

Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

UK SD Strategy 2005

1. Title of proposal

Developing a new sustainable development strategy for the UK called "Securing the Future"

2. Purpose, and intended effect of measure

Objective

A new UK sustainable development strategy has been developed that will provide a strong basis for renewed action to deliver sustainable development.

Sustainable development is about making economic, social and environmental progress at the same time, and in a holistic way, so that we achieve "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Background

"Securing the Future" is a successor strategy which builds on the 1999 UK Government's strategy "A better quality of life". A new strategy is needed for several reasons. First, the 1999 strategy envisaged a full review after five years.

Secondly, since 1999 when devolution came into effect, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales have developed their own policies for sustainable development, and Northern Ireland is in the process of doing so. Therefore the 1999 strategy can no longer be said to apply to the whole of the UK.

Thirdly, experience in implementing the 1999 UK Government strategy, and a small stakeholder consultation exercise conducted in February 2003, have identified some weaknesses of the strategy, notably that it has not been put into practice as well as it might have been.

Finally, we also need to recognise other policy developments. Not least new requirements for local government, and regional bodies in England, to take account of sustainable development in their work, and new EU and international commitments, including those from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

To meet these needs, two documents have been produced. The first is a new UK strategic framework for sustainable development "One future – many paths", co-owned by the devolved administrations and the UK Government. This provides the context for separate, more detailed strategies that are the responsibility of the devolved administrations to work up as they see fit.

The UK (Westminster) Government has developed its own sustainable development strategy, "Securing the Future", building on existing work, for its responsibilities in relation to international issues, relevant non-devolved issues, and issues pertaining to England.

It is expected that the UK strategic framework and UK Government strategy will affect a wide range of bodies, including the UK Government and devolved administrations, and their associate organisations; regional bodies and government; local government; businesses; voluntary and community organisations; and non-government organisations.

Risk Assessment

The UK Government and the devolved administrations are committed to sustainable development. There are international and EU commitments for countries to adopt national sustainable development strategies, although these are not legally binding. The UK was one of the first countries to adopt a national sustainable development strategy, in 1994.

Key risks from not incorporating sustainable development approaches into decision making, purchasing patterns and consumption decisions by **individuals** and decision-making, purchasing, consumption and service delivery by **businesses** and the **public sector** would be:

- A focus on immediate benefits rather than the long-term
- A focus on immediate impacts, rather than taking a broader global perspective
- A focus on a solution which addresses one aspect of a problem, rather than looking at it holistically in an joined-up integrated way
- Lack of engagement from the public in decisions taken by the public sector

Although a lot of good work has already been done by government and others, evidence (including from the UK Government's set of national sustainable development indicators) shows that more needs to be done to achieve sustainable development in the UK and elsewhere. While progress has been made across the three pillars of sustainable development, the economy, society and the environment, progress has been stronger in some areas rather than others. There are also some key challenges such as climate change and global poverty identified in the strategy.

Key to the impact analysis is the degree to which the new UK strategic framework and UK Government strategy will help to address these risks, and to make further progress towards sustainable development.

The UK strategic framework should provide a common purpose and direction on sustainable development for the UK, to support and provide the context for the sustainable development policies being developed or implemented by the UK Government and the devolved administrations, by regional government

and bodies in England, by local government, and by other sectors of society; as well as honouring international and EU commitments.

3. Options

1) to do nothing and leave the 1999 UK Government strategy in place, together with the approaches adopted by the devolved administrations;

Benefits and Costs

The financial cost would be nil. The cost of not doing this is a lack of UK-wide strategic direction, a failure to take account of policy changes and opportunities since 1999 in the UK and internationally, a failure to improve both delivery and public engagement in policy and a failure to meet a commitment in the 1999 strategy.

2) to update the 1999 strategy only, by including new UK Government policies.

The financial costs would be similar to those in the chosen option below. The cost of not doing this would be to continue to have a lack of UK-wide strategic direction. The benefits include the opportunity to bring the sustainable development strategy in line with policy changes and opportunities since 1999 which are the responsibility of the UK Government, and to improve delivery and public engagement in England for some issues, and for the UK and internationally in others.

3) to carry out a full scale review of the 1999 strategy covering the UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Administration

The costs in full are set out in a series of RIAs across Government, since the strategy sets out a cross-departmental approach. Links to key RIAs are set out in the Annex. Additional costs arising from some new commitments in this strategy, set out chapter by chapter are in Annex 1. All of these aim to improve public engagement in delivering sustainable development, strengthen delivery of sustainable development, and integrate sustainable development into policy and decision-making between administrations in the UK and between departments in the UK Government to mitigate the risks set out above.

