

“green alliance... issue 5
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INSIDE TRACK

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“how to assess the potential risks and benefits of new technology ... will be preoccupying ... the progressive governance summit”

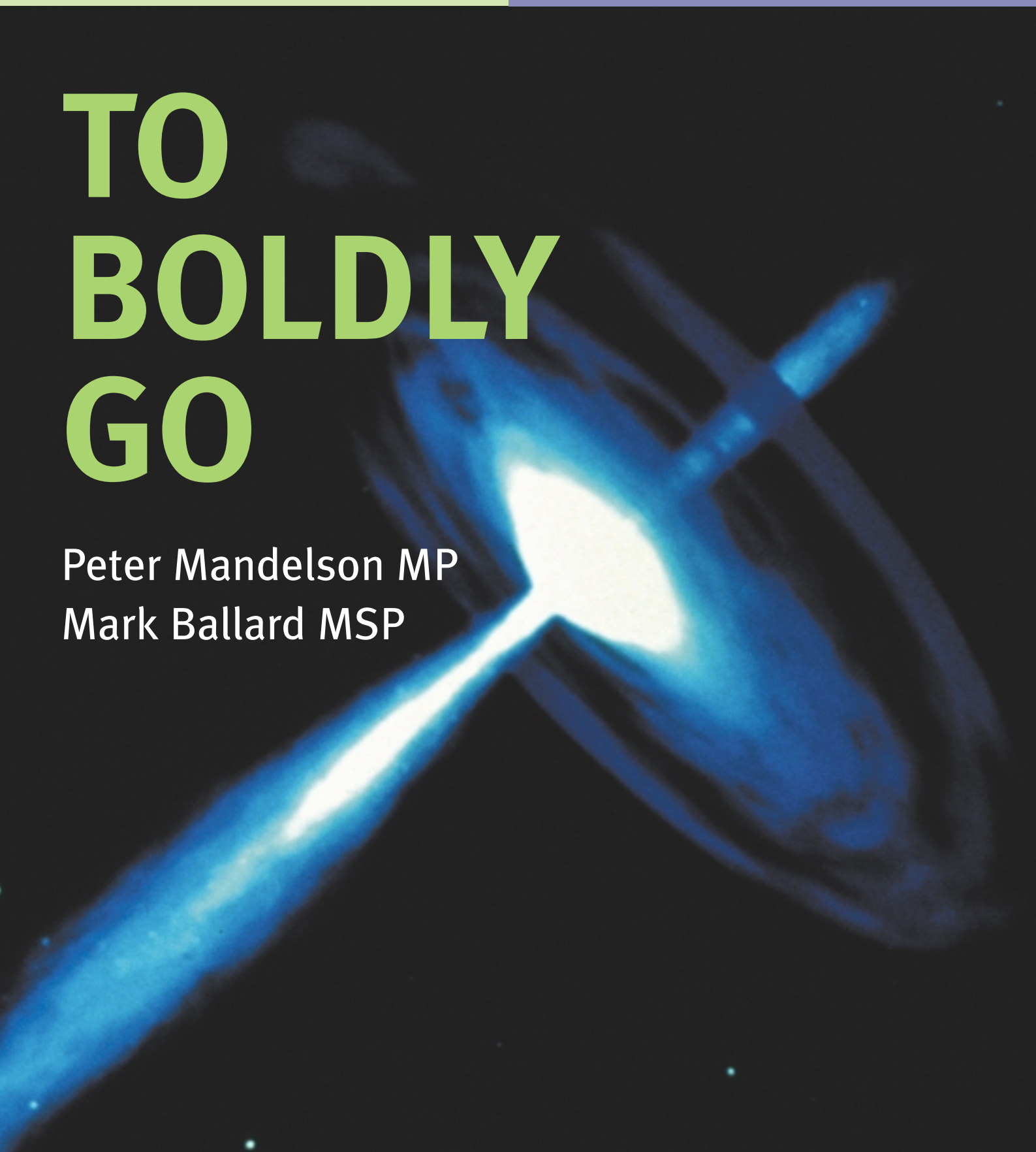
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TO BOLDLY GO

