



“What sort of Scotland do we want to live in?”

Electronic Consultation Study

Analysis of Comments

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Executive Summary

This report provides the results of the analysis of the comments received from the e-consultation on "What Sort of Scotland do we want to live in?". The e-consultation was on behalf of the Environment Group of the Scottish Executive and was based around sustainable development issues facing Scotland. The aim was to equip Ministers with views to develop a policy document as input to the World Summit in South Africa in 2002. The e-consultation ran from 6th June to 8th October 2001. It aimed to inform people about the key issues facing a future Scotland and asked them to give their views on a range of issues ranging from efficient use of resources to lifestyle and transport. The web site address for the e-consultation is: <http://e-consultant.org.uk/sustainability/>. It received a total of 392 contributions. Of these 172 were made by individuals and 19 on behalf of organisations or groups.

There are 3 objectives to this analysis:

- To discover the extent to which contributions answer questions set by the e-consultation;
- To investigate whether the issues and information provided online were clear and helpful;
- To determine the main sustainable development themes arising from the e-consultation.

The results of the analysis show that contributors engaged with the question "What sort of Scotland do we want to live in?". 97% of comments contained, or agreed with, suggestions about what could be done to improve Scotland's status in terms of sustainable development. Over half the comments (57%) included suggestions for government action. A reasonable proportion specified that businesses should take action (19%). A smaller number of comments pointed out where individuals should take action themselves (7%). A third of comments (33%) requested action from all parties - government, business and individuals.

The issues chosen to structure the e-consultation worked well with almost all the contributors using the issues the way they were intended to be used (96%). Most comments directly answered the questions that accompanied the issues and the background information. The "Efficient use of Resources" issue received most comments (83) while the "Public Health" issue only received 22 comments.

A number of themes emerged under each issue and also across issues. The seven themes listed below each received over 10% of the contributions.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Recycling | Make more recycling facilities available; create markets for recycled goods. |
| More renewable power | Move to renewable energy, especially wind and wave power. |
| Energy efficient buildings | Encourage energy efficient buildings. Remove VAT from insulation products to eliminate fuel poverty. |
| Change lifestyles | Change lifestyles to protect environment. Encourage better quality of life rather than economic growth. |
| Community development | Importance of strengthening communities. Give more power to local communities over issues that affect them. |
| Education and public awareness | Education is the key to sustainability. Children should be taught sustainable principals. Make public aware of environmental issues. |
| Improve public transport | Integrate public transport systems in terms of routes, timetables, information and tickets. Develop new transport systems. |

To conclude, while most suggestions for improvement were directed towards government, there was an extensive realisation that everyone needed to be involved at some level.

1 Introduction

This report provides the results of the analysis of the comments received from the e-consultation on "What Sort of Scotland do we want to live in?".

The e-consultation was on behalf of the Environment Group of the Scottish Executive and was based around sustainable development issues facing Scotland. The aim was to equip Ministers with views to develop a policy document as input to the World Summit in South Africa in 2002. The e-consultation ran from 6th June to 8th October 2001. It aimed to inform people about the key issues facing a future Scotland and asked them to give their views on a range of issues ranging from efficient use of resources to lifestyle and transport. The web site address for the e-consultation is: <http://e-consultant.org.uk/sustainability/>

E-consultant is a web-based application, developed in partnership with BT, that allows Internet users to make responses to a consultation, read related background information, see who else has contributed and the nature of their response, and return to read feedback on the outcomes of the process. The website's contents, appearance, structure and functions are tailored by ITC to meet the needs of the particular consulting body, in this case the Environment Group in the Scottish Executive on the subject of sustainable development. E-consultant addresses the need to collect responses from the wider community and informal responses generally.

After the e-consultation the outcomes are summarised and reported. For the e-consultation on "What Sort of Scotland do we want to live in?" there are 3 reports:

1. Report giving the full text of all the comments received through the e-consultation.
2. This report providing the results of the analysis of the comments entered onto the e-consultation website.
3. Report describing and assessing the e-consultation process.

There are 3 objectives to this analysis:

- **To discover the extent to which the contributions answer the questions set by the e-consultation;**
- **To investigate whether the issues and background information provided in the e-consultation were clear and helpful;**
- **To determine the main sustainable development themes arising from the contributions to the e-consultation.**

All comments have been read and categorised according to their content. The way this was done was inspired by Anthony Wilhelm's¹ analysis of 10 political newsgroups in October 1996 during the presidential election campaign in the United States. It should be noted that this is a qualitative and subjective analysis and relies on the interpretation of the person undertaking the analysis.

The report is organised around the three objectives. Section 2 gives an overview of the e-consultation issues and the comments received. It gives an indication of the geographic spread of the contributors and considers the general tone and the extent to which any discussion took place.

