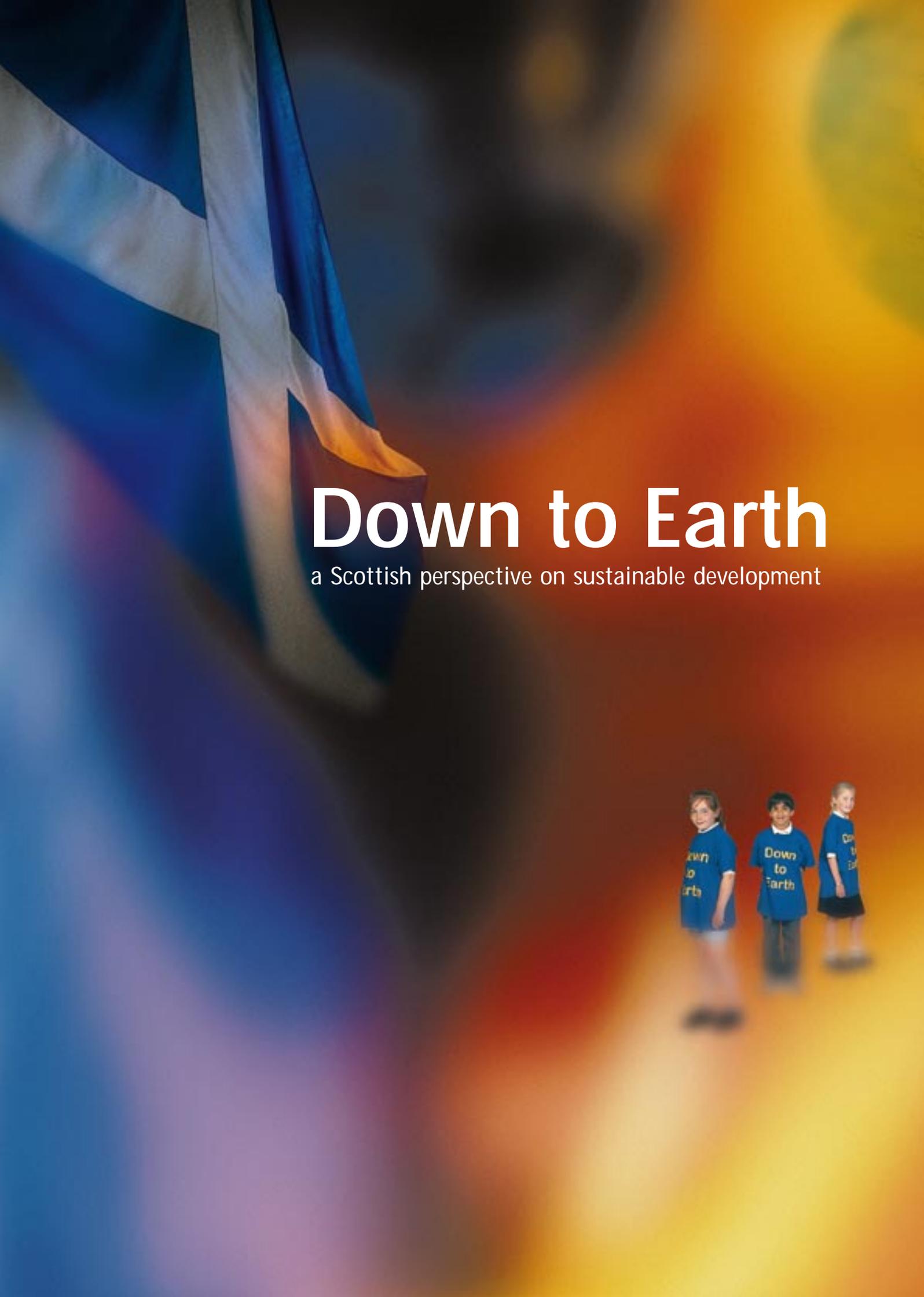




# Down to Earth

a Scottish perspective on sustainable development



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Connect and Involve – Lord Sewel	2
What is Sustainable Development?	4
A Plan for Action	5
Social Development	6
Social Inclusion	7
Rural Scotland	8
Education	9
Health	10
Economic Growth	12
The New Deal	13
Industry	14
Energy and Construction	16
Fisheries	19
Transport	20
Concern for the environment	22
Climate Change	23
Biodiversity	24
National Parks for Scotland	26
The Heritage We Built	26
Planning	28
Air Quality	30
Waste	32
An Embedded Approach	34
Wise Words	35
Local Agenda 21	36
Indicators of Sustainable Development	38
Greening Government	38
Down to Us – The Secretary of State	40
Further Reading	41



# Connect and Involve

**John Sewel**  
**Minister for Agriculture,  
the Environment and Fisheries**

In Scotland's Parliament we made a commitment to a Scottish Parliament which would reflect the needs and circumstances of all the people of Scotland. We spoke of encouraging vigorous sustainable growth and policies on health, housing and education which responded to Scotland's needs. We said the Parliament would work to protect and develop our unique environment and natural and built heritage and enrich our cultural inheritance. In the Manifesto on which we were elected, we committed ourselves to put the environment at the heart of policy making.

Our approach to these commitments is summarised as sustainable development. The United Kingdom declared its support for the conclusions of the Rio Summit of 1992 and was one of the first countries to articulate this through a strategy for sustainable development, published in 1994. We have put in hand a substantial programme to produce a new sustainable development strategy for the United Kingdom under the overall title *Opportunities for Change*. As well as a core consultation, a suite of daughter consultations has been undertaken covering a range of topics including biodiversity business, chemicals, construction, tourism, and waste. This important work will lead to a new strategy to be published early in 1999.

In Scotland, we have moved forward rapidly to make sustainable development a mainstream issue for Government, for local authorities, for business and for the people of Scotland. The cross-linking of issues comes naturally to Scotland; there is a genuine interest in Scotland in delivering on the three arms which make up sustainable development: a sound economy, strong social development, built on a real concern for the environment.

Viewed this way, sustainable development is not a single policy; it is an approach to all policies, which is why it goes to the very heart of sound governance. Many people find it easy to start their thinking about sustainable development from the entry point of the environment. But it goes much wider than that - in many ways the benefit to the environment is best delivered by strong communities and a sound economy. Many of the policies and issues which are central to sustainable development are to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. In his *Foreword to Scotland's Parliament* Donald Dewar wrote of the way in which devolution would "connect and involve people with the decisions that matter to them". Sustainable development is very much "connect and involve".

The purpose of this document is to complement the United Kingdom *Opportunities for Change* process. Over the last two years we have been building sustainability into policies and programmes for Scotland. Here we summarise the stage we have reached, identify action to come and lay out some ideas which the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Administration can take forward.

This document is called *Down to Earth*. This title highlights the thought that we must move, and quickly, from the high aspirations of the 1990s to clear practical action on the ground. Real change is needed to deliver sustainable Scotland. A strategic approach is also needed, and that is being considered in the *Opportunities for Change* work led by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. It will be for the Scottish Parliament to decide how to participate in the overall United Kingdom programme.

In *Down to Earth* we identify issues which we are addressing and the action in hand to resolve them. The action is not for government alone, indeed much of it is for local government, business and others. This is very much a work in progress. In some areas we have taken bold steps forward and made firm declarations of policy, for example, in transport. In others, change is in hand, with firm decisions yet to be made. And in some areas, the approach offered by sustainable development has still to become fully relevant.

We need your comments, your ideas, your commitments to make a reality of a sustainable Scotland led by a Scottish Parliament.

**"Underlying the earth summit agreements is the idea that humanity has reached a turning point. We can continue with the present policies which are deepening economic divisions within and between countries - which increase poverty, hunger, sickness and illiteracy and cause the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which life on earth depends.**

**Or we can change course. We can act to improve the living standards of those who are in need. We can better protect the ecosystem and bring about a more prosperous future for us all."**

(Introduction, Agenda 21)



## THE DOWN TO EARTH CHILDREN

In March 1998 children from primaries 4 and 5 at McLean Primary School, Fife, came first among some 70 entrants to win first prize in the *Bright Sparks Award Scheme*. This scheme is organised by WWF Scotland and sponsored by Scottish HydroElectric. Lord Sewel and BBC *Really Wild Show* presenter, Howie Watkins, presented the children with a cheque for £1000 and a video camera.

The children researched, designed and created their own native mini-woodland in the school grounds, which will be a legacy to all McLean School children. The pupils took total ownership of the project. They branched out into the community bringing in experts for help and guidance, foraging for facts on school outings, securing grants, informing neighbours of the developments and selling their ideas to teaching staff.

In December when the ground was hard and thick with frost, rowan, hawthorn, blackthorn and holly trees were planted. In this publication the children represent the generations to come, who are the focus for sustainable development.

Our thanks go to Avais, Chloe, Christopher, Danialle, Darin, Gary, Gavin, Jennifer, Kirsty, Kristen, Liam, Mark, Nikolaos, Rebecca, Rosanne, Sarah, Shaun, Soyoun, Tracy, and the staff of McLean School.

# What is Sustainable Development?

It is a pity that the issue which everyone on the planet will have to tackle at some point has acquired this impenetrable title. It is even more problematic that no definition exists which can be understood by everyone and built into their lives. What is clear is that it is about the relationship between the lives we live today and those which will be possible tomorrow.

For most of the twentieth century, the march of technology has seemed invincible. Every decade has contributed a breakthrough in fundamental science, every year sees a technological innovation which eliminates a problem (perhaps not always a problem we realised existed). But many advances also laid a shadow over the future: consuming a scarce raw material, adding to the pollution burden, or threatening the other forms of life on the planet.

Nor did the benefits accrue to everyone. While the Western world has prospered, countries behind us on the development path have trailed relatively further back. Even at home the inequalities



between the haves and the have-nots have increased. These inequalities are the touch papers for instability and conflict.

The last couple of decades of the century have produced a change of mood. Many people now wish to adopt a way of life which is less selfish - not in the personal sense - but one in which there is a greater sharing of the benefits of modern life. That movement was based initially in environmental concerns, but quickly it became clear that protecting the environment required changes in our patterns of life - changes in social structures and attitudes. We would also need to maintain our growth because the economic systems on which we depend are based on the idea of growth.

These ideas underpin the most commonly used definition of sustainable development, that produced by the Brundtland Commission in 1987:

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

That means that we continue to work for the goals of today, provided we keep an eye to the consequences of our actions in years to come. So for example, we should be careful about using up raw materials unless we are reasonably certain that an alternative material or an alternative method of making the product will be available. For many people that is an imperative to use only renewable materials. But they do not always meet the needs of the present so they may fail the Brundtland test. We do not yet know how to run a transport system on renewable fuels - like solar power. And some renewable fuels, like wood, have pollution and carbon dioxide problems. A definition does not help in resolving these conundrums but the idea of sustainable development does offer an approach.

Environmental regulation cannot alone deliver a sustainable future. The European Union is moving away from the regulatory approach towards implementing the principles of sustainable development and integrating environmental considerations into the full range of policy making. This process was boosted significantly by the

Amsterdam Treaty which amends, once in force, the Treaties of Rome and Maastricht to include sustainable development among the objectives of the Union.

In short, those who have thought about sustainable development realise that it is a complex of issues which cannot be reduced to a simple mechanistic process. It is not a free-standing subject. It is an approach to issues, problems and policies which is amongst the most powerful we have. If we take the social, economic and environmental consequences of an action and assess them together, that is more likely to lead to a durable outcome than any other. That is sustainable development.

This "three-legged stool" approach has been very well received in Scotland and many people can see, for themselves, how to apply it to issues they face. Another way of approaching sustainable development is consideration of the wise use of resources, in its widest sense. The *Opportunities for Change* consultation led by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions added prudent use of natural resources as an additional leg to the stool. The resulting United Kingdom strategy is likely to adopt this four-fold approach. The Scottish Parliament will choose for itself the form which best suits the circumstances of Scotland. But whichever presentation is preferred, the outcome is the same: we need to find a path forward which is right for now, and right for the future.

## A Plan for Action

This document draws together an on-going programme of action on sustainable development. It offers:

- a **framework** of ideas and issues which make up much of the agenda for the Scottish Parliament.
- a foundation for **discussions**, some led by The Scottish Office, some by others, so that people in Scotland can think together about the action we need to take. Part of that discussion will be on the internet on the Sustainable Scotland site. Here you can post your thoughts and engage with others.
- a **report** in 1999 on those discussions and comments which will help Members of the Scottish Parliament to assess the priorities for the future.



There has, for a long time, been acceptance that concern for the environment is a reasonable objective for a civilised society and today there is little dissent from the view that we should live and work in a cleaner way. The need for economic growth is a given in the Western world.