Peter Mandelson MP
Mark Ballard MSP



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The views of contributors are not necessarily those of Green Alliance.

comment



Rebecca Willis
Director

It is commonplace for environmental organisations like ours to call for bold policies, leadership and political bravery. But we rarely explain why we think bold is best. This is the theme of this edition of *Inside Track*. It's not just an excuse to quote Star Trek - we wanted to look at what change could happen if you decide, in the immortal words of Captain Kirk, "to boldly go where no man has gone before".

The congestion charge was certainly a bold move. It's hard to think back, now, to January this year when all were prophesying chaos, disaster and rebellion on the streets of London. Now, Ken is basking in the knowledge that his policy has reduced traffic levels within the zone by 16 per cent - figures that must make the DfT green with envy (if not actually green).

It's not just that things happen faster if we go for more radical solutions. It's also that bold policies promote step-change solutions, like new technologies, or new ways of doing things. Small, incremental policies mean that people instead make small, incremental changes – end-of-pipe solutions, not system innovation. Incremental policy may actually reduce the chances of reaching our end-goal, if they keep us wedded to the status quo.

So, in this edition, we look at what else we could do if we boldly go. Peter Mandelson, patron of the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, offers us a vision of a bold energy future – and points out that much needs to be done to turn White Paper aspirations into reality. Mark Ballard, a green member of the Scottish Parliament, criticises the Scottish Executive for their timidity – and paints a picture of how Scotland could lead the way. And opposite, Ben Shaw talks about one possible bold step forward for waste policy – making producers responsible for the environmental impacts of their products.

In a bold move closer to home, Green Alliance is, this year, hosting a web-based photography competition, in association with the London Photographic Agency. We hope that the theme of 'grass roots to green shoots' will inspire people not to search for solutions in outer space, but take inspiration from the environment around them. A lesson for Captain Kirk, perhaps?

return to sender

producer responsibility that works

Recent developments in UK waste policy have focused on getting to grips with household waste. However, the need to also develop a better set of policies to deal with business and industrial waste is acknowledged. For example, the Strategy Unit report ‘*Waste Not, Want Not*’ highlighted the need to achieve waste reduction through the policy tools such as producer responsibility. Green Alliance has been looking at the role that producer responsibility could play in delivering more ambitious waste and resource policy objectives.

Producer responsibility is a simple enough concept – if you make a product you should be responsible for the impacts it has during its life. It is normally associated with the idea of producers being made to take back their products at the end of their life for recycling, repair or disposal. However, the concept also extends to reducing the impacts of products throughout their lifecycle. This is important as for some products the in-life impacts will far exceed the production or disposal impacts and vice versa.

While the concept may be simple, turning it into practice is more problematic. For example, the packaging directive has been hailed by one commentator as “the most heavily lobbied dossier in the history of the European institutions”. To date, except for a few voluntary schemes, the UK’s experience of producer responsibility

has been driven by European legislation with directives on packaging, end of life vehicles and waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). These have got progressively more ambitious with the recent WEEE directive being the most rigorous implementation of the producer responsibility concept.

Yet Europe doesn’t have to be the only driver of new producer responsibility initiatives. Member states can develop their own schemes that tackle a whole range of products and materials. This was one of the findings of Green Alliance’s Creative Policy Packages for Waste project. Sweden, for example, has used producer responsibility as the basis of its municipal waste recycling strategy. The Netherlands, Switzerland and Flanders in Belgium also have schemes in place. The UK government is moving slowly towards adoption of more ambitious objectives on waste and resource policy with, for example, its current work to produce a sustainable consumption and production strategy and in its response to the Strategy Unit’s waste report. Implementing these objectives will require more radical application of a range of existing policy tools including producer responsibility.