In sections 3 and 4 the comments are analysed to judge the success of the consultation in terms of the way the e-consultation website was organised and the information given within it. This is done by first looking at the extent to which they answer the main questions set out in the e-consultation and second by an investigation of the relationship between the content initially provided on the website (the issues and background information) and the content of the comments. Section 5 describes the main sustainable development themes arising from the e-consultation. Finally, section 6 draws conclusions from the analysis.

¹ Wilhelm, A.G. (1999) *Virtual Sounding Boards: how deliberative is online political discussion?* In Hague, B.N. and Loader, B. (Eds) (1999) *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age*. Routledge

2 Overview of e-consultation results

The e-consultation received a total of 392 contributions. Of these 172 were made by individuals and 19 on behalf of organisations or groups.

In order to give some structure to the e-consultation and encourage discussion threads to form, the e-consultation was based around seven sustainable development issues. (These issues were chosen by the Sustainable Development Consultation Steering Group - see report "Evaluation of the success of the e-consultation process").

The following table lists the issues and the number of comments each received.

| ISSUE | No. of Comments |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Efficient Use of Resources | 83 |
| Energy and Climate Change | 70 |
| Environment | 62 |
| Poverty and Social Justice | 32 |
| Economic Growth and Employment | 41 |
| Public health | 22 |
| Lifestyle and Transport | 65 |
| Good Practice | 17 |

In order to give an indication of the geographic spread of comments, contributors were asked to give their postcode when submitting a comment. For privacy reasons this was not displayed on the website. The postcodes indicate reasonable coverage of the whole of Scotland, with one contribution each from England and Wales and none from elsewhere.

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Aberdeenshire | 19 contributors |
| Angus and Dundee | 5 |
| Argyll and Bute | 5 |
| Ayrshire | 8 |
| Borders | 3 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 16 |
| Edinburgh and Lothians | 59 |
| Falkirk, Stirling and surrounding area | 10 |
| Fife and Perthshire | 14 |
| Glasgow and surrounding area | 25 |
| Isle of Lewis | 1 |
| Inverness and Highlands | 23 |
| Orkney | 1 |

During the e-consultation ITC monitored the site using a “Conditions of Use” statement which were agreed beforehand. In this e-consultation the statement included the following advice:

“Users wishing to make comments on this consultation are requested to refrain from using offensive or abusive language, to refrain from including advertising statements or including text of a disruptive nature.”

All the comments have been respectful, with disagreements of opinion handled gracefully and no comments have had to be removed for disregarding this request. The majority of comments have stayed on topic with contributions indicating support for various measures at all levels to improve the sustainability of Scotland.

12% of comments (48) were replies to other comments. This indicates the extent to which contributors were reading and responding to each other’s comments and that some discussion was taking place, rather than contributors listing their own opinions and leaving the e-consultation. Most of the discussion threads were short, with the maximum being four comments long. Longer threads tended to be a series of comments expressing agreement with another one – adding or clarifying ideas as they went along. This also shows that contributors understood (and used) the reply mechanism provided.

3 Extent to which contributions answered the questions

The objective in this part of the analysis was to discover the extent to which comments answer the questions set by the e-consultation:

Q1. What sort of Scotland do we want to live in?

Q2. What could or should be done to achieve this by governing bodies, individuals and business?

Q3. What has been done well, so far, and what could be done better?

3.1 Method

Comments given as examples in the following sections are, for clarity, marked only with the label they are illustrating. Most comments have more than one label. Comments have not been corrected in terms of spelling or grammar. Where an excerpt from a comment is used, three dots indicate the position of the omission (...).

Q1. What sort of Scotland do we want to live in?

If the comment seems to answer this question by suggesting an improvement, it is marked

Suggest: e.g.

AL, 08/06/01 12:06

Suggest

“Rail freight is more efficient than motorway transport (load size is much larger, economies of scale) and local transport could then be undertaken from rail depots. More people to organise and handle perhaps, but more fuel-efficient.”

If the comment makes no suggestions it is marked **No-Suggestion**. e.g.

RM, 13/08/01 23:16

No-Suggestion

“Why has another GM trial been approved at farm near Munlochy in Ross-shire?”

Notes:

A comment can either be **Suggest** or **No-Suggestion**.

Comments which are off-topic or *imply* a needed improvement, without specifically suggesting one are marked as No-Suggestion.

Q2. What could or should be done to achieve this by governing bodies, individuals and business?

If the comment explicitly asks for action from government or local councils, it is marked

Action-Government: e.g.

RL, 12/06/01 13:17

Action-Government

“Recycling facilities/opportunities are very lacking in Scotland. A packaging tax may reduce unnecessary packaging on products. Public support and government assistance is piecemeal. Local government should be given resources/cash to implement recycling. There is no need to go through dozens of quangos.”

If the comment explicitly asks for action from business, it is marked **Action-Business**: e.g.

