Engagement and political space for policies on climate change

A report for the Sustainable Development Commission by the Institute for Public Policy Research

January 2008

Institute for Public Policy Research
Challenging ideas – Changing policy

About ippr

The Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) is the UK's leading progressive think tank, producing cutting-edge research and innovative policy ideas for a just, democratic and sustainable world.

Since 1988, we have been at the forefront of progressive debate and policymaking in the UK. Through our independent research and analysis we define new agendas for change and provide practical solutions to challenges across the full range of public policy issues.

With offices in both London and Newcastle, we ensure our outlook is as broad-based as possible, while our international and migration teams and climate change programme extend our partnerships and influence beyond the UK, giving us a truly world-class reputation for high quality research.

ippr
30-32 Southampton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7RA
Tel: +44 (0)20 7470 6100
info@ippr.org
www.ippr.org
Registered Charity No. 800065

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Matthew Lockwood, Miranda Lewis, Ruth Sheldon and Naomi Newman. The authors would like to thank colleagues at ippr, as well as Lyndsey Colbourne, Ben Rhodes, Hazel Dempster and Andrew Walker, for their valuable comments on the report, and participants at a Sustainable Development Commission workshop on engagement in June 2007.

Contents

1. Introduction, aims and structure of the report

The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) has commissioned this report to investigate the role of public engagement in opening up greater political space to allow action for sustainable development, and specifically in the field of climate change.

Many measures designed to combat climate change require a substantial rethink of the way we operate as a society. To enable these solutions, government is sometimes required to take radical action. The sustainable development movement has largely focused on providing government with evidence that climate change is really happening. The underlying rationale is that once presented with overwhelming evidence, the Government will have no option but to institute radical action. However, this rationale assumes that the only constraint on government action is not having evidence. In fact, there are other constraints to government's ability to act. Of these constraints, we believe that one of the most important is a lack of 'political space'.

This problem is not new (see, for example, Jacobs 1997). But within the sustainable development movement, there is growing recognition of the importance of political space when thinking about climate change. An increasing number of initiatives aim to open political space *indirectly* by appealing to the public, or to consumers directly. These programmes campaign for individuals to change their behaviour and live in a more sustainable way. It is hoped that increased awareness among the public about climate change will translate into increased space for political action.

This report takes a closer look at the range of approaches used to open up political space, and makes recommendations both for the use of various forms of engagement, and for shaping the context in which that engagement happens. The report has the following aims:

- To review the evidence that political space (public, media and business opinion) plays a significant role in determining government's ability to act on sustainable development.
- To question what types of engagement are effective in opening political space.
- To recommend ways of using engagement to open up political space, and the challenges in implementing such an approach.

The purpose of the report is to spark off a debate, to act as 'kindling' for a larger debate about engagement and the SDC's work programme.

It is useful to clarify at the outset what we mean by 'engagement'. For some, this term carries connotations of two-way interaction on a small scale, as such distinguishing it from 'communication', with its sense of a one-way process (for example in a marketing campaign using the mass media). However, in this report we use 'engagement' in its broadest sense, to encompass all forms of contact between different actors, including mass communication. Where we discuss a particular form of engagement, we make that clear.

It is also important to distinguish between engagement for opening up political space, and engagement for feeding into policy design. The former relates to debates about principles for the *strategic direction* of policy, rather than policy detail, which is what a lot of formal policy consultation relates to. The role of engagement in this latter process is examined in a separate project for the Sustainable Development Commission (Involve 2007).

The analysis and recommendations presented here are based on a review of relevant literature, including previous work by the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) (Lewis 2007, Retallack *et al* 2007, Morris 2006, Working Party on Active Citizenship 2004), detailed case studies of political space and the policy areas of environmental taxation and road user charging, and interviews with a number of informants in the Energy Saving Trust, Departments for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Transport (DfT), Work and Pensions (DWP) and other parts of government, some of which were off the record (see Appendix 1 for a list of interviews).

The report is organised into two parts. Part 1 unpacks the idea of political space, and looks at the evidence for it being an important factor in shaping policy:

Section 2 outlines the problem of there being constraints on space for government (and more widely, politicians) to take bolder action on climate change.

Section 3 lays out an analytical framework for understanding the concept of political space.

Section 4 applies this framework to some examples of policies in sustainable development – road pricing and environmental taxation.

Part 2 of the report looks at how political space can be opened up, and what role various forms of engagement can take in that process:

Section 5 reviews existing communications campaigns, consultations and deliberative events aimed at the public and stakeholders, and assesses to what extent these have helped open up political space.

Section 6 examines how political space has been opened up in other areas of policy, with case studies of the pensions debate and the London congestion charge.

Section 7 draws together the implications, and makes recommendations for the SDC.

We present conclusions in Section 8.

Part 1: Political space and its importance in shaping policy

2. The paradox of environmental politics

British politics is currently dominated by a paradox. On the one hand, voters are looking for leadership on what to do about climate change. But on the other, all political parties are finding that putting specific policies to reduce carbon emissions into practice is often unpopular.

In response to widespread public concern about the environment (see, for example, YouGov 2006), politicians of all parties are competing to appear green. With the Conservative Party slogan

'Vote Blue, Go Green', David Cameron has sent signals that he is particularly concerned about climate change.

In 2006 Labour responded by giving the environmental brief to a young and dynamic cabinet minister, David Miliband, who called for an environmental contract for the 21st century between the citizen and the state to underpin attempts to tackle climate change. Gordon Brown has also begun to address the climate change agenda. He has spoken of the need for a new environmental citizenship, where the public, business and government all play their part in helping to reduce carbon emissions.

But in contrast with the language used in describing climate change, Government policies are notably cautious. Most existing policies – including the Climate Change Levy and Agreements, the Renewables Obligation, the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, and the Energy Efficiency Commitment, and proposed policies – such as the Carbon Reduction Commitment and a possible Suppliers Obligation on energy suppliers, involve no directly visible burden on the public, little coverage by the mass media and are generally designed to be 'under the radar'.

At the same time, setting up the Quality of Life Group has allowed the Conservatives to delay laying out a specific policy agenda on climate change. David Cameron has kept open the option of distancing himself from its conclusions. Much of his visibility on the issue has been in the form of personal actions, such as cycling to work. Where the Conservatives have floated specific policy ideas (for example, rationing flights as part of a new tax package on aviation announced ahead of the 2007 Budget), they have received the same savaging in parts of the media as government policies.

Equally striking, despite the levels of concern about climate change, is that the Liberal Democrats' carefully costed package to shift the tax burden onto environmental 'bads' has failed to bring them any political dividend. Polls show the Liberal Democrats' position with votes has remained fairly static over the last two years.

Thus in the UK widespread concern about climate change has not translated into a straightforward mandate for concrete actions in a particular strategic direction. Policies to achieve deep cuts in emissions in the UK are likely to involve relatively drastic and controversial measures and as a result we urgently need a strong mandate. Such measures may include much higher levels of public spending to support innovation in low-carbon technologies, increased and new environmental taxes, new and possibly broad-ranging regulations, and tighter emissions trading schemes, possibly even applying to individuals (see Box 1 on personal carbon allowances). Securing a broad political agreement that some combination of these measures in the UK is desirable (at the same basic level of support as there is, for example, for the NHS) remains a considerable task.

