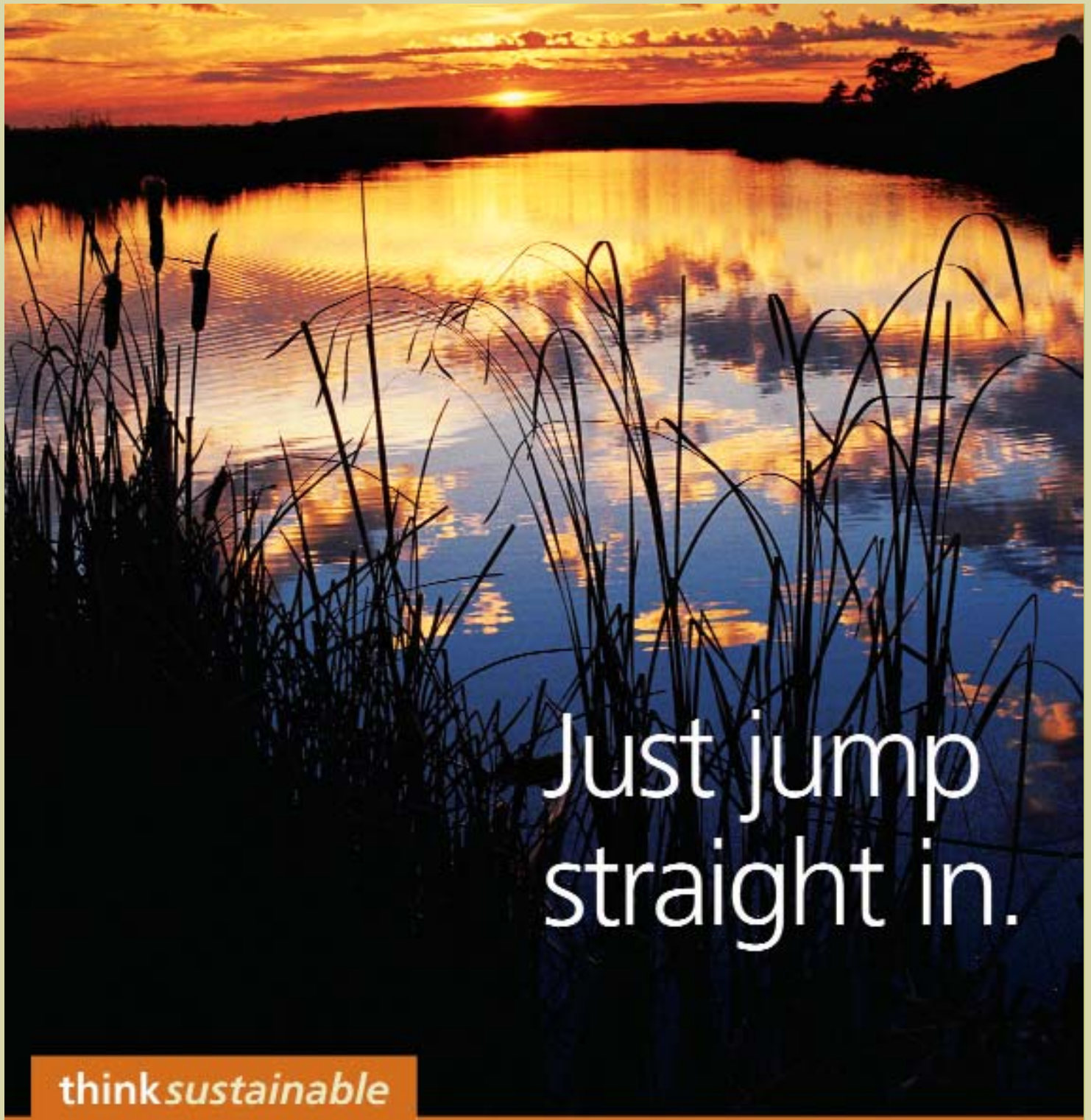


Sustainable Development Action Plan



Just jump
straight in.

think *sustainable*



Front cover: Image adapted from a poster used to encourage staff to volunteer on a sustainable development related project. This poster was part of Defra's 2005 **thinksustainable** internal communications campaign on sustainable development.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Helpline: 08459 33 55 77
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

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Foreword

Sustainable development is Defra's overarching aim. This plan is designed to show how we propose to go about turning sustainable development from an ambition into an everyday fact of life in our department.

The plan sets out a large number of actions. But more important than the actions is the change of mindset that putting sustainable development at our core will mean. We believe that will make Defra a better place to work; make us better corporate citizens; and make our policies work better for Britain and the world.

In our Five Year Strategy¹ we said we wanted our action plan to lead the way in government. Our readers – people in Defra, other government departments, our wider stakeholders and customers and the Sustainable Development Commission will judge whether we have succeeded.

We want your feedback on the plan and where we could be going further, faster – and we will seek your views on our progress in a year's time.

Finally, we hope that our plan will inspire other people to take action – and that we can trigger a competition in which the planet will be the winner.



Ben Bradshaw
Sustainable Development Minister



Helen Ghosh
Permanent Secretary

¹ Defra's five year strategy, *Delivering the Essentials of Life*, was published in November 2004 and is available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm>.

Introduction

In our Five Year Strategy Defra committed to produce a sustainable development (SD) action plan by December 2005, to bring together in one place how we will take forward sustainable development in our policies and in the running of our business during 2006.

The UK SD Strategy², *Securing the Future*, published in March 2005, committed all government departments to produce action plans and in writing our plan, we have followed guidance produced by the Sustainable Development Commission³ (SDC), who will be reviewing this and all other departmental SD action plans.

