

I will if you will

Towards sustainable consumption



About the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable

This report is the concluding work of the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, jointly hosted by the National Consumer Council (NCC) and the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) for 18 months from September 2004 to March 2006.

Funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Roundtable brought together a small group of leading experts in consumer policy, retailing and sustainability to advise government on how to create consumer choices that stay within environmental limits.

Work of the Roundtable

The Roundtable has conducted its own primary research into a range of possible solutions and approaches to sustainable consumption. Our work included:

- > A major two-day Consumer Forum, facilitated by Opinion Leader Research, with findings reported in Shifting opinions.
- > A seminar for stakeholders in Cardiff, with the participation of Welsh Assembly Minister for the Environment and Planning, Carwyn Jones.
- > Roundtable input into an event on sustainable consumption with Sustainability Scotland Network and SDC in Stirling.
- > A General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland event - led by Roundtable Member Sinéad Furey - on responsible consumption.
- > A high-level Business Dialogue event, facilitated by Cambridge Programme for Industry, with 30 senior managers, retailers and manufacturers from international businesses, exploring the respective roles of consumers, government and business in driving change.
- > Seeing the Light: a report based on in-depth interviews with 30 households, with and without micro-generation, about their awareness of how they use energy in the home.
- > Double Dividend?: a detailed sustainability appraisal of expert nutrition guidelines on diet, and a survey of the evidence on how schools can offer menus that are both more sustainable and nutritious.

- > Looking Forward, Looking Back: a survey of how more sustainable products have been mainstreamed in the past, yielding lessons for future market transformation.
- > Communities of interest - and action? A briefing on the opportunities and barriers for community-level action, based on ten in-depth interviews with project leaders.

All these reports, and a series of smaller internal research papers referenced in the report, are available from www.sd-commission.org.uk or www.ncc.org.uk.

Following this final report, the government will set out a plan for further action on sustainable consumption.

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Preface: future life

This report is about the good life: the good life that is possible if people, business and government all share responsibility to open the way to new solutions.

These drawings are by ordinary people who worked with us in our research. They are a selection of the positive dreams and aspirations people have for their future life and for the well-being of their loved ones.

With the right imagination and application, the conditions can be right for all to live a good life and fulfil these aspirations, sometimes in new and smarter ways. And we can do so with the essential bonus of living in ways that are sustainable so that they generate quality of life for all, and for good. This report is dedicated to that opportunity.



Executive summary

On the key environmental issues of our day, progress depends on enabling people to act together. This report sets out how a significant shift towards more sustainable lifestyles is possible and positive all round.

Some of the building blocks are already in place, in terms of an extensive evidence base and an existing set of commitments from government. The key now is to take action that enables people to take up the more sustainable habits and choices that they want.

The focus needs to be on creating a supportive framework for collective progress, rather than exhorting individuals to go against the grain. This is the approach that we heard time and again in our engagement with consumers and business – encapsulated in the notion of ‘I will if you will’.

It is possible to make sustainable habits and choices easier to take up, by drawing on insights about consumer behaviour and using people’s preferences for purchasing shortcuts, and what we call the trend towards ‘choice editing’ (see glossary).

People, business and government – the three groups at the corners of our ‘triangle of change’ – will play a key part in this. This report looks at each group in turn, and then at policies that can link them: while no one of the three can lead alone, a co-ordinated approach can create the opportunities and responsibilities to accelerate change. The right policy approach will focus on positive solutions that work with the grain of people’s aspirations rather than against them. And it will put consumer lifestyles, and the everyday products and services that people use, centre stage.

The illustrations we offer to achieve this do not solve all the issues of a sustainable future. But, by opening people’s minds to the impacts of their actions and demonstrating alternatives, they can also help build the space for more mandatory policies to tackle the most difficult issues.

In our deliberations, we focus primarily on the environmental dimensions of sustainability, while testing the implications of our recommendations for social justice. In part this is in recognition of the complexity of the debate and our own limitations. But more fundamentally, it is because we recognise that living within ecological limits is the non-negotiable basis for our social and economic development.

‘Living within ecological limits is the non-negotiable basis for our social and economic development.’

We view the challenge of sustainable consumption as a spectrum. At the near end of this spectrum are measures that require less in terms of intervention and active change. A simple technological intervention – a mini wind turbine on the roof, or a big cut in standby power requirements for TVs and set-top boxes, for example – could have a very positive environmental impact. In the centre of the spectrum are more deep-seated changes to habits and routines, like restoring a sense of seasonality to what we eat, turning off lights and opting to walk or cycle

in the neighbourhood rather than taking the car. At the far end of the spectrum are innovations and measures that allow people to change behaviour or aspirations in a more fundamental way, such as around air transport.

The purpose of public policy on sustainable consumption should be to enable government, business, and all of us as individuals to move progressively along this spectrum, tackling the right issues at the right points.

To start this, and improve quality of life for all and for good, we now need a step-change forward. The government's sustainable development framework for the UK aims to deliver a 'strong, healthy and just society within global limits'. The challenge is to move to patterns of consumption that achieve both principles at once. The government has already made a commitment to 'set out a plan for further action on sustainable consumption'. On the right, we set out our headline findings and principal recommendations.

This report details practical solutions. While its recommendations are aimed at the UK government, they have an eye to the implications for future wider development. Rather than a rigid set of rules, we have established a Sustainable Consumption Action Framework as a guide for government policy. We see that short-term action can also contribute to longer-term solutions on more complex issues. In our concluding chapter we examine some of these deeper challenges that we face on the path to a more sustainable future.

There is space for change

Government can be bolder about driving markets, as there are win-win outcomes. A mass of people are ready and willing to see new policies introduced that will help them change their behaviour in the face of climate change and global poverty. But they need the government to set an example and make it easier for them to do the right thing.

- > Set a visible example to the public, by making all central government buildings and transport carbon-neutral by 2012, and putting a priority on changes such as sustainable food and on-site renewable energy in public settings like schools and hospitals.

Start from where people are

Four areas of our lives generate four-fifths of our overall impact on the environment around us: how we run our homes; the food we eat; how we get around; and how we travel on our holidays. The way to connect with people's aspirations in these areas is to promote symbolic and effective action that touches their everyday lives.

- > Advance practical initiatives such as these catalysts for behaviour change:
 - giving airlines a clear incentive to introduce carbon offset on an 'opt-out' basis to wake people up to the impact of flying;
 - making on-site energy generation a common sight in new homes and public buildings, to connect people with climate change;
 - rolling out smart meters, to help people get to grips with energy use;
 - enabling schools to serve balanced, seasonal, quality food, to get children into good eating habits;
 - giving serious incentives to low-carbon cars.

We believe that action on all five catalysts together would have a powerful cumulative impact on individuals, helping to break habits and shape new behaviours. It will also help to open minds to other more challenging lifestyle changes needed in the long term.

Don't put the burden solely on green consumers

Government and business must focus fairly and squarely on mainstream consumers, rather than expecting the heroic minority of green shoppers to shop society's way out of unsustainability. Choice editing by manufacturers, retailers and regulators already has a track record in getting high-impact products off the shelves and low-impact products onto them – so bring out the responsible consumer in everyone by making sustainable products the norm.

- > Collaborate with business champions to plot ten sustainability 'product roadmaps' by 2007 for rapid change in priority high-impact products. This could accelerate the switch to:
 - low-carbon cars;
 - low-energy home entertainment; and
 - the next generation of energy-efficient lighting.

Show people they're part of something bigger

People are willing to change, but they need to see others acting around them to feel their efforts are worthwhile. Fairness matters. A combination of incentives, community initiatives and local feedback will reassure people that they are part of a collective movement that's making a real difference.

- > Reward households for careful use of energy and water via taxes and tariffs, and penalise excessive consumption. The government's Energy Review is an opportunity to enable such incentives on energy use.
- > Empower and resource local authorities to help people play their part in sustainable communities. Councils should give street-level feedback on recycling and other achievements, reward those who pledge to adopt sustainable behaviours, and support community-level action.

Develop the tools and momentum to tackle more difficult issues

There are ways in which sustainability imperatives collide with contemporary consumer aspirations, particularly when it comes to foreign travel and the car culture. With the right process, government should not be scared to engage people and business in dialogue on thorny issues.

- > Commit to an ongoing programme of deliberative fora with the public, at a national and regional level, working with media partners to enable as many people as possible to engage with what they can do to meet the carbon reduction targets of 20 per cent by 2010 and 60 per cent by 2050.
- > Develop a working economic model for HM Treasury that can track the links between national income and resource consumption, by 2008. This must be underpinned by comprehensive accounts for high-impact resource flows within the UK⁽¹⁾.

Introduction: from a three-planet economy to one

We live in a consumer society, with unprecedented individual comfort, convenience and choice. What we buy may come from shops and businesses that in turn may buy from factories and farms. All these supply chains start in the same place – nature.

The connections between how we live and the natural systems of the planet are made opaque by the complexity of today's economy. Yet the simple truth is that if everyone in the world consumed at the average rate we do in the UK, we would need three planets.

This report is about how we should look after that end of the supply chain to ensure our continued prosperity – wherever we are. From water conservation to climate change, the solutions range from simple to complex, but a common theme is collaborative action. We cannot expect business or the government to do it alone; but they can enable people to take part. With co-ordination and a little courage, solutions are available.

Even so, it might be tempting to duck this issue, taking comfort in uncertainties in the scientific data or simply expecting markets to ensure we innovate our way out of trouble. But consumption – a field which covers not just shopping, but how we use things and how we get around; all the ways in which we use the planet's resources in our everyday lives – cannot be sidelined. Production-side solutions are crucial, but cannot provide the whole answer:

- > Products like fridges can be designed to use less energy, but we quickly start to expect larger ones and it becomes normal to own

two. Then along come the promotions for ice-makers and beer-chillers.

- > On average, cars have become more energy-efficient, but we use them more⁽²⁾. Thanks to greater car-dependence and the uptake of higher-emission models, including SUVs, UK CO₂ emissions from road transport in 2004 were nine per cent higher than 1990⁽³⁾.

The sustainable development framework for the UK, agreed by government, aims to deliver a better quality of life within global limits. The challenge of sustainable consumption is about ways of living that can achieve both principles. The opportunity we explore is whether we can update our lifestyles, and get smarter about how to do this.

'The simple truth is that if everyone in the world consumed at the average rate we do in the UK, we would need three planets.'

This has an irreducible international dimension. On current growth rates, Chinese consumer spending will make the country the world's second largest market in terms of household consumption by 2014⁽⁴⁾. Over the same time horizon, the UN Millennium Development Goals aim to cut human poverty. The Commission for Africa has argued that significant economic growth is required to lift Africa from poverty. They set out recommendations to enable African countries to achieve

and sustain growth rates of seven per cent by 2010⁽⁵⁾. These are urgent imperatives, but, equally, where will all the natural resources to make the products to fuel such growth come from? Sustainable consumption is not a luxury concept for the rich to worry about. It is a necessity for all.

Our findings, which are upbeat and positive, build on what has been achieved, through the recognition of the wider challenge of 'sustainable development' in so much of business life and government policy. This work was set in train by the government's UK sustainable development strategy, *Securing the future*, which establishes sustainable consumption and production as one of four priorities. The principles enshrined in this strategy for the government, UK-wide, make clear for the first time that sustainable consumption is the model we need to realise the twin goals of 'living within environmental limits' and 'ensuring a strong, healthy and just society', underpinned by good governance, sound science and a sustainable economy.

Building on the thinking first set out in *Changing Patterns*, alongside work from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Securing the Future* illustrates the government's increasingly sophisticated model of behaviour change for sustainable consumption⁽⁶⁾. Our findings flesh out some practical steps for putting these ideas into action with consumers.

Our findings also build on existing government action relating to the role of business and the products they make and sell in achieving sustainable consumption. We have drawn on the recommendations of the

government's Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment, as well as pioneering sectoral strategies co-ordinated by both DTI and Defra, including the draft Food Industry Sustainability Strategy⁽⁷⁾. In turn, we have set some future challenges for the new Sustainable Consumption and Production Business Task Force.

Consumer behaviour

Enabling behaviour change is no trivial task. Our consumption patterns offer a complex, yet telling picture of the kind of society we have become and of our relationship to material goods and services.

Getting to grips with the forces that drive consumer behaviour is challenging. But there is already a considerable evidence base on which to build change. Two or three key lessons emerge from that evidence base⁽⁸⁾. We know, for instance, that there is a considerable gap – the so-called ‘value-action gap’ – between people’s attitudes, which are often pro-environmental, and their everyday behaviours.

‘People often find themselves “locked in” to consumption patterns that are unsustainable.’

We also know that consumer goods and services play a huge variety of roles in people’s lives. Some of these roles are purely functional. Food satisfies a need for subsistence, housing for basic protection. But material artefacts also have another vital purpose. Cars, houses, fashions, gifts, trophies, photographs: all these goods are called on to play vital symbolic roles in our lives. From football matches to weddings, from family holidays to dinner parties, from the work environment to social occasions, the ‘evocative power’ of material goods and services is used to shape our social world⁽⁹⁾. Through them we negotiate status, understand our identity, interact with our family



and friends, and even pursue the dreams and aspirations which give our lives meaning.

It is legitimate to ask, of course, whether this heavy reliance on material things for social and psychological ends is a good thing. In fact, this may turn out to be one of the most important questions of all in our search for sustainable consumption. But the reality is that ‘stuff’ shapes our lives and we neglect that insight at our peril.

Another hugely important lesson for sustainable consumption is that, far from being able to exercise free choice about what to consume and what not to consume, people often find themselves ‘locked in’ to consumption patterns that are unsustainable. The literature on this is very clear and goes a long way to explaining the value-action gap. ‘Lock-in’ occurs in part through ‘perverse’ incentive structures – economic constraints, institutional barriers, or inequalities in access that actively encourage unsustainable behaviours. It also flows from social expectations and cultural norms. Sometimes we act unsustainably out of sheer habit. Sometimes we do so because that’s what everyone else does⁽¹⁰⁾.

This evidence emphasises the difficulty associated with negotiating sustainable consumption. But it also highlights the potential for policy to establish new opportunities for sustainable living and to intervene more creatively to unlock ‘bad habits’ and negotiate new social norms.

Our findings

We have drawn extensively on this body of knowledge. We have also added to it, albeit in a modest way, through limited primary research with consumers and businesses. Our findings draw from our deliberative analysis of these sources and focus on the policy framework that could make a difference.

It is worth noting that, while our analysis is informed by a UK context, many recommendations relate to policy issues that are devolved. Because it has been commissioned as a joint initiative by Defra and the DTI, such recommendations in this report apply to England only. However, many of the underlying issues – for example, about the space for change, the psychology of choice, or the evidence of market transformations – will apply in equal measures to all four nations. We hope this work will be a resource for each of the devolved administrations, as they explore specific strategies appropriate to their context.

‘People, business and government each occupy a corner in a triangle of change.’

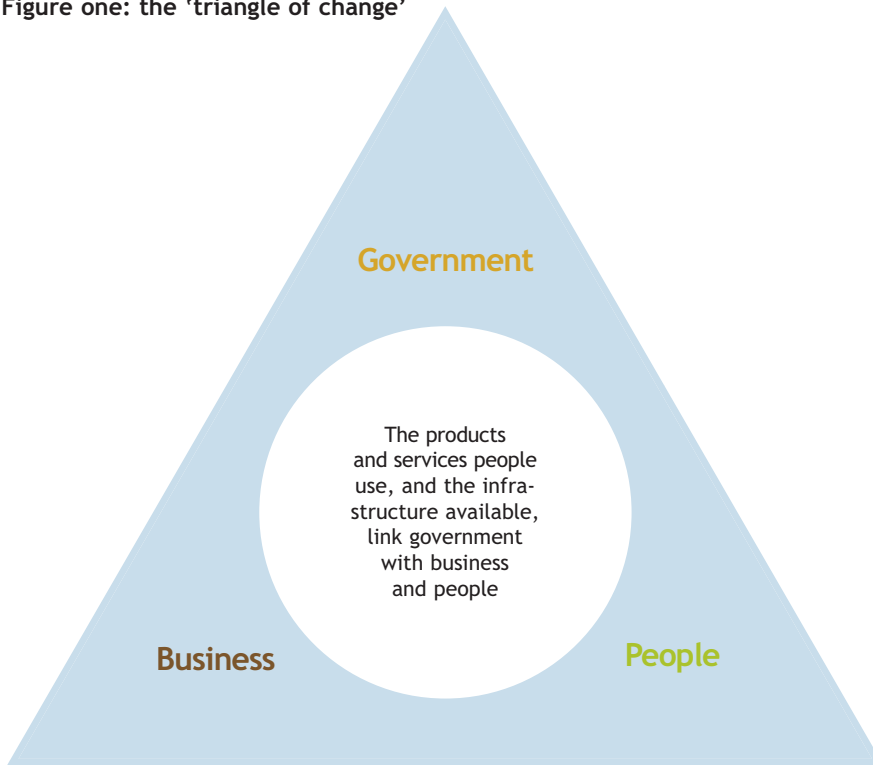
Our headline assessment is that a critical mass of citizens and businesses is ready and waiting to act on the challenge of sustainable consumption⁽¹¹⁾. But to act, they need the confidence that they will not be acting alone, against the grain and to no purpose. One thing we have observed though, is that both the business world and citizens are

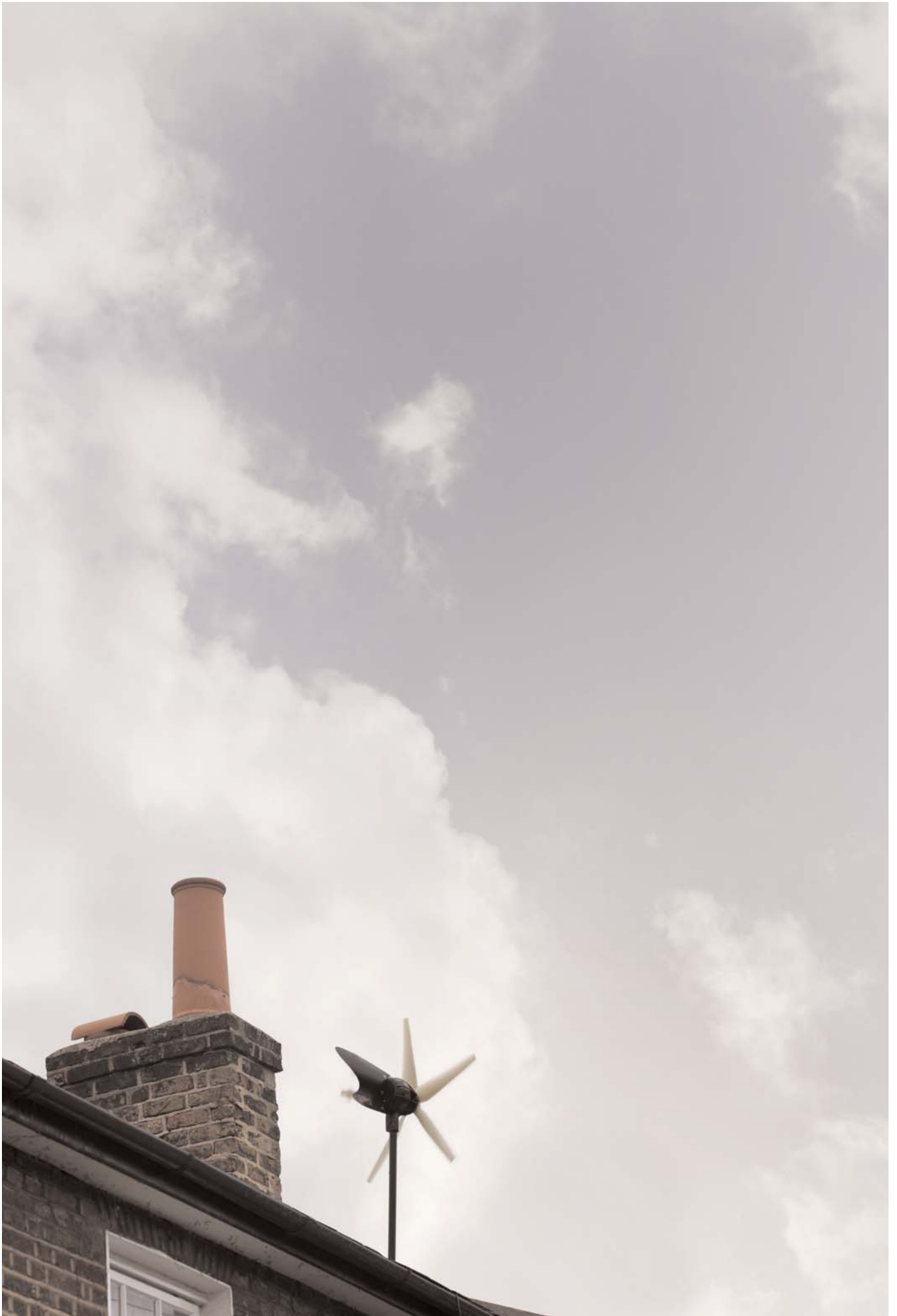
increasingly willing to embrace key aspects of a smarter, more sustainable lifestyle, but on one reassurance: that others, whether your neighbour at home or your competitor in business, act likewise – the simple idea of ‘I will if you will’⁽¹²⁾.