3. Understanding 'political space'

In a literal sense, within their term of office, majority governments can largely do what they want. Several of the respondents to our study argued that the reason why government did not take more radical action on climate change was that it did not want to.

Box 1. Personal carbon allowances

The idea of basing policy to tackle climate change on a personal carbon allowance (PCA) or ration for individuals that could then be traded, was proposed by David Fleming in the mid-1990s, based on the wider theory and experience of emissions trading (see Roberts and Thumim 2006 and Starkey and Anderson 2005 for recent overviews).

It is clearly a very radical proposal. However, in the last year it has gathered an increasing amount of interest, from institutions ranging from the Tyndall Centre, to the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University, to the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), which is setting up a trial voluntary scheme. The former Secretary of State for the Environment, David Miliband, has called PCAs a 'compelling thought experiment'.

There is very little evidence about how the public, the media or business will react to personal carbon allowances. The RSA has commissioned polling that showed support for some of the background principles, but this poll did not directly test views on specific schemes (see www.rsacarbonlimited.org/viewblog.aspa?pageid=597). Arguably, the first real political test for carbon rationing – David Cameron's proposals to restrict tax-free air travel to one short-haul flight per person per year – met with hostility in parts of the media (see, for example, *The Sun*'s 'Pie in the sky' leader, 12 March 2007).

However, in reality, if they are concerned with re-election, governments do have to balance what they want to do with the wider political consequences of carrying out those actions.

Defining precisely how this balance is shaped is quite difficult, but broadly speaking it involves a combination of public opinion and the positions of influential or powerful groups, including the media, business and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This common-sense view was confirmed by one special adviser who described government as hemmed in a triangle created by public opinion, the media and environmental groups.

Discussions with special advisers also confirm that key figures in government see public opinion (as reflected in polling) as a key determinant of political space. The acute awareness of political constraints also lies behind the desire of senior government figures to see more effective campaigning by environmental groups to create greater political consensus for stronger action. As a No. 10 adviser put in a recent meeting with green groups, 'if you look at the opinion polls, we [the government and environmental groups] are way ahead of the public on this'.

Political theory can give a more rigorous grounding to this view. Over the last thirty years UK politics has continued to be dominated by two major parties, while at the same time becoming less grounded on ideological differences and more on competition for votes. This makes pluralist theories based on elections and political competition particularly relevant (see, for example, Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987: 26-32). For example, 'median voter' theory in the tradition of Downs's *Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy* (1957) assumes that political parties seeking power will compete for votes through their policies, and will thus tailor those policies to the 'centre of

gravity' of public opinion on an issue.

A clear majority of people say that they are concerned about climate change and claim to be willing to take action (such as flying or driving less, using fewer electrical appliances and insulating their homes (YouGov 2006). However, statements of willingness to take action to reduce emissions contrast strongly with the trends in what people actually do. Data on actual behaviour show *increases* in flying, holidaying abroad, driving, and consumption of household appliances (see, for example, Retallack *et al* 2007).

At the same time, opinion polls generally show a majority (60 per cent or more) opposed to higher taxes on driving and flying (for example, YouGov 2007). In a poll for the BBC in March 2006, 54 per cent of respondents said they would not be prepared to pay a £2.50 offset on a flight to Spain (ICM 2006).

The Energy Saving Trust's *Green Barometer* survey shows a similar contrast between a widespread desire to be seen to be green and majority opposition to taxes and carbon rationing (EST 2007).

The *shape* of the distribution of voter views may also help explain policy caution. Research by Lightfoot and Steinberg (2005) shows that the UK electorate is no longer very widely dispersed along a traditional left-right axis defined by pro- or anti-market views. Instead it is much more widely dispersed along an axis between a socially progressive, internationalist pole and an isolationist, socially conservative pole, defined partly on whether people are willing to see action to mitigate global warming at a cost to the economy. The centre of gravity (or the median voter) is slightly on the progressive side. However, while progressives outnumber conservatives, the former are spread out along the axis, meaning there is less agreement between them. By contrast, conservatives are heavily concentrated, meaning they are united in their views. This situation means that the Labour Party may feel more constrained than the Conservatives, since the former will tend to court conservative voters, while the Conservative Party will regard them as having no mainstream alternative.

There is thus a significant group of people in the UK who are opposed to new policies on the environment, especially on taxation. This group is important enough for politicians to be concerned about, in a context where radical policies depend on a broad political consensus.

Pluralist theories also point to the importance of civil society intermediaries, such as the media and NGOs, which can influence how people are likely to vote (for example, Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987: 32-41). Governments tend to be particularly concerned with how their policies are seen by the media, large civil society organisations and business, and make special efforts to engage with those actors.

In the UK, interest-group politics can work for and against strong actions in relation to climate change. While there is an important grouping of environmental organisations and their allies, there are also other parts of civil society strongly opposed to particular policies on climate change, such as anti-wind-farm campaigners or anti-road-pricing or -road-tax groups. These organisations are often small in membership but their members have strong views and wide support in the media.

The print media is also split, in part influenced by newspapers' ownership. However, the majority of large circulation papers are hostile to many green measures, particularly green taxation and regulation.

Finally, among businesses there are also different views. Large, capital-rich publicly-owned corporations with good brand profile have been in the lead in the climate change message and being seen to be taking action. Such companies are in evidence in the Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change and are associated with the Climate Group. By contrast, small business and some of the energy-intensive heavy industries provide a counter-lobby.

4. Implications for political space on sustainable development

Certain groups among the public, special interest organisations and the media have made significant efforts to close down political space for debate on policies for sustainable development. Below we look at the two examples of road pricing and environmental taxation. (See Appendices 2 and 3 for more detailed case studies of these examples.)

Road pricing

Among leaders of the main political parties, and business and environmental groups, there is a broad consensus on the need to look seriously at the road pricing option. However, the majority of the public is opposed to road pricing (Bird and Morris 2006).

In late 2006, a member of small pressure group the Association of British Drivers set up an electronic petition on the No. 10 Downing Street website calling on the Prime Minister to 'Scrap the planned vehicle tracking and road pricing policy'.

Aided by a symbiotic relationship between the group and parts of the media, signatures to the petition grew rapidly, and the petition dominated the news agenda from the middle of February 2007 until the deadline on 20th of that month, at which point more than 1.8 million people had signed up.

Business and environmental groups supportive at least of the principles of road pricing mainly kept quiet. By contrast, the voice of the Association of British Drivers, although only a small group, was amplified through a print media that is mostly hostile to road pricing. The e-petition put enormous political pressure on the Government over a sustained period, with both the Prime Minister and the Transport Secretary's responses becoming news stories.

The e-petition has not closed down the policy option of variable road charging. The draft Road Transport Bill reiterates the Government's approach for a national debate and local pilots. However, the furore over the e-petition and the hostility in much of the print media are now reference points framing the debate, not least at local level, at which pilots will have to be agreed.

Green taxes

Following the publication of the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* in October 2006, and in the run-up to the Pre Budget Report (PBR) later that year, the Government came under pressure from two directions. Environmental groups urged the

Chancellor to make a tough package of measures – including higher green taxes – in follow-up to the Stern Review. By contrast, coverage of the Review in the popular press focused largely on hostility to green taxes. Many media sources picked up proposals from David Miliband that were leaked just before the Stern Review launch.