Additionally the new commitments will provide leadership to other levels of government and other sectors, including support and direction to the business sector.

Equity and fairness

A key principle of sustainable development is that any action which claims to be sustainable must uphold the new principle that it ensures a strong, healthy and just society. This principle is at the heart of sustainable development and this is reflected in the approach throughout the strategy.

Several chapters, and in particular chapter six on creating sustainable communities and a fairer world, have a focus on tackling inequality in line with meeting current Government targets and national and international frameworks. In many cases in the strategy, this equity principle is a strong rationale for government intervention in line with Green Book principles on the purpose of government expenditure. Chapters 2 and 6 in particular set out how UK government programmes will support vulnerable social groups, for example, some children and older people.

In particular, the policies pursued at international level focus on poverty reduction, for example in Africa, and development through partnership in key developing countries. Within England, the policies pursued at local level are likely to focus on the most deprived areas as identified through the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Consultation with small business: the 'Small Firms Impact Test'

The consultation document, Taking it on, was distributed to a wide range of stakeholders including representatives of small business.

A series of workshops which involved businesses, both large and small were held during the course of the consultation and in December DTI and Defra held a seminar to consider the business contribution to developing the strategy.

Competition assessment

A Competition Assessment is not required in this RIA because the new commitments contained in Annex 1 impact only on the public services. This has been verified by the completion of a [Public Services Threshold Test](#).

Enforcement and sanctions

None of the new commitments require enforcement or sanctions regimes other than through the newly envisaged watchdog as set out below.

Monitoring and review

Government Departments will produce Action Plans setting out how they intend to implement the commitments in this Strategy and will report progress against these, for example in their annual Departmental Reports.

The Government will monitor the policy commitments and the indicators set out in each of the chapters in the strategy, and the relevant Public Service Agreement targets. We will take action if evidence from monitoring and

evaluation, including latest information on these indicators, shows that we are not likely to meet targets, or deliver the policy commitments.

As part of this commitment to monitor progress, quarterly reports will be made to HM Treasury on performance on PSA targets, including Defra's overarching target on sustainable development.

We propose to create a "watchdog" for sustainable development. It will provide assurance and a report on progress towards implementing the UK Framework and the commitments in the Government Strategy, as well as focusing in more depth on particular issues.

Government Offices will report progress at regional and sub-regional levels through new performance monitoring arrangements and Regional Development Agencies will be accountable for progress through the new Tasking Framework. Local Authorities will be monitored through Comprehensive Performance Appraisal.

We will also monitor and report annually on the UK framework indicators to place the government's performance in context. This report will also form the basis of the UK's reporting to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development which monitors progress internationally.

The Office of National Statistics publishes [at www.statistics.gov.uk] a set of national satellite accounts annually which take into account a range of factors that are usually uncoded when looking at national performance, including environmental.

The Environmental Audit Committee, which reports to Parliament, has an important role in reporting on Government's performance on sustainable development. It has the unique ability to call Departments to give evidence on sustainable development. The Committee has recently been supported by the expertise of the National Audit Office which has been expanding the time and effort it spends on these issues.

Consultation

Within Government:

The UK strategic framework will be owned by the UK Government and the devolved administrations. The UK Government strategy will be owned by the UK Government. UK Government departments and the devolved administrations have been involved in the preparation of consultation proposals and will continue to be consulted.

The approach to the review has also been informed by Sustainable Development Task Force discussions, views from the Sustainable Development Commission and the results of a consultation exercise carried out by UNED-UK Committee.

The development of the strategy has been overseen through a Programme Board of senior officials, and through interdepartmental working groups on key issues that operated between August 2004 and March 2005.

Public consultation:

Public consultation activities were launched on 21 April 2004, and lasted twelve weeks, closing on 31 July 2004. The consultation process was inclusive.

The new strategy and framework have benefited from the many responses received to our consultation "Taking it On". These took many forms – and included: 900 written and electronic responses to the document; more than twenty themed workshops organised for us by organisations with an interest in sustainable development from across the UK; nine regional dialogue events in England; and local community consultations assisted by trained facilitators.

An overarching Defra summary report of the consultation was prepared and is available on the Government's sustainable development website:

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/finalsummary.htm>

Summary and recommendation

It is recommended that the UK strategic framework and UK Government strategy be developed as outlined in the accompanying documentation.