It is government, at all levels, that is best placed to co-ordinate a collective approach to change, through an enabling policy framework.

People, business and government each occupy a corner in a triangle of change. No one, or even two groups, can lead on sustainable consumption alone. Different corners lead at different times by doing what they can do best. Until now this has often been accidental. The change might be profound if it were co-ordinated.

Figure one: the 'triangle of change'





One: people – the first corner of the triangle

Fewer than one in three people have heard of the term ‘sustainable development’; and qualitative studies suggest that very few, even of these, can explain what it means⁽¹³⁾. So it makes sense to start from how people understand their own lives, and the connections to the world around them.

‘It’s scientific jargon, isn’t it? So maybe you don’t understand exactly what point they are getting to because it’s not highlighted in, like, say, our language – layman’s terms. You don’t take notice of it... and I believe in recycling and love talking over the environment, but... I don’t seem to understand what they’re saying.’

Consumer forum participant

To do so, we used the research technique of a structured, deliberative Consumer Forum. We commissioned Opinion Leader Research (OLR) to run an event in which over a hundred people, from all walks of life, deliberated on their aspirations and how these fitted with ideas of policies to encourage more sustainable consumption. (See appendix two for more about how this operated.)

In designing this, and learning from it, we also drew on a previous pilot event run by Defra, as well as qualitative and quantitative work by Brook Lyndhurst, MORI and others on public attitudes on the environment⁽¹⁴⁾. Together these had confirmed that:

- > People recognise the issues, and there are a high proportion of people that want to ‘do the right thing’⁽¹⁵⁾.

- > The arrival of recycling bins on people’s doorsteps helped people to take ‘environmental’ action. Yet recycling can also dominate their frame of reference and some struggle to think about other ways in which they can make a difference⁽¹⁶⁾.
- > In a world of information-overload, it is not more information campaigns or leaflets that are needed⁽¹⁷⁾.

Those at the Forum were able to be frank about the gap between what they felt about the urgency of the challenge and what they felt able to do as individuals in the current context of their lives⁽¹⁸⁾. The barriers they cited resonated clearly with those identified by a well-developed body of research⁽¹⁹⁾:

- > we are creatures of habit, reluctant to make changes that challenge our routines;
- > we are highly influenced by the social norms we see around us;
- > we often lack access to facilities like doorstep recycling or good public transport;
- > we perceive sustainable options to be expensive and niche;
- > we are preoccupied with short-term household budgets and, for low-income consumers, with making ends meet on a weekly basis; and
- > we often do not trust the government bodies and businesses that are exhorting or enticing us to change.

The space for change

We were struck by the number of spontaneous references to environmental concerns at our Consumer Forum, when people who participated took the time to think and talk freely about their aspirations in relation to consumer trends⁽²⁰⁾. These were not often mentions of the 'environment' as a word, per se. Instead, a number of people of all ages in each group spoke up about global warming, food additives, pollution, Hurricane Katrina and flooding. Most apparent was a growing sense of insecurity about the chaotic impacts of climate change.

'I remember a pretty hot summer five years ago when I bought four fans. The next year I had to get air conditioning. What will it be like in ten years time?'

Consumer forum participant

This finding runs alongside other evidence that suggests there is currently political space for more action to make sustainable living a reality. In pre-election polling by MORI, in 2005, 28 per cent of voters cited 'the environment' as an issue that would be very important to them in deciding which party to vote for – more than the number mentioning Iraq or Europe⁽²¹⁾. Of course, during elections these issues tend to slip down the campaign agenda, yet follow-up polls in September 2005 revealed that 47 per cent of voters thought the quality of the environment would get worse in the next few years compared to only 22 per cent who thought it would get better⁽²²⁾.

'The environment is at the forefront really, at the moment, of people's agendas. And it's the world, isn't it? If we don't look after the world, it won't be here for the grandchildren or the great-grandchildren.'

Consumer forum participant

In looking to the future, many people at the Forum placed their emphasis on non-material aspirations. This is not to downplay the lively interest shown by some in powerful cars and big houses, especially many younger people. But across the whole social spectrum there was a preoccupation with wanting to be healthy, safe and secure and to have more time to invest in good relationships with family and friends.

According to research, 25 per cent of people between the age of 35 and 50 from across all social groupings report that they have taken a significant reduction in income in order to put their family and quality of life first⁽²³⁾.

'There is a growing awareness that consumption does not equate to personal happiness.'

Deborah Mattinson, Joint CEO, OLR⁽²⁴⁾

Drawing on the way in which people described their aspirations and related to the issues under discussion at the Consumer Forum, we have identified four areas of our lives that people may connect to for action:

- > how we run our homes,
- > the food we eat,
- > how we get around, and
- > holiday travel.

Together these add up to four-fifths of our impact as households on the local and global environment⁽²⁵⁾. The good news is that smart synergies can be found in these four areas between many of our aspirations and more sustainable ways of living.

The right approach

'I totally agree you need someone to be in control... it's not just about the government, it's about us as well... but you need a leader and that's it, that's the only way forward really.'

Consumer forum participant

'Somewhere along the line somebody's got to take responsibility, haven't they? And every single person as an individual is not going to, ever. Somebody that we look up to and is supposed to be looking after us, needs to do something, needs to take control...'

Consumer forum participant

There was a clear appetite among participants at the Consumer Forum for government to take action to make sustainable habits and choices easier. But this had to be the right kind of action, for them to be willing to support it. The Forum provides additional evidence to illustrate four key guidelines⁽²⁶⁾.

1. Make it fair

Fairness matters. People want to ensure that interventions are fair and not open to abuse by free-riders or manipulation by 'rich' people⁽²⁷⁾. Interventions are perceived to be fair when the polluter pays in proportion to their impact, the interests of lower-income groups are safeguarded and no-one is let off the hook.

Fair for all

As participants acknowledged, there is a need for care, to ensure that policies to tackle excessive consumption support, rather than overlook, the interests of low-income groups. Recent work, for example, has shown that, with careful design, policies to promote water and energy efficiency, and discourage waste, can be progressive, and make low-income households better-off, rather than worse⁽²⁸⁾.

Similarly, with careful design, sustainable consumption could help poorer groups by giving added impetus to investment in energy-efficient homes; getting healthy, fresh food into all supermarkets, schools and hospitals; and ensuring that the 26 per cent of households without access to a car are well served with alternatives.

'I think it would make you more aware of what you were actually throwing away.'

Consumer forum participant

'I would certainly reduce the amount of waste I had if I knew I was paying between 50p and a £1 for a bag.'

Consumer forum participant

There was also openness towards the idea of banding council tax in line with home energy efficiency ratings, on condition that support is available to help low-income groups make improvements⁽²⁹⁾.

'I think it's a good idea in principle as long as people who can't afford to insulate their house are given help to insulate it.'

Consumer forum participant

Even on the contentious topic of cars, there was support for widening the tax gap between high and low-emission vehicles in line with the 'polluter pays' principle. The concept of pay-as-you-drive taxation, compared with a flat road tax, split participants on grounds of fairness. Many in the group liked the concept of a direct and fair connection between the amount you drive and the amount you pay, but there were also real concerns that it would unfairly impact on less affluent groups.

When it comes to cutting back on flights, participants judged that compulsory rises in ticket prices would be effective but unfair, in the sense that less affluent consumers would lose out. However, the concept becomes more acceptable if the tax were to be assigned in a transparent manner, and go into making improvements and cost reductions in inter-city train services.

'We don't like being taxed but... if I knew it was going to a good cause, then I'd be more willing to part with that money than if I was told that it was an extra 20 quid tax on my flight.'

Consumer forum participant

In fact, the group was accepting of the idea of paying extra to offset the carbon from each flight, even insisting that this should be on an opt-out rather than an opt-in basis.

'I don't see the opt-in, I just see there being a different figure for me to pay for my flight... I'd be happy to see that, but I'm not going to make any choice about it...'

Consumer forum participant

2. Help people to act together

'Well, I don't mind if we collectively sacrifice, but I don't want to sacrifice – me and my family – when the bloke next door isn't.'

Consumer forum participant

When thinking about interventions, people wanted assurance that they would be acting in collaboration rather than isolation. Among many, there is a default assumption that they would be making an individual sacrifice for no guaranteed outcome or benefit. Indeed, acting in isolation is seen as futile and counter-productive⁽³⁰⁾.

New behaviours, prompted by interventions, need to become 'social norms' to be truly effective and successful. Interestingly, support for paying to deal with carbon offsetting was on the grounds that this could become a new social obligation that people would feel

ashamed of ducking. Some even suggested that those who ‘opt-out’ should be made to sit at the back of the plane!

‘Would all the opt-out people please go to the back row?’

Consumer forum participant

Thanks, perhaps, to the intervention of Jamie Oliver, there was unanimous support expressed at the Forum by parents with school-age children for paying more for healthy and sustainable school dinners.

People acknowledge that it does not take them long to adjust to new habits, even when they were averse to change before it happened⁽³¹⁾. This adjustment effect was also evident from the sharp rise in support for the congestion charge among Londoners after its introduction⁽³²⁾, and the increased local popularity ratings for wind-farms after their construction⁽³³⁾.

‘There should be more things like recycling... It was a pain when it happened, but now you don’t think about it.’

Consumer forum participant

3. Make it positive and tangible

Participants liked the idea of being able to pay in instalments, through their bills, for a mini wind turbine to generate electricity for their homes at the same time as getting the savings from drawing less from the National Grid. Microgeneration, therefore, proved to be an appealing prospect, because it is something very positive and tangible that everyone could do in a visible way⁽³⁴⁾.

Participants thought a recycling lottery would be a fun way of creating a buzz around recycling. In Norway, a scheme like this was designed by the packing and filling industry, to avoid a direct levy, and carton recycling has increased from 35 to 68 per cent⁽³⁵⁾.

4. Win people’s trust

Of course, people can be sceptical of the motives of government and business. As part of this, some people saw fiscal incentives as ‘just another tax’. Significantly, transparency helps overcome this⁽³⁶⁾. Above all, interventions need to be seen to be motivated by environmental concerns, rather than raising revenue⁽³⁷⁾. Likewise, there is a strong perception that business’ motives are often not ‘pure’ when it comes to sustainable issues, as in the case of supermarkets putting a perceived mark-up on organic foods.

A dominant theme of the event was that consumers are looking to government representatives to set an example and make it real. This is especially true on the difficult issues of flying and car use. People wanted to see politicians putting their money where their mouth is, both in terms of public procurement (investing in microgeneration for public buildings and school meals), and in terms of personal behaviours (flying less and driving hybrid cars).

‘What do you think would happen if Tony Blair started driving around in a hybrid vehicle? I think sales of them would go up 1000 per cent overnight.’

Consumer forum participant

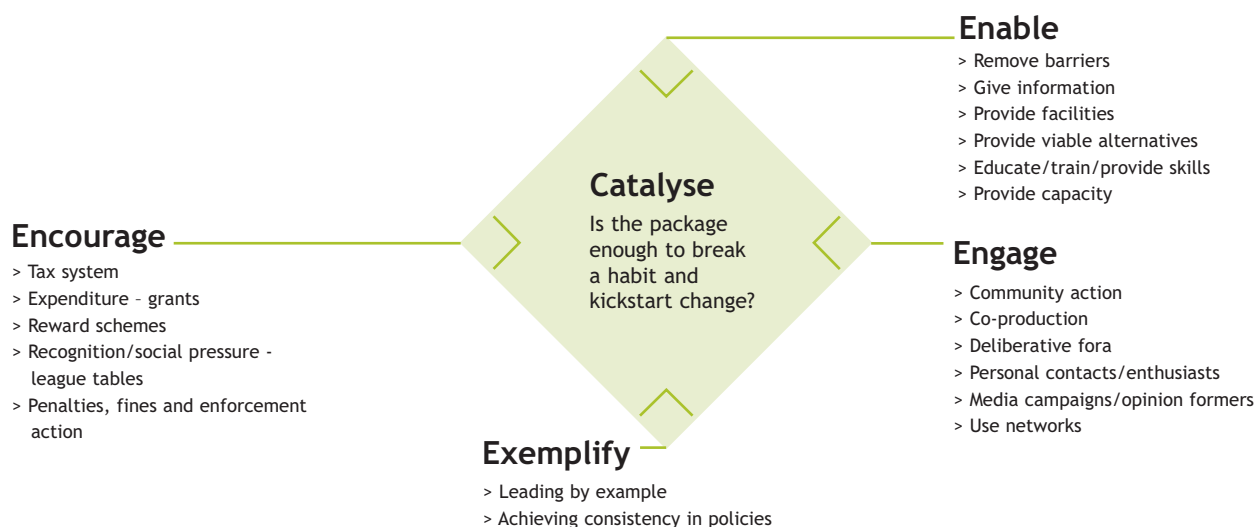
The four ‘E’s

If people are asking for government to set an example, and to make interventions tangible, fair and the norm, then these challenges correspond well to the three ‘E’s – Exemplify, Enable, Encourage – which the government signed up to in its 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy. Helping people make better choices, the strategy said, requires more than just persuasion. The task for government was represented in a diagram (figure 2)⁽³⁸⁾.

The fourth ‘E’ is Engage. As *Securing the Future* recognises, engagement is not just a one-way process of communicating at people or relying on conventional ‘above-the-line’ persuasion. It requires a real commitment to community action, deliberative processes and involving people in change on their own terms. The distinguishing feature of sustainable consumption policy will be the way in which it engages honestly and courageously with people to create and retain its mandate⁽³⁹⁾.

The four ‘E’s are a theoretical framework. The challenge is to put them into practice. One practical approach, which is gathering momentum internationally, is ‘social marketing’. There is a strong evidence base in relation to health and wider public policy goals⁽⁴⁰⁾. The National Consumer Council (NCC) defines social marketing for government as ‘a systematic process using marketing techniques and approaches to achieve behavioural goals’⁽⁴¹⁾. The starting point for this approach is to identify the behaviours that are a priority to change, or perhaps sustain.

Figure two: as attitudes and behaviours change over time, the approach evolves



It is easy to become sidelined into promoting behaviours that are easy to achieve but trivial in terms of environmental benefit. Equally, it makes little sense to focus efforts on behaviours that are worthy and important, but have no chance of taking off in the immediate term across the mainstream. Some forms of behaviour bring knock-on benefits. For example, people can act in symbolic ways that bring psychological or social benefits that extend beyond the immediately measurable environmental ones. Whose behaviour it is also matters. For some, what is needed may be behaviour change. For others, such as people using public transport, it may be supporting and sustaining existing patterns of behaviours that might otherwise be eroded.

What matters is what is most effective for more sustainable outcomes. But, above all, there is a need to choose

priorities and design interventions that segment and target the right people and behaviours. For the purpose of illustration only, a selection of indicative targets, relating to climate change, are set out here.

These are, however, one step back from precise behaviours and are far from definitive. They only prompt the more detailed, thorough analysis that is needed to determine the relative significance of potential lifestyle changes.

Learning from health

Improving public health, from smoking to diet, all too often means changing people's behaviour. Across a number of countries, including the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the EU, 'social marketing' has been used to achieve this, for example by:

- > being clear about what behaviour could be like and focusing on the right ways to achieve very specific improvements;
- > focusing on the right people, by using 'segmentation' approaches which go beyond their immediate circumstances to capture what they think and feel about issues, what moves and motivates them;
- > taking a long-term approach and using a mix of interventions and ways of reaching people; and
- > using communication and information only in the context of an overall, co-ordinated marketing mix, rather than in isolation.

The evidence is clear that social marketing of this kind can be a practical and effective approach for achieving behaviour change.

With the right focus on behaviour, and its nature and drivers, the next step is to build an in-depth understanding of where people are starting from.

This points to the importance of designing the right approach, rather than falling back on whatever policy lever is in favour at the time. Each of the components of the four 'E's approach has radically different policy implications – for example, around investment (enabling), around community (engaging) and around fiscal incentives and regulations (encouraging).

Starting from where people are, and choosing the right mix of interventions can make sustainable habits for people easier to achieve and more attractive to do.

Top tips: illustrating behaviour change goals

The average person in the UK is responsible for 9.6 tonnes of CO₂ a year. To meet the target of a 20 per cent cut by 2010, this will need to come down to 7.9 tonnes, and to meet the 60 per cent reduction target, this will need to come down to 3.5 tonnes by 2050⁽⁴²⁾. What behaviours could begin to address this?

How we run our homes

1. Raise the number of people switching to all-renewable green energy tariffs.
2. Promote key energy-efficient habits, such as the installation of home insulation and prudent use of high-efficiency, energy-using household products⁽⁴³⁾.

The food we eat

3. Cut down on excess meat and dairy produce.
4. Increase the consumption of more in-season produce.

How we get around

5. Raise the market share of cars that are B or above on new energy ratings⁽⁴⁴⁾.
6. Increase the percentage of commuters that work from home, car-share or opt for cycling, the bus or train⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Holiday travel

7. Stabilise and then increase the number of people choosing to holiday in Britain, rather than overseas.
8. Raise the number of people offsetting carbon emissions⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Can people lead change as consumers?

'I want to see the day when consumers can expect that environmental responsibility is as fundamental to the products they buy as health and safety is now...' ⁽⁴⁷⁾

Tony Blair

The things people buy - products and services

It must be true that, as shoppers, we have more options than ever before. If we selected every item in a typical large superstore, we would have up to 26,000 different products in our shopping trolley⁽⁴⁸⁾. So, because we can't weigh up the pros and cons of every one, it is natural that we use decision-making shortcuts: price, branding, promotions, shelf position and packaging. For most, these shortcuts form the basis of a shopping routine that does not easily accommodate wider concerns⁽⁴⁹⁾.

First, the shortcuts are telling shoppers that today's green products are a luxury (or risk, depending on the branding) and for the few, not the many. Also, when people act as shoppers, they expect some issues to have been dealt with. They may not be aware that government and retailers are delegating to them much of the responsibility of choosing society's way out of unsustainability. As a result, people's concerns as citizens often do not get reflected in their choices on the shop floor.

Of course, there has long been a welcome minority of ethical consumers, taking up opportunities from local food to responsible investment and banking. They are attracting growing attention, from celebrity endorsement of low-carbon cars, the use of organic cotton by

fashion designers, the 'Red' label (raising global funds to tackle AIDS, championed by entertainers), through to a range of imaginative 'how to make the world a better place' books and columns in the media. This is 20 years on from the pioneering book, *The Green Consumer* by John Elkington and Julia Hailes.

Even so, this remains, on balance, a minority activity. But it would be wrong to conclude that people's concerns don't matter to them. The truth is that the complexity of information required to make a judgement on product sustainability can leave even the most dedicated green consumer confused and disempowered⁽⁵⁰⁾. Our concern is, then, how sustainable lifestyles can be taken up, perhaps in new ways, by the mainstream of society.

At the Consumer Forum, people reported feeling confused by a proliferation of logos and their lack of consistency. While some pointed to the success of labels like 'dolphin-friendly tuna', most believed that cost and convenience would generally trump them.

'If people are driven by convenience and cost, they won't give a damn about a pretty logo on a piece of chicken or a logo on a fish and chip shop, it wouldn't mean anything to them.'

Consumer forum participant

Simpler sustainability

Choice editing for sustainability is about shifting the field of choice for mainstream consumers: cutting out unnecessarily damaging products and getting real sustainable choices on the shelves. In the context of high consumer concern, but low levels of action, the idea of integrating the most compelling issues of sustainable development through choice editing makes sense. Consumers benefit from the assurance that the issues they care about are considered, rather than facing the demand that they grapple with those complexities themselves.

'The only problem is you can have so many labels on the products that it gets so confusing for the people that are buying things... and all they do is they put the price up.'

Consumer forum participant

So who leads?

The solution could be the trend towards what we call 'choice editing'. From the magazines we read, the radio stations we listen to or the shops we visit, consumers look to others to organise the choices that they face. As the psychologist Aric Sigman puts it: 'Choice is beneficial up to a point. But limitations, restrictions and boundaries can have a strangely liberating effect.'⁽⁵¹⁾

So, in relation to the threat to fish stocks, for instance, the consensus at the Consumer Forum was that endangered species like cod should be removed from sale entirely until they have recovered. This echoed the findings of a MORI poll on behalf of the NCC in 2005 in which 74 per cent of people surveyed agreed that 'if fish like cod are endangered they should not be available to buy'.

'If you go to a fish shop, there's a whole range of fish and if there's no cod, you can't buy cod. End of story really.'

