invigorate community action on sustainable development by promoting new and existing opportunities to get involved in action of this kind. It will set out what is to be done to enable, encourage, engage and exemplify community action to increase sustainability and contribute to the priorities set out in subsequent chapters of this strategy.

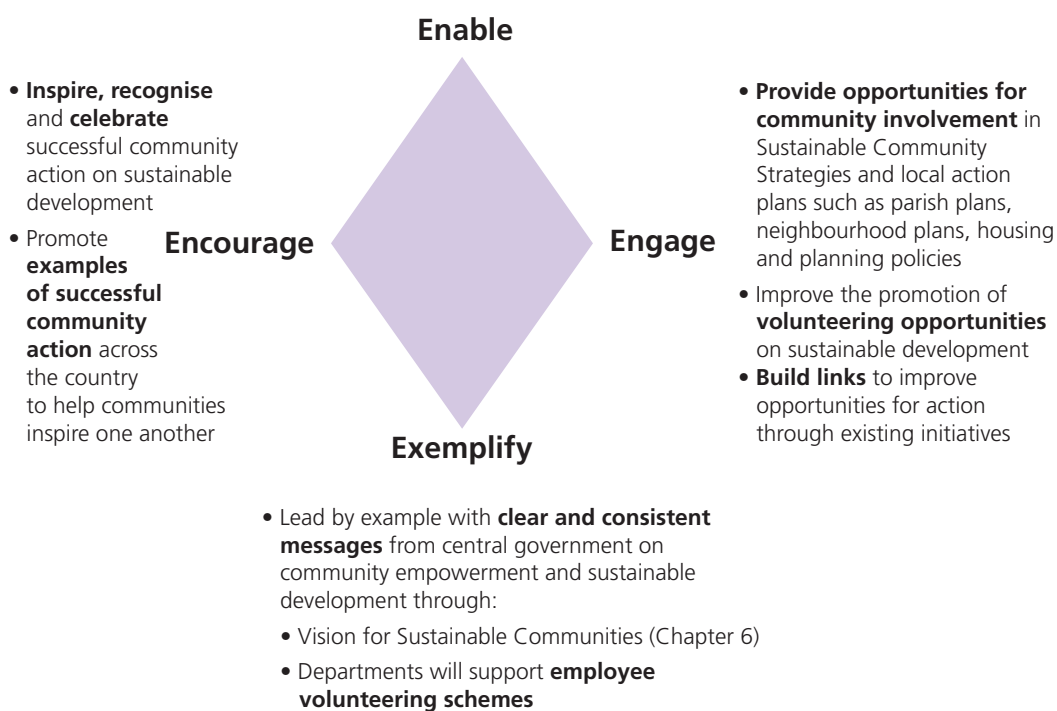
<sup>8</sup> A Joseph Rowntree Foundation report: Church and Elster, JRF, 2002, 'Thinking locally, acting nationally', found that in response to Local Agenda 21 (LA 21):

- Over 400 programmes took root across the UK.
- These programmes had a significant collective impact on targets for sustainable development, but this could grow more if more support was available to remove barriers to action.

Community workers helped promote environmental activity but lacked information on what works. Many LA21 programmes have struggled to recruit deprived and excluded communities, black and minority ethnic groups and younger and older sections of the population. Karen Lucas, Andrew Ross and Sara Fuller, JRF 2003, 'What's in a name? Local Agenda 21, community planning and neighbourhood renewal'.

### Community Action 2020 – Together We Can

- Strengthen the capacity of **Community Mentors and Community Development Workers** to support community action on sustainable development
- Increase **learning opportunities and training on sustainable development**
- Improve **access to seedcorn funding** for community projects on sustainable development
- Forge links with the **schools citizenship and sustainable development syllabuses**
- Improve **information of funding** availability



Community Action 2020 – Together We Can will enable community development practitioners and mentors to be better equipped to support communities. The Government will work with key stakeholders in the community sector to achieve this by:

- ▶ **improving access to information, advice, materials, community packs, web portals and training which will all help communities take action on sustainable development**
- ▶ **increasing opportunities for community workers and communities to learn about sustainable development**
- ▶ **including sustainable development in National Occupational Standards and accredited units which set out the skills and principles of practice for community development work, and**

► **increasing opportunities for individuals within communities to volunteer in sustainable development activity.**

Community Action 2020 – Together We Can will encourage the recognition and valuing of communities' efforts:

- by raising awareness of community awards and providing more information about them, and
- by improving access to sources of funding for environmental and sustainable development projects<sup>9</sup>.