R.M, 20/08/01 14:03

Action-Business

“Producers and manufacturers need to standardise their glass and plastic bottles/jars so it will be easier to refill/recycle them when they are returned (...).”

If the comment explicitly asks for action from individuals, it is marked **Action-Individuals**: e.g.

Ri, 19/07/01 14:40

Action-Individuals

“Until people learn to respect the immediate environment around them it is difficult to believe that they will take a wider interest in the environment in general. I believe that we need to address some of the simple issues such as littering and fly tipping. These sorts of activities need to be made socially unacceptable...”

If the comment explicitly asks for action by all three groups, it is marked **Action-All**: e.g.

PL, 24/08/01 12:46

Action-All

“Waste minimisation by individuals, business and other organisations and government itself is critical. Local authorities need to implement clear guidelines for waste reduction, backed up by financial incentives and disincentives, eg continue increasing waste disposal charges for industry, subsidise local recycling facilities, even look into variable charging for household waste collection according to amount of waste collected. Raising awareness of alternatives to using non-renewable resources also important, including explanations of the benefits, eg use of washable nappies.”

Notes:

This category is not exclusive, unless the label is **Action-All**.

Government is used as an umbrella term to refer to local government, the Scottish and Westminster governments and in some cases international bodies, i.e. United Nations.

Business is taken to include all commercial enterprises from farming to bus companies:

Q3. What has been done well, so far, and what could be done better?

This refers to the assessment by the contributor of current policies and action.

If the comment acknowledges that something has been done well or is being done well, it is marked **Doing-Well**: e.g.

BC, 12/06/01 16:05

Doing-Well

“Local authorities have been doing a lot of work on local sustainable development through Local Agenda 21. They've produced case studies of good projects which you can find at www.cosla.gov.uk, then click on the 'Improvement' box and go to 'Sustainability'.”

If the comment explicitly asks for a change of policy or an improvement in current practice, it is marked **Improve**: e.g.

MS, 21/06/01 13:11

Improve

“I agree entirely. Governments have consistently failed to see the urgency of the issues; while panels of scientists have consistently warned of the dangers. We need much tougher legislative measures to ensure that business interests don't continue to take precedence over the environment.”

Notes:

This category is exclusive: a comment may be either **Doing-Well** or **Improve**. If the comment does not refer to government policy or action, it will be neither.

3.2 Results

The results show that contributors engaged with the question “What sort of Scotland do we want to live in?” 97% of comments contained or agreed with suggestions about what could be done to improve Scotland’s status in terms of sustainable development. Only 3% of comments made no suggestions and merely pointed out a current problem.

Over half the comments (57%) included suggestions for government action. It should be taken into account that the consultation was initiated by the government, so it is natural that people took this opportunity to tell them what to do. This was particularly the case in the Efficient Use of Resources section because local councils are responsible for collecting waste and would need to be involved in any changes to this system. Some contributors addressed their comments directly to the Scottish Executive. Many ideas were things that only government could implement such as punitive/reward tax systems. A reasonable proportion specified that businesses should take action (19%). These businesses (where named) were most often supermarkets, energy providers, transport companies and farmers. Many comments advocated some sort of government control/encouragement towards businesses adopting sustainable practices. Some comments pointed out where individuals should take action themselves (7%), particularly in terms of recycling and buying local produce. A third of comments (33%) requested action from all parties (government, business and individuals).

There was very little praise for current policies and practices in terms of “What are we currently doing well?”- only (1%). This may well be due to lack of awareness. Typically little publicity is given to successful schemes compared to unwise ones. Clearly, this is something that the Scottish Executive and other stakeholders in the consultation should consider how to remedy. For future e-consultations brief outlines of successful schemes or relevant current policy should be included in the “Background Ideas” section. The Deputy Minister’s comments are a step towards this and were given more prominence by placing a “news article” about her visit in The “Feedback” section of the e-consultation site. Most of the comments (80%) asked for a change or improvement in current policies. It was hoped that the Good Practice issue would be used as a place for contributors to talk about other projects doing well, unfortunately this proved to be a relatively quiet issue.

Overall the contributors engaged strongly with the questions asked, with the exception of those evaluating current progress. While most suggestions for improvement were directed towards government, there was an extensive realisation that everyone needed to be involved at some level.

3.2.1 Summary of Results

| | |
|--|--|
| Suggest 97% (380) | Comment suggests a way to improve sustainability of Scotland. |
| No-Suggestion 3% (12) | Comment does not contain any suggestions. |
| Action-Government 57% (223) | Comment asks for action by governing bodies to improve sustainability of Scotland. |
| Action-Business 19% (73) | Comment asks for action by business to improve sustainability of Scotland. |
| Action-Individuals 7% (25) | Comment asks for action by individuals to improve sustainability of Scotland. |
| Action-All 33% (130) | Comment asks for action by all three groups. |

Doing-Well
1% (5)

Comment acknowledges success of current policy.