So two supports of the three-legged sustainable development stool are almost natural parts of our late 20th century lives. But often those who can follow the argument thus far, stop short at the third arm, the need for social development. Social issues are important for several reasons:

We are asking many people to change their lifestyles, for example, by using their cars less, or by thinking more about their own energy use and the waste they generate. If they are not already enjoying a comfortable way of life, in decent warm homes, with fairly-paid jobs, why should they join a movement which appears to want to deny them the very material benefits to which they aspire. In Scotland, we think of those individuals who are socially-excluded but similarly, many developing countries are themselves socially excluded. We need to identify a development path which meets their needs and those of generations to come.

The Western world consumes most of the planet's resources. We trade across the world and gradually other countries are joining the better-off nations list. As our supplies of raw materials dwindle we will come to rely on them for our continued prosperity. That is best secured by careful thought and action now: the alternative is likely to be substantial conflict. We need an understanding world-wide of the planetary prospects and what each of us can do to help and what each of us might expect to receive.

These are issues of social development. We cannot deliver a stable sustainable future without tackling them directly.

# Social Development



# Social Inclusion

For many people, social inclusion brings similar difficulties of comprehension and acceptance as sustainable development. While definitions are difficult, we each have an innate sense of what is required to make our future sustainable or our communities inclusive. But gut reactions do not bring about change. That is why we have established a specific initiative to promote social inclusion in Scotland. With the assistance of the Scottish Social Inclusion Network we are developing a strategy which will help create more opportunities for individuals and communities throughout Scotland to improve the quality of their lives through greater social participation. We are determined that our society shall take account of the needs and views of all. That is the bedrock of sustainable development.

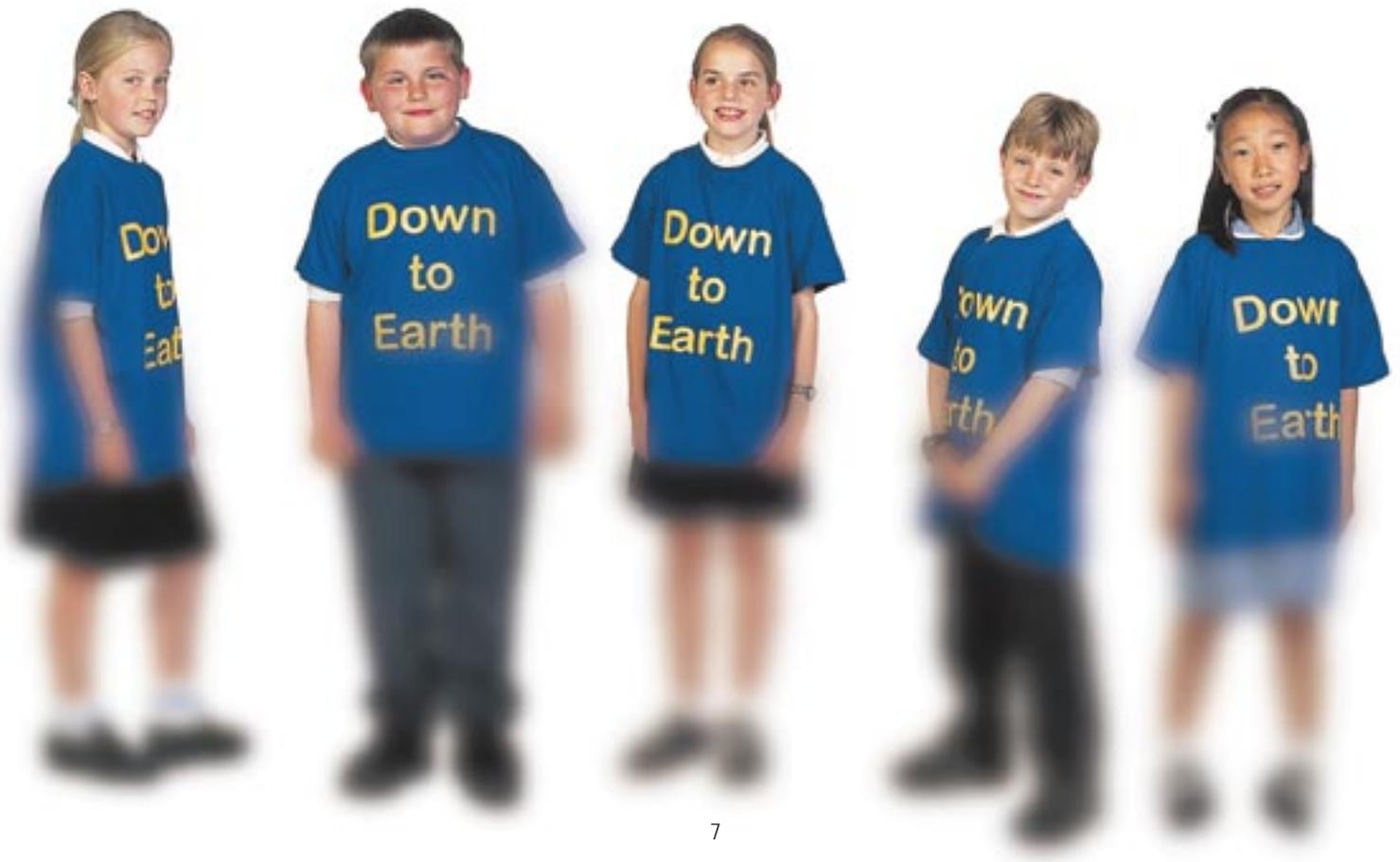
As part of our programme to promote social inclusion, we have announced that new Social Inclusion Partnerships will be set up in areas of greatest need, based on the principles of the existing Priority Partnership Areas, which have been set up in areas of multiple deprivation to bring about lasting improvements to the economic, social and environmental conditions in these areas. The new Social Inclusion Partnerships will retain the key characteristics of the Priority Partnership Areas, that is the need for partnership working, long-term commitment and a holistic approach, but they will focus more closely on promoting inclusion in communities, and preventing social exclusion from developing. They will also be

expected to be innovative in their approach to tackling social exclusion, and to ensure that they are working to get the early years right. Local communities will be expected to play an active part in forming the strategies for Social Inclusion Partnerships and their implementation.

## The Action

The process of selecting the new Social Inclusion Partnerships is already underway. An advisory group, drawn from the membership of the Scottish Social Inclusion Network, has been appointed to advise Ministers on the 2-stage selection process. Following consideration of the 58 expressions of interest submitted as a part of the first stage, 32 short-listed bidders have been invited to develop full proposals at the second stage. The final outcome of the selection process is expected to be announced early in 1999, with the new Social Inclusion Partnerships beginning their work in April 1999.

The New Deal for Communities initiative has been established to progress government policies to empower local communities and tackle social exclusion. More than £13m has been made available in Scotland over this and the next 3 years to implement the initiative, helping neighbourhoods with high concentrations of deprivation. Two main programmes make up New Deal for Communities - Working for Communities which will test alternative, more co-ordinated approaches to delivering local services, and Listening to Communities which will enable local communities better to represent themselves.



### The Action

Under Working for Communities, two early pathfinders have been established. 22 other areas – covering both urban and rural communities – have been invited to submit proposals for further pathfinders to test out new approaches to delivering responsive services locally. Six to ten will then be invited to implement pathfinders during 1999-2000. A total of £10 million has been made available to support this programme. Following a seminar in November 1998 bringing together a wide range of practitioners, policy-makers and community representatives, detailed proposals for the programme are being developed.

With funding of over £3 million over the next 3 years, the Listening to Communities programme will:

- develop the potential of local communities to participate in regeneration partnerships;
- identify new ways of testing community needs, aspirations, and opinions;
- develop decision-making processes which encourage active participation at a local level

The people who live in our deprived communities are best placed to say what needs to be done to improve their surroundings but others are sometimes too keen to assume they know best. The Listening to Communities programme, backed by £3 million over the next three years, is essential if we are to change the way we work with and respond to our communities. To build strong, socially inclusive communities we must first listen to them to find out what they want. Only then can we begin to give people real influence over the decisions which affect their lives.

## Rural Scotland

We are committed to promoting employment and investment for sustained economic growth in rural areas. This is sustainable rural development: providing economic growth and social development along with protection of the natural environment.

People must be at the heart of rural policy. Recent consultation has shown that the basic concerns of rural people are the same as those living elsewhere – the opportunity to make a decent living, access to good education and health care, a safe environment, and mobility and good communications. While these basic needs remain the same, distance and sparsity of population means that the way in which these ends are achieved may be different, and our rural policy is designed to ensure that these differences are taken into account.

Our policies for rural Scotland are set out in *“Towards a Development Strategy for Rural Scotland: The Framework”*, published in August 1998, offering a framework for the delivery of these

policies, particularly through the preparation of rural development strategies. These should be sustainable, and meet the needs, concerns and conditions of the diverse areas which make up rural Scotland.

In the more remote areas of Scotland, agriculture remains the dominant economic activity, and the industry is an important economic driver in respect of maintaining the viability of ancillary industries such as agricultural suppliers, processors, and haulage businesses.

While employment in agriculture is declining, agriculture will remain a major user of land in rural areas, and farmers will continue to play an important role in the management of the countryside, preservation of biodiversity and protection of the environment. Domestic policy objectives and priorities for Scottish agriculture will continue to be dominated by the Common Agricultural Policy. The European Commission Agenda 2000 proposals for CAP reform build on the 1992 reforms by proposing reductions to production-related support, with compensation to farmers being paid by way of direct income aids. The Commission is also proposing a range of horizontal measures, and overall the proposals offer significant possibilities for the sustainable development of Scottish agriculture.

The Agenda 2000 package includes a draft rural development regulation which opens out the prospect of resources hitherto limited for mainstream CAP support being re-deployed, in the longer term, for new initiatives to benefit farmers, their families, and wider rural communities. It is proposed that Member States develop comprehensive and integrated rural development programmes as “second pillars” of the CAP. Some of the measures in the new programmes would still be focused on those engaged in agriculture for example, investment in agricultural holdings, agri-environment measures, compensation for natural handicaps etc, but the draft regulation could allow for programmes to include support for tourism, crafts, conservation and diversification projects from agencies and individuals outwith the agricultural sector.

### The Action

We are committed to a viable and sustainable agricultural sector in Scotland. The Scottish Office is playing a full and active role in negotiating CAP reforms, and we will seek to ensure that distinctive Scottish factors are taken into account. We aim to secure a fair and equitable conclusion to these negotiations, which provides a fair deal for our farmers, consumers and taxpayers.

We welcome the broad thrust of the Commission's proposals for CAP reform but, in the longer term, we wish to secure changes which would reduce dependency on subsidies, while allowing our farmers to compete on quality and price with the rest of the world. We support the rationale behind the draft rural development regulation which accords with domestic policy objectives of encouraging a multifunctional and integrated approach to rural development by gradually breaking down the traditional distinction

between rural development policies and sectoral policies for agriculture. As for all the Agenda 2000 negotiations, however, there are significant differences among Member States, and securing consensus with our EU partners will not be easy.

We will build on our strong working relationships with the agricultural industry in Scotland to take forward important debates on the structure, viability and sustainability of Scottish agriculture in the light of policy changes on the wider European Union and world stages.

#### DUTHCHAS

Duthchas means “our place in the future”. The principal aim of this project is to develop mechanisms for achieving sustainable development within remote rural areas which have both high environmental quality and fragile economies. In three pilot areas, North Uist, North Skye and North Sutherland, the project is steered by a partnership of 14 public agencies and two non-governmental organisations. It is supported by the European Union LIFE Programme and co-ordinated from Inverness using projects which demonstrate ways to provide employment and manage natural resources, while respecting and building on the local heritage and identity. Duthchas aims to involve local people, interest groups and public bodies in identifying the values of each pilot area, agreeing a vision for its future sustainable growth, and developing a plan for co-ordinated action.

## Education

Education prepares people for change, which is an essential and inevitable component of sustainable development. It is through schools that most of us are first given the knowledge and skills to enable us to play our part in developing and maintaining a sound economy and strong society as well as encouraging a real concern for the environment. Education is at the heart of our policies in Scotland centred on achieving a well-educated population with the skills required for the workplace and enabling each of us to take our place as good citizens and parents.

The 5-14 National Guidelines, particularly those on Environmental Studies, Religious and Moral Education and Personal and Social Development, provide a sound basis for education for sustainable development. As schools implement these guidelines they will achieve a more coherent and progressive learning experience which should create a whole school culture amenable to education for sustainable development.



While there is no equivalent programme for all pupils in upper secondary schools, the overall principles of the Higher Still reforms recognise the value of sustainable development. The range of experiences within secondary courses, particularly in modern studies, science and geography will contribute to developing and promoting responsible and positive attitudes among pupils in this area.

### The Action

We have published the White Paper 'Targeting Excellence: Modernising Scotland's Schools' setting out proposals for improving standards of achievement which will in turn support sustainable development aims relating to the economy and society.

Schools are being encouraged to develop good practice such as: -

- a member of staff identified as an environmental education co-ordinator
- potential of school grounds being developed for environmental education
- environmental audit carried out and subsequent action taken
- a specific environmental education policy produced
- school as a model of good practice in re-use, recycling and energy conservation
- good partnerships established with local environmental groups to support curriculum initiatives

When reviewing guidance on the school curriculum, for example the current review of Environmental Studies, we will consider appropriate recognition of the importance of the place of sustainable development within the overall school curriculum.