The PBR then announced an increase in fuel duty in line with inflation (the first since 1999) and a doubling of air passenger duty. In their reaction, many tabloid newspapers again reflected the popular hostility to increased taxes in these areas, with the *Daily Mail* invoking the 'fury' of motorists and businesses in reacting to the tax rises.

Tax came to the fore again during a week of intense political competition on climate change in March 2007, when the Government launched the Climate Change Bill, Gordon Brown made a major speech on climate change, and the Conservatives floated the idea of rationing people to one flight a year and replacing air passenger duty with a new tax on flights. In the traditionally Conservative media this proposal was greeted with howls of protest, the *Daily Mail* warning that the policy would be a vote loser.

Part 2: Opening up political space using different forms of engagement

5. Past and current approaches to engagement on climate change

So far we have seen that key actors in government see the space for manoeuvre on sustainable development constrained by the views of the public, the media and various pressure groups. Political theory gives good reasons for why we would expect this to be the case and the two examples above show how these pressures work in practice.

However, the Government has not simply been passive. Through campaigns, consultations, deliberative workshops and a variety of other means, it has sought to engage with the public and special interest groups on climate change and other sustainable development issues.

In assessing these interventions, it is important to consider different forms of engagement in relation to their objectives, which we present in Table 1. Over the past 10 years, the most widely used form of government engagement on climate change and related sustainable development issues has been communications campaigns. These campaigns have largely been 'one-way', from government to the public, although they have used polling and discussion groups to feed back on campaign strategy (see, for example, Darnton 2005 for a discussion of such campaigns).

Communications campaigns have been aimed primarily at raising awareness and changing behaviour. The Government has believed that these programmes would help to open up political space for collective action on climate change, by directly changing attitudes through raising awareness (interview with Jo Parry, DEFRA), as well as indirectly in the sense that individuals who commit to environmentally-friendly behaviour on a personal level are more likely to support increasingly radical action by government and others:

> 'The research supporting the [2006 Climate Change Programme] communications strategy shows that changing attitudes is an essential first step to voluntary behaviour change, so the communications strategy is intended to shift attitudes such that individual behaviour change as well as further government-led action to tackle climate change can be achieved at a later stage.' (HM Government 2006: 21)

This position is backed by a communications agency specialising in sustainable development:

> '…attitude change is extremely valuable in itself. We can generate support for policy changes, and use growing awareness of climate change to open the door to behaviour change.' (Futerra Sustainability Communications Ltd 2005)

More recently, there has been increasing interest in deliberative approaches that involve two-way engagement. In 2005, the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (a joint initiative by the National Consumer Council and Sustainable Development Commission) held a one-and-a-half day deliberative forum with consumers. The aims were to explore views and attitudes towards potential interventions, to understand current consumer aspirations and provide insights that can shape and influence future policy (Opinion Leader Research 2005). In May 2007, DEFRA held a similar deliberative event, which it called a Citizen's Summit, as part of its Act on CO_2 campaign. This had two key stated objectives: to help government design policy to maximise positive individual behaviour on climate change, as part of the draft Climate Change Bill consultation; and to drive awareness, information and debate on climate change (DEFRA 2007).

Finally, the current DEFRA-funded Climate Change Communications Initiative pursues multiple objectives through a variety of local interventions. Most projects funded by the Initiative aim to change behaviour, through influencing attitudes. However, some projects also aim to engage people in political action, and seek to work specifically through local opinion leaders.

Overall, it is clear that, at least so far, these forms of engagement have not yet succeeded in opening up political space for bold policies on climate change, especially with the wider public.

To open up political space in a meaningful way, engagement needs to reach a large public (see also discussion in Section 7 below), and the form of engagement that has the most reach is mass communications. These campaigns are still evolving, and much has been learned from early failures, both in terms of audience segmentation and language used (Ereaut and Segnit 2006, Retallack *et al* 2007).

However, the connections between influencing attitudes and behaviour on the one hand and opening up political space for government policy on the other are complex (see Section 7 below), and are not overtly made in most strategies. Government and its agencies such as the Energy Saving Trust should continue to run and

Table 1. Objectives and forms of engagement on climate change

	Communications campaigns	Deliberative events	Stakeholder consultations	Local-level initiatives
Attitude change	Act on CO_2 (DEFRA), Save Your 20% (EST), Climate Change Communications Initiative (DEFRA)			Climate Change Communications Initiative (DEFRA)
Behaviour change	Act on CO_2 (DEFRA), Are you doing your bit? (DEFRA), Save Your 20% (EST)			Climate Change Communications Initiative (DEFRA)
Community action	Every Action Counts (DEFRA and Community Development Foundation)			Climate Change Communications Initiative (DEFRA)
Support for public policy (political space)	Act on CO_2 (DEFRA), Save Your 20% (EST), Climate Change Communications Initiative (DEFRA)		Energy White Paper consultations, Draft Climate Change Bill meetings	Climate Change Communications Initiative (DEFRA)
Input to policy		Citizen's Summit on climate change, Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (NCC*/SDC)	Energy White Paper consultations, Draft Climate Change Bill meetings	
Test reactions to policy		Citizen's Summit on climate change, Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (NCC/SDC)		
Testing public understanding	Polling and focus groups to assess campaign impact	Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (NCC/SDC)		

*NCC=National Consumer Council

refine communications campaigns, which can influence behaviour and may have some impact on willingness to support bolder policies. But there is a strong case for taking a more direct approach.

6. Opening up political space

How, then, is political space opened up in practice? Despite political constraints, governments do not always act in popular ways. Sometimes they take risks, seek to open up political space to allow debate on a charged issue, and successfully get acceptance for new policies.

Below we give two successful examples of this process that show some of the elements involved, including the ways in which actors engage with the public, interest groups and the media.

The pensions debate

By the end of the 1990s, with an ageing population, concern was growing in government about a potential crisis in pensions. In late 2002, an independent Pensions Commission was set up, under the charismatic leadership of Adair Turner. The remit of the Commission was to review the adequacy of private pension saving in the UK, and whether the Government needed to step in to ensure more savings.

Under Turner's leadership, the Commission spent two years carefully gathering evidence using a range of methods, which included hearings and major stakeholder meetings. It then framed the issue very clearly and simply as a series of unavoidable choices, between a rise in pensioner poverty, older retirement ages, more savings or more tax (Pensions Commission 2004). This clear menu of unavoidable choices and the evidence behind it were consistently and widely promoted through the media and various public forums over an extended period.

The effect of this phase of the Commission was to open up political space for an informed debate on new policies on pensions. Importantly, at this stage the Commission did not promote any particular solution, but simply laid out the options, which allowed wide-ranging public debate. Phil Wynn-Owen, Director General of Strategy and Pensions at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), describes it as a debate that was previously between 6,000 specialists being opened up to 60 million citizens.

Only later, in the second phase, did the Commission make recommendations for solutions that were then adopted by the DWP, which has continued to keep the development of policy open to input from stakeholders and the public through various forms of engagement.

The London congestion charge

In the case of the London congestion charge, there was clear acceptance in the media and among the public that congestion was a problem in central London. However, while there always a degree of support for a congestion charge as a solution, there was also significant opposition. Thus Mayor Ken Livingstone, by campaigning on a manifesto commitment to introduce the charge (and then pointing out that if it did not work he could be voted out at the subsequent election), took on quite considerable political risk (Richards 2005).