Improve
80% (310)

Comment asks for improvement to or change in current policy.

4 Extent to which the issues and information were recognisable and helpful

The objective in this part of the analysis was to discover whether the issues and background information provided in the e-consultation were clear and helpful:

- Do comments appear under the most appropriate issue?
- Do comments react to or reflect the information provided and address the questions?

Each issue comprised a title and related questions. On the website, these are shown whenever each issue appears. There is also a “Background Ideas” page for each issue which contains two or three paragraphs of further information. The following are the issues and their related questions.

Efficient Use of Resources

How can our standard of living remain high while at the same time we use fewer resources? How can we use less in producing goods? How can we use less fuel in taking raw materials to factories and finished goods to shops?

Energy and Climate Change

Where should the balance lie between different energy sources such as coal, oil, gas, nuclear and renewable, like wind power? Where is the greatest scope for energy efficiency?

Environment

How can we protect our landscape and the diversity of wildlife within it? Can we 'clean up' our land, rivers and sea? Can industry, farming and fisheries grow without damaging their surroundings?

Poverty and Social Justice

How can we make poverty and poor housing a thing of the past? Can we make sure that everyone shares in Scotland's progress? Can we make discrimination a thing of the past?

Economic Growth and Employment

How can our economy continue to grow? How can environmental policies co-exist with economic growth? How can we provide enough work for everyone?

Public health

How can we increase our healthy life expectancy? Do we know how safe our food is? How can we improve our air quality?

Lifestyle and Transport

How do we lead satisfying lives without consuming too many resources? How should we travel around in the 21st century? Have local authorities focused too much on discouraging cars in cities and too little on improving and integrating public transport?

Good Practice

If you are involved in or have noticed good examples of sustainable development in action, please share them.

4.1 Method

Does the comment appear under the most appropriate issue?

If the contributor has placed the comment under the appropriate issue, it is marked **appropriate-issue**, e.g. from Efficient Use of Resources:

WJ, 17/06/01 22:30

appropriate-issue

"We can all recycle but if the local authority has no market for the materials collected then it may be a "wasted" exercise. Government create markets for the recyclables, especially in rural areas, then force local authorities to implement household separation at source"

If the comment demonstrates much more relevance to another issue, it will be marked **less-appropriate-issue**: E.g. from Good Practice:

DT, 12/06/01 13:58

less-appropriate-issue

"Composting and recycling are things that all of us can do. We just have to realise how important they are."

Notes:

This category is exclusive: a comment may be either **appropriate-issue** or **less-appropriate-issue**.

If a comment could also appear under another issue, but is still relevant to its current issue, it is marked **appropriate-issue**.

Some contributors listed all their opinions, on sustainable development, in one comment. Where this is the case, the comment is marked according to the part of it most relevant to the issue it appears under.

Does the comment react to or reflect the information provided?

If the comment answers one of the questions accompanying the issue title or in the "Background Information", it is marked **Answer**. E.g. from "Economic Growth and Employment" which asks, "How can our economy continue to grow? How can environmental policies co-exist with economic growth? How can we provide enough work for everyone?":

ED, 29/06/01 17:47

Answer

"Scottish people should be more encouraged to buy Scottish produce if we are to have a sustainable Scotland. We rely too much on imports and as a nation import much more than we export. If we are to keep businesses in Scotland we must buy from them."

If the comment seems to reflect, or be a reaction to, the information given (without answering any of the questions) it will be marked **Reflect**: E.g. from "Lifestyle and Transport":

DT, 12/06/01 13:53

Reflect

"Car traffic in cities has to be reduced somehow, but rural people need their cars and are in no danger of concreting over their environment."

If the comment gives new information, contains a new idea, or asserts a gap in the information and categories given it will be marked **New**: e.g. from "Economic Growth and Employment":

AL, 04/10/01 18:10

New

"This assumes that our economy must continue to grow - is there a limit to this, or is growth necessarily good? Quality of life is not the same as economic growth, nor do the poor necessarily benefit as the economy grows. We need to question our assumptions that provide the basis for the current wasteful consumer/disposal society, and set out a path towards a genuinely more sustainable pattern of living within the limits of our planet."

Notes:

These three categories are exclusive. If a comment could be labelled as more than one of these things, the most appropriate label will be chosen. If the comment has been marked

less-appropriate-issue, none of these labels will be applied. This is because the questions and background information are issue specific.

Comments entered into the “Good Practice” section have not been included in this category of analysis as there are no questions or “Background Information” for that section.

4.2 Results

It is the nature of sustainable development that there are no clear-cut issues: each issue includes or impinges on another: e.g. Are chemicals used in growing food an environmental issue or a health issue? However, in order to give some structure to the debate and encourage discussion, questions and ideas were divided into issues. The issues were also used to help focus discussion on the less obvious aspects of the debate (economic and social) and help to explain how they fitted in.

