



Sustainable Development News from the MEBC

Midlands Environmental Business Company, the proprietor of the Midlands Environmental Business Club formed in 1991, is a not-for-profit initiative managed by regional businesses and regional government offices and agencies to promote the values of sustainable development to the region's business community.

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1. Addition to the Board

We are delighted to welcome Janet Bailey as an additional Director of MEBC. Well known across the region, Janet is Chairman of AWM's Cluster Opportunities Group for the development of the environmental technologies sector in the West Midlands; is Chairman of Staffordshire Business and Environment Network (SBEN); used to work for Wardell Armstrong but now is part of Orion Management which she runs with husband Les; now looks after the business networking for Faber Maunsell, and is well known in the business community of the Region as being one of the most effective "networkers".

2. Our response to the RES

Members can see the MEBC's response to AWM's Regional Economic Strategy via the MEBC's own web site. This follows a Think Tank hosted by Faber Maunsell in Birmingham.

3. Changes to web site

We are pleased to announce that Katie Hoare of EBC has taken over the management of the MEBC's own web site. An official "re-launch" is planned for next month.

4. Dinner date – December 5th

Plans are still evolving for the annual dinner at the Birmingham Council House Banqueting Suite. Labelled a "Business Success Dinner", this event has grown and grown and is now in its fourth year. Date is December 5th. More details to be announced shortly. Tables can be reserved via jenniem@ebc-info.co.uk

5. Audit of progress on renewable technology – October 18

The "Renewables Technology Audit 07" to be staged at Millennium Point on October 18 is a business led appraisal of progress in developing solutions to energy, heat and water challenges.

With climate change, global warming, growing populations, fast expanding new super-economies and escalating demands for energy, power and water, there has never been greater need for us to find new ways of running our lives. The investment needed to meet these challenges is enormous. The demands on business to deliver are growing.

But how are we doing? Away from the rhetoric and spin, what is the reality of delivery in the UK? How are we progressing? Are solutions finding their way to market? What barriers stand in the way of progress?

This business led audit seeks to provide a national UK reality check.

6. Bit of sad news

We were delighted to hear from Tom Elliott – he of Black Country Spine Road fame of old and who knew more about on-site land clean up before most people had even heard of the term. Tom has been retired for some time. He phoned with the sad news that MEBC member, John Butson had died suddenly whilst in Cyprus. This will come as a shock to everyone who knew this deeply committed sustainable development man and expert on overseas markets and who ran his own consultancy – Enviro-Markets International.

7. Call for papers from CIWM



a world of difference

9 - 13 JUNE, PAIGNTON, UK

incorporating The 6th International Symposium on Waste Treatment Technologies

CIWM is offering the opportunity to participate in the CIWM 2008 Conference and the Symposium on Waste Treatment Technologies.

Abstracts for sessions are invited from the following subject areas:

- Climate change: challenging creative thinking for a resource and waste industry solution
- Creative management: gaining the trust of the people
- A different way to pay? Finance and investment: risk versus rewards
- Waste strategies: realistic, practical and speedy
- Global recycling and its markets
- People make a difference and make it happen
- New technologies: flexible, financial and viable?
- Trial and error: waste management techniques
- Waste regulation: the heart of the industry
- Local environment: collection and cleansing
- Waste treatment technologies and emission control

Interested in presenting a paper? Please submit the following:

- A Biographical Sketch, not exceeding 200 words, including past presentational experience.

An abstract of 500 words or less, identifying the session in which you wish to present. You should include the title of the presentation and the presenter's name, title, affiliation, address, email, phone and fax numbers. Presentations must be original and one presenter per paper is preferred, unless agreed by CIWM in advance.

For further details visit www.ciwmshow.com

Abstracts are due by 15 September 2007 and should be sent to:

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8. Links to Task Force

MEBC hopes to stage Workshop activity to explore the pertinence to the Midlands of the reports from the Business Task Force on Sustainable Consumption and Production on "Distributed Energy" and on "Mobility".