Livingstone's team successfully framed the issue as a choice between maintaining the status quo, with congestion getting steadily worse, or challenging it through introducing a congestion charge. The Mayor committed to use a large part of the revenues from the scheme to improve and extend bus services. He repeatedly made the same basic arguments for the charge in London and national media over the course of the 18 months leading up to the introduction of the scheme. A single clear objective – reducing congestion – was kept to the fore throughout.

The Mayor chose to consult widely with stakeholders and the general public in London, and although only a small proportion participated, the Transport for London team did make some changes to the scheme design in response, to reduce opposition. They also rebutted criticisms that the scheme would not be fair or feasible (Dix 2006). Livingstone also benefited from the fact that a large part of the detailed policy and scheme design work had been done before the creation of the Greater London Authority, allowing decisive and speedy production of scheme details.

However, openness about the proposals and the political leadership of the Mayor were the main factors in the successful introduction of the charge in the face of considerable public uncertainty.

7. Re-thinking engagement for political space

Although the sustainable development movement and many politicians now take it for granted that the case for action on climate change is clear, a significant part of the population does not. This is not because they believe climate change is not happening – polls show a high level of public awareness and concern. Rather, it is in part at least because there is no consensus on an overall strategy for tackling climate change, especially in terms of what happens within the UK. There is a lot of debate, but much of it is fragmented and misinformed, and it is taking place in an atmosphere of widespread distrust of the motivations of politicians.

In this final section, we draw on the evidence in this paper to recommend that the SDC should advise the Government to establish an independent process, such as a Commission or an Inquiry with a strong leader, over a two- to three-year time frame, to lead an evidence-based national debate on what strategic direction the UK should take to reduce carbon emissions. It is only by constructing a wider consensus through such a process that the political space for more radical action can be created.

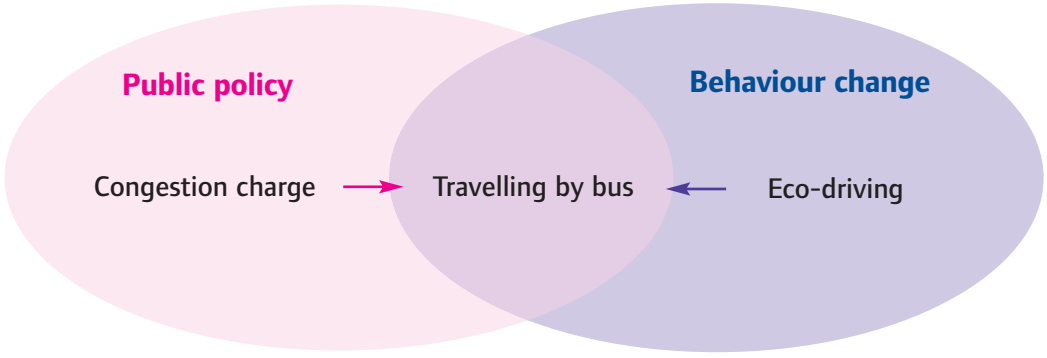
The case for a more direct approach

Government engagement on climate change, in the form of communications campaigns, consultations and deliberative events, may have played a part in the change in awareness about the issue, and a change in attitudes among many people. However, the impacts on *behaviour* have been less clear. Nor have these efforts so far succeeded in opening up *political space* for bolder policies, partly because this is only an indirect objective of many of these types of engagement initiatives.

A direct approach is needed mainly because bold measures need near-unanimous support, and that does not yet exist. Taking a more direct approach to opening up political space alongside making efforts to change behaviours will also be mutually beneficial and reinforcing. This is because there are key points of overlap and interaction between behaviour change and public policy (see Figure 1).

Efforts to change behaviour usually start with changes that are under the direct control of the individual (for example, driving in a

Figure 1. The interaction between public policy and behaviour change



way that uses less fuel – or 'eco-driving'). Next steps might be bigger (such as using the bus instead of driving), but at some point usually require some new or improved infrastructure or system to be in place (in this case, a good bus service). Such infrastructures are of course the outcome of public policy – individuals cannot provide them on their own. The absence of such infrastructures is often a key barrier to behaviour change (thus attempts to persuade the rural population to use their cars less will not work without alternatives in the form of good bus services).

On the other hand, getting support for particular public policies, especially taxes, pricing or regulation (for example, congestion charging or road pricing), is often dependent on alternatives being available to allow individuals to change their actions (for example, using the bus instead). Without a good fit with the options that people might want to choose, policy can easily be labelled as punitive (for example, 'stealth taxes').

The case for a more open approach

As well as being more direct, there is also a good case for being more open.

Governments tend either to follow public opinion (with engagement taking the form of focus groups and opinion polling) or to try to lead it (with engagement taking the form of information or political campaigns). A genuine appeal to meet in the middle, with an admission that government does not have all the answers, is rare. Furthermore, the public is generally able to detect when engagement that claims to do this, in fact does not.[1]

Could such an open approach move society as a whole closer to consensus on a strategic route to reducing emissions in the UK and contributing to international efforts?

The main argument for this approach is that climate change is a new kind of challenge – a problem that requires collective action on an unprecedented scale, that brings with it massive uncertainties and involves impacts over long time-periods. It is a problem that government cannot solve on its own, but rather one in which everyone must engage in deciding a way forward – 'doing their bit' not only in terms of behaviour change but also in terms of political engagement.

A key problem facing a government trying to use an open approach is that it is difficult to do so if the issue being debated is subject to intense party political competition, which climate change policies currently are. Wider government engagement with the public would either need an enforceable cross-party agreement, or to be handed over to a more independent process.

However, an open approach should be possible. The Prime Minister has now opened up an agenda for constitutional debate that includes proposals to consult much more widely on major decisions affecting people's lives, through citizen's juries and other methods.[2]

One obvious model for this kind of approach is pensions policy, where a complex inter-temporal issue to which government did not have all the answers was first investigated by an independent commission (see Section 6 above), and then taken up by a government department in an unusually open way. The Department for Work and Pensions' approach has been guided by the view expressed (in an interview with the authors) by Phil Wynn-Owen, its Director General for Strategy and Pensions: 'You have to be modest about your ability to solve any large scale public policy problem without stakeholders and without public buy-in.' The DWP has not only developed a close relationship with stakeholders (defined to include the media and MPs) through a continual process involving a rolling series of meetings and consultations, but has also used large deliberative polling workshops with the public to inform policy direction.

Principles for engagement

Based on the analysis in this paper, we argue that, to be successful, direct and open engagement with the public to open up space for debate on tackling climate change will need to be based on a number of key principles:

- Establish credibility of the actors
- Target sceptics
- Frame choices
- Act at scale

Establish credibility of the actors

First, any programme of direct engagement must have credibility with the public, and with sceptical interest groups and media.

A key problem facing government is the persistently low level of trust in politicians among the public (Marquand 2004, NCC/SDC 2006, Duffy *et al* 2005). Rising public distrust in the Government as a source of information (Duffy *et al* 2005) is particularly challenging. This can be seen, for example, in distrust of government figures on possible road-user charges. Environmental taxation is presumed to be about taxation by 'stealth', and regulation about an over-intrusive government.