We have recently set up a working group to look at creating a national scheme to collect donations of computers from business in order that they can be refurbished for use in schools. This will provide a useful way of topping up the numbers of computers in schools, while also extending the useful life of the computers.



## Health

In *Working Together for a Healthier Scotland* we declared that good health is more than the absence of disease. It has to do with the way we live, the quality of our life and our environment. Socio-economic factors and environmental factors are key determinants in people's health. A poor environment, in terms of air pollution, poor housing, unemployment, high levels of crime and social exclusion leads to high levels of ill health and premature death.

Our goal is a healthier Scotland with higher levels of well-being and fitness across the nation and social spectrum. This means reducing the health inequalities which currently exist in our society. It is not enough simply to address diseases such as coronary heart disease or cancer. We need to give everyone a reasonable lifechance.

### The Action

We made a number of suggestions in the Green Paper for encouraging the continued development of health promotion strategies through the work place, schools and other educational institutions; on the development of inter-agency working between the health service, local authorities and other agencies; the introduction of Health Impact Assessments which will enable measurement of the impact of a number of factors including the environment on health; on strengthening communities; and on health at work.

The next step is a new public health strategy for Scotland, which will mesh with parallel initiatives such as those on social exclusion and transport.

Complementary to our proposals for strengthening communities is the introduction of healthy living centres funded from the New Opportunities Fund of the National Lottery. These centres will begin to operate during 1999 and are intended to increase public awareness of health issues, including environmental issues, and to help individuals take more responsibility for their own health and well-being. £34.5 million has been allocated to Scotland for such centres - which will be run by the community for the community.

In addition Health Boards in Scotland have completed their first Health Improvement Programmes designed to ensure that the National Health Service takes a longer-term approach to planning for better health. Focused on measures to achieve a sustained improvement in the health of the population in each health board area the Programmes require health boards to work closely with other statutory and non-statutory bodies.





Down  
to  
Earth



The success of the industrial economy is both the root cause of the problems of pollution, waste and resource use we face, and is itself the engine which will enable us to afford to change those patterns of life to more sustainable forms.

The world we see today is one global economy, where distance is no obstacle to markets and no barrier to the effects of change. Equally, the environmental effects and social demands which business and industry affect are not localised. Sustainable development provides an approach which offers a way of tackling the large with the small, the local with the global.

We must have growth today, for on that our survival depends, but we should not add to the burdens of the businesses of the future.

# Economic Growth

# The New Deal

Unemployment wastes one of our most valuable assets - our human resources, provides a breeding ground for many social evils and excludes many people from playing a full role in society. At the same time, the business community requires a trained and flexible workforce if it is to survive and prosper in the future. The Government is determined to combat social exclusion and the misery that it brings, and work is the key to opportunity and self-development.

The overall aim of the New Deal for the long-term unemployed is to help them find work and to improve their prospects of sustainable employment. By helping people to close the gap between what they have to offer and what employers are looking for the New Deal aims to move them from welfare to work by offering them the opportunity to gain new skills and to build or re-build their confidence. This is being done by providing, on an individual basis, a combination of advice, support, high-quality training and direct work experience. As a result of this programme, the skill base of the workforce should improve while at the same time many more individuals will be joining the labour market and achieving longer term job stability. This should result in a substantial improvement in the life chances of the unemployed, and at the same time it will give them an important role in the community, thus helping to break down the barriers to participation and inclusion in mainstream society.

For some, the education and training will provide a taste for more learning, and this will start them on what the Government hopes will be a continuing process of lifelong learning, where skills are updated throughout an individual's lifetime. This is crucial if the workforce is to provide a sustainable resource for the challenges of the next millennium.

This is all part of tackling some of the most important challenges facing us, reconciling the pursuit of economic growth and employment with social progress and a concern for the environment. The New Deal, in working partnerships with the local authorities, private sector, voluntary organisations, environmental bodies and the community in general, also offers through its Environment Task Force quality work experience and training for the unemployed while contributing to the regeneration of their communities. It therefore provides the dual benefit of environmental improvement and skills development for individuals to assist them towards long-term employment.

## The Action

Over 20,000 young people have entered the New Deal, and already over 5,000 have gone on to full employment.





## Industry

Successful businesses are those that know how to rise to challenges and opportunities and this applies equally to the challenges and opportunities presented by sustainable development. Most businesses are seeking to establish sound and prosperous futures which accord with the principles of sustainable development.

Opening up new markets, innovating with new products, and developing customer trust are not just good business practices but good practices for a sustainable future. Likewise reducing consumption of raw materials and energy, engineering waste out of processes and meeting the needs or aspirations of both customers and stake holders (including employees) are sensible business practices and sound policies for a sustainable future.

The main priority of a business is to create shareholder value but as market places expand and customers and the community in which businesses operate become more demanding, to remain viable, businesses must pay ever more attention to the working climate in which they operate and the changes in operating environment which are on the horizon. Businesses always have to be prepared to take action to ensure their survival but if their management has no vision for the long term, quick fixes of the moment are unlikely to endure.

Scotland has long been in the vanguard in giving recognition in the business community to issues now identified as crucial to sustainable development. As far back as 1816, Robert Owen's founding of the Institute for the Formation of Character within the textile mill development at New Lanark pointed the way to consideration of the welfare and development of employees. And the Scots tradition of thrift in the utilisation of resources does not rest comfortably with some of the less sustainable aspects of our consumer society. More recently, Scottish Enterprise assisted the formation in 1991 of the Centre for Environment and Business in

Scotland as a front runner in the United Kingdom on the provision of information and advice to business on the developing Green Agenda. This in turn led to the foundation in 1992 of the Institute for Environmental Managers which, from its base in Edinburgh, now has a membership of 2,100 across all parts of the United Kingdom and has proved invaluable in raising awareness and competence in business skills crucial to sustainable development.

Strong though our commitment is to promoting sustainable development, we alone cannot drive that message home to business. In the course of its operations, business routinely has contacts with many sources of advice and assistance such as accountants, lawyers, bankers, trade associations, chambers of commerce, local authorities and the Enterprise Network who are duty bound to give best possible advice to their clients. If they are to do so, they themselves need to be alert and informed about the pressures and opportunities of the sustainable development agenda so as not to sell their clients short. Some groups such as the banks have been particularly quick to recognise the financial implications. Representatives of several intermediary bodies have met regularly under the banner of the Scottish Environment and Business Initiative to develop and co-ordinate activity with their client groups particularly in an effort to raise awareness amongst smaller companies. But the sustainable development agenda is now recognised as having so many strands that we really must seek to achieve a mind set change in business and all its managers and advisers if they are to be persuaded of the benefits to be derived from the adoption of sustainable practices.

Business will face performance challenges from its customers whether they are individual consumers or other companies; Government through developments in legislation and the provision of advice through the Enterprise and Business Shops networks is driving forward sustainable development policies, and business advisers must arm themselves to protect their clients' competitiveness by the provision of appropriate advice. The best of Scottish business is already responding to all these pressures and

opportunities as featured in *No Small Change* the latest report on sustainable development in Scotland. The rest must take up these challenges or accept that they are unlikely to have a future at all.

#### **The Action**

Industry is itself moving towards sustainable development, driven by market forces and Government programmes like Foresight. The Scottish Energy Efficiency Office is giving practical help to improve industrial environmental performance and energy efficiency. As part of this practical help and assistance a new streamlined energy

efficiency and environmental advice service was launched in December 1998. The new service, part of the energy efficiency best practice programme, offers a helpline and half day free consultancy to small and medium sized businesses.

Much of the Government action is by quiet persuasion and support for events like the Tweed Horizons *New Business, New Scotland* Conference and the CBI Scotland Conference on *The Environment and Business Competitiveness*. But the new objectives for Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise should be influential.

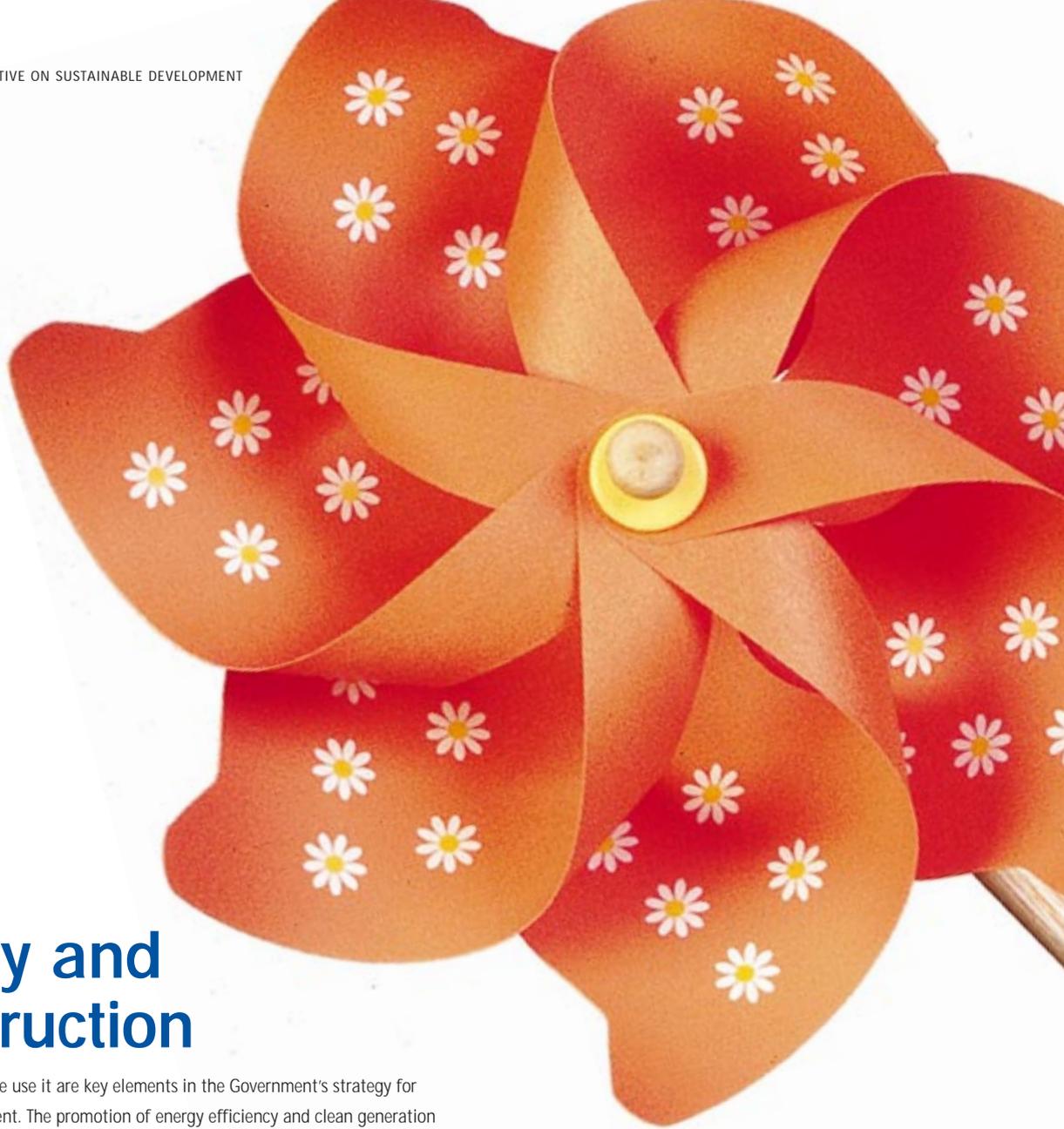
To Sir Ian Wood,  
Chairman of Scottish Enterprise

Sustainable development more generally is one of the Government's key commitments.

The enterprise networks have adopted its principles which are poised to become mainstream business for most public bodies. We now have to develop methodologies which will ensure these principles in your operations and programmes. We should develop and agree these jointly and I look to the network to propose, during the course of the year, deliverable objectives both for your own operations and for the companies you support.

Donald Dewar  
July 1998





## Energy and Construction

Energy and the way we use it are key elements in the Government's strategy for sustainable development. The promotion of energy efficiency and clean generation technology will play a crucial role in combating climate change and meeting the emission targets set at the Inter-Government Conference in Kyoto in December 1997. Promoting competitiveness in the private and public sectors remains one of our key objectives and our contribution to sustainability includes promoting and securing employment and local culture as well as tackling issues of social inequity.

Increasingly we are seeing that while a secure energy supply is vital to modern life, there are major short and long term issues to be resolved in order to deliver a sustainable approach. Renewable energy has had some success in Scotland but it quickly throws up conflicts with the need to protect wildlife and landscape. Windmills are now generating electricity at prices similar to fossil fuel systems but the public is not yet comfortable with them on the horizon - although they are accepted, even popular, in other European countries. Biomass is still too expensive and has similar landscape problems as well as transport and pollution difficulties to overcome. Even generation from hydroelectric power is less certain than before with the more erratic rainfall seen in recent years - a contradictory effect of climate change.