² The vision and principles for sustainable development are set out in *Securing the Future*, launched by the Prime Minister in March 2005. *Securing the Future* is available at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/uk-strategy-2005.htm>

³ The SDC have published guidance, called '*Sustainable Development Action Plans: Getting Started*', which is available on their website at http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/news/resource_download.php?attach_id=V4GS2OQ-KFWM5GA-R9PEM39-YS9PNW0.

Defra's role in delivery of SD

Defra has a dual role in achieving our overarching aim of sustainable development:

- As **cross-Government champion**, we lead on the coordination of the UK SD strategy, and are responsible for promoting SD across Government in the UK and internationally, through our Public Service Agreement target PSA1⁴.
- **Putting sustainable development into practice** in all our own policy areas and in the way we do business.

Defra cannot do this alone – delivery of our objectives depends on others. Within the Defra family, our agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and other bodies provide services to end customers on our behalf⁵. Achieving our objectives depends on working closely with other government departments at national, local and regional level, whose policies affect our outcomes.

But we cannot wait for others to act first. Defra needs to set an example – both within Government and beyond and demonstrate the benefits from fully embedding sustainable development into all that we do. Within Defra, this will:

- provide a more robust basis for policy making – ensuring the environmental, social and economic implications are addressed together at an early stage;
- provide a unifying vision for the department and a common framework for everyone wherever they work – showing how the operational and corporate service functions contribute to the department's policy goals; and
- help us attract high-calibre, committed individuals who want to work for an organisation with a forward looking, long-term and cross-cutting agenda, and motivate our people.

And Defra will benefit from others fully embedding sustainable development:

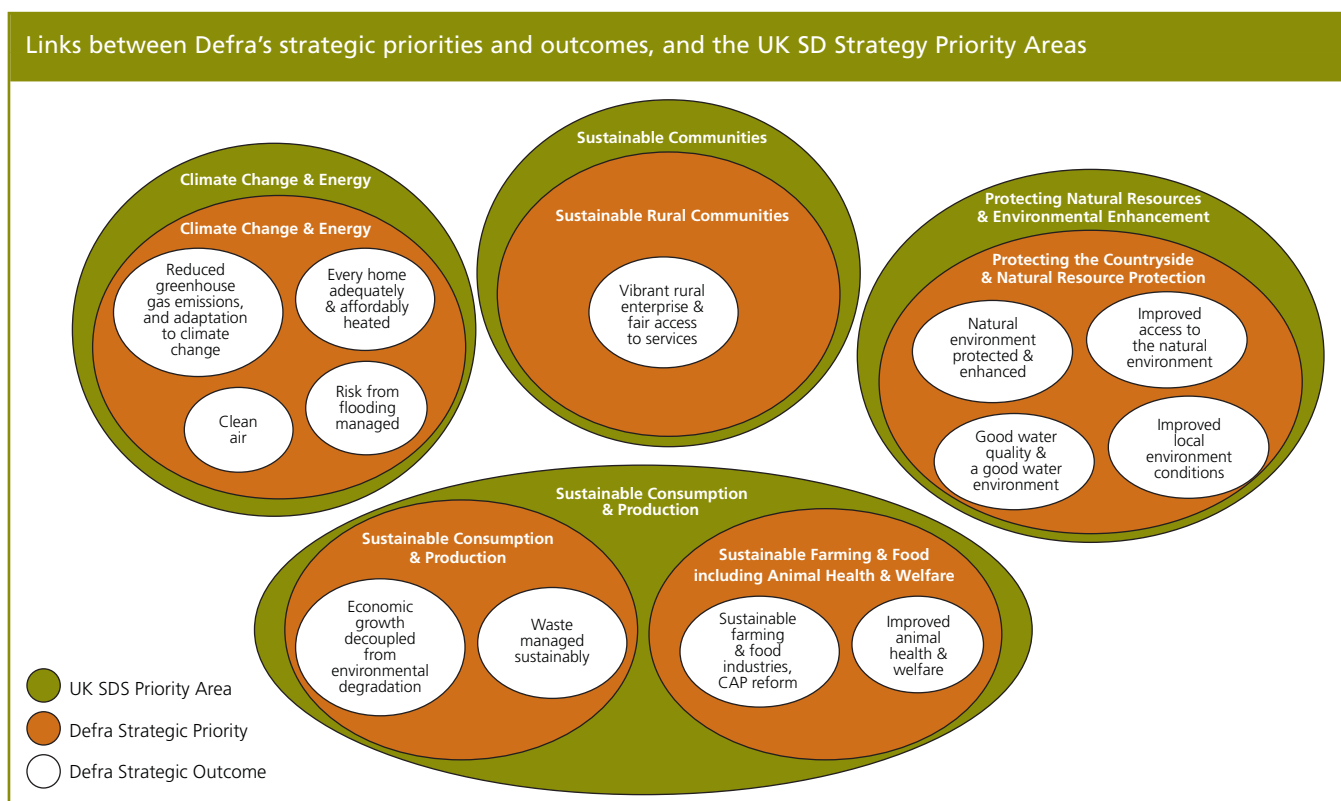
- ensuring that environmental issues are fully addressed from the start, reducing the need for subsequent mitigation (which Defra or our delivery bodies might otherwise be responsible for dealing with); and
- ensuring social and economic impacts in rural communities are addressed in all policies, achieving our goal of building sustainable rural communities.

⁴ PSA1 includes Defra's commitment to making progress on World Summit on Sustainable Development commitments and to leading efforts to tackle climate change at European and international level. More details of Defra's Public Service Agreements are available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/busplan.htm>.