Green Alliance’s work on producer responsibility has been looking at how this might be done. Some of the questions we have been addressing are:

- What are the objectives that should be set for new producer responsibility initiatives?
- What are the lessons to be learnt from existing types of schemes in Europe and how do these affect different actors in the production and consumption chain?
- What products or materials are suitable for new initiatives and how should they be complemented by other policy measures?

A scoping seminar was held at the end of March to discuss these issues and a background paper was produced that outlined existing producer responsibility schemes in Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Flanders. The write up of the seminar and background paper are available from Green Alliance’s website. The write up summarises the presentations and discussion that covered the principles and objectives of producer responsibility, the role and relationships between consumers and producers and practical issues of implementation. Green Alliance will be taking forward this work by revisiting these issues in more detail with the objective of developing a set of guidelines for the design and implementation of future producer responsibility initiatives.

For more information on this work please contact Ben Shaw bshaw@green-alliance.org.uk
To download the *Creative Policy Packages for Waste* report go to www.green-alliance.org.uk/Programme_CreativePolicyPackagesWaste.htm

from biotech to nanotech?

a progressive agenda for science and technology

Green Alliance's director **Rebecca Willis**, author of a paper on technology, risk and environment for the Progressive Governance Summit in July, asks whether nanotech will be the new GM – and how governments should be handling it

“Humanity, get down on your knees!” So screamed the billboards for Michael Crichton's latest novel *Prey*. Crichton, who did much to popularise concerns about biotechnology in *Jurassic Park*, has now turned his attention to a new generation of technologies. In *Prey*, he describes an experiment at the frontiers of nanoscience, which goes badly wrong, causing clouds of self-replicating nanobots to swarm out of control. And to Crichton, this is not just harmless science fiction – in interviews, he stresses his genuine concerns about the risks of nanotechnology. He is not alone. NGOs are beginning to wake up to the challenge – and in May, the Prince of Wales was reported to have

serious concerns about the new technology, sparking a fresh wave of media interest.

Nanotechnology should not be seen in isolation. It is just the latest of a series of technologies that have caused controversy – think nuclear power, GM crops and mobile phone masts. The problem is that we can't ignore the potential benefits of this sort of innovation. Nanotechnology is based on the ability to measure, manipulate and organise material on the nanoscale – 1 to 100 billionths of a metre, sparking a radically new approach to engineering and materials science. Potential breakthroughs include

a green bill of health: a new agenda for health and environment policy

Health is a key political issue, and there are some potentially strong connections to the environmental debate. It is widely accepted that a healthy environment is a prerequisite to healthy living, yet government policy to date has rather neglected these links.

Green Alliance's new project, A Green Bill of Health, will take the quality of

life agenda to the next stage, exploring the role of environmental protection in public health promotion. The project will consider how the opportunities provided by the new focus on public health can be harnessed to simultaneously achieve the goals of a better environment and a healthier population. The project will begin with a publication to be launched in the autumn with contributions from green

thinkers, community project leaders and public health experts.

Regular project updates will be posted on www.green-alliance.org.uk. In the meantime if you would like more details on the project or to contribute your insights, please contact Charlotte Marples cmarples@green-alliance.org.uk

medical applications like biocompatible materials that will change the way that we repair nerves and tissues; telecommunications advances such as sensors allowing ubiquitous monitoring; and pollution control at the nano-level. But concerns have already been voiced about the potential for self-replicating nano-machines to smother the world in 'grey goo'. Scientists have also expressed worries about the potentially carcinogenic effects of nanoparticles. And the battle-lines between supporter and opponents of this technology are already being drawn up.

This tricky issue – how to assess the potential risks and benefits of new technology, like nanotechnology or GM – will be preoccupying politicians from all over the world, when they descend on London in July for the Progressive Governance Summit, a meeting of centre-left leaders from as far afield as Brazil, Bulgaria and South Korea. Convened by Peter Mandelson, participants at the summit will 'rethink how the enduring values of social democracy can be applied in new circumstances'. Alongside more traditional centre-left preoccupations like the future of the welfare state, one of the summit's themes is how to steer technological progress in a more sustainable direction.