Commitments in the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy

Chapter 1. A New Strategy

The four objectives of sustainable development laid out in the 1999 strategy and the ten principles of sustainable development have been reviewed as part of the process of developing the new strategy.

In our consultation we asked if an explanation of what sustainable development means based on the UK Government's four objectives approach of the 1999 strategy remains useful. The responses led us to conclude that they needed to be updated to provide an explanation that is more coherent.

Additionally we asked what should be the guiding principles for UK decision-makers, and how can they be made widely practical and relevant both within and beyond government. The principles contained in the 1999 strategy had been added to by new principles contained in the Scottish and Welsh strategies and by a set defined by the SDC. This was considered by many consultees to be unnecessarily confusing.

Our options for reviewing the purpose and principles were:

- Do nothing – this would have allowed a situation that had been identified as unsatisfactory to continue.
- Develop an entirely new set of purpose and principles – this could have caused confusion between the previous position and how policy has developed that could have led to legal challenge of existing guidance in statute and policy
- To review the current set of principles to reconcile the differing versions in use (CHOSEN OPTION).

In essence the review of the current purpose and principles for sustainable development constitutes an evolution of policy and they have been designed in a manner that makes them fully congruent with previous articulations that are contained in either existing statutes or policy.

Following the conclusion of this review we will be reviewing the existing guidance and will update this where necessary to ensure consistency of approach. This project is being scoped and we envisage that it will be possible to conclude this in the course of normal business.

Chapter 2. Helping people make better choices

The strategy recognises that remote messages from government are often not the best way to get people to act and take responsibility.

We have therefore developed a new model for changing behaviour that we will promote through Government. This highlights the need for engagement

and public participation. This is a complementary approach to Government's approach to consultation and participation.

Deliberative Forum - Government [has committed to] face-to-face contact through a deliberative forum process on sustainable lifestyles.

In January we ran two day long pilot workshops for this process at a cost of £40k. The purpose of this pilot was to test the feasibility of the subject area and the language to aid the planning and design of a larger event. Following the pilot's it was concluded that a larger scale event was [feasible/not feasible] in meeting Defra's objectives for moving this issue forward.

A larger scale event will be run in [the summer 2005]. This will be two day event for 100 to 200 people. The cost for this will be [£150-250k]. The results will inform [sustainable development policy especially in the areas of changing behaviours and communication activities to increase sustainable lifestyles.]

Options for a deliberative forum were:

1. **Do nothing** – Arguably, we have already engaged in a detailed and inclusive consultation process for the SD Strategy and it is not necessarily clear that this process will tell us anything new.

Against this, the consultation was largely responded to by organisations with an environmental or more generic SD profile or by individuals who have that brief in businesses or other organisations. There was a certain degree of duplication of conversation and there is no sense yet that we have necessarily reached a new audience.

2. To run a smaller scale event in the early new year – This would have been cheaper and easier/quicker to organise. A sample audience could have given us some indication of how a participative approach to SD would play with a wider public audience and we would be able to integrate some of the outcomes into the launch of the strategy.

However, a forum run at a lower level would be unlikely to engender a wider debate on key SD issues and in the time allowed risked being an under prepared event that would have neither helped us with strategy development or implementation.

Business sector affected:

No additional costs to this sector

OpenStrategies []/Connexions Smartcard

[to be developed]

Community Action 2020

Responses to 'Taking It On' demonstrate that although the potential exists for communities to contribute to SD, little is currently happening. The strategy contains a key initiative to reinvigorate community action on sustainable development through 'Community Action 2020 – Together we can'. This will provide support to communities and those who work with them; promote opportunities for communities to get involved in sustainable development projects and locality action planning; calling on Local Authorities to support 'Community Action 2020 – Together we can' provide information, ideas and practical examples about community activities which contribute to sustainable development; and raise awareness of awards that recognise 'Community Action 2020 - Together We Can'. The cost of this programme over three years is estimated to be £1.5 million.

Options for a community action were:

- ♦ Do nothing option, communities carry on as now with a relatively minor contribution to SD.
- ♦ Community Action 2020 initiative – provide sufficient support to 'kick-start' new SD initiatives and mainstream training (£1.5m) **CHOSEN OPTION FOR THE STRATEGY**
- ♦ Provide a 100% funded programme similar to Cleaner-Safer-Greener (£89m) or the Community Chest Grant Scheme. The cost of this programme is estimated at £200m.