### The Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund is the merged organisation of the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund. It supports charities and the voluntary sector and health, education and the environment and has taken on the Millennium Commission's responsibilities for funding large-scale regenerative projects.

Big Lottery Fund is working with the Sustainable Development Commission to deliver on the commitment to sustainable development set out in the 2003 statement by the New Opportunities Fund. This work will consider how the funding application, assessment and evaluation process could be improved in terms of its potential to deliver sustainable development.

The Big Lottery Fund has also requested support around the development of their new funding priorities and their forthcoming transformational grants programme, to ensure that they have incorporated sustainability principles.

There are already many examples of community projects, which help contribute to achieving sustainable development in the UK. By showing what can be achieved by small community groups, others gain in confidence. Sharing success stories can motivate and inspire people to make things happen in their own community. So Community Action 2020 – Together We Can will promote the exchange of information and experience between successful community projects and other communities who want to learn through training and web-based dissemination of good practice.

In partnership with local government and other local public bodies, it will engage people in planning for the future of their local neighbourhoods or parishes<sup>10</sup> and influencing the delivery of services in their area.

The Government appreciates the work of voluntary and community organisations in enabling individuals to contribute to the development of their communities. The Government is committed to working in partnership



*Communities 'Taking it on' in the public consultation for the Strategy review*

<sup>9</sup> The Home Office online portal ([www.governmentfunding.org.uk](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk)) provides access to grants for the voluntary and community sectors

<sup>10</sup> In Chapter 6 we describe how communities should be involved in drawing up plans which affect them: the Government will support local authorities to do more to engage communities.



with the voluntary and community sector through the principles of the Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector<sup>11</sup>.

Government as an employer can lead by example by supporting employees who volunteer for their community. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills already do so.

### 3. A new approach to communications and engagement

Evaluation of past awareness raising campaigns suggests that they have raised awareness but not translated into action. The new approach to climate change communications, launched in February 2005, is designed to address some of the past inadequacies. It will contribute to Community Action 2020 – Together We Can and help engage wider community action at the local level.

The toolkit for climate change communications (see Chapter 4) is designed to provide a model for future behaviour change campaigns on other issues. Key components of the initiative are:

- ▶ using positive and inspirational messages rather than fear or concern
- ▶ avoiding 'above the line' advertising e.g. TV or billboard
- ▶ galvanising local and regional communicators for climate change through financial support and guidance
- ▶ high-profile national communications to support the local and regional initiatives, and
- ▶ developing a new inspirational goal and a branded statement are recommended to link the communications of different organisations.

The effectiveness of this new initiative will be evaluated and used to improve the approach going forward.

<sup>11</sup> More details under [www.thecompact.org.uk](http://www.thecompact.org.uk).



*Proposed Olympic Park London 2012*

### **The London 2012 Olympic bid: Making sustainable development real...**



All our evidence shows that people find it difficult to relate to the general concept of sustainable development. We need therefore to exploit opportunities to show the benefits of sustainable development through things that people are interested in and do relate to.

Sustainability is a hallmark of London's Olympic bid. As well as being a key selling point for the London bid to the International Olympic Committee, it offers a unique, very high profile way of communicating the benefits of a sustainable approach to a wider public who would turn the off switch if lectured on sustainable development.

London 2012 is working closely with WWF-UK and Bioregional, a local charity, to introduce the concept of a 'One Planet Olympics'<sup>12</sup>. This introduces the sense of a more equitable share of finite resources, which complements the Olympic ideal of "sport and the harmonious development of mankind".

Sustainability goals for the London Olympic bid include:

- ▶ low carbon Games – to reduce energy demand and meet it from zero/low carbon and renewable sources and to showcase how the Olympic Games are adapting to a world increasingly affected by climate change
- ▶ zero waste Games – to avoid landfill by reducing waste at source, then reusing, recycling and recovering all remaining waste
- ▶ conservation of biodiversity – to conserve natural habitats and wildlife, improve the quality of urban greenspace and to bring nature closer to people
- ▶ sustainable transport – to reduce the need for travel and provide sustainable alternatives to the private car, and
- ▶ sustainable legacy – to promote health and wellbeing through an integrated package of sporting, environmental and cultural initiatives.

Work by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit<sup>13</sup> suggests that involving people directly in policy design may lead to more successful outcomes. There have already been some experiments with deliberative fora and citizens' juries where representative citizens help governments develop policy. These allow more in-depth discussion about options than

<sup>12</sup> WWF, Bioregional, 2005, Towards a One Planet Olympics – Achieving the first sustainable Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. One Planet Living is a joint initiative between WWF and Bioregional.