This debate couldn't be more relevant to the UK – we are, after all, in the middle of an official 'public debate' about GM crops. A brave initiative – but, arguably, ten years too late. In my paper for the Progressive Governance Summit, I argue that the debate about nanotech should start now. It is at an equivalent stage in R&D terms to biotechnology in the late 1970s. This means that we still have the opportunity to intervene and improve the social sensitivity of innovation processes at the design-stage – to avoid the mistakes that were made over GM and other technologies.

There are lots of practical steps that government could take to improve the way we handle new technologies. There is a need for new fora in which the scientists and companies involved in R&D can get together with citizens' groups and politicians, to debate the direction of the technology. Social engagement of this sort should be a requirement for all publicly-funded research, and a condition of regulatory approval. The recent announcement of a government-backed inquiry into the wider impacts of nanotech (being led by the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering) is an important and welcome first step, but this should mark the start rather than the end of the dialogue process.

But there's also a need to move this debate to the international level – given the current EU/US spat over GM, it's not a moment too soon. Could the Swedish proposal for an International Convention for Socio-economic and Environmental Evaluation of New Technologies be one solution? The Progressive Governance Summit may be the start of a more honest debate between governments about how we can learn from past mistakes, cope more readily with complexity and uncertainty, and harness the drivers of technological change for the common good.

For more information on the Progressive Governance Summit, and a copy of the paper, *From Bio to Nano and Beyond: A progressive agenda for technology, risk and the environment*, by Rebecca Willis and James Wilsdon, see www.progressive-governance.net

spending to save the environment

This Autumn, Ministers will be flexing their muscles in preparation for another spending review. Each department bargains with the Treasury for a slice of public expenditure, in return promising to achieve specific aims, set out in public service agreements.

Of course, the real money goes on education and health spending. Protecting and improving the environment does not require the huge injections of public cash that go into schools or hospitals. Yet we shouldn't

overlook the power of green spending. The availability of more modest levels of government funding can make or break key environmental aims like waste recycling, energy efficiency or landscape management. And some spending – on unnecessary roads, or nuclear power – can be positively harmful.

This is why Green Alliance, together with other green groups, will be working with the Treasury and other government departments, to make

the case for green spending. We will commission research, to estimate the funding required to meet a range of environmental targets, and we will use the findings to persuade government that if you see green, you should spend green.

Watch out for updates on this work in future editions of *Inside Track* or on www.green-alliance.org.uk For further details, contact Rebecca Willis rwillis@green-alliance.org.uk

energy entrepreneurs

In the Energy White Paper's vision for 'the energy system in 2020' we find an ambition that goes to the heart of a sustainable energy future:

"New homes will be designed to need very little energy and will perhaps even achieve zero carbon emissions ... There will be much more micro-generation, for example from CHP plant, fuel cells in buildings, or photovoltaics ..."

It's always good to have some vision. But for those working closer to the ground - the entrepreneurs, planners and developers struggling to implement micro-renewable energy projects – it is a tantalising vision. They need the supportive policy measures that would make their projects viable, and put micro-power at the heart of achieving mainstream energy demand reduction.

So what have we got to work with so far? The White Paper did announce that the next revision of Part L of the Building Regulations, relating to energy use in buildings, will be brought forward to 2005. Micro-renewables should be promoted by more stringent requirements for developers to reduce energy demand from new properties.

The planning system could give the same results. Regional and local authorities are starting to develop renewable energy targets and strategies to play their part in carbon reduction across the UK. The Mayor of London has announced in his draft energy strategy that he will ask new developments to generate a proportion of their energy needs from renewable sources on-site.

The London Borough of Merton is requiring developers to generate at least ten per cent of the energy needs of all new factories and offices bigger than 1,000 square metres on-site, meaning the inclusion of solar water heaters, photovoltaic panels and other micro-renewable generation.

But the legal status of such positive interventions is uncertain. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has not yet made clear its position on 'positive planning': using the planning system to promote goals owned by other departments, such as energy policy.