The way forward for Scotland will probably include more generation from renewable sources and a major programme of energy efficiency. That will require business and industry, local authorities and householders to take a radical look at their energy use. The technology exists to make most buildings use much less energy for the same final comfort levels.



Energy efficiency is often described as the fourth fuel or the Negawatt. It has a proven track record of reducing energy costs and emissions, improving competitiveness in business, saving money in the public sector and helping to make homes more affordable to heat and light. Business, public sector organisations (for example local authorities, schools, hospitals), building professionals and housing managers have achieved significant energy improvements by acting on the free information, advice and support provided by the Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme. Smaller businesses and individuals do not have sufficient time or interest. Raising awareness and encouraging changing behaviour are fundamental in reducing energy consumption.

Construction is an important player in the drive for sustainability. The construction industry in Scotland accounts for approximately 6.5% of Scotland's gross domestic product, has a gross output of £5.6 billion and employs around 162,000 people. Nearly half of the industry's output is devoted to the repair and maintenance of the existing stock. Between 40-50% of the United Kingdom emissions of carbon dioxide are attributable to construction activity and half of these emissions are from the domestic sector. The industry in the UK uses about 6 tonnes of materials per person per year. By any measure, then, the construction industry has considerable potential for contributing to the meeting of the objectives of sustainable development.

The construction sector is important for other reasons. The built environment provides the context for almost all human activities and has a direct influence on people's quality of life. It provides the delivery mechanism for many aspects of Government policy aimed at improving and modernising the nation's services and infrastructure. A sustainable approach to construction is critical, therefore, because what we build now locks us in to future patterns of resource use, waste emissions and corresponding patterns of environmental degradation. Once built, we are committed to a pattern of environmental interaction that can only change at the rate at which we can change the environmental performance of the existing built stock.

### The Action

The Scottish Renewables Obligation (SRO) is a series of orders made under section 32 of the Electricity Act 1989 which obliges the public electricity suppliers (PESs) in Scotland to secure more of their output from renewable generation sources. Potential developers submit bids within one of a number of different technology bands to the Office of Electricity Regulation (OFFER), who scrutinise the projects to ensure they are technically and economically viable. OFFER then submit advice to the Secretary of State, who determines the size and content of the order. Successful applicants then enter into contracts, known as Power Purchase Agreements, under which the PESs purchase a specified capacity.

There have been two SRO orders to date, resulting in contracts being awarded to 56 projects for around 190 megawatts of net



capacity. Eleven of these projects have been commissioned so far - 6 wind, 3 hydro and 2 waste to energy projects. A third round of the SRO was announced in 1997, with the closing date for bids to OFFER being 2 October 1998. The order is expected to be made in February 1999.

We have introduced new planning guidance to give greater protection to communities from the environmental hazards of open cast mining. The social, economic and environmental aspects of such mining - its effect on sustainable development - have been assessed and this guidance is a direct result of that approach.

The results of the 1996 Scottish House Condition Survey show that less than one house in ten meets the standards of energy efficiency now provided by the Building Regulations. The 1996 survey showed also that 25% of all Scottish homes suffer from problems associated with poor energy efficiency: condensation and dampness. Homes which are inefficient in the use of energy waste scarce resources and, in particular, are responsible for emissions of carbon dioxide which lead to climate change.

The increasing concerns over the environmental effects of energy consumption underpinned the establishment of the Energy Saving Trust, which now has a Scottish Programme Manager working in partnership with The Scottish Office and Scottish Gas. Raising awareness and encouraging increased uptake in energy efficiency measures through Energy Saving Trust projects and schemes is part of the Programme Manager's remit. Over the last 3 years 69 schools in Scotland have participated in the School Energy Programme, sponsored by the Energy Saving Trust and Scottish Gas. Other school initiatives sponsored or supported by the Trust include Angus Council and Scottish Hydro-Electric in a HECA/Action project; Scottish Power in a Standard of Performance programme; and Scottish Gas and their Powersave competition.

Schools and pupils participating in these schemes, programmes and projects have all been appreciative of the benefit realised. However, these initiatives have identified the wealth of material available and the limited penetration that this material has made. The Scottish Energy Efficiency Office, the Energy Saving Trust and Eco-Schools in Scotland are seeking partners for a project aimed at improved uptake.

A society that does not value its natural and human resources is a society that will decline and die. By linking education and care for the environment we build for the future. In December 1996, the first vocational qualifications for managing energy were introduced at level 4. The Scottish Office, the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Energy Technology Support Unit, the TUC and the STUC are currently developing vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3 for staff at shop floor level.

The Scottish Energy Efficiency Office and COSLA re-established the Local Authority Energy Managers Group which is developing a management approach which makes more explicit the demand profiles and supply potentials and their variations. The system will have the potential to track emissions and to contribute to the management of local authority Home Energy Conservation Act objectives; fundamentally a 30% reduction in energy use in the home.

Every year, the use of energy in buildings requires the burning of large quantities of fossil fuels. This produces millions of tonnes of gases such as sulphur dioxide and carbon dioxide. These emissions can be reduced through energy efficient and environmentally conscious building design. On 1 September 1998, the Scottish Office and the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions launched Design Advice. The Design Advice service offers professional, independent and objective advice on energy efficient and environmentally conscious design of buildings. Subject to eligibility, clients are offered a one-day general consultancy on their chosen building project, paid for by a cash-back scheme. This new service is provided under the Energy Efficiency Best Practice programme

We are taking steps to improve the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes. In 1997-98, £2.5 million was allocated to local authorities for works to improve energy efficiency in their own stock by installing a basic package of home insulation measures comprising loft, tank and pipe insulation. Some 20,000 homes benefited from this package. In 1998-99 £5 million is going to benefit all housing sectors. The resources will be available to local authorities and others who take on unemployed young people under the New Deal.

Works should begin shortly and the target is for at least 30,000 homes to be improved by April of next year. This should result in an average improvement in the comfort rating and reduced emissions of carbon dioxide of 3.3 tonnes per annum for each house, an overall reduction of 99,000 tonnes per annum.

## Fisheries

Sustainability is at the heart of the Government's approach to fisheries management. We aim to secure prosperity for the fishing industry and for fishing communities through sensitive stewardship of the marine environment and through the sustainable development of fishing stocks. There is no doubt that effective conservation of fish stocks is the key to ensuring that the fishing industry has a long term future.

Conservation strategies require good quality scientific input. Scientific advice underpins the total allowable catches set annually for fish stocks. Scottish scientists contribute to this work. A precautionary approach is currently being developed with sustainability clearly in mind. It is based on the setting of reference points designed to ensure that the stocks and their exploitation remain within safe biological limits.

It is important too, that those responsible for the harvesting of fish resources are committed to sustainable development. The fishing industry has much to lose if we do not secure the long term future of the various stocks. Fishermen, scientists and fisheries managers must work closely together if recent progress is to be maintained.

But fisheries are not simply confined to the marine environment. Freshwater fisheries, including salmon and sea trout, are crucial components of the diverse eco-system which Scotland enjoys. The declines in stocks, which in the case of Atlantic salmon have occurred throughout the international range of the species, is therefore a matter which must and is being taken seriously.

### The Action

We will continue to argue for total allowable catches consistent with the sustainability of fishing stocks. The 1999 figures have been set with this in mind. We will also ensure that fishing quotas are properly enforced. New arrangements for designated landing ports and satellite monitoring will be introduced to improve our enforcement activity and counter the illegal landing of fish. Restructuring of the fishing fleet will be supported where this helps to reduce over-capacity and fishing effort, thereby protecting stocks.

We will seek to promote a sense of resource ownership by fishermen by encouraging their involvement in stock assessment and by enabling local fisheries management where appropriate.

Research into the problems of salmon and sea trout will continue and we will play our part, at home and in international forums, to address these difficulties. We will work closely with District Salmon Fishery Boards on measures which, whilst recognising the significant contribution which angling can make to local communities, are designed to regulate exploitation and sustain and enhance stocks.



## Transport

Sustainable development underpins of the Government's new Integrated Transport Policy for Scotland set out in the White Paper *Travel Choices for Scotland*. We will attack the problems of social exclusion through the provision of increased access to transport for all sections of society, not just those fortunate enough to own a car. We shall address environmental and health problems caused by transport, such as local air pollution, through better traffic management and through the promotion of measures to improve public transport, cycling and walking. Our transport policies will also ensure that Scottish businesses have a transport network that meets their needs by tackling such problems as the continuing growth in road traffic congestion.

### The Action

We will encourage each local authority to develop an integrated Local Transport Strategy suited to local circumstances and needs, drawing together all the resources and planning functions of the authority and in co-operation with local public transport operators, communities and businesses. We will consult on details of how to take this forward.

We have published consultative draft planning guidance on Transport and Planning and local government should encourage employers to produce green transport plans, not only with the aim of reducing congestion improving air quality, and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, but also of encouraging healthy-travel initiatives.

We have launched a Public Transport Fund from which local authorities can bid for assistance for key value for money developments for their local public transport network.

We shall introduce enabling legislation to permit Scottish local authorities to operate Urban Road Charging Schemes, subject to the approval (in each case) of the Scottish Executive. Using locally any net revenues raised from a road user charging scheme to support improvements to public transport will be fundamental to its success. There is scope for setting charges on parts of the motorway and trunk roads system, as with heavily-trafficked local roads. Revenues raised from any such charging could be used to help meet the costs of upgrading the older and more densely travelled sections, and of any necessary extension of the strategic network or improvements to alternative modes.

We shall introduce legislation under which local authorities will be able to levy a parking charge on workplace parking, subject to the approval by the Scottish Executive of any scheme brought forward. In some larger urban locations, this could encourage reductions in road traffic by influencing the supply of parking spaces that employers and others choose to maintain. We are keen that any workplace parking levy should have a direct positive effect on the problems of congestion and pollution. As with road user charging, a scheme would need to support improvements in more sustainable local transport choices in order to maximise effectiveness.

We believe that local authorities must have a key role in determining local bus service provision, based upon the positive experiences of good Quality Partnerships. In these co-operative arrangements, the local authority provides traffic management schemes to assist bus services such as bus lanes, junction improvements and park and ride schemes. The operator offers better quality (comfort, environmentally-friendly and accessible buses and better customer care by staff) and improved marketing which may lead to more frequent services. To encourage a greater take-up of such Partnerships, we shall bring forward legislation for Scotland to allow Quality Partnerships to have a statutory basis. This will ensure that the advantages of existing Quality Partnerships are properly cemented, and that local authorities can have a greater influence over the provision of bus services. Where these arrangements cannot provide a reasonable level of service, legislation will also allow local authorities, subject to approval by the Scottish Executive, to enter into a Quality Contract with an individual operator.

We will work with transport operators and user groups to produce a Scottish National Public Transport Timetable and to develop better through-ticketing arrangements.

Schools have an important role to play in changing people's attitudes to transport by promoting a better understanding of the wider social and environmental impacts of transport choices.



We shall encourage schools, particularly primary schools, to give prominence to transport issues by assisting in the production of high-quality and user-friendly teaching materials on sustainable and integrated transport themes.

The UK White Paper proposes United Kingdom - level transport awareness campaigns, which will emphasise the physical benefits of walking and cycling, and we shall ensure appropriate Scottish involvement in these campaigns.

Greenhouse gas emissions from transport have been the faster growing of any sector in recent years. In *UK Climate Change Programme: A Consultation Paper* we outlined the significant contribution the transport sector can make to the achievement of our legally binding greenhouse gas reduction target.

Implementation of the integrated and sustainable transport policies set out in *Travel Choices for Scotland* will improve local air quality and are consistent with our National Air Quality Strategy, which sets out Government policy for improving air quality. The decrease in vehicle emissions which we anticipate over the next 10 years or so, partly as a result of improvements in vehicle technologies, will go most of the way to meeting our air quality objectives for 2005. The measures outlined in the White Paper will tackle pollution levels which would otherwise be expected to increase after 2010, as traffic growth continues.