9. News from Carbon Trust

The Carbon Trust has awarded more than £1 million of funding to seven pioneering technologies at the cutting-edge of the UK's carbon reduction innovation work. The financial support will speed the technologies' development through to commercial reality and accelerate the UK's move to a low carbon economy.

Projects including a new generation of LEDs, energy efficient kilns and steam trap performance sensors have all received financial backing from the Carbon Trust's Applied Research scheme. Over the past four years the Carbon Trust has invested more than £17 million in projects that have demonstrated their potential to develop into viable commercial technologies that could reduce UK carbon emissions.

The seven projects to receive funding from the Carbon Trust are:

Aluminium smelting technology with the potential to reduce energy consumption by up to 20% - Coventry University

Technology to explode paint into moulds, eliminating the need for paint shops in the manufacture of plastic components – Warwick Manufacturing Group

Energy efficient kilns, which could reduce the energy used in the manufacture of ceramics – Horizon Ceramics

Natural ventilation systems for large buildings with the potential of halving the energy used by conventional mechanically ventilated buildings – e-stack Ltd.

Testing of new fully automated biomass combined heat and power unit – Biomass CHP Ltd.

Steam trap performance sensors with the potential for reducing carbon emissions by more than 750,000 tonnes over ten years – Spirax Sarco Ltd.

New generation of ultra bright LEDs with improved life expectancy and massive carbon savings over traditional lighting – GlowLed Ltd.

Garry Staunton, Head of Low Carbon Research at the Carbon Trust, said:

"The diverse nature of these technologies clearly demonstrates the exciting low carbon innovation work taking place in the UK today. These technologies have the potential to make significant carbon savings and to be commercially very successful."

"The Carbon Trust's Applied Research scheme aims to speed promising low carbon technologies towards commercial reality and large scale deployment. These technologies will play a vital part in moving the UK towards a low carbon economy. The application process is rigorous so successful projects are to be congratulated on securing support from the Carbon Trust."

The Applied Research scheme requires that each project pass a thorough application process and must secure additional funding from alternative sources. A new call for proposals is now open until 17th August 2007 at 5pm. Applications can be made online at www.carbontrust.co.uk.

10. News from Audit Commission – Climate Change Bill

The Environmental Audit Committee of the House of Commons thinks the draft Climate Change Bill will strengthen climate change policy – but tough decisions still required

The draft Climate Change Bill shows the Government is learning some lessons from the failure to meet its 2010 carbon dioxide reduction targets, the Environmental Audit Select Committee concludes in a report out today.

However, in its report *Beyond Stern: From the Climate Change Programme Review to the Draft Climate Change Bill*, the Committee warns that very significant issues remain:

- The UK's targets for 2020 and 2050 must be significantly toughened
- The proposed Committee on Climate Change must be given a stronger role, including a duty to audit the Government's emissions figures
- International aviation and shipping emissions must be included within the UK's targets
- Use of international carbon credits should be strictly limited and transparently reported; and
- Government must focus more on the total amount of carbon emissions the UK can "safely" emit over the next forty years, rather than on simply hitting annual emissions targets in individual target years.

The Chairman of EAC, Tim Yeo MP, said: "This report reveals a number of weaknesses in the Government's climate change policy. Carbon-saving measures have not delivered as much as predicted, and forecasts of future emissions have consistently drifted upwards. To make things worse, these forecasts have not been updated often enough, which means that by the time Ministers knew the UK's 2010 CO₂ target was significantly off-track it was too late to do much about it.

"The draft Climate Change Bill shows the Government has been learning from its mistakes. Enshrining carbon targets for 2020 and 2050 in law, with a series of five-year carbon budgets beginning in 2008, should help to focus on delivering emissions cuts in the short, medium, and long term. Rigorous annual reports to Parliament should ensure that the Government is quicker to respond when progress starts to slip. Most importantly, the creation of an independent Committee on Climate Change should provide expert scrutiny, and help to depoliticise the consideration of potentially controversial measures.