However the Energy White Paper did announce that:
"ODPM will be examining how to bring consideration of the use of renewables and energy efficiency in developments more within the scope of the planning system, in the context of the review of PPG22 and the Government's wider planning reforms and in a way that does not impose undue burdens on developers."

The wider positive planning agenda needs to be prioritised alongside the new planning guidance for renewables, PPS22, due out for consultation in late summer.

Of course new build, although potentially significant in driving micro-power markets, only represents a fraction of housing stock – for the existing 99 per cent there must be incentives to retrofit. This is where energy services could be crucial. Through energy service contracts or 'ESCOs' suppliers can reduce a customer's demand on the grid for

the same price as they currently sell them more gas or electricity. ESCOs would promote micro-renewable technologies alongside efficiency measures as ways of achieving desired warmth and utility with less energy. If customers could pay for such measures gradually through their bills then the cost would be simultaneously offset by the energy savings. There are currently policy and organisational barriers to these contracts which must be urgently addressed if energy demand reduction is to fulfil its acknowledged potential as the most cost-effective route to cutting carbon.

Energy services and positive planning are two agendas that Green Alliance will be working on with representatives from across the micro-renewables sector and other stakeholders to ensure that opportunities to move towards the Government's 2020 vision for micro-generation are not neglected.

Energy Entrepreneurs is a new Green Alliance project, in association with The Ashden Trust, which will seek to promote a shared voice on key policy challenges across the micro-renewables sector. For more details, contact Joanna Collins at jcollins@green-alliance.org.uk or visit www.green-alliance.org.uk/Programmes_EnergyEntrepreneurs.htm

must try harder: why the fight for a sustainable Europe is not over yet

Last month the Convention on the Future of Europe finally hit the headlines. Giscard's Convention had a grand name and grander ambitions. But did the draft Constitution presented in June live up to expectations? For environmentalists the first reaction to the draft Constitution presented by the Convention was a relief, but as ever the devil is in the detail.

You could be forgiven for not making any connections between the Convention and the environment at all. However whilst the tricky discussions on institutional reform occupied Convention members and dominated the press, the environment was under threat. The first draft of the Constitution presented in October had significantly weakened commitments to sustainable development and environmental protection enshrined in the current Treaty, a move which threatened years of progress on environmental policy.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the NGOs and supportive Convention members these commitments were

reinstated. The status quo was maintained. It is a measure of how dismal the process has been that we must consider this a success.

We cannot afford to rest on our green laurels. The Convention is only a recommendation to Council and will be debated, amended and adopted at the Inter Governmental Conference (IGC) in October.

The specific policy areas remain largely untouched. This is a major flaw as it risks outdated policies, such as transport, agriculture and economic and social cohesion, being adopted into the new Constitution without reflection and revision. In short this means that unless substantially reviewed and modernised, these policies will be inconsistent with the overall messages on sustainable development maintained in the first part of the Constitution.

In response to overwhelming pleas from civil society, the Convention has received a brief extension to continue

work on these specific policies, but time will tell whether the Convention has the will to address these issues properly.

So we can't quite uncross our fingers yet. Only when the Constitution is presented in its final draft format to the IGC will we be able to judge how successful we have been. What is clear is that the Convention is the best chance we have to set out a vision for an enlarged Europe. Unless we can truly put sustainable development at the heart of Europe, Giscard's grand project will miss the opportunity to meet the challenges the Union faces in the next half century. Its citizens deserve better.

For details of Green Alliance's work on Europe please contact Charlotte Marples. *Breaking With Convention: Towards a new European future* is available to download from www.green-alliance.org.uk

grass roots to green shoots

How many words does it take an environmentalist to describe sustainable development? And that's if the person you are talking to hasn't switched off after the first twenty.

Being able to visualise what sustainable development looks like is key in determining the pathway and policies that will lead us there.

For the next four months, Green Alliance in conjunction with London Photographic Awards, is asking photographers to cast their eyes over the places where they live or work and to identify images that demonstrate that sustainable development is now. Grass Roots to Green Shoots challenges photographers to demonstrate to our leaders that politics is literally about the air that we breathe, the food that we eat and the places we live.