Consumer Forum participant

The long and complex evolution of moving away from being a hunting, gathering, farming society to a fast-moving consumer goods society has resulted in rapid development, flourishing economies and better life expectancy. However, it has separated people from the natural processes that underpin their lives. Some might

say that their food comes from supermarkets, not farms and not from soil. There is nothing wrong with this, except that it is harder for people to see the link between a healthy natural environment and the food they eat when the food comes pre-made in a plastic bag. We are not arguing that society should return to a more basic lifestyle. What we are arguing is that the lead for ensuring environmental stewardship must lie higher up in the supply chain.

Looking back at consumer choices

To test such an assumption, the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable decided to list some consumer products where there had been a distinct shift towards a more sustainable supply chain. All the products listed were significant in market terms in their own right but are also now made and supplied in a way that embraces at least some of the principles of a 'one-planet economy'. A panel reviewed the available evidence on the history of the development of 19 products and identified as far as possible what the principal driving forces were that led to the innovation and, more importantly, what link in the value chain was creating those driving forces. Although it is difficult to establish exact causal links from the case study data, our analysis does identify some significant patterns.

The summary for each is set out in the table on the next three pages. After it, we set out our broad conclusions, illustrated with two case studies⁽⁵²⁾.

Learning from success

How we run our homes	Product story and market share	Key drivers
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) wood	The FSC launched in 1993 with a forest certification and labelling scheme. Now 12 years old, the total global market has reached \$5bn of which the UK constitutes approximately a third of the demand.	Retailer leadership by B&Q, committing to edit out non-sustainable wood, creating the market for the FSC as a new sustainable certification. Little consumer pressure, but no perceived consumer compromise needed on price or performance.
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) in paint	In five years to 2003 there has been an estimated 21 per cent reduction in harmful VOC content of paint. The EU market share of water-based paints has risen to 70 per cent.	Mainstreamed in industry through retailer leadership followed by voluntary industry agreement. Little consumer awareness, but no perceived consumer compromise needed on price or performance.
Ozone depleting chemicals	Ozone-damaging CFCs had been phased out in EU by 1995, five years after the Montreal Protocol. Further choice editing now needed as HCFCs are a potent greenhouse gas.	International legislation aided by availability of alternative technology (HCFCs) and industry-NGO initiatives by Unilever, Coca-Cola and Greenpeace on ice cream and drinks refrigerators.
A-rated cold appliances	Market share of A-rated models increased from one per cent to 76 per cent in five years to 2005. The least efficient new fridge freezer on sale today consumes only half as much energy as the least efficient products on the market eight years ago. However, demand for second fridges has risen so that total energy consumption only reduced by 2.2 per cent ⁽⁵³⁾ over the same period.	Labelling alone had limited effect, but enabled the key drivers which were EU legislation to raise minimum standard, price incentives via EEC, and choice editing by retailers. Consumers were happy to adopt A-rated appliances as they were offered at cost parity by familiar brands.
A-rated washing machines	The market share of A-rated machines rose from 0 to 85 per cent in seven years to 2005.	Labelling alone had limited effect, but enabled the key drivers which were a manufacturer agreement to raise minimum standard, price incentives via EEC, and choice editing by retailers. Consumers were happy to adopt as they were offered at cost parity by familiar brands.
A-rated dishwashers	Market share of A-rated dishwashers rose from 0 per cent to 74 per cent in seven years to 2005. Around one in four UK households have a dishwasher, relatively low compared to the rest of Europe.	Labelling alone had limited effect, but enabled the key drivers which were a manufacturer agreement to raise minimum standard, price incentives via EEC, and choice editing by retailers. Consumers were happy to adopt as they were offered at cost parity by familiar brands.

How we run our homes	Product story and market share	Key drivers
Condensing boilers	<p>Moved from 16 per cent of the market to 95 per cent in two years from 2003. Space heating and hot water represent 80 per cent of domestic carbon emissions. 1.3m new boilers are replaced every year with boilers lasting on average ten to 14 years.</p>	<p>Announcement in 2003 that from 2005 Building Regulations would mandate minimum B-rating (86 per cent efficiency) for new and replacement boilers. This effectively banned all models other than condensing boilers. Low consumer awareness, but no perceived disadvantage.</p>
Recycled paper	<p>The proportion of recycled content in newspaper increased from under 30 per cent in 1990 to over 75 per cent in 2004. More widely, consumer demand for recycled products remains low due to higher price, poor availability, and perception of poor quality.</p>	<p>Newspaper recycled content driven by an industry-led initiative without the need for high consumer awareness. Barrier: for recycling paper generally the marketing mix is less attractive to consumers than alternatives because of price and quality.</p>
Washing powder	<p>Tablet powders have been calculated to reduce packaging by 26 per cent and reduce both detergent consumption and use of low degradable materials. Tablets and liquid tablets now account for around 40 per cent of the UK market.</p>	<p>Promotion by manufacturers on convenience.</p>
Lightweight packaging	<p>Packaging was the first priority waste stream to be legislated at EU level and there are business cost savings from lightweight packaging. But consumer preference for convenience still drives higher levels of packaging – one retailer reports that 45 per cent of vegetables are now sold as pre-packaged.</p>	<p>EU legislative pressure.</p>
Double glazing	<p>Double-glazing started to take off during the 1970s fuel crisis. It has become mainstream despite the fact that it is not generally cost-effective on energy savings alone, due to secondary benefits including easier maintenance, higher security and noise insulation, and improvement to property values.</p>	<p>Promotion and marketing by manufacturers, with many perceived consumer benefits, such as noise insulation, warmth, energy saving, and security.</p>
<p><i>Limited transformation:</i> Energy-saving light bulbs</p>	<p>Low energy light bulbs, such as Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs (CFLs) have been on the market since the early 1980s but at current levels of uptake their market share is only predicted to be around 13 per cent by 2020.</p>	<p><i>Barrier:</i> Low consumer demand because CFLs perceived to offer poorer design and performance at much higher upfront cost than tungsten bulbs. Unless cheap tungsten bulbs are phased out, manufacturers will perceive little market for low-energy lighting and will not invest in innovation to improve design.</p>

The food we eat	Product story and market share	Key drivers
Free range eggs	Four out of ten eggs sold in shops are now either free range or barn eggs. However, there is still a large market for cheaper battery eggs, particularly those destined for use in other foods or catering.	Combination of perceived consumer benefits – freshness, taste, animal welfare that overcome price premium.
'Dolphin friendly' tuna	In 1988, a campaigner filmed horrifying images of hundreds of dolphins dying in tuna purse nets, sparking a tuna boycott that spread rapidly from the US to other countries including the UK. Over 90 per cent of tuna sold is now classified 'Dolphin Safe'.	NGOs built awareness on an emotional issue. Solutions offered involved no quality or price compromise for consumers.
Fairtrade coffee	In the UK, the proportion of Fairtrade market (roast and ground coffee) is now around 20 per cent of the market, up from 14 per cent in 2002.	Marketing mix is equal to competition and the price differential is within the price norm.
<i>Limited transformation:</i> Organics	While successful in terms of high growth in recent years, this is from a low base. Organic products had a market share of only 1.2 per cent in 2004 and around 56 per cent of organic food is imported from abroad.	Labelling has enabled the development of a niche market willing to pay premium for perceived higher quality. <i>Barrier:</i> mainstream consumers do not yet perceive benefits to merit price premium. Marketed as niche luxury product.
How we get around		
Unleaded petrol	Unleaded petrol was introduced into the UK in 1986 and leaded petrol was phased out over 14 years, being banned finally in 2000. Industry objections over costs of change imposed significant delay on this phase-out. Fiscal support, making unleaded cheaper, won consumer support despite some early concerns about car performance.	Early legislation in US stimulated innovation on lead removal. EU and UK legislation, introduced in conjunction with fuel duty incentives, drove phase-out of leaded petrol by 2000. Cost and performance parity means no perceived disadvantage to consumers.
Catalytic converters	All new cars sold in the UK from 1993 had catalytic converters, eliminating harmful carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compound emissions. Initial concerns from some consumers about car performance disappeared, given the benefits to health, so the technology has proved uncontroversial.	EU legislation, implemented in UK in 1993.

‘Choice editing’ in detail: energy-efficient fridges and freezers

A combination of product policy measures, and ‘choice editing’ by retailers, has helped to make a significant shift in the market towards more efficient fridges and freezers. Mandatory A-G labelling was introduced by the EU in 1995, but A-rated models still remained stuck below three per cent market share until a European regulation removed anything rated below C in 1999. Then in 2001, thanks to price incentives from energy suppliers under the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), the market share of A-rated fridge freezers leapt from ten to 70 per cent within three years. A virtuous circle has ensued in which retailers have only wanted to stock higher-rated appliances and manufacturers have responded to demand by raising performance further and instigating a voluntary agreement which cut out C-rated fridges in 2004⁽⁵⁴⁾. Comet, for example, made a policy decision not to stock products below a C.

From the consumer perspective, choice editing held no disadvantages, as A-rated products were offered by all their favourite brands at normal prices and improved performance. From the edited range, the customer could choose their favourite model using the criteria they have always used – price, quality, looks and utility.

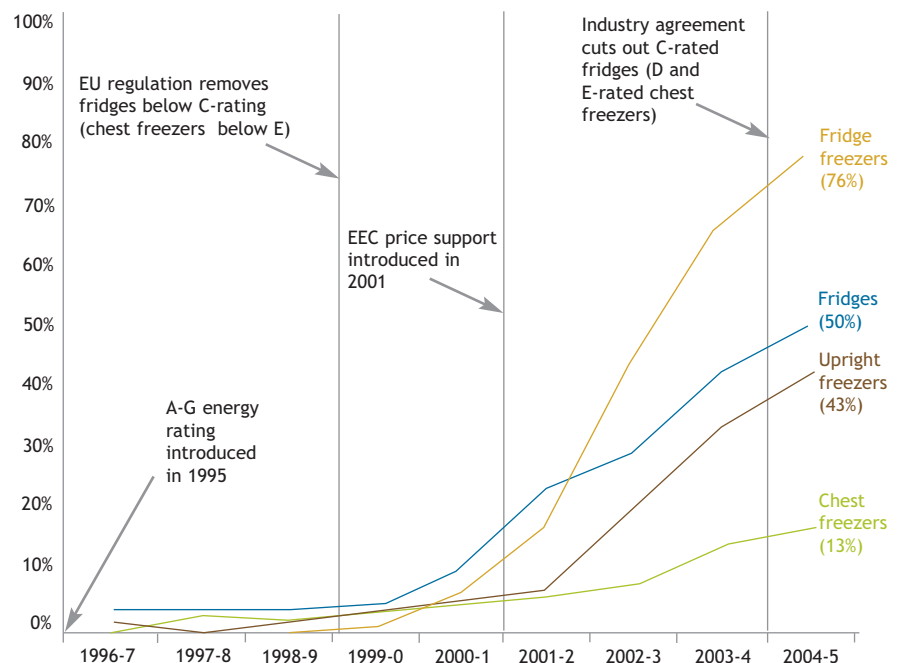
Now there may be a case for further choice editing to grow the market for new A+ and A++ models, which are 23 per cent and 46 per cent more efficient respectively than A-rated products. Despite the opportunity under EEC for energy suppliers to promote A+ and A++ models, and

product labelling within the Energy Saving Trust’s Energy Saving Recommended Scheme, UK sales of A+ and A++ products accounted for only three per cent of sales during the six months to December 2005, compared to 18 per cent of sales in Belgium and the Netherlands. There is a challenge now to reinvigorate the pace of improvement in the UK market⁽⁵⁵⁾. This is particularly important given that demand for second fridges has cancelled out much of the efficiency gain to date, so that, while average unit energy consumption went down 16.2 per cent from 1996-2005, total energy consumption by fridge-freezers only reduced by 2.2 per cent⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Where consumers have led: free range eggs

The size of the UK free range egg market has grown from around seven per cent in 1987 to 30 per cent in 2005 (40 per cent of retail sales). Consumer choice has led the change because of the health scare of salmonella, the perception of better taste and public concerns about animal welfare. The price premium is modest. Legislation has helped. From 2004, EU legislation has made it compulsory for eggs to be labelled according to method of production⁽⁵⁷⁾. However, lack of consumer transparency in the catering sector means that demand for eggs from caged hens remains over 50 per cent. Choice editing by caterers or regulators would be needed to drive further market transformation.

Figure three: market share of A-rated cold appliances (1996-2005)



Lessons learned from *Looking forward, looking back*

The mainstreaming of more sustainable products, whether green or more socially beneficial, is already taking place in some market sectors, and has growing consumer acceptance. So the simplistic statement that the consumer is not interested is no longer valid.

However, from our work on *Looking forward, looking back*, we would focus on eight observations:

1. There is not enough evidence that green consumers on their own are able to change mainstream product markets. These consumers may, in some cases, have played a role as early adopters, but the translation to the mainstream depends on a number of other factors.
2. The crucial requirement is for the product to perform up to the expectation of the relevant market. The successful products studied were largely not sold on a green or ethical platform, unless they appealed strongly to the emotions, as in the case of dolphin-friendly tuna. People do not eat sustainability, or drive it. They eat food and drive cars, and product performance has to be the primary focus of marketing, even for sustainable products. If the marketing mix and price are within the expected norms of the relevant market then any 'good' attributes like sustainability suddenly become attractive to the consumer.
3. Choice editing for quality and sustainability by regulators, retailers and manufacturers has been the critical driver in the majority of cases. Providing information failed to get more than a minority of people buying

the most energy-efficient dishwashers, fridges and washing machines, even when it pointed to savings on running costs.

Inefficient machines were still the norm in the shops, and they were cheaper. But when labelling was combined with action on the part of regulators, retailers and manufacturers, rapid efficiency gains meant even the least efficient new fridge freezer on sale today consumes only half as much energy as the least efficient products on the market eight years ago.

4. Labelling of performance ratings from A-G is a key enabler for choice editing, but does not by itself drive significant market transformation.
5. Early announcement of legislation to set minimum standards drives a virtuous cycle of rapid innovation and further choice editing by retailers and manufacturers.
6. Voluntary industry initiatives are an important ingredient. In the case of dishwashers and washing machines, manufacturers averted regulation by negotiating to remove models rated D or below voluntarily. But voluntary industry initiatives rarely play a leadership role.
7. Fiscal incentives only work if they close the price gap for more sustainable products or create significant tax rebates for their use. Incremental VAT reductions on products like CFLs and insulation do not by themselves create demand.
8. Where a sustainability issue acquires emotional resonance, consumers can lead some degree of market transformation. To date,

this has generally been confined to food-related issues that align with people's emotional concerns for personal health and animal welfare. External events like non-governmental organisation (NGO) campaigns, a food scare or a climate-related event, can suddenly cause background concerns to be manifested in consumer behaviour change. Businesses that move in anticipation of this type of external influence, and sudden consumer awareness, can become market leaders.

Interestingly, nearly all the products covered in the case studies have had their critics. 'Single issue' products are criticised for ignoring wider issues. Even products attempting to address wider issues are challenged over the inevitable trade-offs that sustainability requires. Success means finding the right ways to manage dialogue and debate, without it spilling over into damaging criticism.

Government as 'choice editor'

The general observations above make it clear that, if more sustainable products are to be mainstreamed, they need to be a close equivalent to the norm in price, quality or availability. Where the market is not able to achieve this product parity spontaneously, then government intervention is needed. The conclusion for government is that there is a broad range of regulatory options available to make more sustainable products the accepted norm.

Standards can be set to phase out the worst performing products, as in the case of EU legislation on fridge-freezers, or the 2005 UK Building Regulations on minimum boiler

standards. But regulation needs to be signalled clearly in advance, over timescales that correspond to business design and investment cycles. Timing is critical, as is working with forward-thinking businesses. And having the confidence at times not to be influenced by the entire sector is important. This clearly supports the logic of having a dedicated product body tasked with developing clear road maps for rapid product change.

Such action can also drive innovation, by setting performance criteria beyond the reach of today's products. California's zero-emission vehicles mandate unleashed serious investment in hybrid and hydrogen vehicles for the first time. It signalled 13 years in advance that by 2003 zero-emission vehicles should comprise ten per cent of all new car sales (sales of hybrids can offset this obligation).

It is worth remembering the lesson from 1970s Japan, where tight fuel efficiency standards drove Japanese innovation and their subsequent take-over of the global car market. It is clear that choice editing by government for sustainability represents a big innovation opportunity for UK business. Our strengths in R&D and skilled manufacture means we are well-placed to benefit from demand for a new generation of hi-tech, lean and clean products, like low-carbon vehicles and microgeneration.

Business as 'choice editor'

In 1995 the DIY store B&Q – owned by Kingfisher – set a target for all the timber it sold to be certified sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) by 1999. The idea was that consumers at B&Q stores should

not be presented with a two-tier system of sustainable and unsustainable products – they should be free to choose the door or shelf they liked best, secure in the knowledge that risk to rainforests has been 'edited out' by the retailer.

In a similar way the multinational, Unilever, joined forces with WWF to set up the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), an independent body to certify sustainable fisheries. The impetus was the need to secure long-term supply of fish and this could only be guaranteed if the fisheries concerned became sustainable. After a slow start, the MSC has now certified a number of key fisheries. This will enable consumer recognition of the MSC logo to be built and, hopefully, this will become part of their choice criteria. Retailers' 'choice editing' by only stocking sustainable fish would significantly speed this up.

Retailers are not the only choice editors. Big-brand manufacturers can shift their product portfolio towards sustainability if they see a supply-side saving, or a new market stimulated by growing public concerns or created by policy or public procurement. Companies consider hundreds of innovation opportunities a year and filter these before they are launched. Relative sustainability should be one of these filters.

There are 200-plus models of domestic appliance and a retailer may stock only 20. Since they make this choice for their consumers, they will want to stock the best – so why shouldn't those 20 be A-rated appliances? The John Lewis Partnership has, for instance, as a matter of company policy, made this choice where a sufficient range of A-rated models is available.

As we have shown, however, choice editing for sustainability is not just the responsibility of business.

Government has a responsibility to act as choice editors on behalf of citizens, who often struggle to understand what issues of concern mean for their shopping routines.

'A lot of businesses respond to purchasing behaviour rather than offer customers something better... Business needs to be brave – to go out speculatively and push technology that makes sustainable development economically viable. But government needs to help businesses to be brave – by incentivising and supporting innovation.'

Patrick Burrows, Tesco plc

The work of the Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment (ACCPE)

These observations connect with the findings of ACCPE. In three reports published from 2000 to 2003, summarised in their last report in 2005, ACCPE made some important observations:

- > Given that sustainability is made up of many different environmental and social issues, and that the range of products available in the market are so very different, we have to accept that a simple strategy for a catch-all eco-labelling system will also be problematic.
- > Labels have driven change, but only when they are designed specifically for a small number of key issues closely associated with that product. Forests, for example, are clearly linked to wooden garden benches so a bespoke label connecting forest harvesting with a

garden bench works (the FSC); a label that links fish harvesting with fish meals is logical; while a graded energy label on energy-consuming goods like fridges and freezers is logical. The design and governance systems behind these three examples are fundamentally different but have been designed to create a system that works for that value chain. This further reinforces the flaws in any catch-all generic schemes, and could explain the continued failure of the EU Ecolabel Scheme to find appeal in the market place.

The other important hunch that ACCPE had, that our work now supports with evidence, is that while a label may be seen as a consumer communication, the real user is the retailer and the manufacturer. If you shop at B&Q you do not have to distinguish between wood products on the grounds of sustainability. Consumers can focus on the aesthetics and price of a shelf or door, safe in the knowledge that all wood products are FSC-certified. It is the buyers at B&Q who specify FSC, on behalf of all B&Q consumers.

These insights led ACCPE to develop their ‘Tool Box Approach’. They recognised that different products had different sets of impacts and that it often takes bespoke tools to drive change. Defra’s Market Transformation Programme builds on this principle and, while under-resourced, is a good starting point for the more proactive product policy approach that is now needed. Labelling, as described above, is only one of the possible tools that ACCPE recommended: legislation, tax advantages and retail procurement policies were judged equally important.

ACCPE concluded its work in 2005 with the headline recommendation that the government establish a products body dedicated to working with the entire value chain for key products to get a framework in place to drive environmental improvements. In December 2005, Defra published for consultation a proposal to establish a government ‘sustainable products unit’. We would support this proposal on the condition that this unit is given a clear mandate to develop roadmaps for rapid change in priority products – in consultation with businesses that have demonstrated best practice – and negotiate their implementation through standard-setting and other measures at UK and EU level.

‘Regulatory frameworks can be very valuable. An interesting model is provided by Siemens seizing brand advantage by marketing the fact that their Fujitsu laptop is a year ahead of impending EU regulation on hazardous substances. They can do this in the knowledge that regulation is coming along to back them up.’