Almost all the contributors used the issues the way they were intended to be used (96%). Of those which could have perhaps more suitably appeared under a different issue (4%), most had some relevance to where they were placed. Comments that did not seem to fit any category tended to be about how policy was implemented. Some contributors did not divide their opinions into separate comments under specific issues, but grouped them all together under one issue.

Most comments directly answered the questions that accompanied the issues or those posed in the “Background Information” section (91%). This is a good indication that the questions were successful in focussing the discussion. A further 7% of comments reflected themes from the “Background Ideas” section, without answering any of the questions posed within it.

One or two questions asked in the “Background Information” section were not answered at all. For example the Poverty and Social Justice page states that “**Strong communities must be safe communities. What does the sustainable development debate have to say about law and order?**” No comments engage with this statement or answer the law and order question.

Only 2% of comments asserted a bias or oversight in the actual issues. These comments were either about the omission of “education” as an issue or the inclusion of the questions “**How can our economy continue to grow? How can environmental policies co-exist with economic growth?**” in the “Economic Growth and Employment” section. They queried the usefulness of economic growth as a measurement of success, mostly leaning towards “quality of life” to replace it.

The issues chosen to structure the e-consultation seem to have worked well. As stated previously, a certain amount of overlap is inevitable. The information accompanying Economic Growth and Employment could perhaps have explained its importance to the consultation more clearly. The comments criticising it were advocating a less materialistic society over all: there was a realisation that measures had to be paid for and that this could involve paying more tax. The Public Health issue received few comments, although health related comments appeared under other issues. It was thought that the discussion here would be livelier and focus on food quality and labelling. Perhaps a more immediate issue title would have been better. The Good Practice issue had no accompanying questions or background information which is perhaps why it also received few comments.

4.2.1 Summary of Results

appropriate-issue
96% (378)

Comment appears under most appropriate issue.

less-appropriate-issue
4% (14)

Comment could have appeared under a more appropriate issue.

(The percentages for the following do not include the “Good Practice” issue, where this was not applicable.)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Answer 91% (342) | Comment answers the one of the questions accompanying the issue definition or posed in “Background Information” |
| Reflect 7% (26) | Comment reflects information given, without answering any of the questions. |
| New 2% (7) | Comment asserts a gap in the information given or requests a new issue. |

5 Emerging Themes

The objective of this section is to summarise the contributions and highlight the most mentioned themes emerging under each issue. The meaning of the individual themes and the number of comments pertaining to them are included under each issue.

5.1 Efficient Use of Resources

Comments focused on waste prevention and recycling. There was a strong feeling that much waste could be prevented either by encouraging a reduction in packaging, perhaps by a “packaging tax”, or by reuse. Reuse ideas focused on standardised containers (like jars) and reuse of rubble in building roads. Contributors seemed eager to engage with recycling. They asked for more recycling facilities (e.g. for plastics). They thought people would be willing to divide their rubbish if councils would implement its collection. There was also a realisation that markets needed to be found or created for recycled goods.

Many comments pointed to the advantages of using local products and buying local goods. This would use less fuel, packaging and preservatives (in food) and be good for local economies. If goods needed to be transported longer distances, some suggested that they should go by rail.

5.1.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| less packaging 27 comments | Businesses (especially supermarkets) should use less packaging. Discourage excessive packaging e.g. by packaging tax. |
| recycling 58 | Make more recycling facilities available; create markets for recycled goods. |
| divide rubbish 22 | Council should pick up divided rubbish for recycling. |
| reuse 21 | Prevent waste by reuse. Standardise bottles/jars for reuse |
| goods by rail 11 | Move goods by rail rather than road. |
| local produce 25 | Discourage long distance travel of goods, e.g. institute tax penalties for “food miles”; encourage use of local goods and materials; encourage purchase of local goods rather than imports. |

5.2 Energy and Climate Change

Strong support was expressed for adoption of renewable energy: wind, water and solar power. There was some disagreement over the position of nuclear power as renewable or sustainable. Some advocated a nuclear free Scotland, while others thought its use should be extended.

Many ideas were contributed about using fewer resources, either by increased efficiency and living more “lightly”.

Many comments referred to the need to build energy efficient buildings and support conversion of existing ones. They suggested that planning regulations could enforce this. These would be specifically designed for Scotland’s climate with good insulation as standard. Smart circuitry and accurate digital meters would help inhabitants monitor their energy use. Solar panels could provide some energy (and employment opportunities if they were made locally). Contributors expressed agreement with a comment calling for an end to fuel poverty and the abolition of VAT on insulation materials.

Contributors also believed that more could be done to encourage energy efficient cars. This ranged from support of research into or the adoption of ‘friendly’ fuels to measures taken to encourage the manufacture of more fuel-efficient engines, for example by varying vehicle tax accordingly.

