



Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Sustainable Development Action Plan 2007-2009

FOREWORD



It gives me great pleasure to present this, the first Sustainable Development Action Plan for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. It sets out how we will contribute to the commitments and objectives detailed within the UK Government Strategy for Sustainable Development, *Securing the Future*. The Action Plan demonstrates the contribution our organisation makes to the Strategy and the importance that we attach to the environment and to our social and economic footprint. As a government-funded body, it is important for the JNCC to embrace the principles of the Strategy and the emphasis it places on the public sector to be a leading exponent of sustainable development.

As a nature conservation organisation we aim to deliver our strategic objectives in a way that recognises the relationship between the environment and sustainable development. We also intend to look inwardly at embedding sustainable development principles within our operations.

Over the last year we have undertaken an environmental footprint analysis which identified key areas for improvement and indicators by which we will measure performance. Additionally, in 2006 the Peterborough office gained accreditation from the Peterborough Environment City Trust for the first phase in our environmental management systems work. This Action Plan sets out how we will build on these foundations.

I would like to thank the Sustainable Development Commission for their assistance and advice in developing this Action Plan and Defra's Sustainable Development Unit for their continued support.

I look forward to working with all at the JNCC, and our stakeholders, to take forward this plan and to ensure that we all work towards a more sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Adrian Darby". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Adrian Darby OBE
Chairman, JNCC

INTRODUCTION

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the statutory adviser to Government on UK and international nature conservation. Its work contributes to maintaining and enriching biological diversity, conserving geological features and sustaining natural systems.

The JNCC delivers the UK-wide and international responsibilities of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage. The functions that arise from these responsibilities are principally to:

- advise Government on the development and implementation of policies for, or affecting, nature conservation in the UK and internationally;
- provide advice and disseminate knowledge on nature conservation issues affecting the UK and internationally;
- establish common standards throughout the UK for nature conservation, including monitoring, research, and the analysis of results; and
- commission or support research which it deems relevant to these functions.

The JNCC, originally established under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, was reconstituted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Support is provided to the JNCC by a company limited by guarantee (JNCC Support Co) that the Committee established in April 2005.

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*¹, published in March 2005, made a commitment that all government departments and executive agencies would produce a Sustainable Development Action Plan. Defra have extended this commitment to its non-departmental public bodies, including the JNCC.

This plan details the key actions the JNCC will take to contribute to the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. In writing this plan we have followed the Sustainable Development Commission's guidance².

OUR VISION

The long-term aspirations of the JNCC and its member bodies are set out in our vision for wildlife and natural features³:

"... our countryside, towns and seas will be rich in wildlife and natural features, contributing to the economy and improving everyone's quality of life ..."

Our vision is founded on the adoption of an ecosystem-based approach as a means of achieving sustainable development. This approach accepts that humans are an integral component of the natural world, and seeks to integrate environmental protection with social progress and economic growth. The state of our environment is a key measure of our ability to achieve sustainable development.

¹ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm>

² *Sustainable Development Action Plans: Getting Started*. <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=254>

³ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/strategy.pdf>

The JNCC will contribute to the objectives and outcomes of the vision through all aspects of our work. In so doing, we will also contribute to the government's sustainable development goal as set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy:

“... to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations ...”

OUR STRATEGY

Our mission is to add value to the work of Government bodies and other organisations, so that across the UK and internationally the protection and enrichment of our wildlife and natural features is comprehensive, effective, knowledge-based and forward-looking. We aim to provide strategic advice that reflects the complex and dynamic nature of the natural world and its inherent links with people. In this way we will make a significant contribution to sustainable development, and in particular, to the priorities for sustainable development as set out in the strategy for the UK:

- sustainable consumption and production;
- climate change and energy;
- natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; and
- sustainable communities.

THE BUSINESS CASE / BENEFITS

As the statutory advisor to the Government on UK and international nature conservation, we aim to conduct our business and operations to reflect best environmental practice.

Businesses which have applied sustainable development principles have increased efficiency, raised quality and improved environmental performance. By embedding sustainable development principles throughout the JNCC, we hope to achieve efficiency savings and demonstrate to the Government, public and other stakeholders that we are actively seeking to improve our environmental, social and economic performance.

By working more efficiently and by buying, using and wasting less, there will be financial savings for the JNCC. We recognise that there will be instances where a sustainable solution may be more expensive but we are prepared to consider such alternatives. We believe we can achieve value-for-money while respecting the principles of sustainable development.

“value-for-money is not about achieving the lowest initial price: it is defined as the optimum combination of whole-life costs and quality”⁴

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

This Action Plan will facilitate risk management and ensure that the JNCC meets its legal obligations for environmental management and is compliant with environmental regulations.