Dominique Gangneux, Deloitte & Touche, Business Dialogue

The role of the consumer and marketing

Of course, if sustainable products are to become the norm, consumers have to back them up. The examples above are precedents where consumer behaviour has changed and where more responsible products are beginning to flourish.

Sustainability considerations will impact on all markets at some time in the future. This may be now, as is the

case with fish; imminently as the growing awareness of climate change develops further; or still some time away. However, the impetus for market change is often outside the control of business or government. External events, like food scares or abnormal weather may come at the most unexpected times and seriously change attitudes.

Products which anticipate these potential changes will be the leaders of tomorrow, and companies who prioritise these will increase their chances of long-term success and survival.

Too often we hear ‘we cannot do this because consumers do not ask for it’. But the consumer did not ask for the iPod. Inspired marketers recognise the signs, or insights, translate these into anticipated future behaviour and then launch products, branded, to meet these anticipated needs. Or, technological advances are made and then sold in a way that creates a ‘want’. We appeal to business to do more of this, but in more sustainable ways.

Often, the climate for change can be accelerated by civil society and campaigners. But we have also shown that successful products are rarely sold on either a ‘do-good’ platform or on a negative platform. Advertising and promotion can play a vital role, as we saw with detergent tablets or perhaps with the Toyota Prius, by ensuring that the consumer sees the product as equal to or better than the competition. The sustainability benefit then becomes a secondary but still important selling proposition. However, the bottom line is that it will rarely be the ‘unique’ selling proposition.

Product roadmapping

'Product roadmaps' represent a policy approach for addressing high-impact products. Looking forward over timescales that businesses and people can respond to, the main elements of this will be:

1. understanding the issues and range of possible solutions
2. clear deadlines for achieving the desired level of transformation
3. labelling products as a basis for incentives and standard-setting
4. robust incentives tied to product sustainability
5. supportive public procurement specifications
6. raising the bar through progressive regulation.

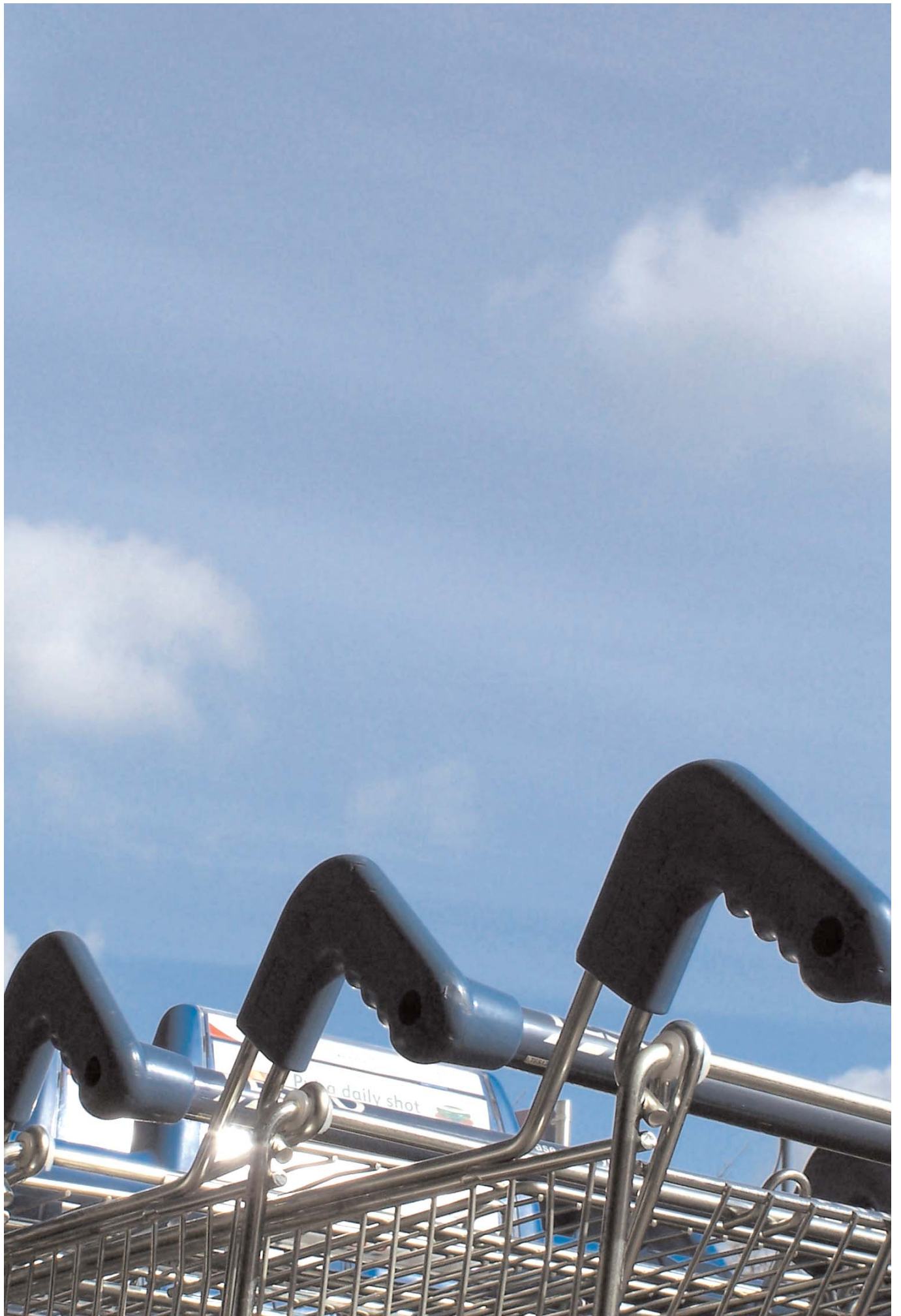
One example could be for homes. Reducing VAT on loft insulation, for instance, will not itself prompt people to go out looking for it. Linking property taxes, like stamp duty or council tax, to A-G home energy ratings would, however, transform the market for energy-saving measures and microgeneration.

When it comes to products like cars, the evidence shows that we need to move beyond applying labels from A-G, important first step though this was. As MORI told the Department for Transport (DfT), 'Environmental performance is not paramount in car buyers' minds when choosing a car - and this is a barrier to the potential impact of introducing the labels in showrooms.'⁽⁵⁹⁾ As we saw when looking back on transformation in the white goods market, labelling starts working when it is the basis for real incentives and standard-setting.

Environment Direct

Our conclusions on the potential role of choice editors have implications for the new government-backed consumer information service, Environment Direct, to be launched in late 2006. The Roundtable believes that this service could play four constructive roles (in declining order of importance):

1. **Choice editing:** if it lives up to the ambition of its conception, and publicises independent, bold and credible advice on product sustainability, this will help galvanise companies into more active choice editing.
2. **Market research:** it can demonstrate to government and business that a significant section of people are actively interested in the issues⁽⁶⁰⁾.
3. **Connections:** by being interactive, giving feedback on outcomes, and uniting many disparate actions into a more coherent 'army' of consumers, Environment Direct could also make people feel their actions are more worthwhile and part of the bigger picture – alleviating the 'lonely burden of choice'.
4. **Converting interest into action:** it can give clear and credible guidance that may help some people take action, especially among more affluent individuals who have both high levels of environmental concern and high impacts⁽⁶¹⁾. However, as we have argued, the evidence shows that information is rarely sufficient to overcome barriers of price, convenience, habits and norms.





Two: Business – the second corner of the triangle

Products and services will play a central part in the creation of a single-planet economy, but the evidence suggests that, historically, the green consumer has not been the tipping point in driving green innovation. It follows, therefore, that business, as providers of those products and services, must have a critical role.

On the one hand, this is clearly a responsibility for individual businesses. Supermarkets are important ‘gatekeepers’ of what consumers spend and arguably, they are, therefore, associated with a major proportion of the UK’s consumption impacts. What responsibility should supermarkets have as companies, for moving this to a sustainable level?

On the other hand, the constraints of competitive markets mean that it is often difficult for companies to act alone, outside of a business case for sustainability. So, it is likely that government has an important enabling role to play, in using policy levers to create the business case for all companies to deliver more sustainable products.

Through a Business Dialogue event, convened on the Roundtable’s behalf by the University of Cambridge Programme for Industry, more than 30 senior managers from retailers and big-brand manufacturers gave their views about the way forward for sustainable products. It is important to acknowledge that the individuals we spoke to held positions which meant they were natural enthusiasts for this agenda. As a result, their suggestions were focused on what would make their own goals easier to achieve within their own organisations and help overcome the natural resistance other senior managers may have to this agenda. We wanted insights into what was

needed to create change, rather than a list of reasons why change was impossible.

These participants saw government to have three critical roles:

1. Engaging in genuine partnership with those businesses who want to move the agenda forward (as opposed to working through a negotiated compromise position with the entire sector).
2. Providing future market certainty via fiscal and regulatory frameworks. Companies that invest early in better standards, without proof of commercial advantage, need to know that policy levers will be used to eliminate any competitive advantage for peers that persist in unsustainable practices.
3. As a procurer practising what it preached. If industry and commercial firms are being asked to cut carbon then public sector buildings and car fleets should be one step ahead, and public sector procurement should give a market to progressive firms by specifying high standards.

The underlying theme is once again: ‘I will if you will’. Businesses want to act, but cannot do so in isolation, without the support of a business case. They need a policy framework to create that business case, and give others reason to follow.

These business leaders called for cross-party consensus on key issues like climate change, to give business more confidence that targets and policies will not be at the mercy of party politics and electoral cycles. Sustainable consumption represents a big innovation opportunity for UK entrepreneurs and manufacturers. But they cannot create the market on their own.

'Business will tend to lead where they see a business case, but the government has an opportunity to take a major leadership role and establish the frameworks from which all else flows.'

Ian Blythe, Boots Group plc

Certainty about future market frameworks

Above all, the businesses that are prepared to make strategic investments in low-carbon services, or introduce other aspects of sustainability into products, need more certainty about future markets. Given clear goals over defined time-frames, business can start planning and also create a competitive edge. Competitors will then be obliged to follow and markets would be transformed. Once again, this reinforces the potential role of a government-sponsored product body. What our studies have shown, however, is the potential value of shaping policies and supporting frameworks around the products that business supplies rather than the business operation itself (as was the case with catalytic converters and energy-efficient white goods). For example, regulation on solvent emissions from a paint factory's chimney would not be necessary if there were a market incentive to sell only water-based paint.

The new corporate social responsibility

A company with a good corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme has, we can assume, processes to manage and report on the social and environmental impacts of its operations. Improvements are clearly being made but the gap between 'good CSR' and sustainable consumption is intuitively large and, more importantly, unknown. How many CSR reports, for example, look at how the company's product range supports the principles of a single-planet economy?

What we need to avoid is a perception that a good track record on CSR matches the requirements of sustainability when there has been no evidence gathered to support such a perception. A company can have a good CSR record, but this does not mean that its operations and products are sustainable, nor that sustainability is embedded into the company's culture and decision-making. Core to this is moving beyond an internal frame of reference, coupled with an engagement with key stakeholders, to accept responsibility for the impact of the products and services it sells to consumers⁽⁶²⁾.

'Businesses can make the customer much more aware of environmental issues to do with products. Stores should be seen as a place for discussion, where employees proactively talk to customers about sustainability. Point-of-sale material should have simple, interesting messages so customers feel engaged and encouraged to find out more information.'

Scott Keiller, Starbucks Coffee Company (UK) Ltd.

The new corporate responsibility

A corporate responsibility approach that demonstrated a company's commitment to sustainable consumption would include:

- explanation of how the principle of sustainable consumption is shaping their business strategy;
- a focus on the company's products, through an environmental and social analysis of their key lifecycle impacts;
- proactive engagement with government and NGOs in developing a public policy framework that creates a business case for more sustainable products;
- a research and development strategy that focused on beating the competition at product sustainability – in terms of supply chains and product use – alongside other consumer priorities;
- designing features that help consumers use their product or service in a more sustainable way – such as economy wash options on washing machines, and zero energy standby function on TVs;
- a serious and intelligent justification for any products offered that have the potential to drive consumption practices in highly unsustainable directions (for example, patio-heaters and domestic air conditioning units);
- marketing strategies that would appeal to people's values and ethics, and a broader sense of well-being, and avoid creating new unnecessary and unsustainable wants or playing on insecurities;
- partnerships with innovative enterprises developing more sustainable products or service approaches; and
- partnership enterprises with NGOs and policy-makers, where business expertise and skills can be married with the skills of the others to bring benefit to all parties, as in the case of the MSC venture.

Why business could get serious about sustainable consumption

Roundtable members with senior business experience were compelled by a hypothetical scenario: they were offered the chance to inspire the board of a FTSE 100 company to embed sustainable consumption into the heart of their business strategy.

The individuals recognised that the best place to start would not be a long report but a short, hard-hitting presentation to the main board of that business. It would not talk about the challenges facing the planet, but the risks to, and opportunities for, their business plan.

Such a presentation was produced and tested at the business dialogue described above. While there were considerable challenges in writing a standard ‘off the shelf’ presentation for all the FTSE 100 companies, there was a consensus that if the rationale for a sustainable consumption case was presented, it would highlight risks and opportunities which can be summarised into six key business objectives:

1. Continuously improving shareholder value

To grow a business, suppliers and infrastructure must also grow, or be discontinued. Reliance on unsustainable supply chains is a risk, but one that tends to be consigned to the unpredictable medium to long-term. But many of these risks are here now, or are imminent: fish supply, climate change and energy consumption, water shortage in many countries and regions, the finite limit of many raw materials.

Unless businesses move now to diversify into resource-light products and services, supply chains will become unreliable, reducing profitability long before they actually collapse, and others will seize the opportunity missed and fill the vacuum with innovative and creative solutions that eliminate the problem.

It is also often said of sustainability that it is something that is expensive and unaffordable, or that the costs are passed on to the consumer. Again, in many cases, this is a myth. If sustainability in supply chains means reduction of inputs such as energy, water or materials, then it is clear that significant cost savings are to be had. The same logic can apply to the use of video conferencing to reduce air travel, or the use of local materials to reduce transport costs and, therefore, material miles.

2. Building brand value by meeting and exceeding customer expectations

Awareness of what concerns people as citizens can help companies identify innovation opportunities and stay ahead, and therefore avoid being vulnerable to brand attacks. We have demonstrated that it is a mistake to assume that consumers do not want sustainable products because they are not asking for them. Consumers can only choose what exists today; they can only express desires on the basis of today’s goods. McDonald’s failure to anticipate changes in consumer attitudes about health and local culture has weakened the company.

Building and protecting brand value also requires attention to people’s background concerns as citizens, even if they do not often bring these to the shops⁽⁶³⁾. Corporate-level branding aims to encourage consumers to buy into a set of values identified with the company, reassuring them that once they are in the store, they can rest assured that anything that they put into their trolleys has been produced to a standard in line with these values. When it turns out those citizenship standards have not been met – be it sweat-shop labour, or ‘slash and burn’ agriculture, or dolphins in tuna nets – the consumer feels cheated and affronted by the revelation. They feel duped into having bought something that was not what it purported to be.

3. Operate efficiently within regulatory boundaries

Environmental regulation is increasing on an EU and international level. As the evidence strengthens behind the need for urgent action, in particular, on climate change governments will be under pressure to raise their regulatory game.

Being proactive about government priorities gives businesses the opportunity to influence the policy agenda, and ensure it is designed to promote business certainty and opportunities for innovation. We talked earlier about the benefits of partnerships, of codes of practice and road maps developed jointly with governments and other interested parties.

Businesses reacting early should gain, not lose, competitive advantage.

4. Enthuse investors with a long-term strategy that ensures profitability

Anticipating or initiating shifts in resource availability, regulatory frameworks and consumer demand creates huge opportunities for business. In emerging markets resource scarcity is particularly pertinent.

5. Build pride and satisfaction into the workforce and attraction for future employees

As awareness of the issues surrounding the over-use of resources, of global climate change and poverty grow, it is essential for companies to respond. If not, then their values will become distant from employees, and potential employees, sapping morale and efficiency.

6. Responsible behaviour

Even if there is no compelling commercial reason for responsible and sustainable behaviour, there is a moral obligation for business to play its full role in helping society to meet its aspirations, without endangering the aspirations of the disadvantaged or future generations. In other words, sustainability should be embedded in the culture, philosophy and values of the business if it is to be seen as ethical and responsible.

Helping business get serious

As we see it, businesses fall into one of four categories:

- > those that understand the principles of sustainable consumption and are embedding those principles into their business plans, culture and values;

- > businesses that understand the broader principles of sustainable development, and recognise the business case for action but not the unique contribution the consumption angle brings. They are at various stages of including the principles of sustainability into their processes, policies and cultures;
- > those businesses that recognise the growing challenge of environmental and social responsibilities. These businesses may be addressing this through emerging CSR departments and policies, but their CSR programme is shaping communication more than strategy; and
- > those businesses that do not recognise the business case for CSR, let alone for sustainable development.

There are a number of actions that government could take to support business opportunities around sustainable consumption.

It is essential that an initiative is put in place to start some systematic education about the issue, the business case and the opportunity. After all, we know that businesses will only act if they know that others will, so we have to reach as many as possible. Defra and the DTI should convene a small team to make contact with the boards of the FTSE 100 and, where possible, other business events, where access to small and medium-size enterprises could be gained⁽⁶⁴⁾.

Recommendations for helping business

1. Business should engage with government to make innovation work *for* sustainable consumption, not against: the Sustainable Consumption and Production Business Task Force should take the lead in establishing a partnership approach between government and business to address the issue of high-impact emerging products, like domestic air conditioning. Agreement should be reached by the end of 2006 on how energy-use data on pre-commercial products can be made available to the proposed sustainable products unit, to enable them to advise government on appropriate pre-emptive measures to manage the potential impact on climate change targets.
2. The DTI should champion policies that can promote new markets for low-carbon, material-light goods and services. These should include product roadmaps and should ensure that sustainable consumption objectives are fully embedded in all government strategies towards business, with application to sponsorship, science and technology, innovation and skills.
3. The DTI should use its Horizon Scanning Programme to identify at an early stage new products that could undermine sustainable consumption goals. The department should withhold innovation and science funding from such proposals and direct it to more sustainable innovation.
4. The DTI should undertake a gap analysis of how the FTSE 250 CSR reports correspond to the challenge of sustainable consumption, and issue a clear challenge to the FTSE 250 to improve voluntary reporting along these lines by 2010.



Three: government – the third corner of the triangle

What government can do

A Sustainable Consumption Action Framework is a guide to policy, rather than a rigid set of rules. It recognises the complexity, as well as the possibility, of behaviour change. It also views the sustainable consumption challenge as a spectrum. At the near end of this spectrum are measures that require very little in the way of changing people's aspirations. A simple technological intervention – a mini wind turbine on the roof, or a big cut in standby power requirements for TVs and set-top boxes, for example – could have a very positive environmental impact. Such a change would require changes in the market and changes in business practices. But with appropriate 'choice editing' it demands very little in the way of active change from people.

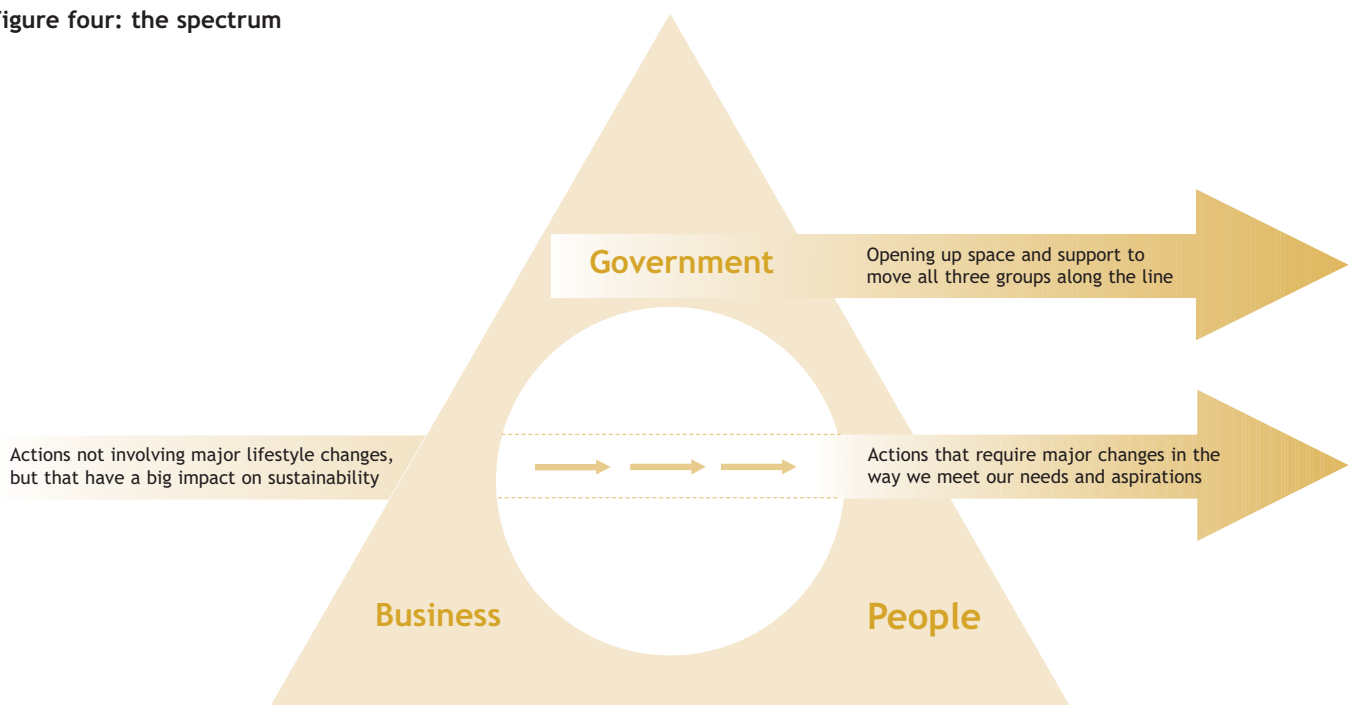
In the centre of the spectrum are more deep-seated changes to habits and routines, like restoring a sense of seasonality to what we eat, turning off lights and opting to walk or cycle in the neighbourhood rather than taking the car. Even in this middle ground, supportive policies and investments are essential in order to encourage, enable, and engage people in the required changes. And it is critical that government sets an example. At the far end of the spectrum are innovations and measures that require people to change their behaviours significantly, and perhaps even to find new ways of expressing their underlying aspirations. Persuading people to drive less (particularly over short journeys) or, worse still, to fly less, is going to be difficult to achieve; but should be considered both possible and essential.