<sup>13</sup> Prime Minister Strategy Unit, February 2004, 'Personal Responsibility and Changing Behaviour: the state of knowledge and its implications for public policy' at [www.number10.gov.uk/files/pdf/pr.pdf](http://www.number10.gov.uk/files/pdf/pr.pdf)

an opinion poll or focus group – and allow people to judge trade-offs based on evidence and opinion from advocates and experts. In Texas it led to a change in energy policy; the Department for Culture, Media and Sport used this approach for the BBC charter review and the Department of Trade and Industry had citizens juries on flexible working. Some local authorities have been using deliberative techniques to help resolve some of the difficult decisions around waste disposal and recycling.

Defra has run two pilot workshops on “sustainable lifestyles” to test the possibility of organising a large-scale deliberative forum to feed into policy development. Initial results appear promising and can be viewed on the Government’s sustainable development website: [www.sustainable-government.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-government.gov.uk).

- ▶ **The Government is joining forces with the Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption to design and run a “deliberative forum” in 2006 – a two-three day discussion between 100-200 people representative of the country as a whole. They will look at how Government and citizens can work together to move towards a “one planet economy”, a concept discussed in Chapter 3**

We will also want to involve stakeholders directly in taking this strategy forward. This will help to keep the Strategy as a living document and allow it to be updated as we learn more, or need to respond to new issues.

- ▶ **From the end of 2005 we will pilot open and innovative ways to enable stakeholders to influence decisions about the kind of projects, which would deliver the goals of this strategy**

## 4. Using incentives

Incentives can take a number of forms including subsidies, voluntary initiatives, trading schemes or taxes. The reasons for using incentives can be to correct externalities or market failures – where the private costs do not reflect the real cost – or as a way of changing behaviours to achieve particular targets. Changing behaviour through ensuring we give the right price signals can be a very effective way of delivering our objectives at least cost to the economy.

The Government’s thinking on using economic instruments to tackle environmental issues were most recently set out in ‘Tax and the Environment: using economic instruments’ (HM Treasury 2002).

This document sets out the key principles that Government will apply when determining whether there is a role for economic instruments to tackle particular environmental issues. Environmental taxes are fundamentally different to most other taxes; their principal aim is to deliver more efficient and better environmental outcomes, not necessarily to raise revenue. So the way in which environmental taxes should be applied is also different. In particular, in developing policy on environmental taxation, attention is paid to:

- ▶ advance notice of new environmental taxes with extensive consultation on its design to allow people or firms to adapt their practices – for example, with the Climate Change Levy

- ▶ recycling some of the proceeds back to the sector paying the tax to help speed the response
- ▶ allow discounts in tax levels in return for negotiated commitments to reduce pollution, and
- ▶ using some of the proceeds to offer alternatives.

In other cases, taxes might not be the right choice and better results can be achieved through regulation (where for example we need to control local pollution impacts), trading schemes or voluntary agreements. Often the best approach will involve a package of measures, which could include some market incentives such as, for example, emissions trading or the Renewables Obligation. In all cases our aim must be to apply these measures in a sustainable way. That means:

- ▶ being clear about the environmental benefits we want to achieve
- ▶ choosing the measure that will impose least economic cost and most potential for economic benefit (for example, encouraging innovation)
- ▶ making sure that the change is fair and in particular that vulnerable groups do not bear too high a burden, and
- ▶ ensuring a degree of public acceptance.

### Using incentives – road pricing

Road pricing or road user charging is designed to influence the behaviour of road users, to encourage them to avoid driving at busy times and places in order to allow traffic to flow more freely.

The Government welcomed the findings of the road pricing feasibility study<sup>14</sup>, which found that a carefully constructed road pricing scheme could make a valuable contribution to reducing the environmental impacts of roads and traffic as well as its prime objective of managing traffic to reduce congestion.

The study found that a carefully constructed scheme could help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as help with more localised emissions, but the impact is not entirely clear cut and would depend on the precise nature of the scheme. The Government agrees that the time has come to consider seriously the role that could be played by some form of road pricing policy and will look carefully at potential environmental impacts as work on road pricing is taken forward, alongside the potential benefits arising from other measures to improve the management and use of the road network.