The collection of images will be an inspiration to decision-makers by helping them visualise a greener, fairer society for all.

To enter the competition or to vote on-line for your favourite image please go to www.lpa-environmental.com For further information contact Sarah Flood sflood@green-alliance.org.uk

the Energy White Paper –

Peter Mandelson MP sets out what must happen to deliver the Energy White Paper's vision of the future

a step change in policy delivery?



After two years of debate, review and consultation the Government's Energy White Paper placed emission reduction at the heart of UK energy policy for the first time. There is no doubt that the White Paper is ground-breaking in its vision of the future, the question is whether the same thinking will be applied to its implementation?

The UK's existing climate change programme was published in 2000. It contained a range of measures aimed at meeting our Kyoto commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent by 2008-2012. So far the UK is on track to meet this and the policies have been broadly successful. The climate change programme was also aimed at meeting the Government's commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions by a fifth by 2010. However, unlike the Kyoto promises, it is less clear that the current package of measures will be enough.

The White Paper builds on and significantly expands the current targets towards a 60 per cent cut in carbon emissions by 2050, with significant progress expected by 2020. It outlines the policies and measures that will be needed to reach these targets and suggests an expansion of many

existing measures. However, given the uncertainty in the ability of the existing policies and measures to reach the current targets, their ability to achieve the even greater reductions required is by no means assured.

Instead, if the UK is really determined to fulfil the White Paper's vision of reduced emissions then small incremental changes will not be enough. Rather we require a radical shift in energy policy alongside new thinking determined to bring about a long-term shift to a low carbon economy.

Let's look at the area of improving energy efficiency which the White Paper identifies as the key to delivering long-term emission reductions. In stark

“Delivering energy efficiency improvements is ... crucial to the whole strategy of the White Paper.”

terms energy efficiency has the potential to cut 15 million tonnes of carbon – substantially more than the level of savings to be achieved under the current Climate Change Programme. This is important in

itself, but the White Paper's supporting analysis also indicates that without the dramatic increase in energy efficiency then it would be harder and more expensive to meet our targets. Delivering energy efficiency

“we require a radical shift in energy policy alongside new thinking ... to bring about a long-term shift to a low carbon economy”

improvements is therefore crucial to the whole strategy of the White Paper.

There are currently a number of measures aimed at delivering energy efficiency improvement as part of the UK's Climate Change Programme. These include fiscal incentives such as the Climate Change Levy, building regulations and an Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) in the domestic sector. The White Paper indicates that the additional savings possible from energy efficiency could be made by expanding a number of these programmes. Therefore, it proposes doubling the EEC in the domestic sector, the introduction of an EEC in the business sector, and further revisions of the Building Regulations by 2005.

However, simply expanding existing programmes may not be enough to achieve the White Paper's emission reduction targets which is why new thinking is required. Perhaps what we should start talking about is reducing actual demand as well as energy efficiency. This will not only make emission reductions easier to achieve but will also benefit our trade balance and give us greater security in energy supply by reducing our reliance on imports.

At the same time investing in energy efficiency needs to become more commercially attractive for industry. As the current mechanism for

delivering energy efficiency investment in the domestic sector, the EEC is seen as an obligation that costs money to deliver and something companies look to meet with the minimum amount of effort. Contrast this to views on the Renewables Obligation (RO). Suppliers like the RO mechanism because it has a clear end point; allows flexibility in how the target is met; and it provides a mechanism to get a substantial return on investments which can be further exploited. Companies are therefore investing considerable sums of money into the development of renewables. I'm not saying that the EEC needs an identical mechanism but if we can find a way to make investing in renewables attractive, then with some new thinking we can do it to generate greater energy efficiency.

There are further ways we can help reduce demand. As consumers we all need to become more aware of the impact of our energy use. Implementing easy and straight forward methods to reduce consumption involves raising awareness as well as fiscal measures to provide users with a financial incentive to consume energy in a different way and invest in more efficient appliances.