The purpose of public policy on sustainable consumption should be to enable government, business, and all of us as individuals to move progressively along this spectrum. Tackling the more intractable issues at the difficult end may require a deep-rooted shift in societal values, but even here government can effect change through its policies and practice.

The Sustainable Consumption Action Framework is based on five elements:

1. Use the mandate for action
2. Focus on behaviour
3. Put products and services at the centre
4. Build collective action
5. Widen the mandate.

Figure four: the spectrum



1. Use the mandate for action

Without a mandate, government can do little to help people change their behaviour. But now, from the evidence we presented earlier, people do appear ready and willing to see new policies introduced that will help them change their behaviour in the face of challenges such as climate change and global poverty. They are looking to government to make it easier for them to do the right thing.

Having a mandate is not, of course, a blank cheque. There are limits. And as we argued earlier, people are most likely to support interventions that are seen to be fair, that prompt a collective response and create new norms, and that are positive and tangible. Equally, if you don't use a mandate for action, you lose it.

2. Focus on behaviour

The goal for policy action is to enable people to live sustainable lifestyles. There is therefore a need to identify, and set priorities around, the behaviours that need to be encouraged or sustained.

This does not mean that the emphasis for policy action is about waiting for a lead from ordinary people. But any policy action needs to be rooted in an understanding and awareness of consumer behaviour. To bring the issues of sustainable consumption alive, for example, people need to see symbolic, effective solutions in their everyday lives. Some actions act as catalysts – creating a deeper commitment to sustainability than the action itself. The effects of these interventions ripple outwards by opening people's minds to ways of doing things differently.

3. Put products and services at the centre

Collaborative partnerships between business and government hold the key to making sustainable products and services the norm in our lives. This means harnessing enterprise, rather than shackling it. The key to achieving this is for policy-makers to set long-term sustainability 'product roadmaps' for key products and services.

4. Build collective action

In a consumer society and a market economy, the role of government is to facilitate collective responses to collective problems that cannot be solved by individual choice. Sustainable consumption falls squarely in this camp. It is extremely hard for any one individual or business to deviate widely from the collective norms. Only the minority that seek to define their identity around sustainability will do so. So we will need to move together.

5. Widen the mandate

These are practical steps. As they progress, there will be a need to deepen the change and foster a mandate for further action through appropriate pauses for reflection. After all, there are many tensions, trade-offs and dilemmas at the heart of a complex challenge such as sustainable consumption. The right process can help to acknowledge these, to bring them out into the open and sometimes resolve them, allowing society as a whole to move further along the spectrum of change required for a sustainable future.

At present, there is a fragmented response by government to the challenge of sustainable lifestyles. A range of bodies and initiatives are charged by Defra with encouraging behaviour change, including the Energy Savings Trust, Consumer Council for Water, Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Environment Agency and Defra's own Climate Change Communications programme. There is also the welcome new advice service, Environment Direct.

Recommendations for implementing the framework

1. Defra should review whether resources currently spent on sustainable lifestyles in a fragmented way could be better co-ordinated to achieve more effective strategic direction to the sustainable behaviour change agenda⁽⁶⁵⁾. Quality and success, in terms of behaviour change, might appear at present to be variable. We recommend that they would be better co-ordinated within a framework of a government social marketing strategy designed to promote key behaviour change goals.
2. As part of this, government should set a limited number of priorities for promoting lifestyle changes. We encourage a new focus on food and diet (responsible for a third of consumption impacts on climate) and on the need to find positive ways to reduce the impact of meat and dairy products. Action on these, and other priorities, could be taken forward through 'delivery coalitions' of non-profit organisations, consumer groups and business.
3. To harness the scope for choice editing in relation to these, government should collaborate with the new Sustainable Consumption and Production Business Task Force, and other business champions, to plot ten 'product roadmaps' by 2008 for rapid change in priority high-impact products. Road maps for mainstreaming low-carbon cars, energy-efficient lighting, low carbon domestic cooling systems, consumer electronics with low standby consumption, and more sustainable fish, are all possible examples that could be developed.
4. We therefore support the Defra proposal for a Sustainable Products Unit, on condition that this unit is given a clear mandate to develop roadmaps for rapid change in priority products – in consultation with businesses that have demonstrated best practice – and negotiate their implementation through standard-setting and other measures at UK and EU level.
5. As a practical way to advance these recommendations, we propose that a dedicated Sustainable Consumption Directorate is established in Defra, with resources appropriate to the challenge of this departmental priority, and with the support of a cross-departmental group (modelled on the Sustainable Energy Policy Network⁽⁶⁶⁾) to take forward the objectives of the Sustainable Consumption Action Plan from 2006/07.
6. The DTI should formally review, by mid 2007, the potential positive and negative contribution of consumer and competition policy to the objectives of sustainable consumption. The DTI oversees a framework of consumer and competition policy, including advice, advocacy and enforcement that will be critical in enabling more sustainable patterns of consumption.
7. The Better Regulation Commission should review by the end of 2007 the evidence on the role of well-designed regulation as a cost-effective tool to raise product sustainability standards and help achieve the government's sustainable development targets. This work could usefully be done in partnership with the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). The Better Regulation Commission should also consider how assessments of regulatory burdens could better evaluate the contribution of regulation to making sustainable behaviour easier for consumers.
8. The government should advocate an ambitious EU action plan on sustainable consumption, with a focus on product standards best introduced at an EU level. Priority should also be given to sharing evidence and good practice with EU and other international partners, for example, through the Swedish-led Sustainable Lifestyles Task Force. International grant programmes should consider incorporating sustainable consumption as a cross-cutting objective.

Setting an example

'I mean, at the end of the day, they're the biggest landlord in the country, aren't they? So if they want change to happen, you start with the biggest person, not the smallest person.'

Consumer forum participant

Transforming government procurement is essential, not only because of the current scale of its environmental impacts, but also – and even more importantly – as a powerful, symbolic and highly visible signal of changing norms.

The government has acknowledged the power of public procurement to transform markets, in setting up the business-led Sustainable Procurement Task Force. However, less political attention is currently given to making sure that public procurers at all levels make sustainable consumption visible in people's everyday lives through schools, hospitals, council facilities and government vehicle fleets⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Sustainable procurement is an issue of credibility and trust. It is also about making sustainable consumption front-of-mind for people in the settings in which they lead their daily lives, pointing to solutions.

'There is no substitute for 'walking the talk' – government has a significant opportunity as a major procurer to embed sustainable procurement into its supply chain. And this is just one of many areas where leading by example will influence learning and behaviours.'

Ian Blythe, Boots Group plc.

The Sustainable Procurement Taskforce, led by Sir Neville Simms, will report in Spring 2006. The role of the public sector procurement spend of £125 billion in driving innovation will be an important focus. As Jack Frost, Director of Johnson Matthey Fuel Cells and Chair of the Environment Innovation Advisory Group has argued, public procurers could do more to help unblock investment in innovative sustainable technologies. By issuing procurement calls committing the government to purchasing only products that meet stringent standards – if they can be delivered below a specified cost threshold and by a specified date – the risk can be shared between manufacturer and buyer.

Recommendations on procurement

1. All direct impacts of central government, notably buildings and transport, should be carbon neutral by 2012. Global bank HSBC and media company Sky have both committed to making their operations carbon neutral. The government should adopt a broader vision of a carbon neutral public sector by 2015, with a commitment to year-on-year progress towards this.

2. The government should adopt a strategic set of procurement priorities to make sustainable consumption visible to the public in all public sector buildings and transport, as part of the goal to make the UK a leader on sustainable procurement by 2009. We recommend that the government commits to delivering on the following procurement targets by 2009:
 - a. All public sector bodies to have over 25 per cent of their car fleet at 125g CO₂/km emissions or below⁽⁶⁸⁾.
 - b. An ambitious programme for public sector procurement of micro-renewables, with a focus on schools, drawing from a dedicated fund additional to the Low Carbon Building Programme.
 - c. A clear shift in public sector catering, especially in schools and hospitals, towards an emphasis on less meat-intensive diets maximising the use of fresh, seasonal fruit and vegetables and promoting more sustainable fish species.



Four: linking the triangle through a product and lifestyle approach

In the four areas of our lives we have focused on in our research – how we run our homes; the food we eat; how we get around; and holiday travel – most of our behaviours are routine, rather than a matter for much active thought. The evidence base on consumer behaviour suggests that, often, we will need to have our unconscious routines shaken up before we can see the value in forming new ones.

The best way to do this is to drop new tangible solutions into people's daily lives, catalysts that will send ripples, get them talking, sweep them up into a new set of social norms, and open up the possibility of wider changes in outlook and behaviour.

On pages 40-48 we look at practical catalysts for each of these four areas, and recommendations for government to take positive action.

The way we run our homes

The homes we live in have a big influence on our sense of identity and how we look out on the world. One fascinating finding of some in-depth household interviews we conducted was the impact that moving into 'eco-housing' had on people with no previous awareness of how their actions at home affected the environment or their bills⁽⁶⁹⁾.

'We felt it was better to work with the house than against it. Because it was a low-energy house we were really careful with the lights, bought A-rated appliances and became frantic recyclers. We were really excited about it, we thought it was going to be a whole new way of living.'

Teenage couple, C2D, Craven Arms

People at our Consumer forum saw their homes as a place in which they could take control of their impacts and make a real difference to the environment. However, it is clear that most people find it hard to picture how they use energy in the homes, and do not make a natural connection with climate change.

'Electricity? Well it comes from that little meter. It comes straight in here. I have no idea where it comes in from before that. I've never thought about it.'

Female, 30s, C2D, London

'Oh yes, climate change. That's about the weather changing. I've heard about that... yeah, it's an issue – you don't know what to put on in the morning.'

Female, London

The latest research tells us that our use of energy for heating and powering lights and appliances in our homes is responsible for 27 per cent of our climate change impact⁽⁷⁰⁾. However, it has proved difficult to engage people in taking up energy-efficiency measures⁽⁷¹⁾.

As a result, the government has revised down its hopes for carbon savings from household energy efficiency over the next five years by nearly one million tonnes of carbon. Part of the problem, perhaps, has been the failure to understand that energy is not necessarily a household term. If so, talking to people about energy efficiency could be unhelpful.

'Of course I know that it's "energy"... they promote themselves as energy suppliers, but in my heart that is not the term I use – it's gas and electricity – if that...'

Female, AB, 30s, London

Energy is an invisible magic in our homes. Our research for *Seeing the Light* has shown that microgeneration has the power to make energy visible. Feedback from the Consumer forum also suggested that microgeneration can have the power to motivate and engage people. Making energy generation part and parcel of people's homes and schools may hold the key to empowering and engaging energy consumers for the first time. If so, we cannot afford to leave microgeneration at the margins of the UK's climate change programme.

In considering the costs and benefits of particular measures, this example shows that the government should attach more weight to its potential to engage and motivate people in relation to wider goals regarding sustainable behaviour change.

'I tell people all the time that I generate my own electricity... I love it... I think it's fascinating.'

Male, N. Lancashire, with mini-wind turbine

Positive incentives matched with penalties for excessive consumption

Householders will be most easily convinced that they are not acting alone if inducements to sustainable behaviour are noticeable in daily life. Reducing VAT on insulation has not proved an effective incentive, for instance, because the question of whether or not to buy insulation is not on the decision-making radar in the first place. Linking environmental behaviours to local, property or vehicle taxation levels, by contrast, puts them firmly on the radar.

Inducements can involve positive incentives or penalties. Positive incentive schemes are attractive propositions if they can be funded. But penalties for excessive consumption can also be seen as progressive, in that they safeguard basic needs and only kick in to target wasteful behaviours. The basis of charging for water and energy use and waste disposal could be affordable fixed rates up to a specified threshold (taking into account household size) with steeply rising charges thereafter⁽⁷²⁾.

Locking in the gains

What happens if products and services become more sustainable, but people simply buy or use them more? The overall impact on resources could increase.

What happens if, alongside such sustainable offerings, new products emerge that accelerate environmental loss. Emerging products, such as low-cost domestic air conditioning, threaten to undermine the hard-won energy savings delivered by the government's climate change programme⁽⁷³⁾.

What happens with the money that consumers save from some sustainable products? The 'rebound effect' describes how money saved, for example, on energy bills from insulating your loft, may be spent in ways that cancel out the environmental gains.

The concept of personal carbon credits, in which people are allocated an equitable share of carbon emission rights, is receiving growing attention as a mechanism for addressing these challenges⁽⁷⁴⁾. Year on year, in line with climate change targets, the credits allocated would decline, in order to achieve the desired carbon reduction at least cost. Those with below-average use of electricity, heating and car fuel would be able to sell their surplus credits to the market where they could be bought at a rising price by more profligate users.

Practical catalyst 1: micro generation

Climate change leadership by this government is not yet being felt where it matters: in everyday lives. The challenge is to raise people's use of energy in the home from the subconscious to the conscious, and enable them to feel part of the climate change solution.

Our qualitative research, *Seeing the Light*, with 29 households and three schools, explores what impact micro-generation technologies like solar water heating, mini wind turbines and air source heat pumps had on attitudes to energy use. It is clear from in-depth interviews and observations that home energy generation rarely leaves families unchanged in their outlook and behaviour. As the researchers say: 'It seems that micro-generation provides a tangible hook to engage householders emotionally with the issue of energy use... Householders described the sheer pleasure of creation and of self-sufficiency: "It's like growing your own vegetables."'

The most striking finding is the energy consciousness shown by those households that have moved into social housing with micro-generation, compared to that of mainstream householders from similar socio-economic groups.

A teenage couple, who moved into social housing fitted with solar water heating in Shropshire, have since chosen to buy A-rated appliances and investigate the environmental credentials of washable nappies.

An elderly widow with a new air source heat pump in Kirklees is experimenting with different settings on her heating control panel to see how she can enjoy warmth at minimum cost: 'I didn't realise before that it was the immersion heater running away with the money. It's made me more aware of where power is being used in my house.'

However, it is clear that it is not sufficient to install the technologies and leave householders to make of them what they will. The greatest effects have been felt in households that were introduced to their micro-generators from the start and given clear explanations of how they can be used to advantage. A similar lesson can be learned from schools: the catalytic role of micro-generation comes to the fore only if it is used actively as a teaching tool and absorbed into wider school life and learning.

At our Consumer forum, people were accepting of the concept in principle, but had many concerns about practicalities of implementation, and whether the system would impact on the vulnerable.

A substantial research effort involving pilot schemes is needed before personal carbon credits can be considered as a solution to climate change. However, this radical concept needs to be looked upon as a real possibility for the medium term, as a way to lock in the gains of product efficiency, and create the right incentive framework for real and rapid progress towards a low-carbon economy.

Practical catalyst 2: smart meters and feedback

'Yeah, clearly we're all going to have to adjust, but I think I'd like to have a carbon meter, have a kind of meter in the house so that you can actually become aware of how much you are using. Because we don't know, do we?'

Consumer forum participant

Pay-as-you-go Keypad Meters were introduced by Northern Ireland Electricity in 2000 to replace the Powercard meter that operated using prepayment tokens. Inspiration was taken from the popularity of 'Pay as you go' mobile phones. In December 2005, the utility introduced an additional tariff option for existing pay-as-you-go users that provides incentives for switching energy consumption to discounted off-peak times through the introduction of a higher-cost tariff at the high peak period between 4pm and 7pm. This helps reduce demand on the dirtiest power stations, which come on-stream at peak time.

Keypad meters have proved highly popular, with demand coming from customers not previously on prepayment. They have already been taken up by one in four consumers in Northern Ireland. Importantly, they appear to be having a catalytic effect in terms of energy awareness. Recent research has indicated that, thanks to the instant display feature which gives real-time feedback on energy use, customers have made (on average) consumption savings of 3.5 per cent. Energywatch suggest that smart meters could help to reduce consumption by as much as 15 per cent⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Energy regulator, Alistair Buchanan of Ofgem commented in March 2006 that 'meters have become hot news because energy prices are up 70 per cent in the year, and clearly consumers will be interested if they can save costs by having a meter on their kitchen wall.'⁽⁷⁶⁾ The Design Council's innovative work on real-time feedback systems demonstrates how smart metering can also be 'sexy'⁽⁷⁷⁾.

In Norway, householders get energy bills complete with bar graphs demonstrating how their energy use that quarter has compared with their use in previous years. A review of the evidence on this and other schemes has demonstrated average energy use reductions of five to ten per cent⁽⁷⁸⁾. In the UK, focus groups have indicated that on-bill feedback could similarly prompt energy use reductions⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Recommendations for our homes

1. [The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister \(ODPM\), with the DTI, should set a 2020 target for roll-out of microgeneration across new and existing homes.](#) We recommend that the following measures be taken to build on the government's forthcoming Microgeneration Strategy⁽⁸⁰⁾:
 - a. A microgeneration commitment on energy suppliers to install microgeneration technologies on their customers' properties alongside the Energy Efficiency Commitment, helping to create a viable market for these technologies in the domestic retrofit sector through greater energy services provision.
 - b. A revised Planning Policy Statement 22 that places a clear duty on local authorities to put in place planning policies that require the installation of at least ten per cent on-site renewables in large new developments.
 - c. A strengthened Code for Sustainable Buildings with carbon savings over building regulations 2005 of ten, 25, 40 and 60 per cent for Levels 1 to 4⁽⁸¹⁾, with Code Level 5 requiring zero carbon emissions. Level 3 should be required for all new homes receiving government funding.
 - d. A dedicated fund for public sector procurement of microgeneration.

Work by the Energy Saving Trust (EST), supported by positive feedback from our Consumer forum, shows that incentives to energy-efficiency operate most effectively for householders at the 'whole house' level rather than in relation to specific energy-saving products.

2. [HM Treasury, Defra and the ODPM should review the potential for rebates on council tax and stamp duty land tax to reward more sustainable households,](#) and give a real incentive for investment in energy and water efficiency measures. The current Lyons Review of local government finance and structures, due for completion in time for the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, offers an opportunity to explore how local authorities can have more discretion over such measures.

3. [We support the introduction of one-off Council Tax rebates for households that install energy-efficiency measures,](#) as piloted by Braintree Council and identified in the HM Treasury/Defra Energy Efficiency Innovation Review⁽⁸²⁾. EST estimates that eight per cent of eligible households would take up this offer, saving 9.8 million tonnes carbon over the lifetime of the measures⁽⁸³⁾. Post-2010 council tax re-valuation would enable a revenue-neutral banding approach to be introduced in all areas based on A-G ratings in Home Condition Reports, a measure which was supported by participants at our Consumer forum, on condition that support would be made available to low-income households to make necessary improvements.

Improved householder feedback about actual consumption appears to be a very cost-effective way to tackle energy demand.

4. [Legislation should be introduced to enable Ofgem to implement a national meter replacement programme by 2012,](#) to ensure that all households can benefit from smart meters that will enable them to monitor and manage their energy use. Smart meters should be capable of displaying real-time consumption, of monitoring exported electricity from microgeneration and of being read remotely. As a starting point they should be required for all meter replacements and in all new connections. This should be implemented within the framework of the government's Energy Review and the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive.