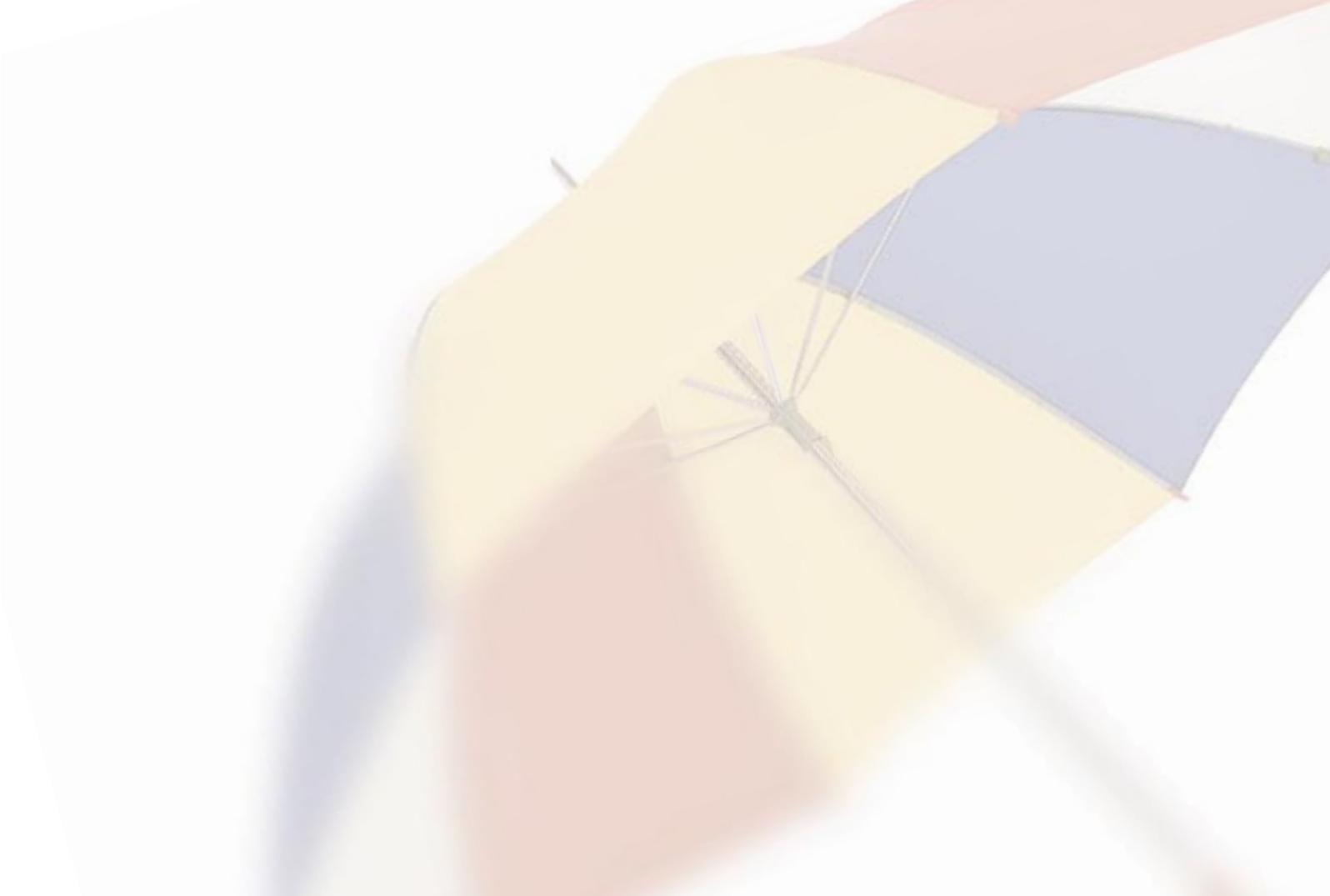


For many people, the environment is the central concern of sustainable development. But more careful examination shows that a good environment is not enough to deliver the secure future which is the aim of sustainable development. We need equally to have strong economies and confident communities, as their success will underpin a clean environment.

In this section, we examine the work underway in Scotland to produce an environment which protects our heritage, through biodiversity and national parks and through concern for the buildings and artefacts which make up our history. We look at the work needed to deliver a quality environment, with clean air, fresh water and land which is fit for life.

# Concern for the Environment



A hand holding a pen over a globe with a network of lines.

# Climate Change

Climate change is a threat to all our futures. It is expected to bring wetter, stormier weather for Scotland and this threatens agriculture, risks more flooding and would deter tourists. If, as some suggest, the Gulf Stream shifted away from our west coast, the prospect would be of much colder, drier weather, again damaging agriculture and increasing our energy demands. The effects for other parts of the world would be catastrophic and are a threat to world economic stability. Climate change is an issue which challenges our social and economic structures as well as bringing environmental hazard. Our sustainable development demands that we take all possible steps to avert these outcomes.

Following the 1997 Kyoto conference on climate change, the European Union is committed to an 8% reduction in a basket of six greenhouse gases in the period 2008-2012. Agreement on sharing out this target among Member States was reached at the June 1998 Environment Council. The United Kingdom agreed that it would reduce its emissions by 12.5%. At the 1998 Conference of the Parties in Buenos Aires agreement was reached on an action plan to help deliver the reductions agreed at Kyoto.

## The Action

We issued the UK Climate Change Programme consultation paper at the end of October 1998. Views are being sought from a wide-range of interested parties on how we should deliver our legally-

binding commitment of a 12.5% reduction in emission of greenhouse gases and how we might go beyond this to meet the Government's goal of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide by 20% by 2010. Many policies - such as transport, energy, and utility regulation - are relevant to consideration of climate change issues. What we propose to do to meet our commitments will be set out in the draft UK Climate Change Programme to be published in 1999.

The Scottish Office has held workshops to consider the implications of climate change for Scotland. These considered likely impacts and mitigation measures and helped us assess the need for further work to fill gaps in our knowledge and prepare the way for a Scottish climate change strategy.

The greenhouse gases at the heart of the climate change problem arise mainly from combustion processes. Industry has an interest in greater energy efficiency, to reduce costs, and this brings the added benefit of reduced carbon dioxide emissions. Reductions in the use of vehicles, and the development of more efficient vehicles, bring similar benefits. Industry is the primary user of the other gases in the "basket" and it should consider what steps can be taken to reduce or, in some cases, eliminate their use.

Simple steps can benefit both the family and the future. Improved home insulation, turning down heating systems, using energy efficient appliances, using the car only for essential journeys, walking and cycling where possible - all these reduce emissions and reduce out-goings.



## Biodiversity

Maintaining biodiversity – the whole rich variety of life which surrounds and sustains us – is not just an important environmental objective of Government; it is a key indicator of sustainable development. Biodiversity is important to people for a number of reasons. Some people feel strongly that all species have a right to exist while others see this variety as a future asset and recognise that there is economic value in biodiversity. We do not yet know how many species may be able to help us – for example in medicines, in agriculture or in waste management. Nor do we understand the full importance of the natural heritage in the context of global climate change. Without this knowledge, we should avoid risking the loss of species, which we cannot re-create.

Scotland has an outstanding natural heritage, which often reflects past good stewardship and represents an important asset, particularly in many rural areas. As a result of the Government's endorsement of the Convention on Biological Diversity following the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the maintenance and enhancement of Scotland's natural heritage is a key Government commitment. Our approach to biodiversity is set out in more detail in *Biodiversity in Scotland - The Way Forward*. A major challenge, to which the Government is committed, is to integrate the needs of biodiversity with the full range of other policies and activities.

Biodiversity policies in Scotland are implemented through the Scottish Biodiversity Group, a broad partnership which brings together Government, its agencies and a wide range of other stakeholders in Scotland's natural heritage from both the public and private sectors. Local authorities, business and voluntary bodies, representatives of Scottish landowners, farmers, foresters and fishermen, industrialists, researchers and scientists, and indeed the general public, all have an important contribution to make to achieving biodiversity objectives.

The Scottish Biodiversity Group has three main tasks:

- co-ordinating the implementation of action plans for priority species and habitats which are distinctively or predominantly Scottish within the UK.
- promoting greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity and its importance among all parts of society, focussing initially on farming, education and business.
- encouraging local authorities and other local bodies to work in partnership to promote biodiversity at a local level.

### The Action

Action on biodiversity is for everyone and everyone has a responsibility and a role to play. All parts of society can become involved. The Scottish Biodiversity Group is targeting agriculture, education and business initially and has set up Working Groups to promote greater understanding of the opportunities in these sectors.

Most Scottish local authorities are now directly involved with the development of Local Biodiversity Action Plans, which will be the major local focus for biodiversity. They typically involve local business, communities and individuals, along with environmental organisations and the local authorities, in developing and implementing plans for nationally and locally valued habitats and species, and undertaking other action to promote local biodiversity.

Many people already support biodiversity in their daily activities, whether at work or at home, on farms or in gardens. While some people may not be aware of the important contribution which their activities are making to biodiversity, others consciously make particular choices, for example to consume environmentally friendly, organic or recycled products and influence manufacturers through their choice.

Business interests can also become directly involved in the process, for example by championing an action plan for a particular species or habitat. This is a direct relationship, usually offering financial sponsorship, but there are also wider business opportunities through the use of natural resources in a sustainable way, or through developments such as wildlife tourism. Support of this kind is welcome both at national and local levels.

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest

One of the ways in which the Government and its agencies help to secure biodiversity is through the system of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The most precious parts of Scotland's natural heritage, both biological and geological, are designated as SSSIs. This is both an accolade – recognising the truly special nature of these places – and a protection of their special qualities. The law requires the owners or occupiers of SSSIs to seek permission from Scottish Natural Heritage before doing things which could damage the nature conservation interest of the site. SSSIs are also protected through the planning system.

There are now over 1,400 SSSIs in Scotland, covering some 12% of the country's land surface. Some of these are also recognised as being of European nature conservation importance, and receive special protection under European law.

We are committed to ensuring that SSSIs properly protect the interests, including wildlife, for which SSSIs are designated. But we recognise that the present system needs reform and modernisation – to make it more 'user-friendly' and to ensure that it makes the maximum possible contribution to social and economic development objectives for rural Scotland. Not all new development is inconsistent with the objectives of SSSIs, and we wish to promote a wider understanding of this.

### **The Action**

Our proposals for change to the SSSI system were set out in the consultation paper "People and Nature" in the autumn of 1998. This proposed a number of ways in which the SSSI system could make a stronger contribution to sustainable development, including:

- taking full account of the particular circumstances of SSSIs in Scotland, for example the large size of many of the areas;
- consulting people more fully about how SSSIs should be managed;
- recognising that a wide range of people may be stakeholders in how an SSSI is managed;
- enabling the people affected to appeal against being prevented from doing something by SNH;
- offering financial incentives to land users for positive management of SSSIs;
- imposing stricter penalties on people who deliberately damage the nature conservation interest of an SSSI.

These proposals have been discussed at a series of local meetings in different parts of Scotland, as well as being the subject of written consultation. We believe that changes to the SSSI system can help it to support the social and economic wellbeing of communities as well as protecting the environment. Following the consultation period, we will set out our proposals for change in early 1999.



## National Parks

Much of Scotland's natural heritage is of outstanding value and should be conserved. However, many of our most important natural heritage areas are also places where people live and work. In fact, people over the years have had a significant influence on landscapes that we now value. It is vital for the future of these areas that they are managed in an integrated manner to ensure that the needs of local people for social and economic development are balanced with those of conservation. We believe that National Parks can be a useful way of achieving this in the case of a small number of relatively large areas of our most treasured natural heritage where the need for more integrated management has been identified.

National Parks exist in many forms throughout the world. Our intention is that National Parks here will be appropriate to the particular requirements of Scotland. They will not have a narrow conservation focus, but will pursue the wider sustainable development of their areas. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, with the many pressures resulting from its close proximity to areas of high population, is an obvious candidate for National Park status. A case can also be advanced for a Cairngorms National Park. Overall we expect that only a small number of National Parks will be created. This will require primary legislation which will be for the Scottish Parliament.

### The Action

We have asked Scottish Natural Heritage to consult widely and to advise us on which areas of Scotland should be designated as National Parks; what structures for the administration of the National Park would be appropriate in each case; and the powers required. The advice of Scottish Natural Heritage has been published and the Government thereafter set out its proposals shortly.

### Access to the Countryside

We should all be able to enjoy the Scottish countryside. Some take pleasure from getting away to more remote areas or climbing the high hills. Others value the opportunity to explore the areas near to where they live. We are committed to providing greater opportunity for everyone to enjoy the countryside, whether in less populated areas or around towns. Increased access, exercised responsibly, is something which we wish to encourage by making clear where people are free to go, and by improving facilities. This may require changes in the legislation which will be a matter for the Scottish Parliament.

### The Action

We asked Scottish Natural Heritage to advise on the need for changes in the law relating to access. Its advice was published in late 1998 and the Government set out its proposals in early 1999. In addition, we are encouraging SNH to work with local authorities and others to establish path networks around urban areas, and to maintain footpaths in those upland areas which attract visitors in significant numbers.