⁵ Information on Defra's delivery bodies and delivery strategy is at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/delivery/index.htm>.

Sustainable development... in Defra's policies

Our Five Year Strategy sets out our strategic priorities and strategic outcomes, which are very closely aligned with the key priorities identified in the UK SD Strategy, as illustrated below:



We are increasingly using these strategic outcomes to drive our business plans and to measure our performance.

We need good evidence to deliver our strategic outcomes. Using sound science responsibly is one of the five principles of sustainable development⁶ set out in the UK SD Strategy. Over the past year, Defra has undertaken an intensive internal process to determine those evidence and innovation needs resulting in the Evidence and Innovation Strategy 2005-08⁷ (E&IS), which aims to improve the evidence base for policy to deliver the objectives of sustainable development. Other actions will include:

- getting other funders to support the implementation of the UK strategic framework;
- piloting innovative ways of engaging the public in policy-making; and
- bringing policy-makers together to share information on what works and what doesn't on behaviour change.

⁶ A useful diagram showing the five sustainable development principles is available on page 16 of the UK SD strategy.

⁷ Further information on the Evidence and Innovation Strategy consultation document is available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/strategy.htm>.

⁸ The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is a key tool in delivering successful policies. Full details are given on the Cabinet Office's RIA website at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/ria/>

To ensure that SD is embedded within the existing policy making process, all Defra policies should already be subject to a sustainability assessment at an early stage, using our internally mandated SD checklist in their Regulatory Impact Assessment⁸ (RIA), supplemented by our new 'Stretching the Web' appraisal tool. These processes are designed to ensure that policy makers look both to build in mitigation where needed and to seek opportunities to maximise social, environmental and economic benefits from early in the policy process.

However, we are concerned that these tools are only being applied patchily – so action in 2006 will focus on ensuring consistent use across the Department. We are also working to incorporate sustainability into our project management templates (it has already been built into the business case template), and our better policy making guidance and training.

We also want to ensure that our existing policies are sustainable. We therefore propose a sustainability audit of existing policies. This will be a key part of our preparations for the 2007 Spending Review⁹.

Actions to embed SD into policy making:	Target:	Responsibility:
All RIAs will have sustainability assessments included at an early stage in the process.	End 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development
Each Directorate General will undertake a sustainability audit of its key policies, with the involvement of external stakeholders.	End 2006	All policy Directors General (DGs)

Key policy commitments

All Defra policies are intended to contribute to sustainable development. We have a large number of specific commitments in the UK SD strategy – the table below sets out the key actions to take forward the UK SD strategy in 2006. A reference to the original strategy commitment is given in the left hand column.

Action on Sustainable Consumption & Production:		Target:	Responsibility:
p47	With DTI, develop a coherent policy framework for sustainable products and publish a set of measures for taking this forward.	End 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
Action on Climate Change & Energy:		Target:	Responsibility:
p80	Implement actions arising from Climate Change Review Programme (full details of actions will be available in the mid-2006 review of this action plan).	From early 2006	Director of Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk
Action on Protecting Natural Resources:		Target:	Responsibility:
p98	Publish the agreed vision for the natural environment and a policy document outlining our next steps towards delivery.	Early 2006	Director of Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use
Action on Sustainable Communities:		Target:	Responsibility:
p128	As part of Community Action 2020, agree an action plan with voluntary and community sector organisations, to mainstream sustainable development into their policies and everyday work.	May 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development

⁹ More information on the Government's Spending Review process is available on the Treasury website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_index.cfm.

Across Government, we will:

- work with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to strengthen delivery of a genuinely sustainable communities agenda, through local authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks;
- work with HM Treasury to ensure sustainable development is fully embedded in the Comprehensive Spending Review process;
- work with the National School of Government to develop the necessary programmes to ensure the civil service can gain comprehensive skills in SD, both through tailored programmes and inserts into other programmes;
- work to ensure that the London 2012 Olympics live up to the ambition of being the most sustainable ever; and
- ensure that the National Action Plan for Sustainable Procurement to be produced by the business-led Sustainable Procurement Task Force in April 2006 is taken forward across the public sector.

The UK SD Strategy set out a new delivery framework for SD. A key element of that was strengthening the SDC's capacity to offer advice to Government and giving it a new role as watchdog of government progress. As the SDC's sponsor on behalf of government, we will support their change programme and increase their budget to enable them to deliver their new expanded role.

We will also continue our external communications around SD, in particular:

- an initiative on communicating climate change awareness;
- capacity building and awareness of SD in the voluntary and community sector (through Community Action 2020);
- completing a series of Ministerial SD themed visits to the regions; and
- sponsoring awards.

Action on external communications for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Launch an e-newsletter to help raise awareness of sustainable development progress and opportunities to all sectors (public, private, community, NGO etc.).	February 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development

Further policy actions being undertaken in 2006 are shown in Annex 1, which lists our key actions by priority area.

...in our operations

Defra has a central role within Government to promote sustainability in the way that departments conduct their business. In Defra, this covers the provision, maintenance and operation of buildings, the procurement of goods and services and the social impacts of our operations.

We are working towards the targets and guidance published in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate¹⁰ (FSDGE), which covers all key environmental and social impacts of the running of departments. The framework is currently being reviewed across Departments, by a Sustainable Operations Board with a Defra secretariat, and will result in a revised framework in 2006. Once the new framework is published, we will update our action plan with actions to deliver any new or amended targets.