Business sector affected:

No additional costs to this sector

Costs and benefits:

The total costs of the package of measures covered by CA2020 is estimated at £1.5m. Some of this funding will go to GO's and Las to support awareness raising but most will go to NDPBs and community sector partnerships to develop training and skills materials and to the Learning Skills Council.

Economic Benefits

By promoting social enterprise through this initiative, wealth will be generated in the local community.

Social Benefits

Through involvement in CA2020, communities will develop the capacity, confidence and momentum to contribute towards sustainable development and civil renewal. The initiative has a strong diversity element to support socially excluded groups. Improved involvement in public life (Defra/HO/ODPM PSAs).

People will develop transferable skills, for example budgetary skills, through involvement in community activities which in addition to social benefits, will also bring economic benefits.

By working to improve the quality of their local environment, improvements in healthy lifestyles and eating, and support to SD internationally through aid, fair-trade and sustainable consumption, reducing social exclusion and contributing to their local economy, communities will address issues to ensure healthier lifestyles.

Environmental Benefits

There will be improved local outcomes on sustainable consumption and production, climate change and natural resource protection, reducing waste etc. CA2020 will encourage a change to more sustainable behaviour in the community as a whole.

Chapter 3. “One planet economy” - Sustainable Consumption and Production

This chapter sets out how the Government will develop its policy to achieve more sustainable consumption and production. This includes developing the potential for an Environment Direct service; consulting on the ACCPE proposals for a “products body”; a number of activities to improve sustainable public procurement, including a business -led Sustainable Procurement Task Force; and carrying out a review of the Waste Strategy. All these initiatives will be subject to their own separate regulatory impact assessments as appropriate.

Of the funding commitments highlighted, details of the £284m Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme are available on the Defra website www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/brew/index.htm. The Environmental Action Fund will be providing £6.75m of funding to thirty six projects over the period 2005-8 as outlined at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/eaf/index.htm.

Chapter 4. Confronting the Greatest Challenge: Climate Change

As the review of the UK Climate Change Programme process is still ongoing, new policies for further carbon savings are not proposed within the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy. Any resulting new initiatives will instead be launched as part of a revised UK Climate Change Programme, together with an RIA where required, in the first half of 2005.

Chapter 5: Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement

This chapter sets out how the Government will achieve a more integrated policy framework for natural resource protection and environmental enhancement:

- This includes introducing a Bill in the next Parliament to establish the new Integrated Agency, publishing a Commons Bill during summer

2005, reviewing priority species, the habitats list and targets under the Biodiversity Action Plan and plans to introduce a Marine Bill.

All these initiatives will be, or already are, subject to their own separate regulatory impact assessments.

Chapter 6. Creating Sustainable Communities and a fairer world

Much of this chapter relates to initiatives launched by ODPM and more details can be found at www.odpm.gov.uk. It also draws on material from a range of departmental strategies, for example, "Choosing Health: the Public Health White Paper" for which an RIA is available at www.dh.gov.uk

Local environmental inequality.

Research carried out by the SDRN confirmed findings from the English Housing Condition Survey and the Home Office Citizenship Surveys in 2001 that poor local environmental quality and differential access to environmental goods and services have a detrimental effect on the quality of life experienced by deprived communities and socially excluded groups; The research also indicated there was little data available to researchers or to the public at local level on the state of local environmental quality and little research in the area of environmental inequality. The objective therefore is to improve accessibility to consistent and comparable data on the environment at local level to help practitioners such as local authorities and the public work out priorities in their local area, and tackle them together and to help further research on local environmental quality. This will help meet ODPM's PSA1 and PSA8, and Defra PSA1. Greater community involvement will contribute to Home Office goals.

This is linked to RIAs on clean neighbourhoods -

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/clean-neighbourhood/ria.pdf>

Options:

- **Do nothing**

Costs and Benefits: Benefits nil. Financial cost nil. Local authorities will be less able to benchmark their performance against other areas and will not be able to identify priority neighbourhoods. Central government will have less information in order to target resources to address local environmental inequalities between local authorities. It will be more difficult to evaluate success on delivering improvements in local environmental quality. This will increase the risk of not hitting key PSA targets ODPM 8, OPDM 1 and Defra PSA 1.