⁴ [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Value_for_money_\(VFM\)_in_Procurement_-_The_Role_of_Auditors.pdf](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Value_for_money_(VFM)_in_Procurement_-_The_Role_of_Auditors.pdf)

The primary role of the JNCC is as an advisory body to Government. Its function is to provide objective science-based advice on nature conservation. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006⁵ specifically outlines the JNCC's remit in relation to sustainable development:

“... the JNCC and its conservation bodies must ... have regard to ... the desirability of contributing to sustainable development.”

Therefore, advice provided by JNCC must take account of social and economic factors while retaining its focus on nature conservation.

OUR COMMITMENTS

We are committed to the continuous improvement of our environmental performance, as part of our overall goal of implementing the principles of sustainable development in our priority areas. Our aim is to ensure that environmental objectives are integrated into relevant business objectives in a cost-effective manner, and that we follow the principles set out in the UK sustainable development strategy:

- live within environmental limits;
- ensure a strong, healthy and just society;
- achieve a sustainable economy;
- promote good governance; and
- use sound scientific information, findings and discoveries responsibly.

In working towards the objectives and goals outlined in our environmental management policy, we will implement an environmental management system appropriate to the location, scale and nature of our activities to demonstrate our commitment to the Government's UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

In March 2006, the JNCC Peterborough office received official accreditation from the Peterborough Environment City Trust for demonstrating a high degree of commitment to the environment by reducing our environmental impacts. The JNCC were presented the award in recognition of improved environmental performance over the previous three years.

Building on this achievement, we will follow the best practice guidance for environmental management systems with a view to implementing the internationally recognised standard BS8555⁶. This will identify and reduce our impacts on the environment, raise awareness of compliance and promote the JNCC as an organisation working towards best practice. The standard focuses on performance and continual improvement using a practical approach involving all staff and management. Implementation of BS8555 will support and strengthen relationships between the JNCC and suppliers and will contribute to the goals and objectives outlined in our sustainable procurement policy.

Through the implementation of this action plan, we aim to significantly reduce carbon emissions in support of central Government's commitment to become carbon-neutral on the office estate by 2012. Our initial aim will be to reduce, re-use and recycle in order to

⁵ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060016_en.pdf

⁶ <http://www.iema.net/acorn/bs8555>

decrease consumption and carbon emissions. However, we will investigate opportunities to mitigate any carbon that we cannot or have not reduced through offsetting.

By achieving the goals set out in our environmental policy, we will ensure that sustainable development is embedded in our organisation through our internal policies, operations and activities. We will also ensure that we pay appropriate regard to sustainable development in providing advice to Government and other organisations.

Specifically, we have identified six priority areas (**Table 1**) to focus our actions on for the next year after which the environmental management policy and sustainable development action plan will be reviewed.

Table 1. Priorities for 2007/08

Priorities	Operational responsibility
Travel. Publish a green travel plan that will provide staff with information regarding sustainable methods of transport for commuting. Reduce business travel and save carbon miles through increasing the use of video-conferencing facilities.	Environmental Management Project Manager
Waste. Monitor waste generation and reduce output through recycling programmes, including CDs, batteries, mobile phones and print cartridges.	Office Services Manager
Energy. Institute a range of measures to increase energy efficiency, reduce our carbon footprint and eliminate the use of non-renewable sources for electricity.	Office Services Manager Environmental Management Project Manager
Procurement. Produce a sustainable procurement policy that will ensure goods and services are procured in the context of sustainable development while ensuring value for money.	Finance Services Manager Business Manager
Environmental Awareness. Increase staff awareness regarding the impacts and sustainability issues associated with travel, waste, energy and procurement within the JNCC.	Environmental Management Project Manager
Policy Advice. Produce guidance for staff to ensure that all advice provided to Government and others has regard to the desirability of contributing to sustainable development.	Policy Advice Group

These priority areas are described in more detail in **Annex A**, which also shows how they are aligned with the Government's sustainable development priorities and principles.

Operations

We are committed to producing an annual sustainable development report that will comment on progress towards our key operational commitments as set out at **Annex A** and associated targets (**Annex B**). These targets will be benchmarked against the sustainable operations on the Government Estate's framework. We have identified objectives that will improve our environmental performance and contribute to sustainable development, and actions that will

enable us to reach our targets by 2010. The objectives that we have identified for the organisation are aligned with the Government's wider sustainable development priorities and principles.

People

Every member of staff has a responsibility to help deliver sustainable development, from the advice and services we provide to our work practices.

Using a range of media we will work to embed good environmental practice into our operational activities and achieve enhanced environmental performance within the JNCC. We will promote cultural change through the following actions:

- through training and development, ensure staff have the skills needed to implement the Action Plan;
- introduce awareness posters that highlight environmental issues and mitigating actions;
- present the Sustainable Development Action Plan to a staff open meeting, outlining our commitments and actions;
- make information regarding sustainability and the JNCC available on the intranet for staff to access;
- produce a regular update for staff regarding the progress of the JNCC in meeting the targets outlined in the Sustainable Development Action Plan;
- continue to encourage an active input to our Greening Group;
- encourage volunteering in the community;
- investigate appropriate training tools and carry out staff surveys to measure how effective our staff awareness programme is in raising sustainability awareness.