5.2.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|--|---|
| more renewable power 57 comments | Move to renewable energy, especially wind and wave power, maybe solar power. |
| more nuclear power 4 | More nuclear power. |
| no nuclear power 25 | Encourage a nuclear free Scotland: Nuclear power is unsustainable. |
| energy efficient buildings 44 | Encourage energy efficient buildings, e.g. smart circuitry, insulation, digital meters, buildings adapted for disabled. Take VAT off insulation products to eliminate fuel poverty. |
| friendly fuel cars 6 | Cars should be run on friendlier fuels or be more energy efficient. Cars should be taxed on fuel consumption. Manufacturers should be encouraged to make more fuel-economical engines. |
| use less resources 28 | Either through greater efficiency or through a simple reduction in consumption. |

5.3 Environment

The Environment category provoked a healthy range of responses which ranged from very specific ideas for government action to changes in attitude by the whole of society. In analysing this section for emerging themes we found it helpful to split it into two sub-issues: Changing Attitudes and Pollution and Protection.

5.3.1 Environment: changing attitudes

Some comments suggested that environmental issues were not given the priority that they deserved. They felt that powerful corporations or business interests should not undermine the protection of the environment. Powerful bodies should be set up at all levels (including global) to safeguard the environment and reverse damage. This was backed up by the idea that we

needed to change attitudes and lifestyles. This idea focused on living a less consumerist lifestyle, measuring success in terms of quality of life, rather than economic achievement and on buying goods because of their quality (e.g. in terms of production) rather than their cheapness. No one intimated that the environment was beyond help and there was recognition that 'cleaning it up' would cost. Viewed as the creation of sustainable and valuable jobs, this could have positive benefits.

Education was seen by many as a key component of sustainable development. In terms of school, sustainable ideas should be taught as an integral part of the curriculum. Children could also be taught in a more sustainable way: e.g. more creative and participatory methods, more respect given to vocational training. There was a strong feeling that there should be more equality of opportunities in education across the board. A wide variety of education and training should be open (and free) to all age groups and abilities. Environmental education should also take the form of public awareness campaigns in which people were reminded about their individual role in protecting the environment. A second positive force was seen to be the community. Contributors used community ideas in terms of location: a variety of facilities in each location (employment, shops, homes and leisure) would cut down on transport use and strengthen human ties. Communities should have more control over issues that effect them (especially planning). Identification with a community would encourage individual respect for the area and group initiatives.

5.3.1.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>environment has priority 16 comments</p> | <p>Give environmental concerns a high priority on policy agendas at all levels. Set up powerful groups to protect it. Ensure that business and economics do not take priority over environmental issues.</p> |
| <p>change lifestyle 62</p> | <p>Change lifestyle to protect environment. e.g. quality rather than quantity quality (of goods) rather than cheapness better quality of life rather than economic growth</p> |
| <p>create environmentally friendly jobs 12</p> | <p>Cleaning up the environment will create jobs. e.g. by recycling goods more people needed to produce organic goods</p> |
| <p>education and public awareness 67</p> | <p>Education is the key to sustainability. Children should be taught sustainable principals. It should be available and affordable (free?) to all age groups. A wider variety of education/training should be valued. Education should be more participatory/ creative. Make public aware of environmental issues and what they can do as individuals.</p> |
| <p>community 40</p> | <p>Importance of strengthening communities. E.g. support community projects and groups. Businesses should support community initiatives. Give more power to local communities over issues that affect them (like planning).</p> |

5.3.2 Environment: pollution and protection

Contributors felt that more restrictions should be placed on industry and farming to limit their environmental impact. Some asked for stricter monitoring of industry: e.g. stricter enforcement of current regulations and the introduction of compulsory environmental assessment. Some contributors wanted to apply this stringently to farming (especially fish farms), including more limits set on the chemicals used in food production. More support should be given to

sustainable farming practices like organic farming, even though these are more labour intensive. This included support for the ban of all GM crop trials in Scotland or an unbiased investigation of the subject.

Many thought that some areas should have special protection or stewardship schemes – like National Parks. These areas should also include the sea. This would involve schemes to clean up the coast and fishing restrictions to allow stocks to replenish. The position of agriculture in terms of stewardship versus production was also mentioned, with contributors advocating subsidies to be changed accordingly.

Databases should be set up on a local level to monitor biodiversity and track progress.

There was a strong feeling that Scotland’s landscape woodland, water and seas were great assets and that much was to be gained by looking after them. It was also recognised that these were great assets for people to enjoy and access to them was important, in terms of our health and attracting tourists.