"But four enormously significant issues remain. The 2020 and 2050 targets need to be significantly strengthened, in accordance with the latest science of where we need to be to limit global warming to 2°C. Our share of international aviation and shipping emissions can and should be included in the UK's targets immediately. And the use of international carbon credits must be limited and transparently reported – and not be used as an excuse for inaction at home. Finally, alongside the proper continuing focus on cutting annual emissions, far more attention must be paid to the rise in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere."

[In more detail](#)

This report draws on two specially commissioned studies by the National Audit Office. It looks at the lessons to be learned from efforts to meet the UK's domestic target of reducing CO₂ by 20% by 2010 (which looks set to be missed by a significant margin), and asks whether the recent draft Climate Change Bill will help to put things right for the future. It finds that:

Emissions forecasting

- In 2000 the Government projected that UK CO₂ would be down by 19% by 2010 – but by July 2006 this had been revised to just an 8.7% reduction. With the addition of new measures, including Phase II of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (which will include the purchase of foreign credits), this forecast was increased again, but only to a 16.2% reduction.
- The Government should perform much more frequent revisions to emissions forecasts. It should also consider a wider range of assumptions and scenarios and make its forecasting models publicly available.

Use of cost-effectiveness analysis to choose between climate change policies

- The 2004-06 Climate Change Programme Review used cost-effectiveness analysis to help to decide which carbon reduction policies to implement. As the NAO found, many of the technical aspects of this process were done well. But because the Review was focused on meeting the short term target of 2010, it did not consider policies which would have a bigger but longer term impact.
- In the future, there should also be more public scrutiny of the assumptions which lie behind cost-effectiveness figures, and which result in intangibles such as “The benefit society received from increased use of in-car appliances such as air conditioning” being given the monetary value of £170 million.

Need for joined-up government

- The 2006 Climate Change Programme Review successfully involved the joined-up work of officials from several different departments and external bodies. But one major failure was the exclusion of fiscal policy, which remained the preserve of the Treasury. In the future, there must be an integrated approach to climate change policy-making, which considers the use of taxes and incentives alongside other measures.

Draft Climate Change Bill

Targets

- The Government’s policy towards the UK’s 2050 target is clearly incoherent. The Government remains committed to limiting global warming to a rise of 2°C; but it also acknowledges that, according to recent scientific research, a cut in UK emissions of 60% by 2050 is now very unlikely to be consistent with delivering this goal. This target should be strengthened to reflect current scientific understanding of the emission cuts required for a strong probability at stabilising warming at 2°C.
- The 2020 target should be amended to read “at least 32%”, rather than “26-32%”.

International aviation and shipping

- CO₂ from international flights from the UK have grown from 15.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (MtCO₂) in 1990 to 35MtCO₂ in 2005, an increase of 123%.
- Emissions from international aviation and shipping are excluded from the UK’s targets in the draft Climate Change Bill. They should be included immediately. If not, the Government should publish forecasts which clearly indicate what the progress towards meeting national carbon targets would be, once international aviation and shipping were included.

Emissions trading

- The Government must ensure that carbon credits are not used to forestall the early transition in the UK to low carbon infrastructure. The Government ought to adopt a code of practice for reporting UK emissions, ensuring this clearly distinguish between reductions achieved within the UK and reductions funded by the UK but taking place abroad.

Committee on Climate Change

- As well as making detailed policy recommendations, the Committee should be given a duty to audit the Government’s publication of emissions statistics to ensure these are transparent. It should also have a duty to comment on the modelling used to forecast future emissions and estimate the impact of individual policies.

· New appointees to the Committee should be required to appear before the Environmental Audit Committee, to provide assurance to Parliament as to their suitability, and to highlight their thinking on tackling climate change.