- **Have a robust national survey of local environmental issues (est £400k per annum) with the data supporting both development of Best Value indicators and the neighbourhood statistics website [proposed option]**
- **Support Green Spaces database (£100k in year one (2005/06) and £30k thereafter)**
- **Carry out statistical research on sampling and small area data on local environmental data for Defra, ODPM and ONS at £50k**
- **Spread best practice (Birmingham's Public Space Index) through UK tool (est £200,000k)**
- **Set up website translating environmental law for public (just as netregs does for business) (£162,000k)**

Business sectors affected: All - through better access to environmental information

Assumptions: That the data collected will need to be made public

Costs and Benefits: The estimated costs to Government are as set out above. Additionally cost on business nil. Potential resource management implications for individual local authorities depending on timing of surveys and data collection, although the form of collection of material on local environmental quality is at local authorities' discretion.

Economic benefits: There will be better decision-making by both business and government by having this information available. It will support Government's evidence based policy making. This information will help target central government investment into Cleaner, Safer, Greener programmes and help local authorities in the planning and delivery of front line services to become more efficient by linking the data to the meeting of local and national targets and to local authorities performance management systems (Best Value indicators and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment) . Better public data at local level has helped drive improvements in education, health and crime. In addition it may reduce the number of written enquiries under the Environmental Information Regulations for information about the local environment because the information has been set out in an easy to understand way on a website.

Social: Issues surrounding local environmental quality have arisen as key in the majority of consultations on Community Strategies and in MORI research on what matters most to people. Supporting the evidence base helps support and enable communities to address those issues that concern them most by highlighting areas most in need of attention. Addressing issues of local environmental quality is proven through research to address health inequalities and crime, in particular anti-social behaviour (see http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odp_m_index.hcst?n=4705&l=2) . Supporting the provision of information to the public on environmental issues supports Government's community empowerment goals and environmental justice goals by giving communities, through local and neighbourhood structures, a greater say in how it is run.

Environmental: At the local level being enabled to address issues of local environmental quality enables people to see a difference to their neighbourhood and become engaged in activities that deliver sustainable development in a way which makes a difference to their own community..

7. Ensuring delivery

The 1999 strategy was perceived to have been only partially implemented. We are proposing additional measures, which we believe would be powerful catalysts for improved delivery.

The strategy proposes **an enhanced Sustainable Development Commission** to enable the SDC to extend its reach further across government, providing enhanced advice on specific strategy areas, economics, business, regional and better shadowing of Defra plus improved financial and business management.

The SDC was established in 2000 as an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body with 21 commissioners and a chair. Its role is to act as the government's advisor and critical friend on sustainable development. While the Commission has developed its role and increased its influence across government since 2000, it remains small and under-resourced compared to other bodies with narrower remits.

The options for this proposal are:

- **To do nothing** - £679k is baseline now but SDC have used previous year's underspend of £147 as base funding for this year. This would now in effect reduce their capability as they are not forecasting an underspend this year.

Benefits: Basic coverage only of strategy implementation and overall SDC remit possible.

- **To provide a medium increase in funding to £1000k** - would enable us to increase some aspects of the SDC's contribution to strategy and PSA1 delivery but would not satisfy all their stated needs.

Benefits: Enhanced scope of activities to cover majority of strategy themes but would not provide adequate resources to allow SDC to build up all necessary technical expertise on these areas, or on support systems such as Finance and other corporate services.

- **To meet the objective in full proposed increase of up to c.£2000k.**

The benefit of this approach though would be an organisation which is recognised as being fully professional and evidence led. This will help to drive forward the SD agenda and provide the quality advice and advocacy required.

The strategy also proposes the need for an **independent audit** of the government's performance on sustainable development. There are two leading models for this potential role:

- SDC take on role – additional c.£4-500k pa to recruit strategic audit staff, produce framework and technical secretariat to evaluate and collate evidence across government (12 staff).
- NAO take on role - NAO already do much of this work and could allocate additional resources themselves, but if Defra had to fund would involve 12 auditors at cost of around c.6-700k pa.

Regional Delivery and SD

Measures to improve delivery of SD at the regional level include giving regional players' more opportunity to influence national policy development, ensuring new guidance on preparing RESs assists RDAs in contributing to SD, updating guidance on regional sustainable development frameworks (rsdfs) clarifying the responsibilities of the Regional Assemblies for rsdfs and improving integration across regional programmes and strategies including improvements to the evidence base.

Options:

- **Do nothing** option, regional bodies continue to work towards SD as now.
- Package of measures as set out above to enable regional bodies to deliver sustainable development. Costs are estimated at £100k to update rsdf guidance and raise awareness of the guidance within the regions. These costs will be found from existing resources. **CHOSEN OPTION**
- Place a statutory duty on Regional Assemblies to contribute to sustainable development. (RDAs already have a statutory duty.) This would require Regional Assemblies to be established on a statutory basis, which would represent a constitutional change.

