

What would success look like for the societal challenge?

Participants in the Societal Challenge workshop, held on 12 May 2011, were asked to say what success of the challenge would look like to them. Participants included people from the Living with Environmental Change partner organisations, academics and organisations such as the National Farmers Union. Here are some of the suggestions:

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| <i>Individuals, communities, businesses and government all understand and are adapting to the risks and opportunities that a changing environment brings.</i> |
| Awareness and recognition of the synergies between nature and society, to the extent that policy delivery and governance is integrated at multiple scales. |
| <i>Attitudes and behaviours towards environmental resources and ecosystems altered, e.g. ordinary people and businesses understand the importance and value of water and are beginning to reduce their water footprint.</i> |
| Behavioural and environmental aspects of economics given more importance. |
| <i>Society more in tune with the environment and environmental challenges. Greater and shared understanding of what a greener future means for everyone</i> |
| An integrated society based on mutual understanding of our diverse needs which is working towards a shared outcome of a sustained environment. |
| <i>Government, business and society working together to enable all to live with environmental change.</i> |
| Individuals integrate sustainable behaviours into every day decisions, supported by a framework in which: policy makers make sustainable choices the logical option (by using pricing, legislative and other levers); businesses actively remove unsustainable choices from the market place and gain competitive edge from sustainable behaviour (whether from lower energy prices or enhanced permissions through the planning system); investors predicate choices on the basis of a minimum range of environmental, social and economic criteria; the NGO community form partnerships with organisations to actively reward transparency and celebrate genuine success. Sustainability is no longer considered as an “expensive” option by customers, businesses and governments! |
| <i>An economy that is progressively and genuinely re-orienting towards long term environmental sustainability.</i> |
| Decision makers will understand the impact of environmental change on all sections of society, as well as how best to engage with society to achieve the behaviour change necessary to adapt to or mitigate environmental changes. This knowledge will have been used to ensure an equitable response to climate change and a move to a thriving green economy. |
| <i>Society understands the need (and is willing) to adapt to the changing environment. This will maintain human wellbeing whilst increasing understanding of our dependence on the natural environment thus leading to more sustainable practices and ways of living.</i> |
| A joined-up, transparent, equitable environmental decision making system driven by inclusive, reflexive consultation with the appropriate individuals, communities, business and government actors and supported by the best available knowledge of the environment from a large number of sources. |
| <i>Green thinking is mainstreamed in society (not just a lifestyle choice).</i> |
| Local communities can increasingly identify and assess their own needs and problems and deliver their own services where appropriate to minimise waste and transport, whilst understanding the benefits of managing the natural environment sustainably in a local and global context. |
| <i>A society that is fairer and more sustainable, less focused on conspicuous consumption, utilising resources efficiently and effectively and conserving ecosystem services for all.</i> |
| Global and UK institutions and governance systems are transformed, providing trusted leadership devoted to developing environmentally, socially and economic resilient local communities and international relationships. |
| <i>Communities across the UK have access to the knowledge, skills and resources they need to adapt rapidly and effectively to the new and unexpected environmental changes we now face, sustaining high levels of well-being, underpinned by healthy ecosystems that continue to provide key ecosystem services</i> |
| An appreciation of the different social, political and economic drivers and barriers to low-carbon living and the political will (amongst all actors) to act. |
| <i>Individual households, communities, businesses and governments incorporating the natural environments' contribution to a healthy & sustainable society into integrated, cross sector decision making.</i> |