11. News from Audit Commission – Carbon Offset Market

Encouragement and assistance should be given to individuals, organisations and companies to offset because it can play a part in mitigating CO2 emissions levels over the short term, the Environmental Audit Select Committee has concluded.

In its report into The Voluntary Carbon Offset Market published today the Committee recognises that elements of the carbon offsetting market are less than robust but says it is unfortunate that offsets as a whole currently risk being tainted by a few failed projects. The Committee is also disappointed by what it calls “the diverse and generally unsatisfactory attitude” of the airline industry towards offsetting. For example, British Airways’ initiative in this area has been risible, it says.

Key points from the Report on the Voluntary Carbon Offset Market by the Environmental Audit Committee include:

- Carbon offsets have a role to play in cutting carbon emissions and raising awareness of climate change (para 23)
- encouraging offsets must not inhibit increased efforts to cut emissions (para 28)
- Research is needed to find out if buying offsets makes people more or less determined to cut their own carbon footprint (para 28)
- Airlines must make it easier for passengers to buy offsets (para 121)
- Government should compel the most carbon-intensive businesses to offer offset services (para 25)
- Individuals should be given a compulsory-choice option for offsetting when procuring carbon intensive goods and services (para 25)
- Government and business must agree the definition of "carbon neutral" when applied to business and develop appropriate audit standards (para 31)
- Greater transparency is needed in the offset market (para 44)
- Using robust offset schemes to preserve existing forests should be encouraged (para 91)

The Chairman of the Environmental Audit Committee, Tim Yeo MP, said: **“We are concerned that prospects for growth in carbon offsetting, and the accompanying benefits in terms of lower global emissions, are being held back by suspicions that a lack of regulation and transparency in the market is allowing some schemes to be promoted which do not achieve acceptable outcomes. This is a pity in view of the contribution offsetting can make to tackling climate change.**

“The UK has the opportunity to lead the world in developing robust and helpful guidance. An effective government code of practice which endorses meaningful offsets could assist people in choosing the best way to offset their emissions.

“The UK’s financial and carbon markets have much to gain from a rapid growth in what is increasingly seen as a vital component of commercial activity and corporate responsibility.”

The Committee recognises there has been bad publicity and bad practice concerning a few forestry-based offset schemes or the way in which they were sold. One of these was the negative publicity given to a project in Karnataka sponsored by the music band Coldplay and their fans to offset the emissions from their concerts.

However, the Committee concludes some of the most rigorous and environmentally beneficial of all carbon offset projects come from the stewardship of tropical forests and the well-judged re-forestation or afforestation of land in the tropics.

The recent scientific debate about the *albedo* effect and the northern temperate forests and the often inaccurate reporting on this subject is another distraction from the undoubted good that forests provide for the climate, says the Committee.

The Committee welcomes the current DEFRA consultation which it says offers the opportunity for the Government to bring forward measures not just to encourage responsible and robust offsetting but also to set out clear criteria which offsets ought to meet. It however recommends that the Government should allow for the approval of both Certified Emissions Reductions (CERS) and Verified Emissions Reductions (VERs) within the DEFRA scheme as long as they meet appropriate criteria.

MEBC is a not for profit limited liability company managed under contract from Birmingham by Environmental Business Communications Limited (EBC).

The Board of Directors consists of Jonathon Porritt (Hon. President), Ian Aspley (Chairman), Marley Eternit; Prof. Peter Braithwaite (Deputy Chairman) Arup; David White (Finance Director), Grant Thornton; Anita Lloyd (Company Secretary) Eversheds; David Middleton (CEO) EBC ; Janet Bailey (Orion Management); Roger Key (Brumcan); Tony Lass (Fox Consultancy); Pat Laughlin (PL Associates); John Sharpe (Bates Wood).

***Observers are invited from AWM, GOWM and Birmingham City Council.
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