5.3.2.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|--|--|
| control industry 18 comments | Stricter environmental monitoring/control of industry. Enforce existing anti-pollution laws. Make environmental assessment mandatory. |
| less pollution from farms 22 | Stricter codes of practice to reduce environmental pollution from farming and stricter controls of chemicals used in food production. Especially applicable to fish farms |
| sustainable farming (no GM) 22 | Move towards sustainable or organic farming and organic, locally produced food, e.g. Reduce chemicals in food. Outlaw factory farming. Ban GM farming and trials in Scotland. |
| Protected areas 30 | Designate areas of land or sea for environmental protection status. Instigate stewardship schemes. |

5.4 Poverty and social justice

Contributors focused on divisions in society, particularly in terms of housing and opportunities. Gaps should be narrowed by better educational opportunities: a more creative and equal approach to education and training. There was concern that housing policies and prices had created “ghettos”. Integrated housing (where affordable council or rented accommodation is situated among more expensive housing) would increase social mobility. This housing should be designed to be energy efficient, reducing fuel poverty and associated ill health. Long term policies should be adopted regarding the housing and care of elderly and disabled people. They deserved more respect and should be given better opportunities (especially in terms of training and employment).

Contributors felt that wealth could be spread more evenly, either by a cap on land ownership or greater taxation of the wealthy. Commercial profiteering, especially by housing developers and supermarkets, should be restricted.

5.4.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| spread wealth 5 comments | Spread wealth more evenly. E.g. controls on supermarket profiteering. More even distribution of resources. |
|------------------------------------|--|

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| spread housing 5 | Integrate lower cost housing, rather than allowing peripheral ghettos and geographical separation of population according to wealth e.g. build social housing. Encourage developers to include affordable housing in all projects |
| equal opportunities 9 | More respect and opportunities for elderly, disabled and disadvantaged groups, especially in terms of access to education and training. |

5.5 Economic growth and employment

Contributors stressed the importance of education, training and equality of opportunity that have been discussed above. There was some feeling that too much emphasis was being placed on economic growth as opposed to a sustainable economy where quality of life and the protection of the environment have priority over the creation of wealth. This was also reflected in ideas about “living more lightly”- working less, producing less and consuming less. Contributors backed suggestions that a shorter week would be socially and economically more beneficial. Some expressed doubt about its viability.

There were calls for Scotland and its workforce to be more actively promoted. This included retraining the workforce in new skills, including IT and hospitality. Some felt that a more sustainable economy would follow from creation of business within Scotland, rather than foreign investment. More could be done to support a quality tourist industry.

5.5.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| work less hours 11 comments | Encourage the adoption of a shorter working week. |
| promote Scotland 14 | Promote Scotland (and its workforce) to business. Promote creation of industry within Scotland (e.g. by retraining workforce). |

5.6 Public Health

Many comments in this section focused on current food production methods: food produced using fewer chemicals (preservatives, pesticides and antibiotics) would improve our health. This included support for organic farming and concern about GM food. Local production of food was seen as a key element. Public awareness campaigns should advise on healthy diets and lifestyles and food should be clearly labelled, providing information about what goes into its production and where it comes from. Comments requested more comprehensive and accessible information about food. Others asked for information to be made available about pollutants in the atmosphere, soil and water.

Exercise, particularly the benefits of walking and cycling, should be supported and publicised. This theme also came through strongly in the “Lifestyle and Transport” section. Respect for our own and each other’s quality of life were considered integral.

5.6.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| food info 10 comments | Public should know more about what’s in food products and where they come from. More promotion of types and benefits of healthy food. |
|---------------------------------|--|

5.7 Lifestyle and Transport

The most requested improvement in this section was for an improved public transport system. Contributors felt that if it was faster, cleaner and more reliable, people would use it more and leave their cars at home. This transport system could include reopening local railway stations and routes and the addition of light rail or trams. Many specifically asked for an integrated system. This would include travel companies (bus, rail and ferries) co-operating on routes,

fares and provision of information. 'Park and Ride' schemes, perhaps combined with city tolls would further cut down on urban congestion. Others advocated more cycle lanes and pedestrian routes and generally greater respect and right of way for cyclists and pedestrians. Some felt government claims that they are tackling transport issues are undermined by the money currently being spent on building and widening roads and that less should be invested in this.

Many thought that people should be encouraged to make more environmentally friendly choices (especially concerning transport) by punitive tax systems (e.g. on fuel or engine size), city tolls and parking. Positive choices might be encouraged by tax breaks. Some felt that this would reflect the real costs of motoring.

Other contributors stressed their reliance on their cars. This was especially true of those worried about the effect of punitive fuel taxes on rural and disabled drivers and those with young children.

There was some feeling that the extent of current travel (particularly commuting) is unsustainable. Planning for housing, shopping centres and industrial development should consider transport factors. Car-free residential developments should be encouraged.