In our five year strategy, we stated our aim to be 'best in class' on key elements of the FSDGE. In order to achieve this, we have identified five priority areas that we are focusing our actions on:

Priority sustainable operations actions for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
<p>Travel: Publication of a revised Defra travel strategy that will focus on reducing business road miles and thus carbon emissions. Expanding our existing carbon offset scheme for air travel to:</p> <p>a) rail travel; and b) road travel.</p>	<p>October 2006</p> <p>June 2006 June 2007</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>
<p>Waste: Reduction of packaging waste on goods supplied to Defra. We will develop best practice clauses on reducing supplier packaging and take-back of re-usable packaging as appropriate to goods supplied. These will be incorporated into new and renewed supply contracts. We will also use our influence to incorporate packaging clauses in pan-government contracts.</p>	<p>March 2006</p>	<p>Director of Procurement & Contracts</p>
<p>Water: Where practical we will develop water saving projects at Defra sites, to re-use rain water for non-potable purposes.</p>	<p>December 2006</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>
<p>Energy: Through our agreed Carbon Management Programme with the Carbon Trust, we will undertake a full review of energy management of the estate and institute a range of invest to save measures to realise carbon savings into the future. This partnership is being viewed as a pilot for other Government departments.</p>	<p>Review: July '06 Implementation: from August '06</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p>
<p>Procurement: We will ensure that sustainable development principles are embedded in pan-Government call-off contracts for goods and services – the first of which will be the Pan-Government Travel Contract.</p>	<p>March 2006 onwards</p>	<p>Director of Procurement & Contracts</p>

Information on further actions in each of these areas is available on our website¹¹. After the SDC report on Government performance against the framework is published in December 2005, we will update the above actions accordingly, to address any specific areas requiring improvement.

¹⁰ Full details of the FSDGE are available at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/delivery/integrating/estate/estate.htm>

¹¹ See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/sdstrategy/operations/index.htm> for more details.



As well as our priority actions, we are continuing to review the major impacts of our business and working to improve the way that we manage them through Environmental Management Systems (EMS), certified to ISO 14001 standard. By April 2006, we anticipate that all our major sites, accommodating over 85 per cent of staff employed by Defra and our Executive Agencies, will be covered by an accredited EMS.

In December 2005, we published Defra's Sustainable Procurement Strategy and the recommendations will be taken forward from 2006. The strategy has been developed to ensure that Defra procurement decisions will be underpinned by the five principles of sustainable development. We will also update our Procurement Strategy to reflect recommendations in the Sustainable Procurement Task Force's national action plan.

...as an employer

As part of our Departmental Reform Programme, Defra is facing the challenge of improving efficiency through a reorganisation of the department and a need to perform better with fewer resources.

We aim to use this period of change as an opportunity to embed sustainable development principles into the way the department manages its people. In Defra, it is arguably the 'people' aspects of the business which people find most difficult to relate to the sustainable development agenda. However, the social elements of sustainable development – for example: personal wellbeing and work-life balance, justice, social inclusion and sustainable communities – all link very closely with many of the 'people' related policies already in place in Defra.

Awareness and skills

Awareness-raising and encouraging behaviour change amongst staff is key to Defra being seen as an 'exemplar' on sustainable development. Our latest staff survey¹² shows encouraging increases in the number of people in Defra who understand sustainable development and how to apply it in their jobs. But the results – particularly for the questions on senior management – still fall well short of expectation for a department with sustainable development at its core.

Survey Question	% positive score	
	2005	2004
I understand what sustainable development is	82	80
Sustainable development is taken seriously by senior managers	57	50
Sustainable development is relevant to me in my job	58	54
I understand how to incorporate sustainable development into my work	51	44
I know where to go for advice on sustainable development	65	52

Our aim is that by our 2007 annual survey, the scores on senior managers, relevance and advice will all be over 75 per cent and that in the summer 2006 survey we will be on a clear trajectory to achieve that goal. We aim to increase the score on understanding what SD is to 90 per cent.

We will do this by increasing the momentum of our internal **thinksustainable** communications campaign to ensure that everyone in Defra understands the concept of sustainable development and how to integrate it into their work. These messages will also be given to new entrants through the new e-Induction package and half-day workshop, which will be rolled out and used extensively during 2006. Once trialled within Defra, we want to make these tools available to the Defra family and other government departments.

¹² A summary of Defra's staff survey is given in our annual Departmental Report.

Actions on communications for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Complete an internal communications thinksustainable strategy with messages on SD over 2006 covering policy, people, places (estates) and procurement.	January 2006	Director of Strategy and planned Sustainable Development
Use the re-launched internal SD Enthusiasts Network to drive internal commitment to SD, aiming for a nominated representative in every Division of Defra.	February 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development
Continue thinksustainable communications campaign to increase the survey scores on questions highlighted above, in comparison to 2005 results.	Summer 2006	Director of Strategy and staff Sustainable Development
Make thinksustainable tools available to Defra family and other Government Departments.	March 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development

Leadership is key to delivery of sustainable development. In order to show the importance Defra attaches to SD we want to give all senior managers, starting with the Management Board, a specific objective to contribute to sustainable development.

Last but not least, we need visible ownership of SD both inside and outside the department.

Actions on SD performance for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
All Management Board members will have a performance contract requirement to promote sustainable development internally and externally.	April 2006	Permanent Secretary/DGs
Assess the options for bringing SD into objective setting and the performance development process across Defra.	End 2006	Director of Human Resources

Incentives are all about recognition and reward. To recognise the teams that make the biggest contribution to putting sustainable development into practice, we will ensure that SD is rewarded through our team awards programme.