## The Heritage We Built

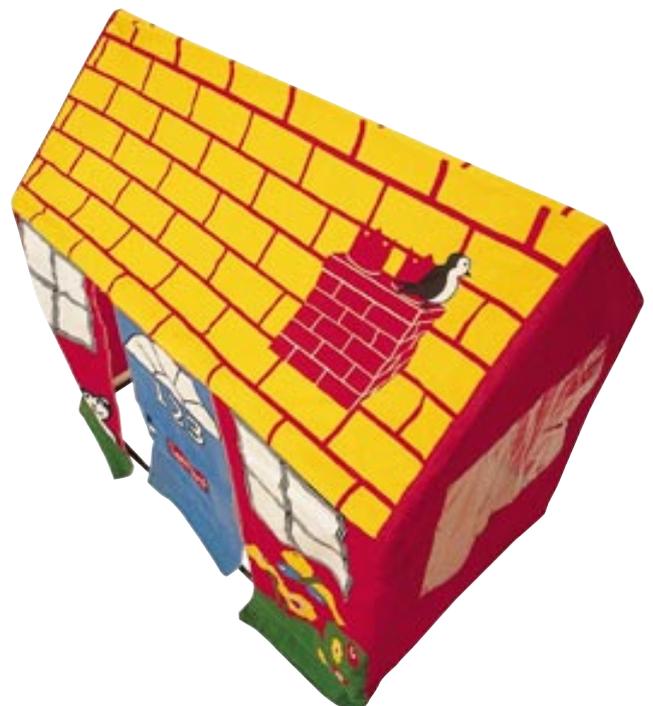
The built environment and all of its components is a finite resource, no less so than the natural environment. We need to think broadly about our needs and how to meet them, in order to reduce resource requirements and energy use, minimise pollution and waste and enhance economic efficiency, ensuring at the same time that the buildings and communities we create provide satisfactory living and working accommodation for their users.

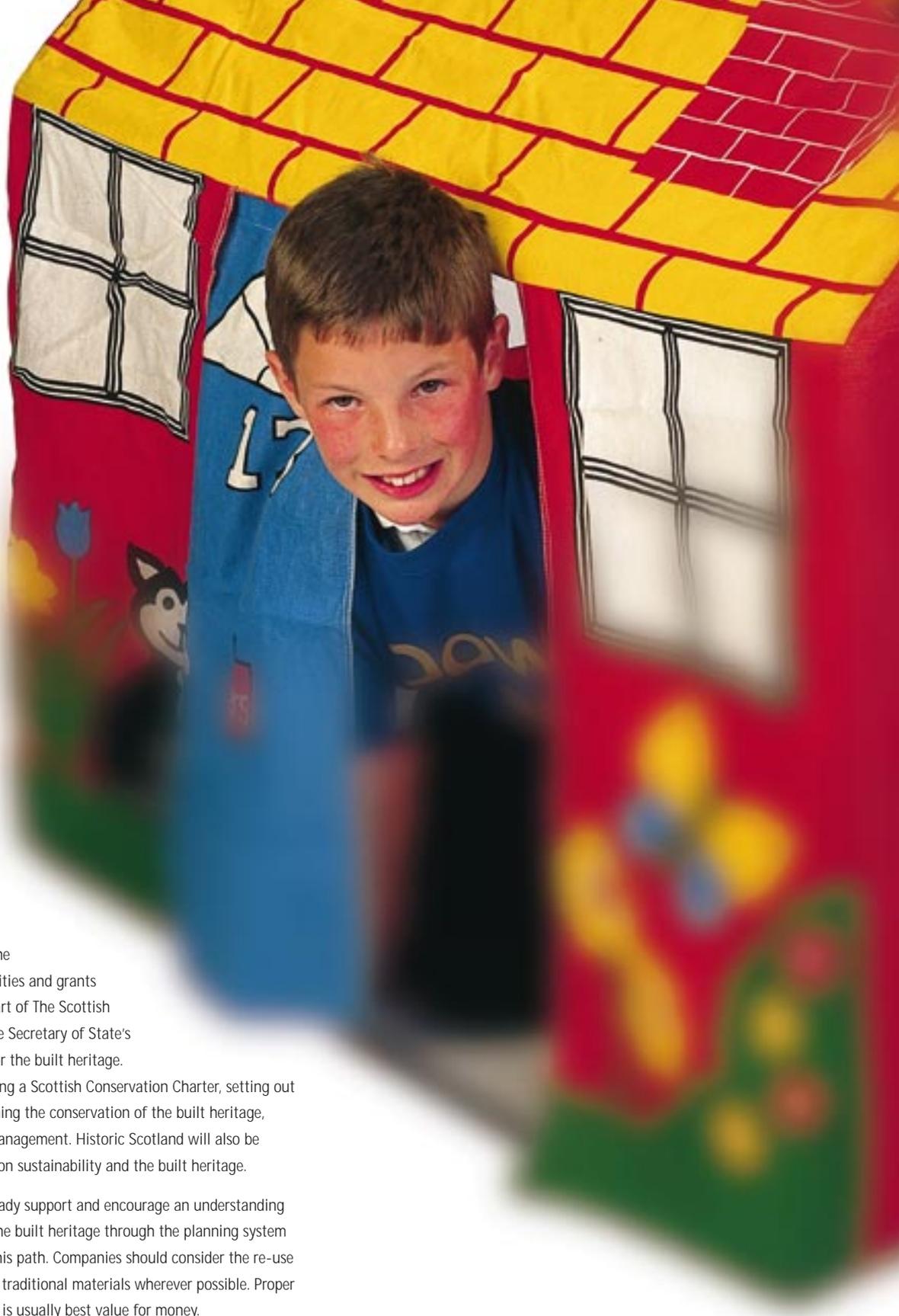
The characteristics which have made many of our older buildings still relevant and desirable today may give us clues as to how buildings of the future might be constructed. Our buildings are the most durable signs of our culture, bringing us messages from the past. Our treatment of them signals our attitude to a sustainable future.

The built environment needs to be managed in such a way that those parts of it which form our historic and architectural heritage are conserved and protected, being recognised as an irreplaceable resource.

The built heritage and sustainable development are linked by:

- the need for sympathetic and appropriate re-use of buildings;
- promotion of the use of traditional, indigenous materials, and the maintenance of associated craft skills;
- the maintenance of cultural diversity represented by the historic character of settlements and landscapes;
- the promotion of the involvement of local communities in conservation activities.





### **The Action**

We give support through the programmes, training activities and grants of Historic Scotland, the part of The Scottish Office which looks after the Secretary of State's statutory responsibilities for the built heritage.

Historic Scotland is preparing a Scottish Conservation Charter, setting out the broad principles governing the conservation of the built heritage, including its sustainable management. Historic Scotland will also be issuing a policy statement on sustainability and the built heritage.

Many local authorities already support and encourage an understanding and sensible approach to the built heritage through the planning system and others should follow this path. Companies should consider the re-use of buildings and the use of traditional materials wherever possible. Proper built heritage conservation is usually best value for money.

Everyone can take an interest in conservation of the built heritage. Good local examples are already in place, for example the work of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. We need to encourage regular maintenance of property to conserve the fabric and avoid greater resource requirements in the future. Use of traditional materials is also more sustainable in the long term for example the use of slate rather than tiles. The use of traditional, usually local, materials also assists local businesses.

# Planning

One of the key forces shaping our communities is the statutory land use planning system. For almost 50 years it has provided a way of looking at the needs of today and protecting the possibilities for the future. Without far-sighted planning made decades ago preserving corridors, it would be much more difficult, and costly, to make new transport provision – whether road, rail or cycle-path - today. The planning system necessarily looks into the future to assess how our communities will develop and what will be needed to make them successful. The planning system links economic growth - through sites for office and industrial development, with social development -for example, in provision of homes - to environmental concerns. That makes it one of the essential tools for delivering sustainable development.

The Government's objectives for the planning system are set out in National Planning Policy Guidelines of which NPPG 1: The Planning System, outlines the legislative and administrative framework within which planning policies are formed and implemented. The whole system is founded on the principles of sustainable development:

"in pursuing the objectives of the planning system here in Scotland, much can be achieved by encouraging development and investment in ways which will also help to conserve the quality of our environment for the future".

NPPG 1 indicates how the co-ordination of planning and control can guide development while safeguarding the natural and built environment. It declares:

"people look to economic development to provide jobs and in turn raise standards of living. At the same time, they expect a safe and pleasant environment in which to live and to pass on to future generations. Recognising that this means neither preserving the environment from change at all costs, nor always allowing development to take priority because of its importance for wealth and job creation, the Government are committed to the concept of sustainable development".

Subsequent NPPGs, dealing with a range of planning issues of strategic national importance, have explained

"If we are to reduce traffic congestion and pollution in Scotland, we must look at ways of cutting the number of unnecessary car journeys. Our Integrated Transport White Paper promised to encourage employers to produce Green Transport Plans, aimed at reducing congestion and encouraging healthy travel alternatives."

Calum MacDonald MP  
Minister for Local Government and Housing





evolving policy on sustainable development. Most recently, in a draft NPPG on Rural Development,

“The Government’s view of sustainable development embraces its concern for the environment, economic growth and social progress. Sustainable communities require new development and employment opportunities which respect local, social and environmental circumstances. Sustainable development also demands that the very best agricultural land continues to be protected as a national resource and that the overall environmental quality of rural areas is not put at risk by ill-considered proposals. Rural communities should have opportunities to progress and improve their quality of life, and to sustain their local economies, while maintaining or enhancing the overall environmental quality of their respective areas.

Given the status of NPPGs and their prevailing influence on development plans and development control decisions, the Government’s sustainable development message is central to the day to day working of the planning system.

#### **The Action**

The planning system provides the context for many decisions which have long term effects in shaping our future. One example is transport. We published a draft NPPG and Planning Advice Note in August 1998 which examines the relationship between transport and planning.

A profound shift in favour of sustainable development was made by the publication in September 1998 of NPPG 8 on Town Centres and Retailing. This reflects our adoption of planning policies which explicitly recognise the connections between transport and air quality, between the strength of communities and their access to services and jobs - in short sustainable development. NPPG 8 says that our policies are intended to

*“promote sustainable development by supporting the regeneration of urban areas, particularly town centres, reuse previously developed sites, protect green belt or countryside. Moreover, as part of its integrated transport policy, the Government expects development to be located where there is better access by public transport, walking and cycling and less dependence on access by car. It attaches importance to air quality and recognises that traffic is the dominant source of pollution in urban areas.*

and:

*New retail and commercial leisure developments should therefore be in locations which support more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel. They should be accessible by direct, attractive, safe, and secure walking and cycling routes, as well as by regular and frequent public transport services, in addition to the car. Locating developments in or next to existing town centres will ensure that a range of shopping and other facilities can be reached for those without access to a car. Other centres may also be well served by public transport services and provide convenient access.*

# Air Quality

While much of our work on sustainable development is aimed at averting problems in the longer term, some issues affect our lives today and require urgent action if they are not to become serious in years to come. Air quality is one such.

For many people, it is difficult to believe that Scotland would have an air quality problem - it does not match our perceptions of our high quality environment. But for some Scots, exposure to polluted air is an everyday problem. A recent report found that air pollution hastened the deaths of between 12,000 and 24,000 people in Great Britain and caused 14,000 to 24,000 annual hospital admissions. The main cause is traffic and those people who live or work near some of the major traffic nodes in our cities are at risk. Eliminating the problem requires an approach which runs to the very heart of sustainable development. We need to change social habits and perceptions which make the car a desirable adjunct to modern life. We need to change the way in which we do business to reduce the amount of travel, especially short journeys in towns and cities. That has to be done without losing jobs or business opportunities on the way. We have begun the process of change, by substantially reducing the emissions from cars but more needs to be done. We are taking a strategic approach, founded in sustainable development.

## The Action

The National Air Quality Strategy was launched in December 1997. It established:

- Health based air quality standards and objectives for eight major pollutants - benzene, 1-3 butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, fine particles and sulphur dioxide
- A target to achieve the objectives by 2005
- Comprehensive policies for meeting those objectives
- The contribution which key sectors - in particular local government, transport and industry - can make to the cost-effective achievement of those objectives.

At the core of the Strategy is a new duty on local authorities to carry out regular reviews and assessments of air quality within their areas, and where air quality objectives are unlikely to be met, to declare an Air Quality Management Area. In such cases, authorities then have a duty to prepare an action plan for improving air quality in the designated area. Local authorities are expected to have completed their reviews and assessments by the end of 1999 and to repeat the process within three years.

The Strategy identifies the need for action to tackle vehicle emissions, which are the biggest cause of pollution in urban areas. Traffic management measures designed to reduce traffic related pollution are likely to be key elements of the Action Plans which

local authorities are now required to introduce in areas where statutory air quality objectives are unlikely to be met. The eight objectives have statutory force except for ozone where action at a local level would not be appropriate. A comprehensive package of guidance has been prepared to help local authorities with their local air quality management duties. The actions to be taken are likely to be mainly traffic management and encouragement of public transport.

We are committed to strengthening the Strategy and ensuring early achievement of the objectives. For this reason we commissioned an early review of the Strategy and established an Air Quality Forum which brings together representatives of all interests such as SEPA and environmental, industry and transport groups.

Our consultation paper on the Review of the Strategy was published on 13 January. It proposes tightening five of the objectives (for benzene, 1-3 butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and the hourly limit for nitrogen dioxide). The limits for ozone, sulphur dioxide and the annual limit for nitrogen dioxide would remain unchanged for now.

The previous limit for small particles (PM<sub>10</sub>) is, in the light of more scientific evidence, not achievable and we propose that the new European limit value be adopted instead.

We also plan to introduce new limits to protect ecosystems from sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. This package of proposals represents a considerable tightening of the Strategy and we hope, following consultation, to implement the changes though the Scottish Parliament later this year.