Being completely open and clear about intentions is one way of responding to this situation. One reason why the introduction of the congestion charge was successful is that Ken Livingstone was very clear about his intentions, and about the use of scheme revenues. This approach involves political risk, but this itself can earn respect and trust from the electorate. Not being open about intentions of course also carries a risk.

An open style of engagement should only be embarked upon if it can be carried through. Government should set out plans and rationale for engagement in a clear way. The public must be convinced that government could actually change its position as a result of the engagement process. Thus questions about the Government's intention in setting up the 2003 GM Nation process as an open debate were raised partly because it was clear that the

1. This appeared to be the case with the GM Nation public debate, for example, which was criticised for distorting findings from deliberative events.
2. See the Constitutional Reform statement of 3 July 2007 at www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page12274.asp

Government had already decided that a pro-GM strategy should be pursued (Understanding Risk Team 2004). The current consultation on nuclear power carries similar risks.

A second element to credibility (as seen in both of our examples in section 6 above relating to the roles of Adair Turner and Ken Livingstone) involves strong, convincing (and if possible, charismatic) leadership with good communication skills.

Ultimately, if distrust is deemed too powerful for government to be able to lead an engagement process, then an independent vehicle should be used. This could be a Commission or Inquiry with a strong leader whose independence is credible, or possibly the GM Nation model of a national debate involving a range of trusted institutions such as the BBC, or the Church.

The combination of the uniqueness of climate change as a challenge, and the distrust of government in areas such as taxation and regulation, strongly suggests that such an independent route makes sense.

A third requirement in terms of credibility is a strong analysis on a sound evidence base. Again, the examples of opening political space in section 6 above bear this out. In promoting the congestion charge, Livingstone benefited enormously from detailed work on scheme design that had been done before the creation of the GLA (Richards 2005). This gave greater credibility to his arguments that the scheme would work.

In the Pensions Commission, Turner had a dedicated secretariat which assembled a large amount of evidence to underpin his simple but compelling set of policy choices. This evidence was published in a series of papers. His Commission involved the best experts on the issues, and also drew on the work of officials in the right departments.

This approach was continued by DWP once it took up the work. Phil Wynn Owen argues that to engage successfully, 'You have to do it with a crack team off a professional evidence base', and that without this, there is a danger of 'just adding to the chaos and unease' (interview with the authors).

Because it is a complex, uncertain process whose mechanics are not visible and are mainly still in the future, producing this evidence base for engagement on climate change is particularly important. The public is already flooded with information through the media and other sources both on impacts and on possible solutions, but much of it is presented in decontextualised, confusing and misleading ways (Ereaut and Segnit 2006).

It is not clear that people understand the distinction between the climate change we are already committed to, further change we could avoid through mitigation policies, or the effects of both. There is disproportionate concern about potential large-scale catastrophic events far off in time (such as major sea level rise) or with low probability (such as the Gulf Stream ceasing), and relatively little public understanding of near-term and virtually certain impacts such as summer heat waves and flooding from intense rainfall, or their implications for health, infrastructure, and property.

Providing people with more information in these circumstances is unlikely to be sufficient to change their views significantly and can even be counter-productive (Lewis *et al* 2007, Retallack *et al* 2007). Rather, what is needed is analysis that organises, clarifies and makes relevant information more visible, to underpin the framing of choices (see below).

There is also the need to produce an evidence base that is relevant for the UK. This is important because people will become most engaged with issues that are near to them in space and time. The obvious place to go to for an evidence base about both impact and solutions is the Stern Review, which has already had a profound impact among certain audiences[3]. But the Stern Review was primarily designed as an international report, and much of the follow-up has been for international audiences. Its discussions of policy have an international focus[4]. The report is also highly technical. What is needed is to build on the Stern Review to provide an evidence base that addresses the UK situation, and is accessible enough to enable a wide debate.

Engage with sceptics

As discussed in Section 3 above, there are clear divisions in public opinion about climate change, as well as in the media, business and civil society groups. Engagement for political space (ranging from debates in the media through to the full range of consultative and deliberative techniques) needs to be targeted clearly at specific audiences: the strategies needed for convincing sceptics are very different to those aimed at people in the middle ground.

The first step is to analyse and segment audiences. It is crucial to separate out public groups into those that will be allies, those that are indifferent and those that are hostile both to engaging in debate at all and to specific solutions.

Here, psychographic models for segmenting the public are a useful means of moving beyond the problems inherent in working simply with socio-economic analysis (Retallack *et al* 2007). Communications campaigns – for instance those run by the Energy Saving Trust – have developed more sophisticated segmentation methods over time, and much can be learned from this experience (interview with Jon MacGowan, EST). However, it should be borne in mind that these campaigns are aimed primarily at changing behaviour, rather than at engaging people to debate national strategy, and segmentation for these two purposes may not be the same.

Beyond sceptical portions of the public, there may also be a need to engage directly with hostile opinion formers such as newspaper editors and key figures from civil society groups, and these should also be identified early on.

Frame choices

The examples of the Pensions Commission and the London

3. For example, in spurring Stuart Rose, Chief Executive at Marks and Spencer, to take action to reduce the company's carbon footprint.
4. This focus has been reinforced by Ministers who want to emphasise the importance of internationally coordinated action (see, for example, Alexander 2006). While this is not a bad thing in itself, without balance, it runs the risk of undermining the credibility of domestic action.

Congestion Charge in section 6, and of road pricing and green taxation in section 4, all point to the critical role played by *framing*.

Language is one powerful way of creating space for political change, because we understand the world through linguistic 'frames' (Lakoff 2003, Cialdini 2003). These frames combine specific words with ways of thinking about an issue. Once frames are established in people's minds, they govern the way that new information is absorbed (or discounted).

The challenge for government and the sustainable development movement is that parts of the media and some civil society groups have quite successfully re-framed many sustainable development policies as being about tax and government intrusion into privacy. For example, the public tends to see road pricing within a tax frame rather than a congestion or environmental frame. As a result they see it as unfair to poorer drivers and doubt its feasibility, even though the evidence is weak on both these counts (Bird and Morris 2006, YouGov 2006). In media treatment of environmental taxation, key frames are 'stealth taxes', a lack of fairness, and a lack of trust in the Government (or indeed politicians more widely) to use the revenue effectively to reduce emissions. These frames resonate with much of the public because of the low level of trust in politicians already noted.

The challenge is therefore how to re-frame these issues. Again, the examples in section 6 show not only that this is possible, but also how important the process of framing (or re-framing) is for opening up political space.

In the case of the Pensions Commission, Turner's team managed to frame the pensions problem as a simple clear choice between a problem ('pensioner poverty') and a short menu of possible solutions. This limited the options up for discussion, but also drove people away from a consequence whose name ('pensioner poverty') implied unacceptability, towards policy solutions.

In presenting the London congestion charge, Livingstone framed the issue as a choice between the charge (as the only viable solution) or letting congestion get progressively worse. He was careful to frame the charge as something he was reluctant to bring in (to avoid the impression that he was simply after additional revenue), but that was a necessary measure to avoid chaos.

In both cases, framing keyed into core values, including fairness and practical feasibility.