Policies

To meet our operational commitments, we will embed sustainable development considerations into the following policies:

- Home-working policy
- Procurement policy
- Travel policy

The JNCC are currently working towards foundation level (level 1) on the Flexible Framework which effectively forms the cornerstone of the Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan⁷. The actions required to meet level 1 will be incorporated into our sustainable procurement policy and we will work towards reaching level 3 over the next 3-4 years. This is consistent with recommendations by the Sustainable Procurement Task Force in order for Government to meet its goal of becoming a leader in sustainable procurement in the UK by 2009.

⁷ *Procuring the Future* <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/procurement-action-plan/documents/full-document.pdf>

Providing advice

All of the JNCC's core work contributes to the environmental strand of sustainable development. **Annex C** sets out the key activities in relation to the UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

In accordance with the NERC Act, the JNCC will ensure that advice provided to Government and other institutions has regard to the desirability of contributing to sustainable development. Our Policy Advice Group will provide guidance on fulfilling the requirements of the NERC Act. We will investigate methods to monitor and assess how effectively this guidance influences policy advice.

In addition, we will promote a greater understanding of the contribution that biological and geological diversity make to sustainable development by underpinning a healthy economy and society.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, REPORTING

The sponsor director, Director of Resources and External Affairs, is responsible for the overall delivery of this Action Plan, and accountability will lie with the Executive Management Board.

Using baseline data collected in our ecological footprinting analysis and results from a travel to work survey, the JNCC will monitor the progress of its operations against the performance indicators set out in **Annex B** and report these results in the 2007/08 annual sustainable development report. Certain aspects and targets of the action plan will be reviewed quarterly to ensure continual improvement of our environmental performance and to inform and guide policy and practice within the organisation.

We will continuously monitor environmental incidents, complaints and compliance with statutory requirements through following best practice guidelines.

Reporting on our commitments
We will report on our progress in a sustainable development report by April 2008
We will review the Sustainable Development Action Plan by April 2008

Annex A: JNCC operational commitments

Priority area	Objective	Actions	Government sustainable development priority	Sustainable development principles supported
Travel	Reduce carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a review regarding the feasibility of implementing a carbon offsetting programme • Monitor air miles with a view to setting targets in the next Action Plan 	Climate change and energy	Living within environmental limits
	Reduce business travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the use of video- and tele-conferencing and Skype • Promote travel policy 	Climate change and energy	Living within environmental limits
	Encourage the use of sustainable transport for commuting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a green travel plan • Undertake a study regarding the feasibility of installing shower facilities for staff 	Climate change and energy	Living within environmental limits
Waste	Reduce amount of landfill waste produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor waste generation and promote recycling programmes (re-usable batteries, composting, mobile phones, print cartridges, CDs) 	Sustainable consumption and production	Living within environmental limits
	Reduce the amount of paper bought and used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage electronic circulation and filing of documents and discourage unnecessary printing through staff awareness • Encourage tenders to be submitted electronically 	Sustainable consumption and production	Living within environmental limits

Priority area	Objective	Actions	Government sustainable development priority	Sustainable development principles supported
Energy	Increase energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit a gas optimiser • Review efficiency of IT equipment • Service boilers, heating and ventilation systems • Purchase energy-efficient equipment • Replace old PC monitors • Undertake regular in-office checks to monitor whether equipment is being switched off when not in use 	Climate change and energy	Living within environmental limits
	Eliminate use of non-renewable sources for electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract a company that can supply 100% electricity from renewable energy sources 	Climate change and energy	Living within environmental limits
Procurement	Reduce amount of unsustainable products purchased for goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a sustainable procurement policy specifying a preference for green products and suppliers • Work towards level 3 on the Flexible Framework which forms the cornerstone of the Government's Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan • Monitor the number of awarded contracts that have an environmental policy or environmental management scheme in place • Specify a requirement for a copy of suppliers' and contractors' environmental policies in the tender evaluation • Comply with mandatory Government standards for 	Sustainable consumption and production	Living within environmental limits Achieving a sustainable economy

Priority area	Objective	Actions	Government sustainable development priority	Sustainable development principles supported
		sustainable procurement (Quick Wins, Common Minimum Standards, Government's Timber Procurement Policy)		
	Promote local produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for a local farmers market to visit JNCC • Provide information and links to websites for buying local produce • Highlight the positive impacts of buying locally 	Sustainable consumption and production	Achieving a sustainable economy Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
Staff awareness	Increase staff awareness of sustainable development issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sustainable development training for staff 	All	Promoting good governance
General	Identify and manage the JNCC's environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards implementing an Environmental Management System to BS8555 standard by 2008. 	All	Living within environmental limits Promoting good governance