5. The government should work with Ofgem, Ofreg and energy suppliers to pilot different forms of enhanced billing feedback on energy use in 2006 and build successful models into implementation of the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive via a new code of practice for energy suppliers from 2007⁽⁸⁴⁾.

The current structure of the energy market, based on competitiveness, actively works against innovative pricing mechanisms that would encourage demand reduction.

6. In the context of the Energy Review, we recommend that the government align Ofgem's primary duty with the four goals of energy policy: to cut carbon emissions; maintain the reliability of energy supplies; promote competitive markets; and ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated. A fundamental re-examination of the structures of the energy market should then be undertaken, including the role of Ofgem and the potential of tariffs, pricing or graduated taxes in achieving carbon reductions.

7. We support the introduction of a requirement for universal water metering by companies in areas under water stress⁽⁸⁵⁾. Most of southern and eastern England has been identified by the Environment Agency as being under water stress. Water use is very hard to influence without water metering, to enable people to monitor and be charged for what they use. Once metering is in place, tariffs must include a built-in allowance to protect vulnerable consumer groups.

8. As part of wider work on waste and resources, Defra should conduct a feasibility study into the potential of a national Recycling Lottery to promote new forms of recycling, as recommended by the NCC, drawing on the evidence of incentive schemes supported at a local level.

The food we eat

We are perhaps more aware than ever before that what we eat plays a crucial role in influencing our health and capacity to enjoy life. We are less aware of the critical impact it can have on the well-being of the planet. Food is the average household's number one impact on climate change: responsible for nearly a third (31 per cent) of our climate impact⁽⁸⁶⁾.

But this is not a bad news story. The evidence is clear that sustainable consumption and better nutrition can, and should, go hand-in-hand⁽⁸⁷⁾. Seasonal produce, extensively-farmed meat in lower quantities, and a shift away from over-exploited white fish to sustainably-harvested oily species, are all changes that are desirable from a nutritional and sustainability perspective.

There are surely few more enjoyable and effective ways of responding to climate change than by reconnecting our national diet to the flow of seasons. According to the Institute for Grocery Distribution, two-thirds of consumers (and higher across 'middle England') report being positive about buying seasonal foods⁽⁸⁸⁾.

It was evident at our Consumer forum that seasonal, local and organic food is becoming increasingly topical and understood. Taking time to buy and prepare quality food for family and friends is a growing hobby for many people. This is partly due to the charismatic influence of celebrity chefs like Rick Stein, Jamie Oliver, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Nigel Slater.

'And I think I don't know enough about when things are in season because I'm so used to it all year around; I don't know when strawberries come.'

Consumer forum participant

However, others were frank about their penchant for, or reliance on, convenience.

'You want to do your shopping in an hour – you don't want to spend 20 minutes in ten different shops that are half a mile apart...'

Consumer forum participant

Given the market share of the supermarkets, it is reasonable to explore what more they can do to 'edit out' unnecessary food miles, packaging and waste, and to prioritise more seasonal produce. It may be that steps can also be taken, whether at the local level through planning, or national level through the work of competition authorities, to ensure that supermarkets give people of all socio-economic groups access to healthy and sustainable food that is also affordable.

It is not just local supply that would reap dividends for carbon reduction. The disappearance of local shops, and their replacement with centrally-located supermarkets, is an important climate change issue too. It is worth noting that the combined greenhouse gas emissions of the nation's weekly supermarket shop are equivalent to the impacts from road freighting food in the UK⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Practical catalyst 3: healthy and sustainable menus in schools and hospitals

Our eating patterns, of course, are no less habitual than our use of energy. How do we influence current trends of eating too much meat, or habits of buying strawberries in December? We can start by getting into more sustainable habits in the first place. The example set by meals served in schools and hospitals will have a ripple effect on what parents, pupils and patients assume is a healthy diet for themselves at home.

Thanks to the spotlight shone by Jamie Oliver's Feed Me Better campaign, parents everywhere are now calling for school meals to set a better example for children and get them used to a more healthy diet⁽⁹⁰⁾. The agenda of school meal reform is a crucial opportunity to get upcoming generations used to the pattern of the seasons and healthy alternatives to eating cheap meat twice or three times a day. So far it is not clear that the opportunity will be taken. A narrow focus on nutrients alone risks neglect of the wider synergies with climate change and local agriculture that can flow from a shift towards more fresh, sustainably-farmed fruit and vegetables.

Defra needs to work more closely with the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health and the Audit Commission to give local authorities, schools and hospitals confidence that they will not be penalised for serving up seasonal, sustainable, quality menus rather than resorting to low-cost options.

In schools, the ripple effect of school meals should be reinforced by a parallel educational programme. It will pay huge dividends for health and sustainability if cooking classes are viewed as an essential life-skill for all, alongside IT. Evidence from 1,600 schools participating in the Garden Organic for Schools project shows that getting children to grow their own vegetables can make the job of getting them interested in eating greens a lot easier⁽⁹¹⁾.

Recommendations for the food we eat

1. We recommend that the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) should give the new School Food Trust a clear mandate to help schools familiarise children with more nutritious *and* sustainable diets. Cooking and nutrition lessons should be incorporated into the curriculum as a life skills tool. The DfES Growing Schools programme should be given a dedicated fund to support schools in disadvantaged areas seeking to develop vegetable gardens or make farm visits, to reflect the importance of the 'outdoor classroom' experience in getting children more interested in food origins and quality.
2. Defra, in partnership with the DfES and the Department of Health (DoH), should further develop and agree with the Audit Commission authoritative guidance for public procurers on how they can give due weighting to sustainability criteria in all public sector catering contracts. Building on the work of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative⁽⁹²⁾, procurers should be encouraged to use available powers to specify extensively-reared meat and dairy products, seasonal fresh produce, and fish certified as sustainable by the MSC. Although EU rules discourage specification of local or fair trade produce, procurers should be supported in developing such supply relationships for key food items.
3. Defra and the DoH should give a mandate to the Food Standards Agency to integrate advice to the public on food in relation to nutritional and sustainability objectives. This will require close attention to the underlying evidence base, but we expect it to highlight:
 - a. advice on fish consumption that points people towards more nutritious and well-managed species, with an emphasis on fisheries recognised as sustainable by the MSC, and away from species the MSC identifies as over-exploited.
 - b. the value of moving away from meat-intensive diets to those based more around moderate consumption of local, extensively-reared meat, and a greater intake of fruit and vegetables.
4. Defra should work to reduce the climate impacts of meat and dairy, by working with retailers, public procurers and the UK livestock sector to develop roadmaps by 2007 for a transition to a more localised supply chain of extensively-farmed meat and dairy products. The department should also promote the use of a diverse range of cuts of meat to cut down on waste.
5. Defra should fund public-facing initiatives to increase seasonal consumption and familiarise people with lesser known meat cuts and well-managed fish species, in the context of wider work on social marketing. These initiatives should be in partnership with UK farmers, retailers, celebrity chefs and NGOs. The campaign will build on the efforts of the Sustainable Farming and Food Implementation Group to reconnect people with the origins of food, and should be underpinned by negotiated commitments from public procurers and retailers – as part of the Food Industry Sustainability Strategy – to promote sustainable and seasonal produce.

Getting around

At the Consumer forum, there were spontaneous references to the environmental impact of cars, and the need for cleaner, 'greener' ways of getting around. People talked about the need for more accessible, more reliable public transport and even highlighted the advantages of walking and cycling more.

'I love walking. You take in a lot more of the world.'

Consumer forum participant

But they were also candid about their personal attachment to cars and the concept of car ownership. It was clear that for many people the car represents a personal symbol of status and identity, as well as a means of getting from one place to another. This emotional attachment to cars – together with the perceived unreliability of public transport – left people struggling to reconcile environmental concerns with the need to cut back on driving.

Participants were asked to identify measures they would be prepared to consider in tackling the over-use of the car. Once again, they placed a particular emphasis on fairness. Public transport was not typically regarded as credible and car clubs were not seen as attractive – partly because they fail to meet the need for autonomy, which personal ownership seems to deliver.

We were able to conclude that the concept of shifting taxation away from car ownership and onto car use in a transparent way can command support. However, when it comes to taxation of fuel, vehicles and road use, people are often sceptical of the motives of policy-makers: they see taxes as revenue-raisers rather than carbon-cutters. But clear and visible hypothecation – from tax revenues to public transport – as in the case of London's congestion charge, can help make such taxes more acceptable to people.

These findings mirror evidence from elsewhere about the challenge of addressing the car culture. A prerequisite for achieving change is a committed effort to improve public transport services, to tackle long-term issues of access and mobility in a sustainable way. But effort is also needed to address our underlying attachment to cars. One clear opportunity is to work *with* the grain of people's pride in their cars and accelerate the market for desirable low-carbon cars.

We set out, right, a number of recommendations for improving the way we get around. These include some suggestions for developing a product roadmap for mainstreaming low-carbon cars, which can build on the work of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership⁽⁹³⁾.

Practical catalyst 4: hybrid cars

When the Toyota Prius won Car of the Year at the 2005 Paris and Detroit motor shows, it became a new must-have. As our Consumer forum made clear, car ownership is, for many people, a symbol of status and identity, an emotional connection as much as a practical requirement. The fact that the Prius is not just a desirable model but has strong environmental credentials means that their owners can have all their aspirations from their car met while still buying into environmentally advanced technology. On the right, we set out policy options that would unleash the investment needed to make all the new must-have models low-carbon for UK drivers.

Recommendations for getting around

Recent research suggests that a high intensity application of measures that help facilitate behavioural change, such as school, green and personalised travel plans, telecommuting and video-conferencing, could reduce car traffic by eleven per cent over a decade⁽⁹⁴⁾.

1. Local authorities need encouragement from the DfT to incorporate stronger guidance in Local Transport Plans to prioritise behavioural change measures, such as school and work travel plans, and video-conferencing, as recommended by the SDC. The government should lead by example by adopting departmental travel plans with modal shift targets by 2009.
2. Local authorities should be encouraged by the DfT to introduce 'hard measures' like reallocation of road space, congestion charging and parking charges, to lock in the benefits of behaviour change measures so they are not eroded by induced traffic. Effective enforcement of the speed limit on motorways by the police also helps to reduce emissions.
3. The DfT should introduce a more explicit focus on carbon reduction into their welcome proposals for a national road pricing scheme. Local authorities need more political and financial support in introducing congestion charging schemes and public transport services. We welcome the new Transport Innovation Fund as a step in this direction⁽⁹⁵⁾.
4. Apply the approach of a product roadmap to low-carbon cars. We recommend that the DfT urgently consider the following⁽⁹⁶⁾:
 - a. Action to require car advertisements to display prominently the A-G efficiency rating of the car – making it more visible on a daily basis.
 - b. Introduce a new top band of VED, and a £300 gap between each band, as recommended by the SDC. The top band of VED would rise dramatically to £1,800/yr for vehicles emitting 221gCO₂/km or more, with a bottom band of £0 for vehicles with emissions below 100g CO₂/km. We propose that this policy should be announced in 2006, but brought into effect in 2008. The SDC believes that this would dramatically improve the market demand for highly fuel efficient vehicles such as hybrid cars, achieving carbon savings of around 0.4 to 0.8MtC/yr.
 - c. After appropriate consultation, announce at the earliest opportunity that the proposed road-pricing scheme will be banded by vehicle emissions rating.
 - d. Remove financial disincentives to low-emission vehicles, such as the higher mileage rates given to more powerful engines in the NHS.
 - e. Issue a procurement call committing the government to purchasing only vehicles that meet stringent emissions standards (to ensure 25 per cent fleet below 125gCO₂/km by 2009), if such models can be delivered below an agreed price threshold⁽⁹⁷⁾.

Holiday travel

Overseas travel represents a major aspiration for many people. Participants at the Consumer forum spoke of their attachment to flying abroad for sun and for short breaks. Among less affluent groups there were numerous references to how the low-cost carrier boom has opened up travel to a wider section of the population.

People were also shocked when they were informed of the impact of flying on climate change. For many, flying has always been presented as a positive thing, a chance to broaden your mind.

'You just want to experience as much as you can, and learn about the different ways of living as well. And you can't do that by staying around the same people.'

Consumer forum participant

There is a clear paradox in the relationship between travel and sustainability. Many champions of the environment and the developing world would acknowledge that travel was a driving force in opening their eyes. Yet there is no question that we urgently need to limit the rapid increase in carbon emissions from frequent flying.

The fact that one of the ten break-out groups at the Consumer forum chose an end to internal flights within Britain as their 'best idea of the day' demonstrates that attitudes are open to change. It may be that, with careful and visible investment in infrastructure, and improvements in inner-city rail services (where these are a realistic and available alternative) more people might become receptive to leadership on curbing domestic flights.

Even so, there are fewer alternatives to air travel in some cases. People in Northern Ireland, for example, can claim with some reason that air travel helps to reduce their potential isolation from the rest of the UK and the European mainland.

Overseas travel is a more contentious area. Of course, projected emissions growth from aviation means that demand management is urgent and essential. Bringing aviation into the Kyoto Protocol and emissions trading schemes will be important steps. But it would be short-sighted to think that we can leave air passengers out of the equation when we push for more radical interventions. As we have argued upfront, if policy-makers and advocates are to create and retain the mandate for the bold action that is needed on sustainable consumption then policy will need to actively touch the lives of citizens and engage with them honestly and courageously. Our contribution has been to see how public support, and hence political will, can be built for essential demand management measures. This is the rationale for rolling out carbon offset on an opt-out basis.

Practical catalyst 5: opt-out carbon offset for flights

Carbon offset schemes are a way to take action on climate change, by putting money aside to make a positive difference. Of themselves, they will only ever be one of a wide range of policy tools needed to reduce the impact of flying and manage demand, but we believe that a positive approach to offsetting could have public resonance well beyond the tonnes of CO₂ offset, and would help to build awareness of the need for other measures.

British Airways adopted a carbon offset scheme in 2005, but take-up is low, implying that the issue is not front-of-mind to most air travellers.

Public sector procurement, with a commitment to implement carbon offset across all central government departments from April 2006, is likely to have a positive effect on this highly competitive sector. However, the scope for significant growth in market share is a very tall order, given competitive pressures. So we propose:

1. An 'opt-out', rather than an 'opt-in' approach for consumers. Data from the Travel Foundation (a voluntary scheme on sustainable development in tourism and travel) suggests this can achieve around 60 per cent take-up, far higher than on an opt-in basis. Data from the payroll deductions on pension saving support this⁽⁹⁸⁾.

2. Align the incentives on air operators, within the current, highly competitive industry. The Air Passengers Duty may be a blunt instrument in relation to climate change. But, as an incentive for airlines that want to promote more sustainable lifestyles, it is a practical option.

3. The market for carbon offset needs to grow and to develop quality standards that operate across countries.

Therefore, the Chancellor should increase the Air Passengers Duty, but waive this for companies that offer consumers (quality-assured) carbon offset on an opt-out basis.

Recommendations on holiday travel

There is an urgent need to tackle emissions in advance of EU measures and wake people up to the impacts of flying.

1. [HM Treasury should introduce a clear incentive for opt-out carbon offset schemes across all airlines.](#) This can be implemented using a two-tier system for Air Passenger Duty, or similar approach, that gives rebates on the higher rate for airlines that offer consumers (quality assured) carbon offset on an opt-out basis from 2007.
2. [The government should introduce an emissions charge for internal air travel,](#) as recommended by the SDC, to reflect the environmental impact of short-haul flights relative to inter-city rail.



Five: show people they are part of something bigger

From individuals to communities

The spectrum of action we have described makes community-based action an imperative. While changes may be driven by ‘choice editing’ and by offering more sustainable products and services, strong community networks are needed to achieve change further along the spectrum. It is simply not possible to achieve the step-change needed for ‘one-planet living’ unless people are enabled to work together, both as consumers and, perhaps more importantly, as citizens.

Breaking out of habits and norms is difficult as an individual. Groups, however, can create a new momentum for change. A substantial evidence base suggests that:

- > ‘unfreezing’ bad habits is more successful in groups;
- > overcoming social lock-in requires group support;
- > new social norms are negotiated in groups;
- > social learning is an effective tool for encouraging new behaviours;
- > community-based management of social goods has a long and effective pedigree⁽⁹⁹⁾.

The popularity of walking groups and WeightWatchers-style programmes has shown that the group setting can overcome apathy and encourage people to help each other tackle new challenges⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

Eco-clubs and other community-level initiatives offer a promising way forward in helping people move towards more sustainable lifestyles. They have the potential to influence governance and decision-making at local level, leading to more active citizenship⁽¹⁰¹⁾. However, such projects

will never become mainstream unless there is an absolute commitment from all levels of government to create the conditions which allow them to thrive⁽¹⁰²⁾. At this stage, the priority must be to learn more about what works and what does not work from existing initiatives.

Defra’s Environmental Action Fund is funding around 35 community-based projects in sustainable consumption across the country. The initiatives vary from local community-based projects like Wiltshire Wildlife Trust’s Climate Friendly Towns and Villages, to GAP’s EcoTeams, involving office colleagues. Other projects are spread across communities of interest, such as the National Trust’s Small Steps, Big Changes. Together, these initiatives provide an opportunity to learn how to achieve effective community-based social change.

‘Breaking out of habits and norms is difficult as an individual. Groups, however, can create a new momentum for change.’

We look forward eagerly to the full three-year evaluation of these projects. The lessons for stakeholders and government from the Environmental Action Fund projects should be combined with other case study evaluations, both within the sustainability field – such as the work done by the ChangeLAB project – and beyond, in areas such as public health and anti-social behaviour⁽¹⁰³⁾. We have been able to gain some provisional insights from a series of

in-depth interviews with community leaders from a selection of these projects and from existing evidence in this area⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

A number of measures would better support their ability to deliver more sustainable consumption:

- > a more robust and agreed methodology for evaluating behaviour change, to help projects monitor their own effectiveness and compare with others;
- > visible commitment to the sustainability agenda by central government to convince individuals that taking part is worthwhile – and to convince funders that the issues are worth supporting;
- > a supportive infrastructure and fiscal environment, to make behaviour change possible and attractive, and to reward people for their participation in community action;
- > an ongoing government commitment to provide medium-term funding (as with the Environmental Action Fund’s three-year cycle) for fully-evaluated pilot and start-up projects. Many projects are self-sustaining and pursuing innovative partnership and funding strategies to reduce the need for further public money;
- > consistent and well-resourced support from local government. Beyond waste, sustainable consumption is often not a key issue for local authorities. The ODPM must make sustainable living a priority for local government, through Local Area Agreements and other tools (see page 53) with appropriate supporting funding;

- > a government-funded network for practitioners to share information about resources and effective techniques, and to feed into policy-making at local and national levels. This would offer an opportunity for small community-level groups and larger organisations in the UK to collectively engage with European and international processes, such as the UN Environment Programme's Sustainable Consumption Opportunities for Europe project⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

Pledges and feedback

Smart communication can help to give people the confidence that their individual action is being matched by others and bringing about meaningful change. For example, the pledgebank.com website, with the strap-line 'I'll do it, but only if you help me do it', invites people to create a pledge along the lines of: 'I'll do something, if X many other people pledge to do the same thing'. Pledges currently pick up support through micro-marketing. Once a pledge is created, flier and text message formats are automatically generated and can be circulated to encourage others in a workplace or neighbourhood to sign up. They are a great device for getting people interacting with others.

The pledge model has the potential to be scaled up in a range of applications.

- > NGOs could use it to get their members implementing mass changes like car-sharing.
- > Local authorities could use it to increase recycling levels or energy conservation. The pledge could be made by the authority: 'We the council will provide X, but only if Y thousand local authority citizens

will pledge to do Z'. One example might be to commit to improve street lighting if enough people pledge to start using composters.

Another example might be offering loft insulation at a discount if over 100 people in the same district took it up.

Suppliers of green products and services could offer local authorities significant discounts if they could plan to install or sell a fixed number of measures in a neighbourhood, as this would reduce their transaction costs considerably.

To date, Sutton Council have signed up over 1,000 residents to a Planet Pledge, offering advice, support and incentives like discounts on cycle repair and tube travel in return for pledges to take steps like fitting loft insulation, recycling supermarket plastic bags and leaving the car at home for short journeys.

Another excellent model for taking people on a carbon-reduction journey is supplied by CRed, the Community Carbon Reduction Project, based in the East of England and focusing on Norfolk and Norwich. Through their website – www.cred-uk.org – people can follow pledge pathways and receive advice and feedback on how much carbon they will be saving.

Better feedback on the collective achievements of a community's street, compared with others, can also motivate more individual action. Pilots conducted by Guildford Borough Council and Surrey University raised the number of people recycling by up to 39 per cent – to a high of 90 per cent – simply by giving householders feedback on how well their street was doing compared with others⁽¹⁰⁶⁾.

Community learning

The mainstreaming of community-based action on sustainability requires a strong government framework to create the enabling conditions for it to thrive.