The Government continues to refine its approach to the use of economic instruments. Particular methodological and analytical issues, which have been kept under review, include:

- ▶ improving the links between environmental impacts and economic growth, particularly the challenge to global growth from climate change
- ▶ getting the right balance of environmental tax, other economic instruments and other policy interventions, in particular the role of price and quantity based economic instruments

<sup>14</sup> [www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_roads/documents/divisionhomepage/029709.hcsp](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/divisionhomepage/029709.hcsp)

- ▶ the role of economic instruments in encouraging innovation and new technologies
- ▶ intervening at the points where it is likely to have most impact, for example getting the right balance between incentivising waste minimisation and recycling
- ▶ using combinations of different policy interventions, such as regulation tied to trading
- ▶ taking account of some of the wider effects of using economic instruments, such as the behavioural change that results from making announcements about the implementation of policy
- ▶ interventions will not be used in isolation but will be allied with education and communication, and
- ▶ ongoing evaluation of the impacts of measures and taking account of these lessons.
- ▶ **To advance understanding on the role of economic instruments evaluations of the Climate Change Levy and Aggregates Levy are underway. The results of these evaluations will help to build a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of environmental taxes and will inform other reviews, including that of the Climate Change Programme and a further stocktake of the evaluation of environmental tax policy for the Budget.**

## Examples of Interventions

Tax	Trading scheme	Mixed Instruments	Tax credits/ public spending	Voluntary agreements
Landfill Tax Escalator (standard tax rate to increase annually by £3 from April 2005 to reach a medium/long term rate of £35 per tonne.	EU Emissions Trading Scheme January 2005.	Renewables Obligation – a mixed instrument comprising a regulation and trading of renewable obligation certificates.	Recycling of revenues from Landfill Tax Escalator to business.	The Pesticides Voluntary Initiative was accepted by the Government on the 1st April 2001, in place of a proposed tax on pesticides used in agriculture and horticulture.
New lower rate of Vehicle Excise Duty for the most environmentally friendly cars.	Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme, April 2005.	Inland Revenue rules encourage employees to cycle to work in a number of ways including tax-efficient bike purchase from salary.		The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is an organisation comprising corporations, NGOs, and Trade Unions which is committed to improving the conditions of workers in the global supply chains of corporate members through voluntary agreements and codes of conduct.

The tax system works at national level – but in many cases we want more targeted incentives. Recent work has focused on local or targeted “positive incentives”<sup>15</sup> in motivating more sustainable behaviour. We will consider the scope for using such incentives.

<sup>15</sup> Maxine Holdsworth and David Boyle, National Consumer Council, 2004, ‘Carrots not sticks: the possibilities of a sustainable consumption reward card for the UK’ at [www.ncc.org.uk](http://www.ncc.org.uk)

## 5. Forming habits early – the role of education

Formal education has a crucial role to play in both raising awareness among young people of sustainable development, giving them the skills they need to put sustainable development into practice in later life; but also in forming good habits at an early age.

*“The people who will succeed fifteen years from now, the countries which will succeed, are those which are most based on a sustainable vision of the world. That is what we should be training people to do.”*

**Rt. Hon. Charles Clarke MP, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, 2003**

young people – their personal quality of life, and the wellbeing of the communities and environment around them – their learning becomes more relevant and compelling, with positive impacts on standards of achievement and behaviour. Working towards sustainable development goals can also increase the sense of purpose felt by staff in schools, colleges and universities, with impacts on morale, retention and recruitment of new staff.

On behalf of the Government, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) aims to ensure that sustainable development is embedded in the core education agenda across all education and skills sectors. A Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills, was launched in September 2003.

### Schools

The DfES' Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners contains a vision that:

*‘Every school should (also) be an environmentally sustainable school, with a good plan for school transport that encourages walking and cycling, an active and effective recycling policy (moving from paper to electronic processes wherever possible) and a school garden or other opportunities for children to explore the natural world. Schools must teach our children by example as well as instruction.’*

There is an opportunity for schools to develop the skills of sustainable living not just through the curriculum, but through the examples that teachers set on a daily basis, and through pupils' direct experience of living and studying within the school environment. Through parents and other sections of the local community, good habits established in young people have the potential to exert influence far beyond the classroom. We are keen to give further encouragement to teenagers – often the group with the highest levels of interest in the environment but least likely to translate that into action – to put their beliefs into action.