Action to reward staff for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Work with organisers of the Defra Team Awards to include sustainable development – to reward teams who make a significant contribution towards Defra's SD goals.	Autumn 2006	Director of Human Resources

We also aim to improve the number of people in Defra who feel able to achieve a good work-life balance, as well as increasing the score for teams who involve external stakeholders, whether within or outside of Defra, in their policy design process – both integral to achieving sustainable development.

Survey Question	% positive score	
	2005	2004
I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life	67	69
We involve people from outside our team to design policies more creatively	62	45

Defra is working within the Government's framework, Professional Skills for Government¹³, using it as a vehicle to ensure that Defra can deliver its SD commitments through having the skills it needs. Through the actions below, we will identify the skills that are needed and ensure that everyone in Defra can develop accordingly.

Actions on skills for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Produce a new Defra Skills and Capability Framework reflecting the skills our staff will need to deliver sustainable development. The framework will also enable staff to better identify and manage their own development needs.	April 2006	Director of Human Resources
Conduct a cross-organisational skills audit against this framework to identify gaps to enable more effective learning and development succession planning.	June 2006	Director of Human Resources
Introduce a new skills database to facilitate greater use of flexible teams and succession planning, ensuring we make the most effective use of our staff in delivering our business.	December 2006	Director of Human Resources

Our Policy Centre Review Programme and the better regulation agenda are challenging the way we work as a department. Traditional silo-based working is an anathema to sustainable development. If we are to make policy better we need to be more responsive and flexible, think longer term, work seamlessly with our delivery partners and understand the needs of customers and other stakeholders. We also need people who are able to make connections between different areas of policy and can deal with cross-cutting problems – and who are driven by the need to find solutions that work. Our departmental change programme will enable policy-makers to become more strategic and to integrate policies across the Department, give us more flexibility in the way we deploy people and will increase our ability to influence other government departments.

Actions on skills for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Aid the implementation of departmental reform and restructuring where possible, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with Directorates General to develop implementation plans; and implementing a new process, incorporating a review of the existing priority movers process, to ensure effective internal redeployment of those affected by departmental restructuring. 	Work with DGs: March 2006 New process: December 2006	Director of Human Resources

Diversity

We want to recruit, retain and promote a more diverse workforce in Defra. But we acknowledge that diversity is about more than reflecting the communities in which we operate in our workforce – if we don't understand how to connect to those communities, we cannot successfully develop and deliver our policies.

¹³ More information on Professional Skills for Government is available on the Cabinet Office website, at <http://psg.civilservice.gov.uk>

Defra aims to create an environment where each member of staff is:

- valued for the differences, skills and experience they bring to work;
- encouraged and enabled to develop their potential in the workplace and to progress;
- free from harassment, bullying and discrimination; and
- treated with respect.

To achieve this requires clear leadership and setting an example at all levels in Defra. Our Diversity Strategy concentrates our efforts on embedding diversity into the culture of the Department itself.

In addition, one of Defra’s values is to “treat everyone fairly and encourage, value and recognise everyone’s views and contributions”. There is also now a high-level requirement to integrate the ‘Big 5’ leadership behaviours into all of our work, specifically ‘Putting Diversity into Practice’.

In November, we published our delivery plan showing how Defra will meet the civil service wide targets¹⁴ for the Senior Civil Service and top management.

Action on diversity in 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Use our recently published delivery plan to ensure that Defra meets diversity targets for the Senior Civil Service and top management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 per cent of the SCS to be women; • 30 per cent of top management posts to be women; • 4 per cent of the SCS to be minority ethnic staff; and • 3.2 per cent of the SCS to be disabled people. 	Increased % by end 2006, making progress towards 2008 targets	Director of Human Resources

A sustainable workplace

The workplace is important for quality of life. We want to ensure everyone in Defra can enjoy a workplace free from bullying and harassment and we want to tackle stress at work. We also want to give people the chance to be involved in local communities and to understand the people our policies affect.

We will continue to develop our stress, mediation and welfare policies, offer all staff the chance to take one day’s paid leave to volunteer and continue the roll-out of our Take5¹⁵ programme for the senior civil service to spend a week in business, the voluntary sector or one of our delivery agencies.

¹⁴ Information on the Civil Service wide 10-Point Plan is available at http://www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk/10_point_plan/index.asp.

¹⁵ More information on Take5 and similar programmes in Defra can be found in our annual Departmental report.

Further HR actions for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Improve formal complaints procedures in relation to bullying, harassment and discrimination.	April 2006	Director of Human Resources
Develop a home working policy which will encourage people to improve their work-life balance and help to make energy efficiency savings through more efficient occupancy of the estate.	April 2006	Director of Human Resources
Revise the Pay and Workforce strategy, ensuring integration of sustainable development, in relation to HR issues, and publish internally.	May 2006	Director of Human Resources
Senior management will be encouraged to take a day out of the office to spend on volunteering in a role that contributes towards sustainable development.	End 2006	Director of Human Resources

Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

At present our governance arrangements do not reflect the centrality of SD to the Department's objectives. Although the SDC Chair sits on the Department's Strategy Group, SD does not feature regularly on Management Board agendas. We also need to ensure that our external Board members can hold the executive members properly to account on their delivery of sustainable development.

Management Board actions for 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Regular discussions will be held on sustainable development at Management Board meetings.	April 2006	Permanent Secretary
Non-executive Board members will be given training on sustainable development.	End 2006	Permanent Secretary

- We are monitoring the actions in this document through the current monitoring mechanisms used in the Department for:
 - the corporate balanced scorecard¹⁶; and
 - bi-annual reporting for the Departmental annual report and autumn performance report.