Annex B: JNCC key performance indicators

Priority area	Performance indicator	Performance target by 2010	Current performance
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of working days on which video-conferencing facilities are used • kg carbon dioxide saved through video-conferencing • Number of people working from home at least once a week • % staff commuting by car • % staff commuting in single occupancy vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use of video-conferencing by 20% • Increase total amount of carbon dioxide saved per year by 10% • Encourage an increase in the number of people working from home at least once a week • Reduce the number of people commuting by car by 10% • Reduce the single occupancy vehicle rate by 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video-conferencing is used on an average of 31% of working days • Total amount of carbon dioxide saved for the year 2005/06 is 17,640 kg • Number of people working at home at least once a week is 17 • Number of people commuting by car is 69% • Single occupancy vehicle rate is 46%
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kg waste disposed which is recovered or recycled • kg waste to landfill per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase amount of waste recycled by 5%* and reduce the amount to landfill by 5%. In addition, start recycling batteries, CDs and PCs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle 83% of overall waste (15,020 kg) • 17% of waste to landfill (3,106 kg)
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kWh gas consumption • % of non-renewable energy used • % carbon offset by programme / ratio of carbon emitted: offset • Number of old monitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce gas consumption by 5% • Eliminate electricity usage from non-renewable sources • Investigate carbon offset possibilities and set an appropriate target • Replace and recycle all old monitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas consumption is 47% of total direct energy (109,426 kWh) • Electricity from grid is 52% and electricity from renewables is 2% of total direct energy • There are 50 monitors that need replacing

Priority area	Performance indicator	Performance target by 2010	Current performance
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % contracts awarded to the best environmental option • % contracts which have an environmental policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain baseline data on the number of contracts awarded to the best environmental option and set an appropriate target for the future • Increase the number of contracts which have an environmental policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We currently have environmental policies from companies that supply us with the following contracts under office services: electricity, security, cleaning, washroom solutions and stationery • All paper bought is 100% recycled and, where possible, our furniture is purchased from suppliers using sustainable sources
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff attending sustainable development workshop • % of staff who have an informed idea of what sustainable development is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get 20% of staff trained in sustainable development • 75% of staff to have an informed idea of what sustainable development is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No staff training currently available

* Our ecological footprinting report informed us that we already recycle 99% of our glass, therefore we will aim to maintain this level.

Annex C. Core JNCC work in support of government sustainable development priorities

Government sustainable development priority	<i>Securing the Future</i> reference	JNCC programme	Key JNCC activities
Sustainable consumption and production	The vision and challenge (page 43)	UK's Global Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess UK influence on global biodiversity (e.g. through trade, development aid and tourism) and develop mechanisms to minimise or avoid negative impacts
Climate change and energy	Adaptation to climate change (page 92)	Environmental Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the development of climate change adaptation policies and strategies in the UK and internationally and, where appropriate, support their implementation
Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement	Developing the evidence base: the ecosystems approach (page 99)	Environmental Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice on application of the Ecosystem Approach, in particular showing how it can help non-environmental sectors meet their objectives Increase the use of environmental valuation of ecosystem goods and services as a tool for decision making
	Developing the evidence base: environmental limits (page 100)	Surveillance and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake surveillance of a broad range of species groups and habitat types across the UK Collate available information to provide regular assessments of the status of and trends in UK biological and geological diversity
	Integrating policy: protecting the global environment (page 102)	Global Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide scientific support to enable effective UK implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements Support the UK Government in meeting international obligations agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002
		Overseas Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice to support the implementation of Environment Charters and multilateral environmental agreements within the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies

Government sustainable development priority	<i>Securing the Future</i> reference	JNCC programme	Key JNCC activities
Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement	Integrating policy: European policy (page 105)	European Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate environmental concerns into other sectoral EU policies, such as maritime, agriculture, fisheries, transport and energy, as well as horizontal policies such as the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Lisbon Strategy
		Marine Management Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support implementation of an ecosystem-based approach within the EU Common Fisheries Policy
	Integrating policy: the national approach (page 106)	Policy-relevant Information and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information and advice to facilitate efficient implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and associated country biodiversity strategies
	Integrating policy: modernising delivery (page 109)	Marine Mapping and Area Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce marine landscape maps for UK seas and promote their use in policy and management contexts, for example, by contributing to marine spatial planning
Sustainable Communities	The global dimension: a fairer world (page 139)	UK's Global Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DFID to ensure that environmental issues are integrated into implementation of the Millennium Development Goals