Community projects do have the power to effect significant behaviour changes⁽¹⁰⁷⁾. Nonetheless, there are currently few measures of their long-term impact, or evaluation of successes.

Projects designed with sustainability as their first objective can often deliver a range of other 'social goods'. For example, Peterborough Environment City Trust is building neighbourliness, networks and institutions from scratch in a brand new development within the government's Sustainable Communities Plan. The Trust is also working in partnership with the Richmond Fellowship Employment and Training Division, to provide volunteering opportunities for people who have suffered mental health problems, as a stepping stone back into the community. Action for Sustainable Living in Manchester is introducing people with different socio-economic profiles to work on shared projects. Similarly, Groundwork has achieved a powerful effect across the religious divide in Northern Ireland.

Yet these projects are largely unrewarded for their contribution to the policy goals of central and local government. Chasing funding from a large number of different government pots, each with different criteria, is time-consuming. It may be that the Together We Can programme, co-ordinated by the Home Office, offers the best opportunities to integrate community level action around sustainability and quality of life.

Recommendations for community-based action

1. Government should support local community action, by joining up funding and evaluation programmes for behaviour change initiatives that deliver sustainable consumption alongside regeneration, social cohesion and healthy lifestyles. This should build on the Home Office's Together We Can programme and Defra's Community Action 2020.
2. The ODPM, as part of its forthcoming white paper on the future of local government, should move beyond waste management to make sustainable living a priority for local government. The tools at its disposal include Local Area Agreements, Local Public Service Agreements, Best Value Performance Indicators and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment with appropriate supporting funding and training.
3. Defra should fund a network for organisations delivering behaviour change for sustainable living at the community-level to: share learning and information about resources and effective techniques with each other and with the research community; and to feed into policy-making at both local and national levels. The network should draw on the experience of the London Sustainability Exchange in building capacity among its partners and should also facilitate engagement with EU and international networks.
4. The ODPM and Defra should work with local councils to pilot two new communications-based approaches to lever up community action, recycling levels and energy conservation:
 - a. the use of web-based pledges, by local authorities.
 - b. better feedback on the collective recycling or other behaviour change achievements of a street or neighbourhood by comparison with others. Feedback should be given to households on how their own street's recycling rate compares with the best-performing street in the area, and with the borough target.



Six: The long-term challenges

Pauses for reflection

As we have already highlighted, if everyone on the planet were to consume natural resources and emit carbon dioxide at the same rate as we do in Europe, we would need three planets to support us. If a US citizen is taken as the model, we will need five planets. The obvious bears re-stating: we do not have this many planets!

Throughout this report, we have been concerned with identifying practical, positive measures to deliver sustainable consumption. Policy-makers need to know how to act now to make modern lifestyles more sustainable. Almost every specific action that we have identified in earlier sections of the report could be initiated – given sufficient political will – in the lifetime of the current government.

At the same time, we are acutely aware that some of these measures may be more difficult than others to implement; and that the actions we propose will not in themselves be sufficient to meet the challenge of a ‘one planet’ society. There is, as we have said, the need for action across the spectrum of issues of importance for a sustainable future.

In this section of the report, we look at some of the more complex, longer-term challenges we will face on the path to sustainable consumption.

Consuming differently or consuming less?

An important tension is evident in the debate about sustainable consumption. Some people insist that sustainable consumption inevitably means ‘consuming less’. Others

maintain, just as fervently, that it is not about consuming less at all but about ‘consuming differently’.

In the first camp are those who lament the ‘rampant materialism’ of modern society and suggest that we would actually be happier and enjoy a better quality of life by consuming less. They point to evidence of voluntary ‘down-shifting’: people who appear to opt for a better work-life balance, more quality time with their families and a low-consumption lifestyle⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

In the second camp are those who suggest that consuming less would restrict choice and reduce the quality of people’s lives. They argue instead that sustainable consumption involves ‘consuming efficiently’. They highlight the transformative power of the market to deliver greater efficiency in industrial processes, cleaner and greener products, and more sustainable consumer choices.

This division suggests two distinct routes to sustainable consumption. One looks for deeper engagement with the natural world, aims for increased self-reliance and simpler lives, and calls for large-scale changes in people’s aspirations and behaviours. The other seeks sustainability in the continuing march of progress, opening out the possibility of new, more sustainable products that simultaneously improve our lives. We appear to be offered a choice between two competing alternatives. Which route should we choose?

The reality is that this suggestion of a ‘fork in the road’ is misleading. Neither model of change is complete in itself. The first makes vast and possibly unrealistic demands on human nature. It risks alienating those

whose behaviour it seeks to change. The second neglects one of the key lessons from the past: that efficiency improvements are often outstripped by growing aspirations and increased consumption elsewhere. Neither model is yet capable of demonstrating that it will lead to a ‘one planet’ society⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. In reality, elements from both strategies are going to be needed.

The divided view highlights some of the key issues that lie at the heart of the challenge of sustainable consumption. The first is a lack of clarity over the term ‘consumption’ itself. The second is the link between consumption and economic stability. A third is the role of business in delivering sustainability. A fourth is inequality. The fifth is the complexity of lifestyle aspirations in modern society.

We will address each of these five issues in turn. None of them is simple to resolve. So rather than attempting to present quick-fix ‘solutions’, we concern ourselves here with articulating some of the issues. At the same time, we suggest some practical ways in which government can increase its competence in addressing these challenges.

Consuming less of what?

Whether you believe we will need to consume less or consume differently, it helps to be clear about what you mean. The ‘consumption’ of material resources is not necessarily the same thing as the ‘consumption’ of economic goods and services. But the argument often proceeds as though it were the same. Or else it assumes that the one can easily be ‘decoupled’ from the other.

Those who argue for a simpler life tend to look at the existing structure of consumer society – built on the ever-increasing accumulation and disposal of material possessions – and assume that the only way to stop the damage is to curb the economic system which feeds it. This view alarms those responsible for keeping the economy going, as well as those who have an economic interest in the existing system.

‘We must stop harvesting wood and fish faster than they can restock. We must eat less meat.’

Those resisting any notion of consuming less have a tendency to level charges of naivety at the down-shifters, and insist that it is possible to reduce environmental and social impacts without compromising economic consumption. This view is seen by the ‘down-shifters’ as a defence of the status quo which is unlikely to deliver the radical changes in consumption that appear to be needed. And so the debate gets increasingly polarised. How can we navigate a constructive course through the middle?

In the first place, it is plain that not all things that people buy and do have the same resource implications. Downloading MP3 tracks is trading lightly compared to shopping for a table made from illegally felled teak trees. It is certainly possible in principle to restrict resource consumption while growing the economy. We can cut the amount of energy and materials that go into

today’s products. We can encourage people to purchase new kinds of ‘material-light’ products and services.

At the same time, it is clear that, as a society, we will need to consume a lot less of certain things. We must burn fewer carbon-rich fuels if we are to meet our national targets for climate change. We must stop harvesting wood and fish faster than they can restock. We must restrain our use of finite mineral resources if we are not to face severe economic shortages in the future. We must eat less meat. We must throw away fewer disposable products if we are to reduce the volumes of waste going to landfill.

It is crucial that we acknowledge these constraints and place them at the heart of a sustainable economic policy. It is worth remembering that, in some cases, consuming less can be a straightforward case of cutting out waste – less energy and money leaking out of people’s homes, less unwanted packaging on supermarket products.

And yet, at present, it is hard to see how rising economic consumption is to be made compatible with these limits. It certainly cannot be taken as self-evident that efficiency improvements will do all the work for us. To date, despite much rhetoric to the contrary, there is little hard and fast evidence of decoupling economic growth from environmental impact. Rather, we in the West appear to be exporting our production impacts to developing countries and then importing the products to consume.

To get a better handle on this, we need to dramatically improve our understanding of the reliance of the economy on material resources. Our statistical frameworks are, for the most part, well-developed where

economic flows are concerned. But the same cannot be said of those relating to material flows, resource requirements or environmental and social impacts. Until we have robust statistical frameworks for this important information, it will remain impossible to address the overall resource and environmental implications of economic consumption patterns, and impossible to validate or refute the claim that decoupling is possible. The work of WWF and Biffaward in developing the first comprehensive set of UK material flow and energy accounts provides the ideal platform on which to build.

Beyond the 'consumer economy'

A whole chapter of *Securing the Future* is devoted to the idea of the one-planet economy – but what does this mean? Consumption is intimately linked to economic stability. Vigorous consumer spending signals a booming economy, a thriving production sector, full employment, healthy tax revenues and plenty of money in the public purse. By contrast, as every economics correspondent knows, the first sign of recession is a slump in high-street shopping. Like it or not, our economies go hand in glove with consumer activity and – for the moment at least – that means the continued purchase and use of material goods.

This is surely one of the reasons why calls to reduce consumption are so fiercely contested. It's not just material things that are at stake here, but the entire structure of the modern economy. Without consumption growth, it is argued, output would drop, jobs would be lost, incomes would fall, and there would be

insufficient funds in the public purse to treat the sick or educate our children. The call to a simpler life is not so simple after all.

Of course this immediate reality should not preclude us from searching for alternative patterns of consumption. If economic consumption can be decoupled from material consumption, if people purchased high-value services instead of resource-intensive artefacts, if consumer commodities become value heavy and materially light, then we could preserve economic stability and still meet environmental and social targets. If people accepted higher taxes and invested more in the future, we might even be able to preserve economic stability without a massive growth in private consumption. But these are all big 'ifs'.

In the meantime, the existing economic structure operates as a major disincentive to sustainable consumption.

Models for sustainable businesses

Sustainable consumption has profound implications for business practices. Delivering the changes highlighted in this report requires more than improved environmental management or an allegiance to corporate social responsibility. It requires whole new ways of doing business: different profitability structures, different relationships along supply chains, different business models.

Most obviously, companies who have made their profits from extracting and selling material resources will need to adapt and change. The energy sector is a case in point. The privatisation of gas and electricity markets in the late





1980s and early 1990s resulted in an energy supply sector whose profitability now rests on increasing sales of gas and electricity to consumers. Attempts to regulate these industries to improve energy efficiency and to invest in 'energy services' have struggled against the prevailing revenue structure of the industry. The regulatory regime for suppliers and network operators is itself so complex now that it militates against economic efficiency. And the potentially attractive model of energy service companies has failed to gain any purchase in the marketplace⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

But the challenge is not confined to suppliers of primary energy and material resources. Even in today's so-called 'service economy', business models are predominantly based on material commodities⁽¹¹¹⁾. Selling fewer commodities invites lower profits, an outcome which is never attractive to shareholders. Inevitably, therefore, business will resist changes which appear to threaten the basis of their profitability.

Of course, there will be some 'winners' in the corporate sector: companies with the foresight and ingenuity to respond to the challenge of sustainable consumption and devise more sustainable products and services. But isolated examples of success are not enough. It is going to be necessary to shift the profitability structures of whole sectors of the economy. Without support from government, it is difficult to see how companies are going to respond anything other than defensively to the challenge of sustainable consumption.

Inequality

Not every UK citizen leads a lifestyle that contributes to the ‘three-planet’ economy. Inequalities in income and spending are growing. More people die from cold weather in Britain than in any other European country. Similarly, the boom in car ownership and frequent flying is still traceable to the most affluent in society, not the poorest. Recent research by the Civil Aviation Authority found that the poorest quarter of society took only ten per cent of the flights last year. By contrast, more than half the passengers on budget airlines came from the richest quarter⁽¹¹²⁾.

In a culture increasingly geared to getting around by car, to the value of consumer goods and the dictates of fashion, there may be social shame for many in not being able to fit in. ‘Keeping up with the Joneses’ becomes a powerful and uncomfortable driver of material consumption. The most enthusiastic young consumers aged between 11 and 18, are those from the poorest households, who can afford the least⁽¹¹³⁾.

The dynamics of more or less inequality also play out as a significant factor at the global level, both within and between countries. Poverty can be associated with environmental degradation, so development may help. Alternatively, in some of the poorest regions of the world, climate change is undermining attempts to chart a way out of poverty. Perhaps there is much to be learned from poorer groups and societies that have placed a cultural premium on strategies of self-reliance and efficiency in the use of resources. Yet, in China and India, the growth of the urban middle classes, with aspirations to eat, travel and drive as active

consumers, inevitably accelerates the pressures that our lifestyles currently make upon the planet.

The case for action to address poverty is compelling – and this requires a sustainable natural resource base to succeed. Sustainable consumption has relevance for every country. But where there are trade-offs or priorities around investment opportunities, the challenge is to recognise the moral claim of those in poverty, in comparison with the economic sway of people that are better-off.

Social aspirations

Our work with the Consumer forum highlighted the importance people place on family, security and the future well-being of their communities. It even revealed a spontaneous concern about the impact of modern lifestyles on the environment. But there was also clear evidence of some familiar material aspirations: nice homes, fast cars and holidays in the sun.

These aspirations are often taken as a given in modern society. The expansion of consumer desire is seen as an inevitable consequence of rising incomes and increased choice. Rising aspirations for material goods (both in this country and in developing countries) pose a massive challenge to sustainable consumption.

Yet these material aspirations do not emerge out of nowhere. In the first place, it is clear that our personal aspirations are influenced by cultural norms and expectations.

We constantly receive signals about appropriate or desirable behaviour from those around us, from advertisers, from the media, from performance indicators, some of

them laid down by government. Inconsistent signals from within government can undermine the best intentions of behaviour change campaigns. Signals from marketing and the media can do the same. At the moment, the level of understanding of these processes in policy is weak.

Any robust exploration of people’s behaviour reveals that our relationship to material things is deeply entwined with social and psychological goals. Finding ways to meet these underlying goals in ways that involve less material consumption offers a relatively unexplored avenue towards sustainable consumption⁽¹¹⁴⁾. Research shows that social and psychological goals are ill-served by materialism anyway⁽¹¹⁵⁾. Creating opportunities to fulfil our potential in less material ways is a key task for sustainable consumption policy.

At the very least, the Consumer forum showed that material aspirations appear to be tempered by real concerns about family, security and the future. Understanding how people approach this tension is crucial. Engaging with people to negotiate more sustainable lifestyles offers a vital opportunity to do this.

Mass communications and sustainability

Mass communications – advertising, marketing and the media – are powerful forces in modern society, shaping our aspirations, lifestyles, identities, relationships and, of course, our consumption patterns⁽¹¹⁶⁾. In themselves, it is claimed, these forms of communication are neither good nor bad. But their impact on sustainability depends critically on how they are used and whose interests

they promote. There has been a surge of academic interest over the last two decades in how mass communication has shaped society. Ironically, little of this has looked explicitly at the impact of advertising and the media on sustainability⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

Not all of this impact is negative. For example, a recent surge of interest in TV documentaries and docu-soaps on environmental issues has certainly raised awareness in the general public⁽¹¹⁸⁾. And the creative potential of the advertising industry to be a force for sustainability is significant. Some useful recent work has been done by UNEP and others on how advertising, branding and marketing communications can be used to sell both more sustainable products and the concept of sustainable consumption in broader terms⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

At the same time, the mass communication media do pose some major risks for sustainable consumption. Advertising is an enduring reality in people's lives. The advertising industry in the UK is now worth over £18.3bn⁽¹²⁰⁾. Marketing introduces people continually to new and different products – and to an expanding range of product choice. But some of these products are not sustainable at all. And while the effect of any particular advert on an individual may be relatively small, the cumulative impact of advertising in shaping social and cultural expectations is known to be very significant⁽¹²¹⁾.

Advertising standards currently do little to ensure that advertising is consistent with the government's own environmental or social targets. Voluntary initiatives in the advertising industry – such as those of the World

Federation of Advertisers on 'responsible advertising' are to be welcomed⁽¹²²⁾. But most of these focus exclusively on advertising to children; and even in this critical area there is evidence that voluntary initiatives are not working⁽¹²³⁾. The impact of marketing and the media on a wider range of sustainability issues over a broader range of the population remains virtually unexplored and almost completely unregulated. An urgent policy initiative is needed to address this.

Opening out policy

We have discussed these problem areas as distinct issues. But they are, of course, related. A growing economy requires thriving businesses. Thriving businesses encourage rising aspirations. Rising aspirations lead to a higher demand for economic goods. And so the consumer economy drives itself. On a narrow view, this 'virtuous circle' seems profitable for all concerned and far superior to the vicious cycle of economic depression. But it is not sustainable.

We need ways to deepen learning and reflection on these problem areas and to build the mandate for new action to address the full spectrum of sustainable consumption.

Recommendations on long-term challenges

1. Defra should commit to an ongoing programme of deliberative fora (and other events) with the public, at a national and regional level, to inform policy planning. They should build on the existing commitment to a Deliberative Forum in 2006, by working to secure partnership from broadcasters, and thereby get more people engaged with what they can do to meet the carbon reduction targets that have already been agreed – 20 per cent by 2010 and 60 per cent by 2050.
2. HM Treasury should develop a working economic model by 2008 that can track the links between national income, consumption growth, and resources.
3. As a precondition of this, Defra, the DTI, HM Treasury and the Environment Agency should (by 2007) co-fund a partnership programme with the Office for National Statistics to establish a comprehensive resource flow accounts framework for the UK, building on the work of WWF, Biffaward and others, with the aim of developing robust periodic accounts for priority resources and impacts by the end of 2008.
4. The new Sustainable Consumption and Production Business Task Force should define new sustainable business models in different sectors, based on high service provision and low material output, and engage with government to develop supportive policy frameworks, in close connection with the work on 'product roadmaps'.
5. The government's Foresight programme should, as part of its next round of research, conduct a thorough review of the future impact of the cultural signals received by children, parents, consumers and citizens encouraging high material consumption. People are routinely exposed to such images and ideas through, for example, the media and advertising. The review should focus on the impacts relating to the sustainability of UK consumption patterns, with particular attention to ecological limits and personal well-being.

The Sustainable Development Commission and the National Consumer Council will work closely together to champion and take forward all the recommendations in this report, through their own business plans and workstreams, and through active dialogue with government departments.

Conclusion



The long-term goal of sustainable consumption must surely be: societal aspirations that are fair for everyone; business models which add human value without taking away environmental value; an economy which is stable and yet sustainable. This is the vision set out in the government's sustainable development strategy, *Securing the Future*. This is the defining challenge of our century: how to fulfil our true potential and yet live within our means.

We believe government can be bolder about using the mandate it has to use public policy to influence market solutions. We set this out as a framework for policy on sustainable consumption, with illustrations for action. We do see win-win outcomes from short-run action in a number of fields. In turn, these can also contribute to building a mandate for longer-term solutions on complex issues. These include deeper challenges, such as our aspirations when it comes to foreign travel and the car culture, which at present would simply appear intractable.

We do not claim to have found all the answers. The best way of learning, after all, is by doing.

It is now time for the government to get the policies in place to support and reward people working to make sustainable consumption a reality in schools, hospitals, businesses and their own homes. The crucial missing pieces of the puzzle will be supplied by them.

Appendix one: glossary

Choice editing:	Pre-selecting the particular range of products and services available to consumers. Choice-editing is seen by consumers as increasingly desirable as they look to others to organise the choices that they face. Choice-editing is done by manufacturers and service-providers when they decide which products and services to offer, and to what specification; by retailers when they decide what to put on their shelves; and by governments in the product standards which they set. Choice-editing happens every day according to a wide range of criteria, though currently sustainability is not a significant factor.
Social marketing:	A systematic process using marketing techniques and approaches to achieve behavioural goals for social good.
Product roadmaps:	A policy approach for addressing high-impact products, in which government sets out a long-term series of environmental performance objectives for a particular product type. They are usually backed by a timetabled programme of supportive interventions, including forward procurement calls, fiscal incentives and rising minimum product standards. Product roadmaps respond to businesses' need for confidence in the future regulatory environment, while driving continuous reductions in the environmental impacts of key products.
Triangle of change:	The relationship between people as individuals and communities, businesses, and government, indicating their shared responsibilities in taking action for sustainable consumption. The groups at each corner lead at different times by doing what they can do best. Co-ordinated actions can lead to profound change.
Three-planet economy:	A term used to describe the fact that if everyone in the world consumed at the same rate as the average person in the UK we would need three planet Earths to provide the resources and absorb the waste. This assessment comes from ecological footprinting studies and is contrasted to the goal of a 'one-planet economy'.
Value-action gap:	The observed disparity between people's reported concerns about key environmental, social, economic or ethical concerns and the lifestyle or purchasing decisions that they make in practice.
Microgeneration:	The production of heat and/or electricity on a small-scale from a low carbon source. Various technologies can be used for microgeneration – air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, fuel cells, micro-CHP, micro-hydro, micro-wind, bio-energy and solar (thermal and PV(photovoltaic)).
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	A company's approach to being accountable to its stakeholders in all its operations and activities, with the aim of achieving sustainable development, not only in the economic dimension but also in the social and environmental aspects.