Over the coming year, these monitoring processes will be examined to ensure they adequately monitor all of Defra's actions and whether anything else needs to be added.

- All strategy commitments across Government are being tracked by the Sustainable Development Programme Board, which comprises senior officials from the departments most closely involved in the development of SD policy and its delivery. This tracking will be used to ensure that Defra commitments are being progressed. This programme board oversees delivery of the UK SD Strategy and its commitments whilst also acting as the programme board for PSA1.
- Defra is also required to report on PSA1, which includes a number of the key policy areas covered by this action plan. We produce a six-monthly formal assessment of progress towards achieving this target, based on a series of delivery criteria that have been agreed with the Treasury.
- More general progress is shown by positive movements in the UK SD Strategy indicators, which are assessed, reported and published annually. Further work will also be done within Defra on these indicators and the timetable for this work is:
 - Update of Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket, June 2006
 - Survey of public attitudes (field work), Summer 2006
 - Update of Regional Sustainable Development Indicators, Autumn 2006
 - Initial results of Survey of public attitudes, December 2006
 - Preliminary development of indicators currently unavailable in UK SD strategy set, December 2006

¹⁶ The Balanced Scorecard is a performance management tool for Defra, which reports progress against our strategic priorities to the Management Board (MB) on a quarterly basis. Balanced Scorecard progress is available on the Defra website in MB meeting summaries, available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/manboard/meetings.htm>.

- Our international progress is co-ordinated through the Interdepartmental Working Group on International Sustainable Development.
- This action plan has been approved by Management Board members and by Ministers and has their commitment to delivery. Each action has a person shown as responsible at Director level and they are accountable for delivery of the identified actions. Further information about Defra's Management Board, our strategies and our reporting processes can be found on our website¹⁷.
- Actions in this document will be tracked by the Management Board during 2006 and reported on in our annual Departmental Report, published in March 2007. Actions which relate to our UK SD Strategy commitments, but which do not appear in this document, will also be reported on in our annual Departmental Report.
- The Corporate Resources Group, a subset of the Management Board, will be responsible for overseeing progress on operations and people related actions in particular.
- This action plan is a living document. As its main publication route is electronic, the plan will be reviewed mid-2006 to include significant additional actions that were unknown at the time of preparation. For example, important actions will arise from the Climate Change Programme Review, but the outcome of the review will not be known in time for inclusion in this version of the plan.
- For the first Defra SD action plan, we have concentrated on actions happening in 2006 and have been in regular contact with our executive agencies to share the approach we have taken. We have encouraged the agencies to produce their own SD action plans, enabling them to take full ownership of their commitment to SD and ensuring that they are accountable for their own performance.
- The success of our approach this year will be considered internally, at the regular Agency Chief Executives meeting, with the SDC and with other stakeholders. A new plan will be prepared for actions from 2007 and feedback on the 2006 plan will be used to determine the lifespan of the next plan.

Action on monitoring progress during 2006:	Target:	Responsibility:
Create an external stakeholder panel to formalise feedback on our approach to this action plan and monitor progress.	Summer 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development
Hold the first annual Open Meeting, open to all, for MB members to be questioned on Defra's progress against this action plan.	End 2006	Permanent Secretary









- In 2006, we will go further and discuss the production of action plans with Defra's Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs). The Environment Agency, one of our largest NDPBs, has a statutory sustainable development duty, as will Natural England when it is launched.
- For further information relating to the development of this action plan, or to obtain a hard copy, please contact the Defra Helpline on 08459 33 55 77, or email Defra's Sustainable Development Unit at sdindex@defra.gsi.gov.uk

¹⁷ See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/index.asp> for more information about Defra governance and reporting.

Annex 1

The following table gives details of Defra's specific sustainable development related policy actions for 2006. Actions that relate to a SD Strategy commitment are marked in the left hand column by a chevron icon and the page number where the original commitment appears in the SD Strategy.

Sustainable Consumption and Production actions

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:		Target:	Responsibility:
 p34	Respond to report from Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, due in March 2006, on action to promote more sustainable patterns of consumption. Test new these new ideas – amongst others – with the public in a Deliberative Forum.	End 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
 p52	Design, build and operate an 'Environment Direct' information service which gives consumers the real facts on the impact their purchasing decisions can have on the environment.	End 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
 p55	Publish a national action plan for sustainable procurement across the public sector.	April 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development
 p50	Continue to help business become more resource efficient through the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste programme (BREW), which is providing £95 million of funding throughout the period 2005-6.	Throughout 2006	Director of Environment Quality and Waste
 p63	Publish a revised Waste Strategy for England, embodying the principles of sustainable consumption and production. Subject to consultation on a planned progress report this autumn, this will focus on the protection of human health and the environment by producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible.	Summer 2006	Director of Environment Quality and Waste
 p87	Publication of the Sustainable Buildings Code jointly with ODPM and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). All new homes funded by Government or its Agencies, including through relevant public-private partnerships, will be expected to meet the Code from April 2006.	March 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development
 p169	Work to secure a successful outcome at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial in Hong Kong, being held in December 2005, which would allow us to agree schedules (setting out all the details) for the new WTO agriculture agreement. The schedules should include detailed rules on how and to what extent we will reduce import tariffs on a range of agricultural products; on how we will phase out export subsidies; and on how we will reduce trade-distorting agricultural support in our domestic markets.	End 2006	Director of European Union and International Policy
 p106	Completion of regulations to implement the reformed European Union (EU) sugar regime, as part of further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. This should be a more market-based, deregulated and simple regime that will also make trade fairer for developing countries.	July 2006	Director of Food Industry and Crops

Sustainable Consumption and Production actions (continued)