Running through both the issues of energy efficiency and reducing our consumption is the issue of introducing emissions trading. The White Paper highlights this as central to the future of energy policy and points to the need

to find ways of integrating existing policy measures with the emerging market in carbon trading. Decisions made on increasing energy efficiency must ensure that our policy solutions are compatible with emissions trading, and it is important that there is now a specific commitment to look at how the EEC can dovetail with the emissions trading scheme.

Getting energy efficiency policy right is going to be crucial for both our current and future generations. Many different parts still need to be brought together into a coherent and integrated package that delivers substantial emission reductions, gives industry the necessary framework to make investments in energy efficiency, and incentivises consumers to take a more active role in reducing their own energy use.

It is certainly going to be a challenge but I hope the White Paper signifies not only a step-change for the development of sustainable technologies but also how we go about developing energy policy and, along with the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, I look forward to playing my part.

Peter Mandelson MP is patron of the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy. For further details see www.bcse.org.uk

more green power for Scotland



May 2003 saw the election of six more Greens to the Scottish Parliament. **Mark Ballard MSP**, the Greens' spokesperson on parliamentary business, was one of them. Here, he assesses the potential power of this new force in Scottish politics

DEVOLUTION, we were promised, would bring new politics to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There would be space for bold and creative policymaking.

Unfortunately, the first term of the Scottish Parliament was a disappointment to many people. Jack McConnell declared, on his election as Scotland's third First Minister, that "it is time for this executive to do less, better", which was typical of Scottish Labour's desire for a very safe and conservative programme of work for the first session of the new Scottish Parliament.

One of the chief innovations of the Scottish Parliament (and of the Welsh Assembly) was the use of proportional representation. This means that smaller parties and independents have more of a chance to be elected. In 1999 this led to the election of Robin Harper as the UK's first Green Parliamentarian. Robin quickly gained a reputation as 'the green conscience of the parliament', and, at the election in May of this year, the Greens achieved a huge breakthrough, with six new Green MSPs elected to join him.

Environmental issues were much more prominent in the second Scottish Parliament election campaign than in the first, largely due to a perceived

threat from the Greens. According to Friends of the Earth Scotland, all the parties' 2003 manifestos (apart from the Tories') showed substantial improvements in their environmental commitments compared with the 1999 election. The Scottish Greens' manifesto remained out in front, but the Liberal Democrats doubled their rating from a poor four out of ten in 1999 to a much better eight out of ten in 2003.

The coalition agreement between Labour and the Liberals after the election reflected this higher prominence for environmental issues. Environmental policies in the coalition document *Partnership for a better Scotland* were marked with a tree symbol (though this might have been, as Green MSP Eleanor Scott said, to help those members of the coalition who didn't know what an environmental policy looked like).

Several of these policies were bold initiatives and welcomed by the Scottish Greens, including:

- a target for 40 per cent of Scottish electricity generation to be from renewable sources by 2020;
- four new railway lines in the Borders, Fife, Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire, and a tram system for Edinburgh;

- a reduction of 30 per cent in the number of households living in fuel poverty by 2006;
- targets for local authorities to recycle 25 per cent of their waste by 2006 and 55 per cent by 2020 through increasing use of doorstep collection and through provision of recycling facilities in every community.

But between all the ‘green trees’ in the partnership agreement, there were other commitments that were not so environmentally sound. For example, the new Liberal Democrat transport minister will be working to:

- complete the central Scotland motorway network, including the M74 in Glasgow (which is costing much more, but receiving less media attention than the Scottish Parliament building);
- extend direct air routes to Scotland through the £6m Air Route Development Fund;
- complete the Aberdeen western peripheral road.