We are also addressing proposals from the European Commission for an integrated acidification strategy to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and ammonia. The United Nations Economic Council on Europe also has proposals for a multi pollutant Protocol which would reduce acidifying emissions. Acidification is a particular problem in rural parts of Scotland where there are sensitive ecosystems and significant levels of acid deposition.



# Waste

Waste was one of the earliest signs that our modern ways of life were laying up trouble for the future. From local difficulties like litter, through the disposal of major industrial and agricultural wastes, to the complex issues posed by nuclear waste, deciding what to do with unwanted materials is fundamental to sustainable development.

Waste is not one kind of material. Often it is a valuable material in the wrong place or one whose owner has no immediate use for it. It is very often a result of an unthinking use of raw materials. We all pay for waste - either through charges for its removal or in higher costs of products associated with high levels of waste. We should think what we will do with waste before we create it - in the trade they have a phrase about not picking it up unless you know where you are going to drop it. Nor can waste be left to the professionals. Each of us can influence the waste we generate by demanding products made from recycled materials, products which generate smaller quantities of by-waste, and by ensuring that we dispose of domestic materials safely. Companies and other organisations can adopt waste minimisation criteria for their operations and demand that their suppliers meet them. As well as the more general benefit, this should reduce charges to companies for waste disposal.

## The Action

An issue of this complexity requires a strategic approach based on the wise use of resources – an approach based on sustainable development.

SEPA is required by statute to prepare a waste strategy for Scotland. It published a draft in March 1997 with a view to publication of the final strategy in 1999. SEPA has established Task Groups to bring in the expertise and knowledge of the waste management industry and local authorities and to establish a co-operative approach. It will also ensure a wide sense of ownership of the strategy on completion.

Understanding the relationship between resource use, process design and management, consumption patterns and waste generation is fundamental to moving from a linear model of waste (a single route from creation to dump) to a system based on cycles. Even so, a strong culture of waste minimisation will be essential. A well planned waste system can reduce the environmental impacts of waste management. In addition, a waste management system which reduces waste and provides a recovery cycle for the production of good quality recovered materials for manufacturing will offer a more resource-efficient economy

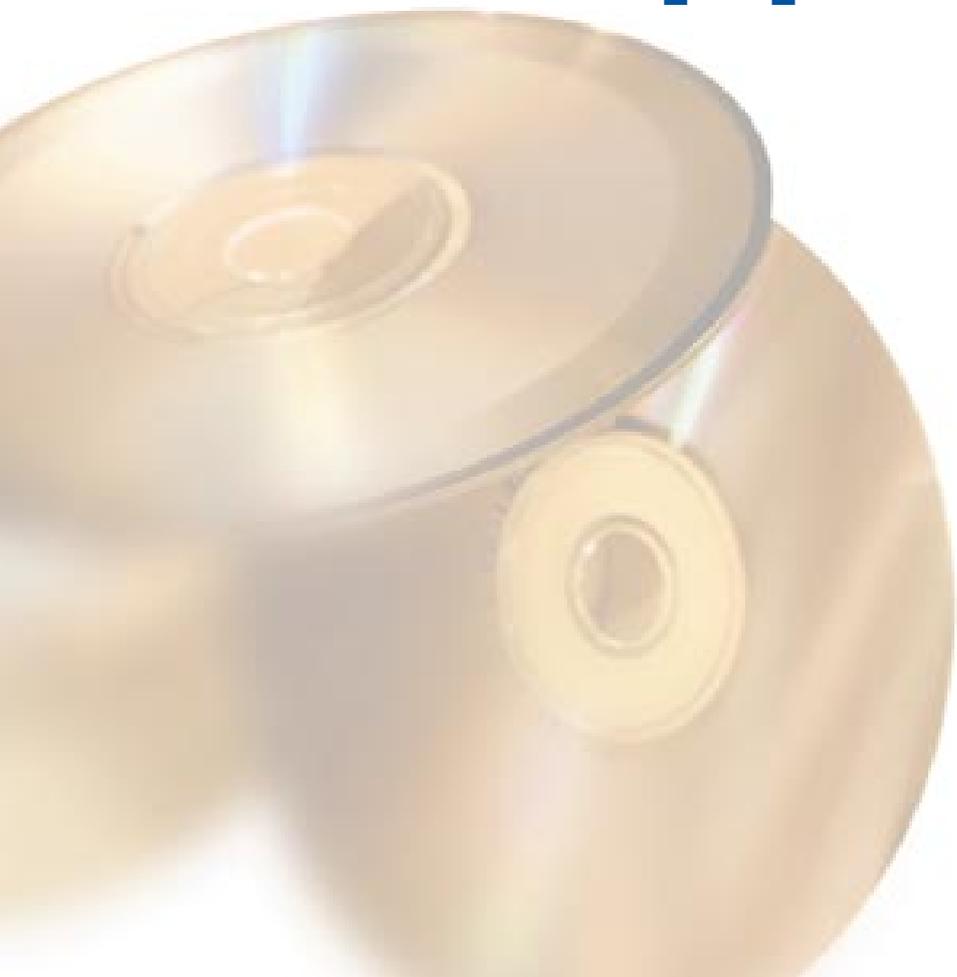
The strategy will link to a series of waste stream specific development programmes such as composting, tyres, construction and demolition, and electronic wastes.

Task Group recommendations that new waste planning regions should be established will require SEPA to develop waste sub-strategies in partnership with local authorities, the waste industry and local enterprise companies. This integrated approach is a key feature of the Waste Strategy for Scotland. The strategy is a developmental framework which over a period of time will significantly increase the competence of the waste industry in Scotland. This will bring the practical benefits of achieving a cleaner environment, a more resource efficient economy and employment opportunities.





# An Embedded Approach



So far we have shown how sustainable development is increasingly the foundation on which new policy ideas are built in Scotland. A wide range of policies and programmes take the S word as a mantra. While it is possible to view each policy separately, the real strength of the sustainable development approach comes when a group of ideas is addressed together and where the resulting action is built into many levels of society.

We have taken important steps forward in that integration but there is much more to do, and the Scottish Parliament will be the right place to do it.

# Wise Words

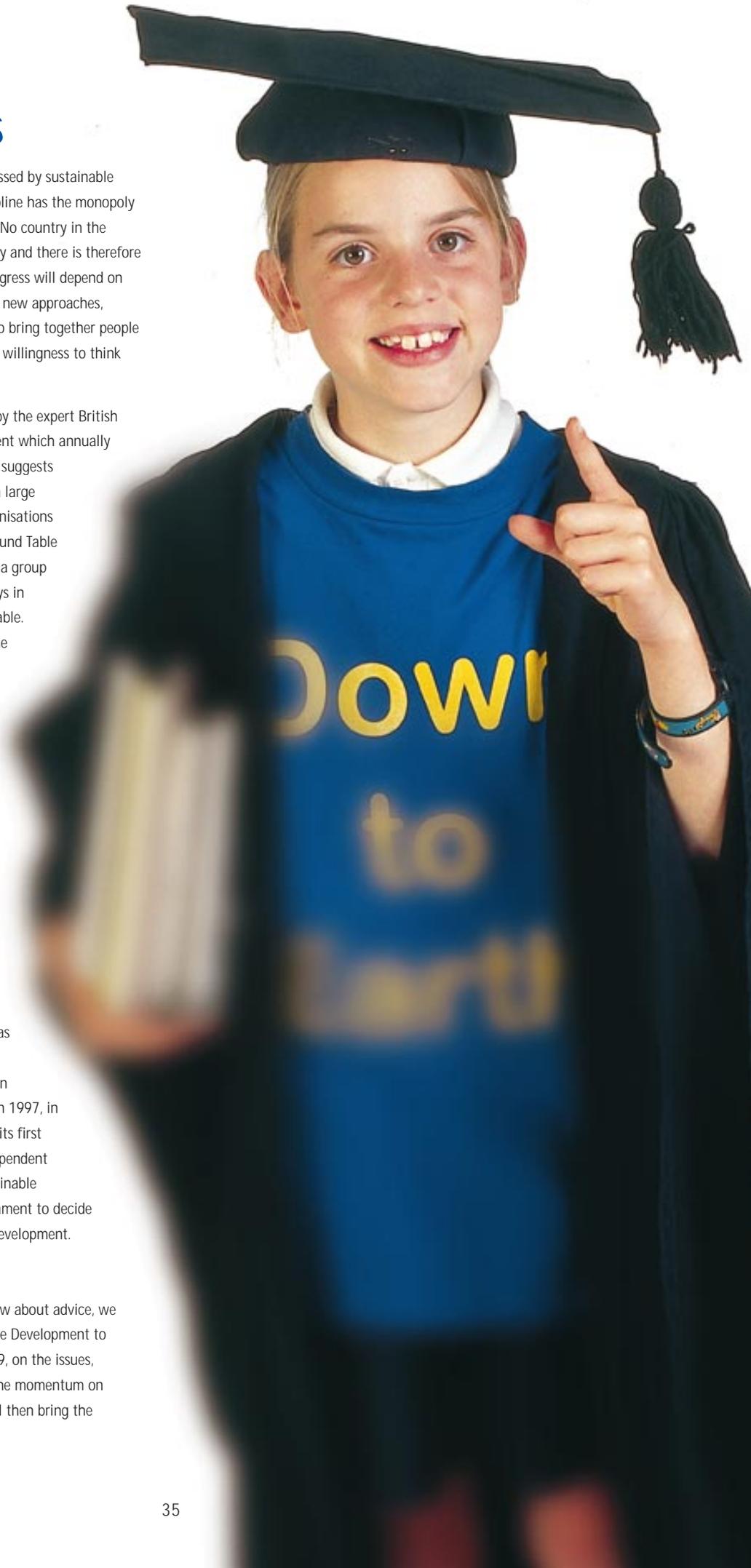
The range and complexity of issues encompassed by sustainable development is immense. No academic discipline has the monopoly of knowledge on how it might be addressed. No country in the world is truly on a path towards sustainability and there is therefore little best practice on which to draw. But progress will depend on careful thought, analysis and the proposal of new approaches, policies and programmes. For that we need to bring together people with wide experience, deep knowledge and a willingness to think radically.

The United Kingdom Government is advised by the expert British Government Panel on Sustainable Development which annually produces crisp reviews of key topics which it suggests require action. Real progress will depend to a large extent on the actions of companies and organisations outside Government. The United Kingdom Round Table on Sustainable Development brings together a group of senior figures in British life to look for ways in which our lives might be made more sustainable. The Government values the contribution these bodies make.

One of the underlying aims of devolution is to provide a mechanism for Government in Scotland which matches the circumstances, structures and sensibilities of Scottish life. These are different to other parts of the United Kingdom which enjoys a rich diversity of people and it is therefore appropriate that our approach to sustainable development should equally match our culture. The Secretary of State's Advisory Group on Sustainable Development provides a role bridging between that of the two United Kingdom bodies. Over the last four years it has examined the sustainable development of Scotland and produced advice which has been directed, in the main, to Scottish Ministers. In 1997, in the spirit of open government, we published its first public report, containing a valuable and independent overview of the steps needed to deliver sustainable development. It will be for the Scottish Parliament to decide how it wishes to be advised on sustainable development.

## The Action

In order to help the Parliament come to a view about advice, we have asked the Advisory Group on Sustainable Development to prepare a report, for publication in early 1999, on the issues, priorities and structures needed to keep up the momentum on sustainable development in Scotland. We will then bring the



Advisory Group to a close, leaving the way open to new Scottish Ministers to establish new arrangements, perhaps with Parliamentary associations.

Education is closely linked to the quest for sustainable development and an advisory group linked to AGSD has been considering what contribution education can make. Like AGSD itself, we have asked the Education for Sustainable Development Group to prepare a final report which will guide the policies of new Scottish Ministers.

These two advisory groups have been in the vanguard of much effort in Scotland on making a reality of sustainable development. It is encouraging to see the universities in Scotland now undertaking research and teaching programmes. The establishment of specialist institutions at Heriot Watt, Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian and Robert Gordon's Universities - and there are others - will provide a resource on which Scottish companies and organisations can draw.

There is a demand in Scotland for a forum outside - but supported by - Government where our sustainable development can be taken forward by agreement between key players. This idea, usually called a Scottish Round Table, has many attractive features if the key players in Scottish life will take part and throw the weight of their organisations behind the ideas it agrees. Two matters have held us back from assisting the establishment of such a body.

First, it is not yet clear that all those key players yet understand the importance to the future of their businesses or other operations to see it wise to come together for this purpose. But that realisation is not far off.

Second, and more fundamentally, such a body would lack the democratic under-pinning that is the justification for the Scottish Parliament. We therefore think it right to leave decisions about a Scottish Round Table to new Scottish Ministers.

## Local Agenda 21

The outcome of the United Nations Earth Summit of 1992 is also known as Agenda 21, because it is a programme for action to be taken from now into the twenty-first century. Much of Agenda 21 can be implemented only with the active commitment of local government and local communities and so it calls upon each authority to consult its citizens to develop a Local Agenda 21.