Costs and Benefits:

Costs for the chosen option are estimated at £100k, these will be found from existing resources There are no additional costs to business. The key benefits of the chosen option will be better – and more efficient - regional delivery of national objectives and regional priorities

Economic Benefits: Better embedding of SD in RES will reduce conflicts and policy overlaps leading to resource efficiency and improved regional economic performance.

Social Benefits: Better decision making and integration of regional strategies, for example better integration between RES and RSS will lead to improved social outcomes. Measures on housing will help to ensure needs are met.

Environmental Benefits: Better decision making and implementation of more joined up policies at the regional level will lead to improved outcomes on waste, energy efficiency, biodiversity, sustainable consumption and land use.

Local Government and SD

The strategy contains a package of measures to develop Skills, knowledge and know-how in local government including: building SD into LG capacity building programme / Leadership centre, Training for LSPs on SD, Training for Audit Commission CPA inspectors, supporting local sustainable procurement. New guidance in form of Sustainable Community Strategies Pack to each local authority includes advice and toolkits to strengthen SD in re-badged 'Sustainable Community Strategies'. Total package costs around £440k. In addition, £86 K is allocated for regional guidance and regional launch events on local SD. Total £526k

Options for improving local delivery of SD:

- Do nothing. Financial costs would be nil but the risks of poor integration of policy making at local level, and poorer procurement decisions would be increased.
- New statutory duty for local authorities on sustainable development. Difficult to scope unless defined by, for example, quantitative outcomes such as zero waste arising, zero carbon dioxide emissions, all of which would be extremely costly (millions of pounds) and burdensome on local authorities.
- New statutory planning requirement for local authorities on sustainable development: This would duplicate requirement for community strategies, increase burdens on local authorities and incur costs for separate statutory guidance, monitoring and reporting (£500,000)
- Separate stand alone training and development programme on sustainable development for local authorities. This would duplicate existing Government and local government programmes and would incur new core costs for running the programme (£3 m)
- Strengthen sustainable development by developing new materials to mainstream more effectively through existing planning requirements, guidance, events, training and development for local government and the regions. (£526 K) **CHOSEN OPTION FOR SD STRATEGY**

Costs and Benefits

The total cost to Defra (SDU) for implementing the strategy to improve local delivery of SD is £526 K and covers a wide-ranging package of measures which build on work being done by ODPM and local government stakeholders. There are no additional costs to the business sector.

Economic benefits: By strengthening sustainable development skills, planning and partnerships at the local level, a greater case will be made to realise economic gains from sustainable procurement in local government,

efficient use of resources and more sustainable local economies which promote sustainable enterprises (better sustainability reporting in businesses and new business activities in recycling, energy efficiency, local food initiatives, community transport schemes).

Social benefits: Through improved skills, knowledge and capacity on sustainable development local authorities will be better able to improve local outcomes on health, community safety, education and learning through more joined-up strategic planning and service delivery. Communities will be more informed and enabled to participate in local affairs as a result of strengthening sustainable development in Community Strategies.

Environmental benefits: Increased local leadership and capacity on sustainable development will lead to improved local outcomes on waste, energy efficiency, biodiversity and sustainable consumption.

International delivery of WSSD Goals

Departments continue to lead on their respective policy areas, however, in order to deliver the cross-cutting WSSD commitments, Departments need to co-ordinate resources and activities in a structured way.

There is a particular need for cross government co-ordination on the sustainable development dialogues where Departments will work bilaterally with a limited number of rapidly developing countries on mainstreaming sustainable development in support of the WSSD target for all countries to be implementing sustainable development strategies.

Options

- Establish a cross Departmental WSSD implementation fund with pooled resources.
 - This was rejected as it was not seen to deliver significant additional benefit over separate Departments working in a joined up way.
- Work together across government Departments to pool existing funds to deliver on WSSD commitments.
 - This options was agreed upon
 - The Interdepartmental Working Group on International Sustainable Development will ensure that commitments are delivered and co-ordinate progress reporting to Ministers, parliament (EAC), NAO, and the public.
 - The Dialogues and associated activities will be funded through the FCO's Global Opportunities Fund complemented by Defra's WSSD Implementation Fund. The FCO will work through its

network of overseas Posts to advance international sustainable development priorities. We will also seek to make relevant links with DFID funds in each country. DTI would contribute through the expertise of UK Trade and Investment and the Office of Science and Technology.