These are all projects that the Greens will continue to oppose. The Greens were also very disappointed that the executive chose to abolish the powerful transport and environment committee, splitting its work between the rural development committee and the local government committee. Mr McConnell had spoken a great deal about environmental justice, a cause championed by Friends of the Earth Scotland, but despite a mention in the preamble to the document, there is a concern that it has not been put at the heart of the new Scottish Executive’s agenda as he promised.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal for environmentalists to take heart at in the partnership agreements. Scotland has historically lagged behind in environmental policy, so the new focus on environmental issues is very important. The concept of environmental justice – which links

environmental issues with poverty, pointing out that it is Scotland’s poorest communities who often face the most serious problems from pollution, congestion, opencast mining and so on – has the potential to transcend the traditional policy priorities of Scottish government. Sustainable development has very much played second fiddle to social inclusion as an overarching philosophy – many hope that Jack McConnell’s interest in environmental justice may allow these priorities to be reconciled.

However, actually achieving the targets set by the Scottish Executive is the immediate

challenge. Unfortunately, the record of the Government achieving environmental targets in Scotland is not good. For example, in 1991, the Government set a target for the UK to recycle 25 per cent of household waste by 2000. Scotland only managed 6.9 per cent. The task of the Greens in the new Scottish Parliament is to make sure that the Scottish Executive exceeds the targets set, making sure that promises are matched by political will and financial support.

No-one should underestimate the difficulty of the task – to increase the proportion of renewable energy from about 10 per cent to 40 per cent in 16 years will require a transformation of the energy market and energy supply industry in Scotland. Not least is the need for a huge increase in the extent and capacity of the national grid to reach those areas which are rich in renewable resources.

But these are the kind of targets that we need to seize the potential for economic development and reduce CO₂ emissions. There are many battles along the way – the Scottish Executive still considers energy from waste

incineration ‘renewable’, for example, but at least the policies are heading in the right direction. So the bold policy promises must be matched with bold implementation.

One of the main criticisms of proportional representation is that it will lead to government by lowest common denominator – leaving no

room for bold policy development. Much of the hope invested in the Scottish Parliament was that it would break the logjam of politics and allow creative policy development. So far, it appears that PR has led to a stronger voice for those who recognise the

importance of environmental issues in Scottish politics.

The Scottish Green Party, as a new party in the parliament, will seek to transcend the tribalism that has historically bedevilled British policies – we will support the executive when it proposes good policies, oppose it when it puts forward bad ones. But the really bold policy step for Scotland will be to see the current promises turned into achievements.

Mark Ballard MSP represents Lothians region. For further information on the Scottish Green Party please visit www.scottishgreens.org.uk

“The task of the Greens in the new Scottish Parliament is to make sure that the Scottish Executive exceeds the environmental targets set”

Green Alliance is an independent charity. Its mission is **to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the environment is at the heart of decision-making**. It works with senior people in government, business and the environmental movement to encourage new ideas, dialogue and constructive solutions.

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members' news

New staff

Paula Hollings joined Green Alliance as the new office manager/PA to the director in May. Paula worked previously at the Contemporary Arts Society. Complementing her work here she also teaches Alexander Technique two days a week.

New members

Green Alliance welcomes the following new individual members:

Susanne Baker
Stella Bland
Julie Cator
Paul Chambers
Barbara Herridge
Katherine Isbester
Marie Rajaonavah
Nona Schulte-Roemer

Our new record collection

Over the past few months Green Alliance has been developing a new contacts management database. The new database will enable us to manage membership information more efficiently and will help us

to improve our communications generally.

We are currently transferring data to the new system and are hoping for minimum teething problems. Please bear with us through this process. If you have changed any of your details recently, please send up-to-date contact information to cpamplin@green-alliance.org.uk. Thank you for your patience.

Summer reception

Green Alliance's ever-popular summer reception was, this year, combined with a major speech by Patricia Hewitt, secretary of state for trade and industry, at the Royal Society on July 14. Our members and supporters heard Patricia Hewitt set out the DTI's plans on climate change and sustainable production, followed by a lively panel discussion. Afterwards, the debate continued informally, over drinks and music. Many thanks to ERM, our co-hosts for the event. Patricia Hewitt's speech is available from www.green-alliance.org.uk

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