Recognising its importance the Prime Minister declared a wish in 1997 that every Council should have a strategy for Local Agenda 21 by the year 2000. Local Agenda 21 is about building the sustainable development approach into all programmes and policies. Many authorities have Environmental Charters which outline their commitments in areas such as energy conservation, transport, land-use planning and waste management. Many authorities are working on programmes to improve damp housing, access to education and primary health care. Others are encouraging good environmental practice amongst business and supporting community business initiatives. These are, in principle, actions supporting Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development. LA21 should not affect only Planning or Environmental Health Departments but be an integrated strategy for sustainable development which is understood and implemented by all departments.

Essentially, Local Agenda 21 is a programme which arises directly from the Rio Summit and is for local authorities, not central government to deliver. We have been working in partnership with councils to develop this process in Scotland.

### The Action

The centre of local authority action in Scotland is COSLA which has now established an influential Group on sustainability. As well as COSLA Member and officer delegates it includes members from relevant outside organisations, including the Scottish Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinators Network (SLACN) and The Scottish Office. During 1998 it has been strengthened by the addition of further Councillor level members.

The COSLA Sustainability Group has been the promoter of much action. In November 1997 it joined with The Scottish Office and SLACN to mount a major conference Sustaining Change on Local Agenda 21 action in Scotland. Virtually every Council in Scotland was represented, many at Leader and Chief Executive level. This restarted Local Agenda 21 action after a pause caused by local authority re-organisation.

We funded a part-time officer at COSLA to promote activity across all councils and this has been such a success that we are now funding a full-time officer to ensure that every Council can see a path to meeting the Prime Minister's declaration.

We supported a two day follow-up conference *Maintaining the Change* for SLACN officers in August which prepared an outline of



A person is holding a large globe of the Earth. The person is wearing a blue t-shirt with the words "Down to Earth" printed in yellow. The globe is tilted, showing the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The person's arm is visible on the right side of the frame, supporting the globe from underneath. The background is a plain, light color.

practical guidance  
to Councils on how to  
make a reality of their  
LA21 strategies.

Forward Scotland, funded by  
The Scottish Office, is working with  
several Councils on sustainable  
communities projects which are helping  
local communities to see how sustainable  
development can be a real force for good  
in their lives.

We worked with COSLA and SLACN to produce  
a report called *Changed Days* on the activity by  
all Scottish Councils on Local Agenda 21. This  
document brings together individual reports by every  
Council which will promote sharing of good practice  
and increase the overall level of effort.

We have also asked Councils to develop community planning.  
Councils will animate a process whereby they work with the other  
key public sector agencies in their area, and with businesses, the  
voluntary sector and communities themselves, to identify the key  
issues facing the people and communities of the area and the action  
which the partners will collectively take to address these issues. This  
will result in the production of a "community plan" setting out how  
these partners will collectively promote the social, economic and  
environmental wellbeing of the people they serve. More importantly,  
it should lead to a real increase in the ability of these partners to  
ensure that collectively they are doing the best they can to work  
together to promote the sustainable development of their  
communities.

# Indicators of Sustainable Development

The whole idea of sustainable development is based on progress towards a goal, of wise use of resources, a new attitude to others in the community, continued economic growth to underpin change, all against a concern to protect and enhance the natural environment. But such a goal is without point unless we have a way of measuring our success and that is the role of indicators.

There are real difficulties in defining indicators. They must be more than mere statistics about the environment, or average incomes or tonnes of pig iron consumed. They need to be set in terms of a policy framework in order to measure the advances made. And some statistics can lead to false conclusions. For example, information about the emissions from motor vehicles is important for assessing air quality, and much has been done in this way. But intrinsically, all use of fossil fuels is counter to sustainability whether it harms the environment or not, so a measure of air quality gives only a tenuous idea of the sustainability of the motor car. Real indicators of sustainable development will bring together such matters. A second, equally fundamental difficulty, is that we are not clear what sustainable Scotland will be like and this inevitably makes measuring progress towards it problematic.

## The Action

We published in November 1998 a consultation paper on a set of headline indicators of sustainable development, *Sustainability Counts*. These headline indicators are intended to be used to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development and to raise public awareness and encourage action. A new core set of indicators will replace those published in 1996. We expect that the new set will be valuable to all sectors in Britain as they plan actions in support of sustainable development.

Other organisations have also produced indicator sets. Of particular relevance to Scotland is *Towards a Sustainable Scotland* produced by Friends of the Earth Scotland with financial support from The Scottish Office.

Insofar as the relevant topics are not reserved, it will be open to the Scottish Parliament to develop indicators of its own, which might relate to Scottish legislation and the policies pursued by new Scottish Ministers.

# Greening Government

We committed ourselves to placing the environment at the heart of policy-making. We have linked this to our other commitments on social and economic policies to make sustainable development a key aim. But there is real work to do to make the work of Government genuinely environmentally friendly. That is the purpose of the Greening Government programme: we cannot expect others to behave responsibly towards the environment if we do not lead the way.

We have taken two paths in delivering this commitment. The environmental consequences of policies and programmes are routinely assessed as a central part of the overall policy process. In some areas, like recent guidance on open cast mining, the environmental concerns are front line, even paramount. Our transport policies are intimately linked to the immediate environmental effects in terms of pollution, and the longer term, but perhaps more acute concerns about climate change.

The other major effort has been in making sure that the environmental footprint of Government operations is as clean as we can make it. While the objective has been averting environmental hazard, this work is also delivering major savings in costs and material use. Our experience of greening operations can easily be replicated by companies across Scotland to the benefit of us all.

## The Action

We have adopted a policy for our operations, developed from a model provided by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions. This a comprehensive framework which ensures that our current operations meet high standards of environmental performance and sets targets for improvement.

In parallel, we have worked with Glasgow Caledonian University to develop a system of environmental management for our largest office at Victoria Quay in Leith. This system has enabled us to achieve accreditation to the international ISO14001 standard and provided a model whose extension to other buildings is being assessed now. As a result, energy savings of 12% have been achieved in the last year alone. We run a small fleet of dual-fuelled cars to demonstrate the practicality of gas as an urban fuel for vehicles. We are putting in place a Green Transport Plan for our large office at Victoria Quay and hope to extend this to cover our operations across Scotland.





Lord Sewel's Evidence to the  
Environmental Audit Committee of the  
House of Commons

"Within the framework of government policies, and across the programmes for which the Secretary of State is responsible, the aim of the Scottish Office is: to create an environment in which the public and private sectors work together to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in which people of Scotland live and work. In effect, this means that the aim of the Scottish Office is the sustainable development of Scotland."

The Committee commented:

"We commend this formulation to the new Scottish Parliament and executive, and government as a whole, as a well-articulated example of a high level strategic aim."

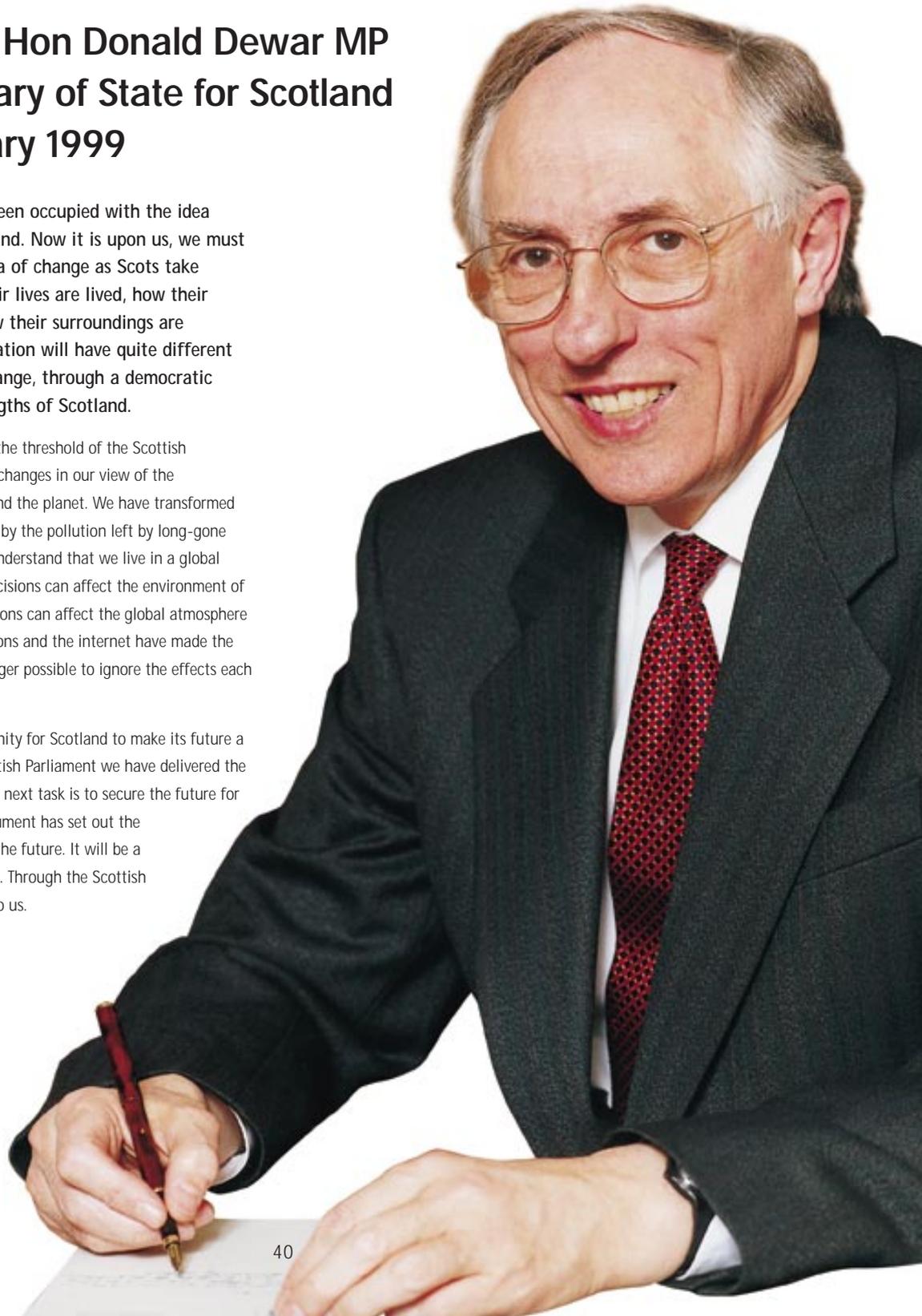
# Down to Us

**The Rt Hon Donald Dewar MP  
Secretary of State for Scotland  
February 1999**

A whole generation has been occupied with the idea of a Parliament for Scotland. Now it is upon us, we must now prepare for a new era of change as Scots take responsibility for how their lives are lived, how their communities develop, how their surroundings are managed. The next generation will have quite different opportunities to make change, through a democratic process built on the strengths of Scotland.

The period that brought us to the threshold of the Scottish Parliament also saw profound changes in our view of the relationship between people and the planet. We have transformed the areas which were blighted by the pollution left by long-gone industries. We have come to understand that we live in a global economy where our buying decisions can affect the environment of far-off countries and their actions can affect the global atmosphere we all share. Telecommunications and the internet have made the planet smaller. And it is no longer possible to ignore the effects each of us has on the future.

This is the moment of opportunity for Scotland to make its future a sustainable future. In the Scottish Parliament we have delivered the aspiration of a generation. Our next task is to secure the future for generations to come. This document has set out the beginnings of an approach to the future. It will be a task we cannot leave to others. Through the Scottish Parliament that task is down to us.



# Further Reading

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*Opportunities for Change* (1998) Department of the  
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*Travel Choices for Scotland* (1998) The Stationery Office  
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*Climate Change Scenarios for the United Kingdom* (1998)  
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*The UK Climate Change Programme Consultation Paper* (1998)  
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*Biodiversity in Scotland – The Way Forward* (1997)  
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*Access to the Countryside for Open-air Recreation -  
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*Sustainability Counts* (1998) Department of the  
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*Towards a Sustainable Scotland* (1997) Friends of the Earth  
Scotland

*The Greening Government Initiative The House of Commons  
Environmental Audit Committee, Second Report*  
HC517-1 The Stationery Office



## If You Want to Know More

Paper copies of this document have been sent to a wide range of interests across Scotland. Further copies can be obtained from:

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The whole text is available at [www.sustainable.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable.scotland.gov.uk)

### Comments

We would like to have your thoughts about Sustainable Scotland. Please send your comments to us at the above address; there is no closing date. You can also add your comments to the discussion group on the website and e-mail the Sustainable Development Team from there. News about sustainable development in Scotland appears regularly on the website. In addition we would be pleased to add your name to our mailing list for future publications. Contact the Sustainable Development Team at the address above.

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*The bicycle on page 20 was kindly supplied  
by the Edinburgh Bicycle Co-Operative Ltd.*



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

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