*“The Government is now developing a school specific method of environmental assessment that will apply to all new school buildings. Sustainable development will not just be a subject in the classroom: it will be in its bricks and mortar and the way the school uses and even generates its own power. Our students won't just be told about sustainable development, they will see and work within it: a living, learning place in which to explore what a sustainable lifestyle means.”*

**Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister**  
14th September 2004



Source: DfES

- ▶ **Defra and the Connexions Card Service of the DfES are launching a joint pilot initiative in schools and colleges to reward student behaviour – individual or in a group – which recognises and responds to environmental and community issues**

Through the Extended Schools initiative, we are exploring ways in which schools can actively support sustainable development in their local communities, leading to practical improvements in local quality of life. Good examples are school transport, where the Government is promoting healthier, greener and safer ways of travelling to school, and healthy living, where projects to improve school food and reinforce healthy eating messages in the classroom are underway.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, the Government is working to build capacity



Children exploring nature through a wildlife pond at Greenwich Millennium Primary School

within subjects such as citizenship, geography, religious education and science. These subjects are already used to explore sustainable development in various contexts, helping pupils to grow into responsible decision-makers and informed problem-solvers. We want to make it easier for teachers and school leaders to make their schools more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

- ▶ **In 2005 the Government will launch a sustainable development framework for schools, a web-based service hosted within [www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk), providing a one-stop shop for teachers and school leaders**

Over the next 10-15 years, the Government is committed to renewing all secondary schools (currently, some 3,400), in particular through the **Building Schools for the Future** programme. All new schools will need to be rated 'very good' according to a system designed with the Building Research Establishment.

## Life-long sustainable development

The good work started in schools needs to be continued on into higher education and professional development.

- ▶ **The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will publish their own strategies for sustainable development later in 2005**

The strategies, which are being developed following extensive processes of consultation, aim to encourage institutions within the college and university sectors to embed sustainable development within their teaching and learning, their management and leadership, and their engagement with the wider community.

To maintain a more competitive economy, to compete internationally and build ourselves sustainable communities, we need to improve the knowledge and skills base of everyone, including professionals and others in the workplace.



*DD, the mascot for the UNESCO ESD website*

Later parts of the strategy set out how we are planning to upgrade public sector skills for sustainable development, help business with corporate social responsibility and develop a strategy for sustainable development in the workplace, but we need to make “sustainability literacy” a core competency for professional graduates.

► **DfES is working with Forum for the Future to ensure sustainability is promoted across the spectrum of professional bodies**

The Government will implement the United Nations Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which underpins the UN Decade for ESD running from 2005-2014, and will seek ways in which to help other countries develop their own sustainable development education strategies.

DfES launched the Global Gateway in February 2004<sup>16</sup>. Working with British Council International, the website enables people involved in education across the world to engage in creative partnerships. This will help to ensure that education crosses national boundaries and that young people become truly global citizens.

<sup>16</sup> [www.globalgateway.org.uk/](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/)



## Skills for Sustainable Development



DfES have done much to **embed sustainable development into the school curriculum**, and their Sustainable Development Action Plan commits them to embedding sustainable development in all areas.

DfES is also keen that **“Sustainability Literacy”** becomes a core competency for **professional graduates**. DfES has, with Forum for the Future and professional organisations, set up the **Sustainability Integration group** to raise the profile of sustainability literacy in the professional curricula.



Sustainable development will be embedded into the **curriculum of the National School of Government**, in areas such as policy making, strategic leadership, programme and project management and the behavioural aspects of management development.

This will build on current workshops with senior civil servants on sustainable development run by the Centre for Management and Policy Studies.



The Government will work to increase the range of learning opportunities on sustainable development available to all **community practitioners**.

It will expand the **National Occupational Standards** to include Sustainable Communities and explore developing an additional accredited unit.

**Community Action 2020 – Together We Can** will enhance the skills of community groups in sustainable development to be able to participate in discussions with local Government and leaders of Local Strategic Partnerships.



During 2005 the Government will establish a new **Academy for Sustainable Communities** which will work together with partners to develop sustainable development learning opportunities for Local Strategic Partnerships as well as **Sir John Egan's core occupations** as set out in his review of sustainable community skills.



The launch of a **new Government Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) website** outlining Government support for CSR, with links to other CSR organisations and case studies of best practice.

The establishing of a **CSR Academy** to support skills development in this area.

Sustainable development competencies are **integrated into all the main professional bodies**, including their registration requirements and qualifications.



During 2005, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) will roll out a **Sustainable Communities module** within the **Leadership Academy** to build the capacity of **local authority Leaders and Chief Executives**.

A **peer review toolkit** on sustainable communities will also be launched.

We will work through the Centres of Excellence to encourage **sustainable procurement** throughout **local government and improved skills training**:

As part of the **Future Leadership programme** for local authority middle managers, we will introduce material to improve **awareness and understanding** about delivering sustainable communities.