5.7.1 Summary of main themes

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>improve public transport 41 comments</p> | <p>Public transport systems need to be integrated in terms of routes, timetables, getting information and tickets. Efficient park and ride schemes (perhaps combined with city toll) Reopen railways and stations. Take public transport up market to compete with cars. Develop new transport systems e.g. trams</p> |
| <p>cycle lanes/ pedestrian routes 22</p> | <p>Set up more cycle lanes and safe pedestrian routes through cities. More pedestrian areas. Give cyclists and pedestrians higher priority.</p> |
| <p>less investment in road building 5</p> | <p>Spend less money on creating/extending motorways and widening roads.</p> |
| <p>protect rural drivers 4</p> | <p>Rural drivers need cars and should not be financially penalised (e.g. by high fuel tax). Public transport not a feasible answer in rural areas.</p> |
| <p>travel less 15</p> | <p>The distances travelled (especially commuting) could be reduced. e.g. by telecommuting or working closer to home Planning for new developments should take this into account.</p> |
| <p>punitive system 17</p> | <p>Discourage car use by punitive systems, e.g. tax, parking charges.</p> |

5.8 Good Practice

Community and local schemes including local food enterprises and waste management, composting and recycling were advocated as good practice. In terms of specific projects:

- The work of the Scottish Centre for Non-violence was mentioned for its emphasis on creating dialog and supporting non-violent conflict resolution.
- Council and charity projects (like New Start) were praised for supporting the homeless in moving into more permanent accommodation.
- The community based project organised by the Orkney Archaeological Trust at Mine Howe in Orkney.
- The Agenda 21 initiative (although another contributor criticised the voluntary status and lack of support this is given).

- Direct food Direct (a local food distribution cooperative in Moray) and organic box schemes in general.
- REAP (Resource Efficiency Action Programme) for its waste management schemes and Strathspey Waste Action Network (SWAN) for its distribution of composters.
- Pfizer headquarters, in Kent, for their employee parking charge scheme.
- The Welsh Assembly for integrating sustainability into its policies.
- SSAVE for its anticipated work in involving older people in sustainable development voluntary schemes.

6 Conclusions

The e-consultation ran for 17 weeks and during that time 172 individuals and 19 groups contributed 392 contributions. Contributions ranged from informal short responses to the consultation questions to more formal contributions suggesting either changes to policy or new ways government, business and individuals could ensure a sustainable Scotland.

The results of the analysis show that contributors engaged with the question “What sort of Scotland do we want to live in?”. While most suggestions for improvement were directed towards government, there was an extensive realisation that everyone needed to be involved at some level. 97% of comments contained or agreed with suggestions about what could be done to improve our status in terms of sustainable development. Only 3% of comments made no suggestions and merely pointed out a current problem. Over half the comments (57%) included suggestions for government action. A reasonable proportion specified that businesses should take action (19%). A smaller number comments pointed out where individuals should take action themselves (7%). A third of comments (33%) requested action from all parties (government, business and individuals).

The issues chosen to structure the e-consultation seem to have worked well with almost all the contributors using the issues the way they were intended to be used (96%). Most comments directly answered the questions that accompanied the issues or those posed in the “Background Information” section. The “Efficient use of Resources” issue received most comments (83) while the “Public Health” issue only received 22 comments.

A number of themes emerged under each issue and also across issues. There were 7 such themes which each received over 10% of the contributions. These were:

| | |
|--|---|
| Recycling 58 comments | Make more recycling facilities available; create markets for recycled goods. |
| More renewable power 57 comments | Move to renewable energy, especially wind and wave power, maybe solar power. |
| Energy efficient buildings 44 comments | Encourage energy efficient buildings, e.g. smart circuitry, insulation, digital meters, buildings adapted for disabled. Take VAT off insulation products to eliminate fuel poverty. |
| Change lifestyle 62 comments | Change lifestyle to protect environment, e.g. quality rather than quantity, quality (of goods) rather than cheapness and better quality of life rather than economic growth. |
| Community development 40 comments | Importance of strengthening communities, e.g. support community projects and groups. Businesses should support more community initiatives. Give more power to local communities over issues that affect them (like planning). |

Education and public awareness
67 comments

Education is the key to sustainability. Children should be taught sustainable principals. Education should be available and affordable to all age groups. A wider variety of education/training should be valued. Education should be more participatory/creative. Make public aware of environmental issues and what they can do as individuals.

Improve public transport
41 comments

Integrate public transport systems in terms of routes, timetables, information and tickets.
Establish efficient park and ride schemes (perhaps combined with city toll). Reopen railways and stations. Take public transport up market to compete with cars. Develop new transport systems e.g. trams

Nine community and local schemes, including local food enterprises and waste management, composting and recycling, were advocated as good practice.

To conclude, the majority of comments have stayed on topic with contributions indicating support for various measures at all levels to improve the sustainability of Scotland. Overall the contributors engaged strongly with the questions asked. While most suggestions for improvement were directed towards government, there was an extensive realisation that everyone needed to be involved at some level.