In relation to climate change, it is worth noting that the Stern Review has helped frame taking action to mitigate climate change as economically sensible, and not anti-growth. However, as noted above, the report was both highly technical and international in focus. What is needed now is a process that takes up the Stern Review evidence base and frames, and gives them a more UK focus, with a vigorous process of engagement with parts of the public, media and civil society.

One key question is whether this should be done at the level of a UK strategy to mitigate climate change as a whole, or in relation to particular policy areas and interventions.

On the one hand, evidence shows that people only connect with an issue when it is specific to an area of activity (Lewis *et al* 2007). So, for example, someone might be concerned about climate change, but not worry about the impacts of their flights – because other issues in relation to flying matter more to them. Trying to bring the broad issue of climate change to bear on flying is unlikely to be successful. This implies that specific approaches to address the frame of flying are needed and each policy agenda has to win the political ground again.

On the other hand, what is lacking politically is precisely a consensus on a broad strategy for reducing emissions generally, a consensus that will require a debate that is not restricted to any one sector. Thus for some people, a re-framing of road pricing may not work, as they feel this is bringing the debate down to too tactical a level too soon, foreclosing other options that they wish to be included within the frame. There is often a tendency for sectoral debates to end up displacing responsibility to another sector, and the only way to avoid this is to be comprehensive in approach.

The answer to this dilemma will lie in developing and testing out frames through engagement processes. Deliberative events and focus groups with a range of target audiences will be particularly useful, as will straightforward evidence from polling. This may be an iterative process as different frames are tested with groups and through polling.

Act at scale

An independent Commission or other vehicle leading a national debate on a strategic direction for mitigating emissions could use the full range of engagement processes and channels, including deliberative events, local initiatives, meetings, hearings, marketing campaigns and consultations.

However, successfully opening-up of political space means grappling with the trade-off between scale and interaction. On the one hand, opening up political space means engaging with a mass audience, which means working through the mass media. Deliberative events are usually aimed at policy development or testing responses to policies, and there is little evidence that the political effects of large-scale deliberative events such as the Government's 'Your Health, Your Care, Your Say' and 'Pensions Day' extend beyond the participants.

On the other hand, events that allow the public or stakeholders to have an active role get people's attention and input in a way that one-way access through mass media or marketing channels do not.

The challenge is to bring together the reach of mass media and large civil society organisations with two-way engagement processes that command people's attention and involvement:

- One important intermediate engagement strategy may be to involve key actors in the mass media (editors and journalists) in small-group workshops, together with expert resource people where needed. The DWP includes journalists in stakeholder events successfully.
- Another might be to marry two-way approaches with the mass media, for example through setting up a 'People's Parliament' on our response to climate change, and then televising the deliberations over a long period. Electoral reform in British Columbia was opened up in this way in 2004 through a citizen's assembly of 160 people which was continually in the media over

the course of a year, successfully getting wide engagement from the public (see Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform website: www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public). Digital television may also offer opportunities for viewer voting on such programmes.

- Another approach might be to encourage and support civil society organisations with local memberships to hold debates and events, and feed findings back, along the lines of the GM Nation model. For example, the Climate Change Communications Initiative is experimenting with projects that are engaging with the National Federation of Women's Institutes, and senior communicators at local level.

Finally, successful engagement strategies need adequate time and resources.

Major enquiries and Commissions that succeed in framing a debate, lead the airing of views and build public opinion towards a majority view, take months and sometimes years. For example, the Pensions Commission took three years to complete its work. The DWP has continued that momentum since, but Phil Wynn Owen emphasises that a continuous process is needed to create a sense of momentum and inevitable consensus. Little will be achieved by one-off events, without a related evidence base, frame or strategy context.

At the same time, engagement on a large scale also takes resources. The DWP's 'Pension Days' cost around £1 milllion.

8. Conclusions

> 'While our system of representative democracy – local as well as national – is at the heart of our constitution, it can be enhanced by devolving more power directly to the people and I propose we start the debate and consult on empowering citizens and communities [including through]…new rights for the British people to be consulted through mechanisms such as "citizens juries" on major decisions affecting their lives.' (Statement by the Prime Minister on constitutional reform, 4 July 2007)

Evidence suggests that, although climate change is now widely seen as a big problem, there is not yet a consensus in the UK on what the country should do about it, particularly in terms of a strategic direction for policy measures. Many policy interventions are currently framed in negative terms, such as stealth taxes, or intrusions into privacy. Politicians of all parties are aware of the possibility of a strong backlash from a significant portion of the public (and the media) against bold measures.

There is a strong case for government engaging with the public, media and interest groups, to try to forge such a consensus. This would require the development of a strong evidence base (to which the Stern Review contributes much), and clear framing of the issues to guide the debate, which will usefully involve a range of engagement techniques, but must work at scale to be successful (including use of the mass media).

Depending on the prospects for a cross-party approach and the timing of a general election, this would best be handled through establishing an independent process, such as a Commission or Inquiry with a strong leader, over a two- to three-year time frame, to lead an evidence-based national debate on what strategic direction the UK should take to reduce carbon emissions. It is only by constructing a wider consensus through such a process that the political space for more radical action can be created.

Appendix 1 – List of interviewees

Jo Parry, Head of Strategic Marketing, DEFRA

Ashok Sinha, Co-ordinator, Stop Climate Chaos

Phil Wynn-Jones, Director General, Strategy and Pensions, Department for Work and Pensions

Jon MacGowan, Head of Consumer Marketing, Energy Saving Trust

Andrew Pendleton, Senior Policy Adviser, Christian Aid

A number of special advisers to Cabinet ministers were also interviewed, but requested that the interviews be off-the-record.

Appendix 2 – Road pricing petition case study

The principle of variable road pricing as a means to manage demand for road space has been around for a long time. However, it was not until the Mayor of London introduced the Congestion Charge in 2003 that a major scheme was established in the UK.

Emboldened by the success of the London Congestion Charge (see below), political leaders began to express interest in a national scheme. The Labour Party included in its 2005 general election manifesto the commitment to explore the use of road pricing on a wider basis. Following the election the ground work was laid for a series of pilots, through the Transport Innovation Fund (Bird and Morris 2006).

The Conservatives have been somewhat equivocal on road pricing, but pledged in 2005 to 'engage responsibly' with the debate. The Liberal Democrats have made specific proposals for a national scheme.

At the level of political party leadership, there is thus a consensus to at least look seriously at the road pricing option. This also extends to some business groups, including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Freight Transport Association, and even, to some extent, motoring groups the AA and RAC. Environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth also support road pricing in principle (Bird and Morris 2006).

However, no such consensus exists within the UK public. While congestion is consistently identified as one of the biggest problems with driving, support for road pricing in as reported in surveys in generally low. Typically the most popular solution for tackling congestion put forward by the public when polled is to provide more and cheaper public transport (ibid). A 2006 nationwide poll conducted for ippr found that a majority of people were more inclined to be against road pricing than for it (Bird and Morris 2006), and other polls give similar findings.

The dynamics of the debate on road pricing changed dramatically at the beginning of December 2006. The initial catalyst was the *Eddington Transport Study*, which endorsed the principle of road pricing (Eddington 2006). Much of the broadsheet media was supportive but the Daily Express described the policy as 'toxic'. While the RAC, the AA and the Society of Motor Manufacturing Trades welcomed the Report, a small pressure group, the Association of British Drivers, came out strongly against it, and became an increasingly audible voice in the media.