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:		Target:	Responsibility:
	Actions arising from the draft Food Industry Sustainability Strategy when finalised (details of key actions will be available in the mid-2006 review of this action plan).	Summer 2006	Director of Food Industry and Crops
p62	Implement a package of measures to tackle barriers to the commercialisation of environmental innovations identified by the business-led Environmental Innovations Advisory Group.	March 2006	Director of joint Defra/DTI Environmental Industries Unit
p44	Produce a report on progress toward Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and an updated plan of action (including our response to the round table on consumption).	End 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
	Implement a compulsory Ram Genotyping Scheme to increase resistance to scrapie, towards Defra's PSA9 target of a reduction of scrapie in the national flock by 40 per cent by 2010.	Mid 2006	Director of TSE and Zoonoses
	<p>Launch of Whole Farm Appraisal and further phases of Whole Farm Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a live version of the Whole Farm Approach, including an online version of the Appraisal, and increased functionality and service availability – including access to good practice advice in order to raise awareness of regulatory requirements and to enable farmers to focus on sustainable practices when planning their farming operations. • Develop an on-line Farming Advisory System to be launched in January 2007, to enable farmers to achieve compliance with the standards that underpin cross-compliance. 	<p>Launch live version of WFA: early 2006</p> <p>Develop advisory system: end 2006</p>	Director of Food Chain Analysis & Farming Regulation
	Launch Older Cattle Disposal Scheme (OCDS), which will replace Over Thirty Months Scheme (OTMS). This will end the costly destruction of cattle aged over 30 months and born after July 1996 that would otherwise be sold for human consumption. Only cattle born before August 1996 will continue to be slaughtered and destroyed at the end of their productive lives under the OCDS.	January 2006	Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Livestock Products
	<p>Maintain rigorous BSE controls to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve further decline in BSE epidemic with no more than 60 cases confirmed in 2006 • negotiate lifting of EU export ban in early 2006. 	60 cases by end 2006; lifting of export ban by early 2006	Director of TSE and Zoonoses

Climate Change and Energy actions

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:	Target:	Responsibility:
p93 Draw together efforts on adaptation to climate change across the UK and raise awareness and understanding about the need to adapt. Adaptation Policy Framework to be launched in March/April 2006 following a full public consultation to begin in Autumn 2005.	April 2006	Director of Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk
p75 Show commitment to our Kyoto Protocol target including through submission of Fourth National Communication and the report on Demonstrable Progress and encourage other annex 1 parties to meet theirs. Follow up on outcomes of Gleneagles G8 Summit in 2005 (plan of action on technologies and investment framework) through the G8 dialogue on climate change.	Submission – January 2006 Conference – December 2006	Director of Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk
p91 Raise public awareness of climate change through delivery of the first year of the Climate Change Communications Initiative, launched in Autumn 2005.	First grants in Spring 2006	Director of Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk
Target and assist a greater proportion of vulnerable fuel poor households through the Warm Front Scheme by providing an additional £30 million funding in the 2006/07 period over 2005/06 levels, as part of the additional funding to tackle fuel poverty announced in <i>Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action</i> ¹⁸ .	End 2006	Director of Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk
Following consultation publish a Review of Air Quality strategy, which will address measures for improving air quality in the UK.	Summer 2006	Director of Environment Quality and Waste
Push for early international adoption of an emerging agreement on a Strategic Approach to International chemicals Management	February 2006	Director of Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk
Delivering against our commitments to tackle intra-urban flood risk in Making Space for Water ¹⁹ . Launch intra-urban drainage pilots that bring together those with responsibilities for urban drainage such as Local Authorities, Environment Agency and water companies to tackle flood urban risk effectively and holistically.	Summer 2006	Director of Water
Ensure effective flood risk management output and performance measures are in place that reflect Government priorities including sustainable development. Portfolio of performance measures agreed with the Environment Agency and put to public consultation.	Summer 2006	Director of Water

¹⁸ Further details at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/fuelpov/>

¹⁹ Making Space for Water: Taking forward a new Government strategy for flood & coastal erosion risk management is available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/strategy.htm>

Protecting the Countryside and Natural Resource Protection actions

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:		Target:	Responsibility:
p100	Complete initial scoping research (on policy characterisation, valuing the natural environment, environmental limits, and pressures on the natural environment) to develop the evidence base needed to support delivery of our vision for the natural environment.	End April 2006	Director of Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use
p103	Continue to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in developing countries through the Darwin Initiative – review monitoring and evaluation process to capture and report on outputs from the programme including lasting benefits for biodiversity.	March 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
p108	Active promotion of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme Entry Level Scheme (including Organic Entry Level Scheme) through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of farmer workshops led by the Rural Development Service (RDS) regions (over 20,000 farmers already attended by June 05) • Engagement of key stakeholders, who assist in promoting the scheme, via an Agri-Environment Steering Group • A promotional strategy of Environmental Stewardship, drawn up by RDS, involving Ministerial visits, shows and other events, press notices, publicity material, etc to help promote the scheme, particularly around significant milestones (e.g. 10,000 agreement holders, x ha of land under agreement, etc.) 	End 2006	Director of Modernising Rural Development and Delivery
p109	Establish Natural England: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Assent for Natural England and Rural Communities (NERC) Bill expected before Easter Recess • Formal vesting of Natural England 	Easter 2006 October 2006	Directors of Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use / Modernising Rural Development and Delivery
p110	Publish UK Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy	February 2006	Director of Water
	Draft Marine Bill published for public consultation, including proposals for a new Marine Management Organisation.	October 2006	Director of Water
	Identify, in consultation with stakeholders, a mechanism to balance fishing fleet size and structure with available fish stocks	January 2006	Director of Fisheries
	Establish a programme for simplifying fisheries management regulation	April 2006	Director of Fisheries
p123	Bring into force the majority of provisions in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, providing local authorities with improved tools to deal with local environment quality problems such as litter and fly tipping.	April 2006	Director of Environment Quality and Waste
p108	Royal Assent on the Commons Bill is expected by the summer of 2006. We will then begin the consultation process for any regulations which will inform when we will commence the various provisions.	Royal Assent – Summer 2006 Consultation – Autumn 2006	Director of Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use