Appendix two: consumer forum methodology

The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable commissioned Opinion Leader Research to conduct a major deliberative event looking at sustainable consumption. The aims of the forum were:

- > to explore views and attitudes towards potential interventions;
- > to understand current consumer aspirations; and
- > to provide insights that can shape and influence future policy-making.

The event took the form of a Consumer forum with 105 people recruited from the Manchester area. People were recruited to reflect the demographics of the area. The event was conducted in Manchester on the 6th and 7th October 2005. The Forum lasted over 1½ days and involved a mixture of plenary and smaller breakout sessions.

During the first evening, we explored consumers' aspirations. No reference was made to the environment and sustainable consumption by the Opinion Leader team. The event was positioned to participants as a forum on future consumer trends. Different break-out groups looked at specific areas of consumption and life – food and drink, getting away, getting around, their homes, and their families and community.

At the start of the second day, Andrew Lee from the Roundtable presented the evidence on climate change and three-planet living. This introduced the topic of the day, and ensured that participants were brought 'up-to-speed' on the key issues.

Consumers then looked at specific areas of consumption – food and drink, getting away, getting around, at home, carbon use – and interventions in those areas. We ensured that the various breakout groups looked at interventions in an area in which they had explored their aspirations the night before. The interventions explored were:

At home

- > Banding council tax – linking energy efficiency with council tax.
- > Variable waste charging – where consumers 'pay as they throw'.
- > Recycling lottery – where recycling is linked to a lottery scheme.

Food and drink

- > MSC logo - an environmental standard which fisheries can apply for to show that their methods are sustainable.
- > School dinners reform – introducing a more sustainable diet in schools.

Getting around

- > Car labelling – cars are rated according to emissions, and tax is weighted accordingly.
- > Road user charging – drivers are charged on a 'pay as you drive' basis.
- > Car clubs – consumers use a pool of cars, rather than owning their own car.

Holidays

- > Making flights cost more through added tax.
- > Carbon offsetting on flights.

Carbon use

- > Carbon credits – each person is given a certain amount of carbon credits to spend.
- > Energy Services Companies – where people can pay back energy efficiency investments through their bills.

Appendix three: business dialogue methodology

The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable commissioned the University of Cambridge Programme for Industry to conduct a day-long 'Business Dialogue' event in London. This drew together more than 30 senior business managers for debate and discussion on the way forward for sustainable products.

Individuals were invited to participate in the Dialogue from a range of UK businesses that had some experience in addressing the issues of sustainable consumption. Participation from a wide spread of sectors was achieved, including representatives from retail, manufacturers of consumer goods, utilities, business-to-business service, business-to-business manufacturing, and SMEs (small to medium-sized enterprises).

A significant number of participants in the Dialogue had specific responsibility for sustainability issues in their companies, but over half had wider strategic responsibilities including CEOs, directors (business, strategy, environment), chairs, marketing executives, and risk and communications managers.

The Dialogue looked at four questions:

1. What might drive changes in consumption patterns in the UK over the next ten years?
2. What discourages or prevents people from consuming more sustainably?
3. What actions can business take to deliver goods and services that encourage and enable people to consume more sustainably?
4. What can government do to encourage and enable more sustainable consumption?

Each of the four questions was discussed in turn although, in practice, discussion of Questions 3 and 4 tended to overlap. Question 1 was considered in plenary; the others were discussed in break-out groups with reports back from representatives of each group.

Participants were also asked to review a sustainable consumption business case narrative presented by the Roundtable.

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38. HM Government (2005) *Securing the Future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy* TSO
39. We discuss a number of methods for such engagement elsewhere in this report, including deliberative fora, community-based projects and a highly interactive version of Environment Direct. Lessons can also be drawn from the GM Nation debate (www.gmnation.org.uk) and the work of Demos and the University of Lancaster on public involvement in policymaking, research and development around the use of nanotechnology (www.demos.co.uk/projects/currentprojects/ESRCnanotech).
40. See for example: Andreasen, A. R. (1995) *Marketing social change: Changing behavior to promote health, social development, and the environment*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; Andreasen A (2005) *Social Marketing in the 21st century*. Sage Publications; Brookings Institution 2003. Schorr L B *Determining 'What works' in social programs and social policies: Towards a more inclusive knowledge base*; Chapman, S., Astatke, H., & Ashburn, K. (2005). *The performance of social marketing interventions in developing countries: A systematic review* (Working paper). Washington, DC: Population Services International; Donovan, R. J., & Henley, N. (2003). *Social marketing: Principles and practice*. Melbourne, Australia: IP Communications; French J *Protecting and Promoting Health - Behavioral approaches*. (2001) *Oxford Handbook of public health practice*. Oxford; Goldberg, M. E., Fishbein, M., Middlestat, S. E. (Eds.). (1997). *Social marketing: Theoretical and practical perspectives*. Washington, D.C.; Kotler, P, and Roberto, W. (1989) *Social marketing: Strategies for changing public behavior*. New York, NY: The Free Press; Kotler, P, Roberto, W. and Lee, N. (2002) Second ed *Social Marketing*; McKenzie-Mohr, D 2000. 'Promoting Sustainable Behavior: an introduction to community-based social marketing'. *Journal of Social Issues* 56(3), 543-554; National Consumer Council (2006) *Social Marketing Capacity in the UK: Academic Sector And Social Marketing Related Work - An initial selective review*. NCC London
41. Steedman, P. (2005) *Desperately Seeking Sustainability?* NCC
42. Figures are for CO2 emissions only (excluding other greenhouse gases), exclude international travel and assume an equal per capita share of the UK's annual CO2 emissions. Figures assume projected population increases and the figure for a 60 per cent cut is based on the projected population in 2044. Sources: Defra, www.Defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050331a.htm; ONS www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?ID=950; Government Actuary www.gad.gov.uk/Population/2004/uk/wuk04singyear.xls
43. Grant-aided loft insulation yields 23 per cent household energy saving. Cavity wall insulation yields 21 per cent household energy saving. These savings are based on a comparison with a totally uninsulated house. Source Energy Savings Trust: www.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/myhome/Energy per cent20Slimming per cent20Plan.pdf
44. Switching from, for example, a C-rated Ford Focus to a (larger) B-rated hybrid Toyota Prius will save 0.33 tonnes of CO2 per year. Based on CO2 emissions figures of 127g/km for the Ford Focus Zetec TCDI manual diesel and 104g/km for the Toyota Prius VVT-I and assuming an annual usage of 9,000 miles. Source: SMMT www.smmtco2.co.uk/co2search2.asp
45. Halving the annual mileage of the driver of an average petrol car would save 1.305 tonnes of CO2, while shifting 2/3 of their travel to the bus would save 1.2 tonnes of CO2 per year. Assuming 9,000 miles per year of travel by car and/or bus. Based on CO2 emissions of 90g and 298g per passenger mile for buses and cars respectively. Sources: Defra, www.Defra.gov.uk/environment/business/envrp/gas/envrpgas-annexes.pdf; Tyndall Centre, www.tyndall.ac.uk/research/researchers/emissions.pdf
46. Through initiatives such as Climate Care and the Carbon Neutral Company. This is not a substitute for avoiding emissions, but should be a step to engaging people with the impact of their flight.
47. Prime Minister's Speech on Climate Change to HRH the Prince of Wales's Business and Environment Programme, 14 September 2004
48. Which? (2005) *Which Choice?* www.which.net/campaigns/choice/0503choice_rep.pdf

49. NCC, 2003, *Bamboozled, Baffled and Bombarded: consumers' views on voluntary food labelling*. Recent research by the NCC found that 56 per cent agree with the statement 'When I'm out shopping I don't think about the environmental impact of the things I buy'. Similarly, the Food Industry Sustainability Strategy points out, 'price, use by date and taste are the three most dominant factors in consumer thinking' and 'wider sustainability issues...do not feature highly'.
50. The NCC estimates that there are up to 500 competing messages on how to live in a more sustainable way. Controversies and dispute between different organisations over what is important compound the difficulties that people face in relation to advice on sustainable lifestyles. Holdsworth, M. with Steedman, P. (2005) *16 Pain-free Ways to Help Save the Planet* NCC
51. Sigman, A, (2004) *The Explosion of Choice: Tyranny or Freedom?*
52. The full analysis is published in our separate report *Looking forward, looking Back*. SCR, 2006.
53. Market Transformation Programme
54. Fridges got bigger at the same time as they got more efficient
55. See www.mtprog.com/ApprovedBriefingNotes/BriefingNoteTemplate.aspx?intBriefingNoteID=402 for further discussion.
56. Market Transformation Programme
57. Defra, www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/poultry/legislation.htm.
58. Ekins, P et al, 2006, *A Green Living Initiative: engaging households to achieve environmental goals*, PSI.
59. MORI for DfT (2003) *Comparative colour-coded labels for passenger cars*
60. NCC research indicates that 19 per cent of consumers have sought some form of sustainability advice.
61. EST/Mosaic: whole life segmentation model.
62. See, for example, Carbon Trust (2005), *The carbon emissions generated in all that we consume*.
63. Work by the Carbon Trust suggests that, in relation to climate change, it is future risk than current brand value that should drive business attention. Carbon Trust, 2004, *Brand Value at Risk from Climate Change*.
64. Presenting a template to the board of FTSE 100 companies is a reality that could be achieved with top level political support. It may be relevant to think about the small business sector which often may not have the capacity to lead in this area.
65. See www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/comms/index.htm and www.climatechallenge.gov.uk
66. www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/index.shtml
67. We note the valuable groundwork by the small team behind the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative in Defra
68. Building further on the intention, announced in the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy to have 10 per cent of its vehicles low carbon by 2012
69. Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, (2005), *Seeing the Light: the impact of micro-generation on how we use energy*.
70. Defra, www.Defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/kf/gakf07.htm
71. Three years on from the energy white paper, all but the cost-conscious prepayment meter users in our qualitative survey for *Seeing the Light* were unable to think of ways to reduce their bills apart from switching suppliers. Most people currently have very little sense of agency in relation to their energy use.
72. Innovative two-tier tariffs for energy are being considered by the Northern Ireland Energy Authority on this basis, in response to the fact that 3 per cent of customers use 11 per cent of electricity. The average household uses 4000 kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. The proposal is that everyone will pay the same unit price for electricity up to 6000 kilowatt-hours, but above this threshold the unit price will go up 50 per cent or 100 per cent to discourage excessive consumption.
73. SCR briefing: *indoor air conditioning*
74. Starkey, R., & Anderson, K., 2005, Domestic Tradeable Quotas: a policy instrument for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use, Tyndall Centre.
75. Allan Asher, Chief Executive, energywatch, speech to NEA conference 20 September 2005, www.energywatch.org.uk/uploads/National_Energy_Action1.DOC; Energywatch (2005) *Get Smart: Bringing meters into the 21st Century* www.energywatch.org.uk/uploads/Smart_meters.pdf
76. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4766460.stm>
77. www.futurecurrents.org

78. Roberts, S. & Baker, W. (2003) *Towards Effective Energy Information: Improving consumer feedback on energy consumption*. A report to Ofgem Centre for Sustainable Energy, www.cse.org.uk/pdf/pub1014.pdf
79. Roberts, S. et al. (2004) *Consumer Preferences For Improving Energy Consumption Feedback*. Report to Ofgem Centre for Sustainable Energy
80. DTI, March 2006, *Our energy challenge – power from the people*.
81. Based on the new EST bronze, silver and gold standards
82. HM Treasury/Defra, December 2005, *Energy Efficiency Innovation Review*.
83. Report on the Household Sector, Dec 2005, Energy efficiency innovation review, Defra/HM Treasury.
84. See also CSE report to Ofgem, 2004, *Consumer Preferences for Improving Energy Consumption Feedback*
85. Ekins, P et al, 2006, *A Green Living Initiative: engaging households to achieve environmental goals*, PSI
86. Tukker A, et al. (2005) *Environmental impact of products (EIPRO): Analysis of the life cycle environmental impacts related to the total final consumption of the EU25*, European Science and Technology Observatory and Institute for Prospective Technological studies, full draft report.
87. Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, 2005, *Double dividend: promoting good nutrition and sustainable consumption through healthy school meals*. The approach to a more sustainable food policy must include tackling global supply chains which have the potential to drive best management practices for basic commodities like sugar, soy or palm oil, and making fundamental changes to the ways in which the CAP and the WTO bear upon them. However, there is also much that can be done within the UK, and it is here, given our remit, that we have chosen to focus our attention.
88. IGD (2005) Connecting Consumers with Farming and Farm Produce IGD, findings from Part 2: Quantitative Research, www.igd.com/downloads/Curry%20Report.pdf
89. Smith A et al (2005) *The validity of food miles as an indicator of sustainable development: final report*. Prepared by AEA Technology for Defra.
90. www.feedmebetter.com
91. Garden Organic, www.gardenorganic.org.uk
92. The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative Catering Services and Food Procurement Toolkit gives a useful foundation for this work.
93. www.lowcvp.org.uk
94. SDC, 2005, *Climate Change Programme Review Position Paper*.
95. Road pricing: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/divisionhomepage/032120.hcsp; Transport Innovation Fund: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/page/dft_about_611056.hcsp
96. Without the introduction of one or more of these additional measures it looks unlikely that even the modest targets in the DfT's Powering Future Vehicles Strategy target (that 10% of new vehicle sales will be cars emitting 100gCO₂/ vehicle km or lower by 2012) and the EU wide voluntary agreement (that by 2008 average carbon emissions for new vehicles will be 140g carbon dioxide per vehicle km) will be met. SDC, 2005, *Climate Change Programme Review Position Paper*.
97. This generic approach has been recommended by the Environmental Innovation Advisory Group.
98. Pensions Commission (2004), *Pensions: Challenges and Choices. The First Report of the Pensions Commission*, www.pensionscommission.org.uk/publications/2004/annrep/fullreport.pdf
99. The potential of community-level action for behaviour change in support of sustainable consumption has been suggested within the academic literature for some time. E.g. Jackson and Michaelis argue that 'there does seem to be more potential for a shift in consumption patterns if people are engaged in a community dialogue than if they simply reflect on their own lives', while Haq and Whitelegg conclude that 'Developing meaningful and effective community based social marketing approaches and implementing them within a supportive institutional/social, infrastructural and fiscal framework should be a primary goal to fostering voluntary pro-environmental behaviour and more sustainable lifestyles.' Jackson, T. and Michaelis, L (2003) *Policies for Sustainable Consumption*. A report to the Sustainable Development Commission; Haq, G. & Whitelegg, J. (2005) *Breaking the Habit: Fostering Voluntary*

- Behavioural Change for a Sustainable Lifestyle* forthcoming; submitted to the Journal of the Local Environment. See also Gardner, Gerald T. and Paul C. Stern, 1996. *Environmental Problems and Human Behavior*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston. This assessment draws heavily on a social psychological understanding of consumer behaviour. For an overview of these social psychological theories, including the relevance of the internalisation of norms through social learning and the emergence of a social identity, see Jackson, T. (2005) *Motivating Sustainable Consumption – a review of evidence on consumer behaviour and behaviour change*. A report to the Sustainable Development Research Network. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- 100.** Reviews of a range of social marketing interventions, including community-based group activities, and their impact on a variety of health issues, will be available shortly from the National Social Marketing Centre of Excellence. www.nsms.org.uk
- 101.** For more on the burgeoning number of local initiatives for change see Elster, J. & Church, C. (2002) *Thinking Locally, Acting Nationally: Lessons for National Policy from Work on Local Sustainability*. York Publishing Services.
- 102.** This is particularly true given certain social, economic and ideological trends which have made an the development of an ethic of local community-management of natural resources more challenging. See Jackson, T. and Michaelis, L. (2003) *Policies for Sustainable Consumption*. A report to the Sustainable Development Commission.
- 103.** ChangeLAB: www.changelabproject.org; see also Community-Based Social Marketing www.cbsm.com; www.toolsofchange.com; www.nsms.org.uk
- 104.** *Communities of interest - and action?* SCRT briefing, 2006
- 105.** www.unep.ch/scoe/index.htm
- 106.** Uzzell et al, 2005, *Increasing recycling through community action*. Report to Guildford Borough Council. Interestingly, existing recyclers upped their efforts most when they were given feedback on how their own street's recycling rate compared with the best performing street in the area. Non- or low-recyclers, however, were most likely to be brought on board if they were told their street was doing well compared to other streets or to a borough target.
- 107.** GAP's EcoTeams has been extensively evaluated, and in its Dutch form reductions in waste, energy and water by around 40 per cent, 15 per cent and 10 per cent respectively have been recorded. GAP reports that a recent EcoTeams project with British Gas demonstrated a 27 per cent reduction in waste going to landfill and a 16.2 per cent cut in CO2 emissions from electricity and gas use.
- 108.** See for example: Frank, R 1999. *Luxury Fever* (Princeton); Hamilton, C 2004. *Growth Fetish* (Allen and Unwin); and Hamilton C 2003. *Downshifting in Britain - a sea change in pursuit of happiness* (Australia Institute).
- 109.** See note 1.
- 110.** Unlocking energy services: main findings of a joint SDC/UKERC seminar, April 2006.
- 111.** This is true even for many 'service sector' industries which still have significant energy and material footprints.
- 112.** Passengers using Stansted, the main budget airline airport which is due to gain a new runway by 2013, had an average income of £51,000 in 2004. One in six passengers was visiting a second home overseas. Source: Civil Aviation Authority 2004 Passenger Survey
- 113.** Mayo E, 2005, *Shopping Generation*, NCC, London
- 114.** Jackson, T 2005 *Live Better by Consuming Less? Is there a double dividend in sustainable consumption*. Journal of Industrial Ecology 9(2).
- 115.** Kasser, T 2002. *The High Price of Materialism* (Allen and Unwin)
- 116.** See for example: Giddens, A 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press); Kellner, D 1995. *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity Politics between the Modern and the Post-Modern* (London, Routledge); Thompson, J 1995. *The Media and Modernity: a social theory of the media* (Cambridge: Polity Press)
- 117.** Notable exceptions are Hamilton, C 2005 *Growth Fetish* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin) and the work of Adbusters – a Canadian NGO dedicated to exposing bad practices in advertising
- 118.** For example, BBC2's *No Waste Like Home* and their Newsnight 'ethical man' project, as well as 'green living' editions of lifestyle programmes such as Channel 4's *Grand Designs* and BBC1's *Changing Rooms*.

- 119.** See for example: *Compass Network for Sustainable Development Communications*
www.compassnetwork.org;
 Utopies, The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) (2005) *Talk the Walk - Advancing Sustainable Lifestyles through Marketing and Communications* UNEP www.talkthewalk.net;
 Charter, M. et al (2002) *Marketing and Sustainability* BRASS and CfSD www.cfsd.org.uk/smart-know-net; UNEP *Advertising and Communication Forum on Sustainability*
www.uneptie.org/pc/sustain/advertising/advertising.htm;
 Gordon, W. (2002) *Brand Green: Mainstream or Forever Niche?* Green Alliance www.greenalliance.org.uk/publications/PubBrandGreen; Forum for the Future's 'Limited Edition' project www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/aboutus/LECS_page1542.aspx;
 MPG International/Sustainable Motivation (2005) *The Role of Marketing at the Business/Consumer Interface*
www.mpgintl.com/sustain/english/home.htm
- 120.** The Advertising Association
www.adassoc.org.uk
- 121.** Elliott, R and K Wattanasuwan 1998. 'Brands as Symbolic Resources for the Construction of Identity', *International Journal of Advertising* 17, 131-144; Streliz, L 2002. 'Media Consumption and Identity Formation', *Media Culture and Society* 24, 459-480
- 122.** See for example:
www.responsible-advertising.org/contact/index.htm
- 123.** See, for example, Mayo, E. (2005) *Shopping Generation*, NCC; Wilson, N, L Singal, S Nicholls and G Thomson 2006. 'Marketing fat and sugar to children on New Zealand television'. *Preventive Medicine* 42, 96-101.

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'The Roundtable's work has clearly demonstrated that citizens can engage positively, constructively and creatively in the debate on how we tackle the big environmental challenges of our time.'

Viki Cooke, Joint Chief Executive, Opinion Leader Research

'This report highlights that consumers are increasingly looking to government and business to help them live more sustainable lives and make better choices about the products and services they buy. The job for the business community then is to satisfy this consumer need and to provide clear and practical guidance to government on the steps required.'

Neil Carson, CEO, Johnson Matthey & Chair of the Business Taskforce on Sustainable Consumption and Production

'The Roundtable has rightly identified that reconnecting people with the origins of the food they eat can repay powerful "double dividends" for public health and the environment. *I will if you will* makes a significant contribution to a critical public debate.'

Sir Don Curry, Chair, Sustainable Farming and Food Implementation Group

'It is hard to go it alone as a green consumer. The Roundtable has set out practical steps that government can take to make sustainable consumption a reality in people's daily lives and reassure them that their actions are part of something bigger.'

Robert Napier, Chief Executive, WWF-UK