The next step for protesters was the online petition. The online system for petitions to the Prime Minister started on 14 November 2006. At the beginning of December, Peter Roberts, a member of the Association of British Drivers, from Telford, apparently angered by support for road pricing expressed in the Eddington report, set up an electronic petition calling on the Prime Minister to 'Scrap the planned vehicle tracking and road pricing policy'.

The e-petition grew very rapidly, through a symbiotic relationship with parts of the media. Roberts's petition was only one of several similar ones, but managed to gather an unusually large of amount of signatures, reaching 40,000 by the time the *Observer* ran a story on it on 17 December. The *Telegraph* then picked it up and ran a number of stories giving the petition prominence. The publicity meant that the number of signatures began climbing rapidly, while the petition itself became a media story. From around 70,000 at the start of January, the numbers grew to 200,000 by 10 January, and to almost 600,000 when the *Daily Mail* picked up the story at the end of the month, with the headline '590,682 sign Britain's biggest petition against road pricing…and you can join the fight here' (27 January). The *Mirror* then exhorted readers to join a 'No to Toll Tax' on 5 February.

From the middle of February the petition dominated the news agenda – see the National Alliance Against Tolls website for a full record of the media coverage[5] – until the deadline on 20 February 2007, at which point over 1.8 million people had signed up. On the one hand, this represents less than 4 per cent of voters. But on the other it represents a huge number of signatories to a political petition, one of the largest ever recorded. As a popular revolt related to driving, the petition gathered comparisons with the 2000 fuel-duty-rise protests, but if anything was more politically challenging, because the latter was led by HGV drivers, while the petition was not only a revolt of ordinary car drivers, but also had lot of support in the media. It also seemed to touch a nerve of more general anti-government and anti-tax sentiment – road pricing is more often seen within a tax frame than within an environmental one (Bird and Morris 2006).[6]

In contrast to the petition and the largely hostile press, interest groups supportive at least of the principles of road pricing remained mainly quiet. Only Friends of the Earth put out a press release while the petition was still in circulation, in which it argued that road pricing is part of the solution to Britain's transport problems, and challenging opponents to explain what they would do instead. It stated: 'Building roads and widening motorways is not the answer. It

5. www.notolls.org.uk/feb07news.htm
6. This was clearly the case, for instance, among participants in a group discussion on the road pricing debate in Newcastle in which one of the authors took part for ITV's *Tonight with Trevor McDonald*.

has been tried before and has failed' (Friends of the Earth 2007). No other major environmental group issued a press release.

After the petition closed, business and motoring groups commented. On 21 February the CBI defended the principle of road pricing, but argued against revenue-raising:

'The central objective of any scheme has to be to reduce congestion – not to become a convenient revenue-generator. And if more money is raised than is returned through cuts in road tax or fuel duty, it should be treated as additional resources to be spent improving the transport system' (CBI 2007). The RAC Foundation also issued a press release on the day after the petition closed, distancing itself from road pricing as a policy, talking about a package of measures and floating the idea of a voluntary scheme (RAC Foundation 2007).

By contrast, the Association of British Drivers issued five press releases over the course of January and February highlighting the petition. Although a small pressure group, their comment was carried by many newspapers during the petition story.

The petition put enormous political pressure on the Government over a sustained period, with both the Prime Minister and the Transport Secretary's responses to the petition becoming news stories (for example, *The Telegraph* 2007, *The Mirror* 2007, *The Times* 2007a, BBC 2007[7]). The Prime Minister went to the lengths of sending a long email reply to each petitioner.

Appendix 3 – Green taxation case study

A sense of how the Government is hemmed in on the issue of environmental taxes can be gained from looking at media coverage and reaction from non-government organisations (NGOs) in late 2006, in the period from late October, when the Stern Review was published, through to the Pre-Budget Report in December, and in mid-March 2007 during a week of particularly intense political competition over the green agenda.

What is striking in the coverage of the Stern Review is the way in which a large section of the press (and especially the popular press) focused largely on green taxes. The *Telegraph* trailed the publication with a series of stories in the business pages warning the Government not to increase taxes, based on statements by the CBI and others.

At the same time, environmental groups were pressing the Chancellor for a tough package of measures, and arguing that green taxation was an essential part of this package (Friends of the Earth 2006, WWF-UK 2006).

On 30 October, the day of the Review's launch, the *Daily Mail* highlighted taxes on air travel ('Air passengers face push for green taxes to help fight climate change'), while the *Sun* led with the headline: 'Pay up…or the planet gets it', saying 'Hard working families face crippling new bills as the Government fights global warming with a raft of stinging taxes.' The Sun provided further details in an article entitled: 'Five ways you'll get caught – to fight global warming the government is going to raise taxes on the biggest culprits.' Many other media sources picked up on this last point, referring to proposals from David Miliband that were leaked just before the Stern Review launch.

Green tax controversy continued to drive coverage the next day, with the *Sun* covering 'Green tax on your weekly shop', and a leader arguing that:

> '…individual taxpayers are already taxed up to the hilt. We know that climate change has arrived, but there is plausible evidence that it may be beyond our control. So why should taxpayers in smog-free Britain pay more while China builds a dirty coal-fired station every week?....And, crucially, can we trust this or any other government to spend our money wisely to solve Britain's problems – still less of the world at large?' ('The Sun Says', 31 October 2006)

The *Daily Express* led with the headline 'Blair's green fight is just a smokescreen' (31 October) and quoting a spokesman from the TaxPayer's Alliance. Similar opinion followed in the Mirror ('I refuse to waste my time on green myth' 1 November 2006), claiming that David Miliband: 'has rushed in to announce he'll save us all from a disaster greater than two World Wars by taxing us to kingdom come.'

In the face of this onslaught a report by the *Mirror*, entitled 'Our last chance: report calls for action on global warming apocalypse', showed how the Treasury felt the need to be very cautious:

> 'Over the weekend it was revealed Environment Secretary David Miliband has called for a menu of green taxes. These include duty of flights, pay-as-you-drive road taxes and higher duty on energy wasting household products such as washing machines. But the Chancellor yesterday indicated he will not burden lower earning taxpayers in the fight to control global warming. A source close to him said: "Gordon is focusing on what government and business can do to tackle climate change. As far as he is concerned the way forward is global."' (*The Mirror*, 31 October 2006)

Green taxation came to the fore again in early December 2006 with the Pre-Budget Report, which announced an increase in fuel duty in line with inflation (the first since 1999) and a doubling of air passenger duty.

There had been heavy lobbying from environmental organisations to show evidence of implementation in the wake of the Stern Review, and Friends of the Earth kept up the pressure via parts of the media (Friends of the Earth 2006b, 2006c), but attacked the Government when it came to the results (2006d).

7. Titles of news stories and dates for these and subsequent press articles are provided in the full reference section.

Some of the media focused on the green aspects of the measures (for example, *Mirror* 2006). However, most newspapers again reflected the popular hostility to increased taxes in these areas (for example *The Sun* 2006, *Daily Mail* 2006). The *Daily Mail* described motorists and businesses as reacting with 'fury' to the tax rises ('Anger at Brown's fuel hike', 6 December 2006). Both the *Sun* and *Daily Mail* quoted representatives from the airline industry criticising the increase in air passenger duty. The *Mail* invoked the memory of the 1999 fuel duty protests and the more recent road pricing petition by quoting a spokesman from the Association of British Drivers.