Sustainable Communities actions

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:		Target:	Responsibility:
	Introduce a new Rural Social and Community Funding Programme that will empower voluntary and community sector organisations in rural areas to design and deliver sustainable local schemes to improve community capacity and address the causes of social exclusion.	April 2006	Director of Rural Policy
	Support the Affordable Rural Housing Commission to recommend ways to improve access to affordable housing in rural areas.	Spring 2006	Director of Rural Policy
p128	<p>As part of our work on Community Action 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> equip 30 community development trainers with the knowledge, understanding and resources to be able to deliver bite sized community training courses on sustainable development. Obtain final sign off for the embedding of sustainable development content in to the National Occupational Standards for community development workers. Roll out the first of the new community enabling schemes and tools to help local community groups increase take action which delivers sustainable development. 	<p>Trainers: September 2006</p> <p>Community enabling schemes: June 2006</p>	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development

Cross cutting action

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:		Target:	Responsibility:
p23	Conduct research programme into wellbeing, and lead discussions with stakeholders on how policies might change, with an explicit wellbeing focus.	End 2006	Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development

International Sustainable Development actions

UK SD strategy reference and policy action:	Target:	Responsibility:
<p>p164</p> <p>At the 14th United Nations (UN) Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) meeting in May 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • push for focused outcomes identifying key obstacles and good practice on implementation of commitments on energy for sustainable development, climate change, industrial development and air quality/atmosphere • support partnerships focus and broader engagement, in order to encourage and support broader international adoption of SD partnerships • pursue the development of robust policy responses and concrete actions in advance of CSD15 	May 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
<p>p164</p> <p>Follow-up UN Millennium Review Summit outcomes on international environmental governance and environmental sustainability by working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for an effective UN General Assembly process on UN environmental activities (to be established by Spring 2006) and with the Department for International Development (lead) on integration of environmental sustainability in development.</p>	Ongoing throughout 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
<p>p164</p> <p>Build on the bilateral Sustainable Development Dialogues (SDDs) with China and India, formally signed off in November and October 2005 respectively. Agreed at Prime Ministerial level in 2004, these dialogues will build on, and provide a framework for, existing country-level activities as well as identify new areas of collaboration (Brazil, South Africa and Mexico have subsequently been added). Agree framework documents on SDDs with all five partner countries and host Wilton Park conference to consolidate 5-country dialogues work and share lessons learned across the five dialogue countries.</p>	July 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
<p>p164</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate cross-Government Learning Network on Partnerships through expanded capacity-building training sessions and policy dialogue • Support partnerships focus and broader engagement at CSD 14 • Encourage developing country engagement in key SD partnerships through UK Sustainable Development Dialogues. 	<p>July 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>December 2006</p>	Director of Environment Strategy
<p>Promote the adoption by the European Council of a single coherent EU sustainable development strategy that adequately covers the EU's internal and external responsibilities.</p>	June 2006	Director of Environment Strategy
<p>Work with other government departments, other countries and external bodies to support the development and implementation of the High Seas Task Force Report on combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, due for publication in March 2006. Prepare and launch action plan to deliver the Report's recommendations.</p>	Report published March 2006; work ongoing	Director of Fisheries

Annex 2

Summary of Peer Review Process

The peer review process for this SD action plan involved three reviewers, who considered the first complete draft of the document in mid-October 2005.

Our peer reviewers were the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), as our nominated other Government Department; Marks and Spencer as our one private sector company; and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), who are an organisation with a great deal of experience in the field of sustainability reporting.

A summary of the type of comments received, split into categories, is given below:

Content


- One reviewer emphasised the importance of adding “explanations for non-Defra people”. We have ensured that all acronyms and Defra terms are explained fully.
- We have improved text “on governance processes to ensure that you encourage compliance and check it”.
- We also added details of the groups in place “to drive and monitor commitment and improvement” against the actions in this plan.

Layout

- We significantly amended the layout of our actions, to include some key actions within the text and further actions in a separate annex, as a result of comments from two of our reviewers.
- As suggested during the peer review, but also in the SDC guidance, where possible we have referred across to existing documents or web pages where the reader can find out more if they want to.

Approach

- We received comments that the action plan should be as short and punchy as possible. We have tried to address this, although in some sections it has been necessary to include background information as context to the actions given.
- We were encouraged “to show how Defra is dependent on its delivery bodies and other Government departments for delivering its commitments”.
- One reviewer encouraged us to make improvements to the plan, to “make people want to work at Defra as it’s leading Government on a journey”.
- One reviewer suggested we should be “more transparent in linking inputs and activities to outputs (or measures of success)”.



Our thanks are extended to our peer reviewers. Involving them at a relatively early stage of drafting allowed us to feed their comments into subsequent drafts, and the final text was improved as a result. The short timetable prevented us from involving of a larger number of reviewers, but we will consider our approach for the next plan, in conjunction with any recommendations from the proposed external stakeholders panel, who will be given the opportunity to comment on our progress throughout 2006.

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
www.defra.gov.uk