In mid-March 2007, in a week following the publication of the first 2007 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there was a particularly intense period of bidding up of a green stance by politicians. The Government launched the Climate Change Bill, Gordon Brown made a major speech laying out his green credentials as a likely future Prime Minister, and David Cameron attempted to steal Brown's thunder by floating the idea of rationing people to one flight a year and replacing air passenger duty with a new tax on flights.

The response to Cameron's plans was positive in the Independent, Guardian and Observer (with the latter quoting approval from Tony Juniper, director of Friends of the Earth). However, in the traditionally Conservative media the idea was greeted with howls of protest (*The Times* 2007b, *The Sun* 2007). The *Sun* ran a leader saying: 'David Cameron's masterplan to make the sky bluer and keep the planet green could have us all red with rage', warning 'our Dave' that he must 'keep his feet on the ground' (12 March). On 17 March the *Daily Mail* reported on an opinion poll on the Conservative's policy, warning that:

> 'David Cameron's green tax on air travel risks becoming a massive vote loser for the Tory leader, according to a new poll [...] The exclusive BPIX survey for The Mail on Sunday reveals that two in three people – 66 per cent – believe the new levies on flying will do nothing to reduce the number of flights people take but will simply increase the overall tax burden.'

References

Note: web references correct December 2007

Alexander D (2007) 'Transport: Acting on CO_2?' Speech by Secretary of State for Transport, Douglas Alexander at the Institute for Public Policy Research event - Transport: Acting on CO_2?, London, 28 March

BBC (2007) 'Minister resolute on road tolls', 20 February, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6377567.stm

Bird J and J Morris (2006) *Steering through change: Winning the debate on road pricing* London: Institute for Public Policy Research

Cialdini R (2003) 'Crafting normative messages to protect the environment' *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12, 4: 105-09

Confederation of British Industry (CBI) (2007) 'Road pricing benefits could be huge, but only if government gets details right – CBI', press release, 21 February

Daily Mail (2006) 'Brown in £1bn tax raid on air travel', 7 December

Darnton A (2004) *Driving Public Behaviours for Sustainable Lifestyles*, report 2 of desk research, London: DEFRA

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2007) 'Citizens' Summit puts climate change in the spotlight', news release, 12 May, available at: www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/070512a.htm

Dix M (2006) *Making Charging Acceptable: The Central London Experience* Presentation to an ippr seminar on road pricing, December

Dunleavy P and B O'Leary (1987) *Theories of the State: The Politics of Liberal Democracy* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Duffy B, Hall S and Williams M (2005) *Who do you believe? Trust in government information* London: MORI

Eddington R (2006) *The Eddington Transport Study – The case for action: Sir Rod Eddington's advice to Government* London: HMSO, available at: www.dft.gov.uk/162259/187604/206711/executivesummary

Energy Saving Trust (2007) *Green Barometer: Measuring environmental attitude*, April, London: Energy Saving Trust

Ereaut G and N Signit (2006) *Warm Words: How are we telling the climate story and can we tell it better?* London: Institute for Public Policy Research, available at: www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=485

Friends of the Earth (2007) 'Road pricing is part of the solution to transport problems', press release, 13 February

Friends of the Earth (2006a) 'Stern measures required', press release, 30 October

Friends of the Earth (2006b) 'Chancellor must tackle climate change in pre budget report', press release, 30 November

Friends of the Earth (2006c) 'Pre Budget Report – Brown must

tackle climate change', press release, 5 December

Friends of the Earth (2006d) 'Brown Budget fails green test yet again', press release, 6 December

Futerra Sustainability Communications Ltd (2005) *Communications Strategy on Climate Change for the Climate Change Communications Working Group*, February

HM Government (2006) *Statement of the UK Climate Change Programme*

ICM (2006) 'Environment poll 7-8 March' London: ICM/Sunday Mirror, available at www.icmresearch.co.uk

Jacobs M (1997) 'The quality of life: social goods and the politics of consumption' in Jacobs M (ed.) *Greening the Millennium? The new politics of the environment* Oxford: Blackwell

Lakoff G (2003) *Simple Framing: an introduction to framing and its uses in politics* Berkeley: Rockridge Institute

Lewis M (2007) *States of Reason: Freedom, responsibility and the governing of behaviour change* London: Institute for Public Policy Research, available at: www.ippr.org.uk/publications andreports/publication.asp?id=548

Lightfoot C and T Steinberg (2005) Presentation, www.politicalsurvey2005.com/themap.pdf

Marquand D (2004) *The Decline of the Public: The Hollowing out of Citizenship* London: Polity Press

Mirror, The (2007a) 'Blair: We can't go on without toll tax', 7 February

Mirror, The (2006) 'Chancellor targets cars, planes and carbon-free homes to save planet' 7 December

Morris J (2006) *Removing the barriers to community participation* London: Institute for Public Policy Research

National Consumer Council (NCC)/Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) (2006) *I will if you will: Towards sustainable consumption* London: Sustainable Consumption Roundtable

Opinion Leader Research (2005) *Shifting opinions and changing behaviours*, November

Pearce N (2007) 'Fair rules: Rethinking fairness' *Public Policy Research* 14, 1: 11-22

Pensions Commission (2004) *Pensions: Challenges and Choices – The First Report of the Pensions Commission* London: TSO

RAC Foundation (2007) 'Road Pricing – the RAC Foundation's view', press release, 21 February

Retallack S, Lawrence T with M Lockwood (2007) *Positive Energy: Harnessing people power to prevent climate change* London: Institute for Public Policy Research

Richards M (2005) *Congestion Charging in London: The policy and the politics* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Roberts S and J Thumim (2006) *Rough guide to Personal Carbon Trading, Report for DEFRA*, Bristol: Centre for Sustainable Energy

Starkey R and K Anderson (2005) *Domestic Tradable Quotas: A policy instrument for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use*, Technical Report 39, Norwich: Tyndall Centre

Stern N (2006) *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* London: HM Treasury, available at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/ independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/ster nreview_index.cfm

Sun, The (2007) 'How Tory tax would hit you', 13 March

Sun, The (2006) 'Motorists and air travellers were both hit today in Chancellor Gordon Brown's Pre-Budget Report', 6 December

Telegraph, The (2007) 'Blair defiant over road pricing row', 12 January

Times, The (2007a) 'A million motorists embarrass road price ministers', 10 February

Times, The (2007b) 'Soaring to heights of absurdity', 12 March

Understanding Risk team (2004) *A Deliberative Future? An Independent Evaluation of the GM Nation? Public Debate about the Possible Commercialisation of Transgenic Crops in Britain, 2003* Understanding Risk Working Paper 04-02, University of East Anglia, available at: www.pgeconomics.co.uk/pdf/ gm_future_top_copy_12_feb_04.pdf

WWF-UK (2006) 'Stern Review is a "wake up call to the world"', press release, 30 October

Working Party on Active Citizenship (2004) *Lonely Citizens* London: Institute for Public Policy Research

YouGov (2006) 'Survey results 30 October-1 November' London: YouGov/Daily Telegraph, available at www.yougov.com

YouGov (2007) 'Survey results 15-16 March' London: YouGov/Sunday Times available at www.yougov.com