



Putting the environment in perspective

Poll background

More than any other British government in history, Tony Blair's eight year-old régime has consistently put the environment at the top of the policy agenda or very close to it. Many have been surprised at the breadth and depth of Britain's emerging enviro-state. Yet they have no right to be. This should have been anticipated following the 1997 Labour Party manifesto, which said:

"We will put concern for the environment at the heart of policy-making, so that it is not an add-on extra, but informs the whole of government, from housing and energy policy through to global warming and international agreements".

True to their word, they have fulfilled this intention and the new focus on environmental policy has manifested itself in a number of ways, including:

1. Compliance with the Kyoto Treaty and a public commitment to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 60% by 2050
2. Early participation in Europe-wide carbon trading
3. An increase in the scope and quantity of government capital grants for environmental projects
4. Targeted exemptions to the climate change levy and other tax régimes
5. More public money for environmental and clean energy R&D, typically through the DTI or DEFRA
6. A commitment to 10% and then 15% renewable-generated electricity via the Renewable Obligation Certificates and an aspiration of 20% by 2020
7. An enormous growth in civil servants and non-departmental government bodies/quangos focusing on the environment
8. A commensurate growth in EU and UK environmental regulation
9. A hiving off of national lottery funds to environmental causes

Cumulatively, these are far-reaching actions that stand out all by themselves. What is less understood is how completely the environment is shaping all other policy agendas. Take housing, for example. Of the

homes that are being built, 50% today are apartment blocks, deemed to be environmentally sound because of their high urban density. For all new developments, housing densities have by law been forced to increase per hectare for purported environmental benefits of energy and carbon savings, as well as green field preservation. Yet these environmental calculations have excluded the resultant costs of social breakdown from tiny unaffordable homes and the resultant property inflation resulting from not building the homes people want. This has become very marked in the last few years.

Environmental concerns have also had a heavy influence on energy policy – now indivisible from the environment. The construction of nuclear power plants is back on the agenda – astonishing for a Labour government – principally for environmental policy reasons, since nuclear power produces virtually no carbon dioxide emissions.

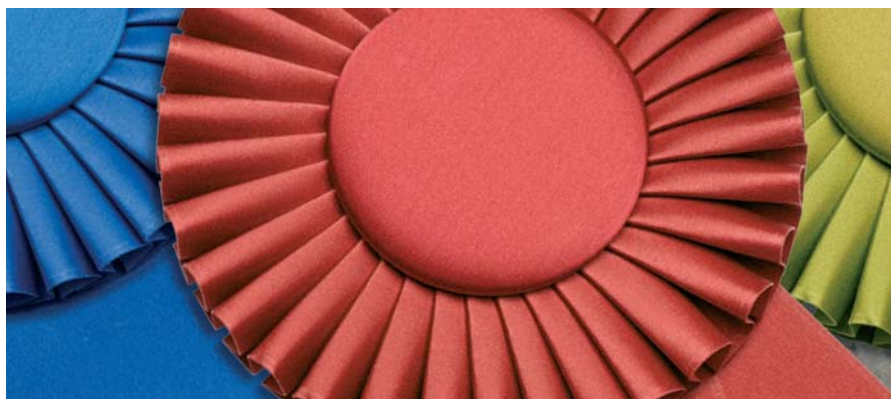
Nor is there particularly a party divide on environmental policy in Britain. Calls are growing, amongst some Tories for a government mandate for biofuels and Tim Yeo MP wants extra taxes on SUVs to price them off the road. Indeed, even Oliver Letwin MP, a former Thatcherite and Shadow Chancellor, spoke out for a

Bank of England style super-quango to oversee 3% carbon emission reductions every year until 2050.

Meanwhile, even at the Ministry of Defence (MoD), with troops overstretched in Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland and struggling to win the peace on the ground, new environmental and sustainability goals are in place which will cost money to fulfill. It may be that the aim of these is to indirectly increase their license to operate by winning back some public support lost in the Iraq war. Yet all this is happening while numerous defence cuts are being pushed through, reducing manpower and defence capabilities still further.

In fact, the public sector – loosely defined as central government, local government, the NHS, the MoD, public bodies, educational establishments, the emergency services and parts of the voluntary sector – is being forced to take its carbon emissions very seriously, with a stated target of a 1% reduction a year. As for the private sector, the Carbon Trust has been set up Jonathan Porritt – a serial quango entrepreneur, who has also set up the Sustainable Development Commission and Forum for the Future, while many public companies now have sustainability policies, Sustainability Directors and annual sustainability reports.

And nor do the government's environmental activities only apply to the workplace; the family home has been targeted too. The Energy Savings Trust seeks to mirror the activities of the Carbon Trust with a mandate to save energy and reduce carbon emissions. Indeed, in a throwback to World War 2, a recent think tank paper¹ prefaced by former Labour MP Stephen



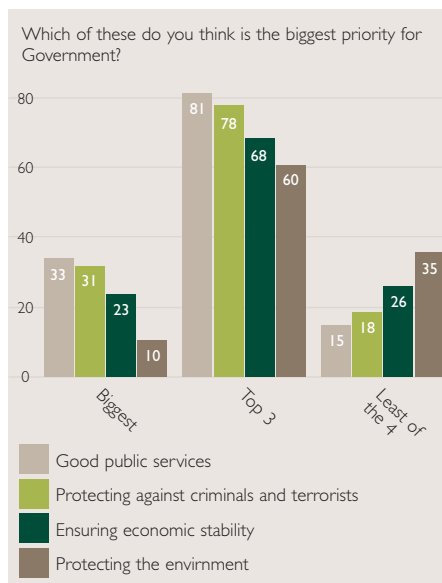


Twigg called for 'energy wardens' to patrol our homes and businesses and to conduct annual energy audits.

But all of these measures are top-down and really need putting in the context of ordinary people. What does their bottom-up thinking on the environment imply and just how important is it to them compared to everything else they have to worry about? Is there a major conflict between this government's environmental priorities and policies when they are set against the people's overall concerns?

In politics, context is absolutely everything, which is why the environment hardly featured during the 2005 British General Election campaign. Yet people do think the environment is important? As this Populus poll for the Stockholm Network shows, 94% of Britons think that protecting the environment is important for the UK.

But is it as important to them as mortgage rates, crime and policing, health and



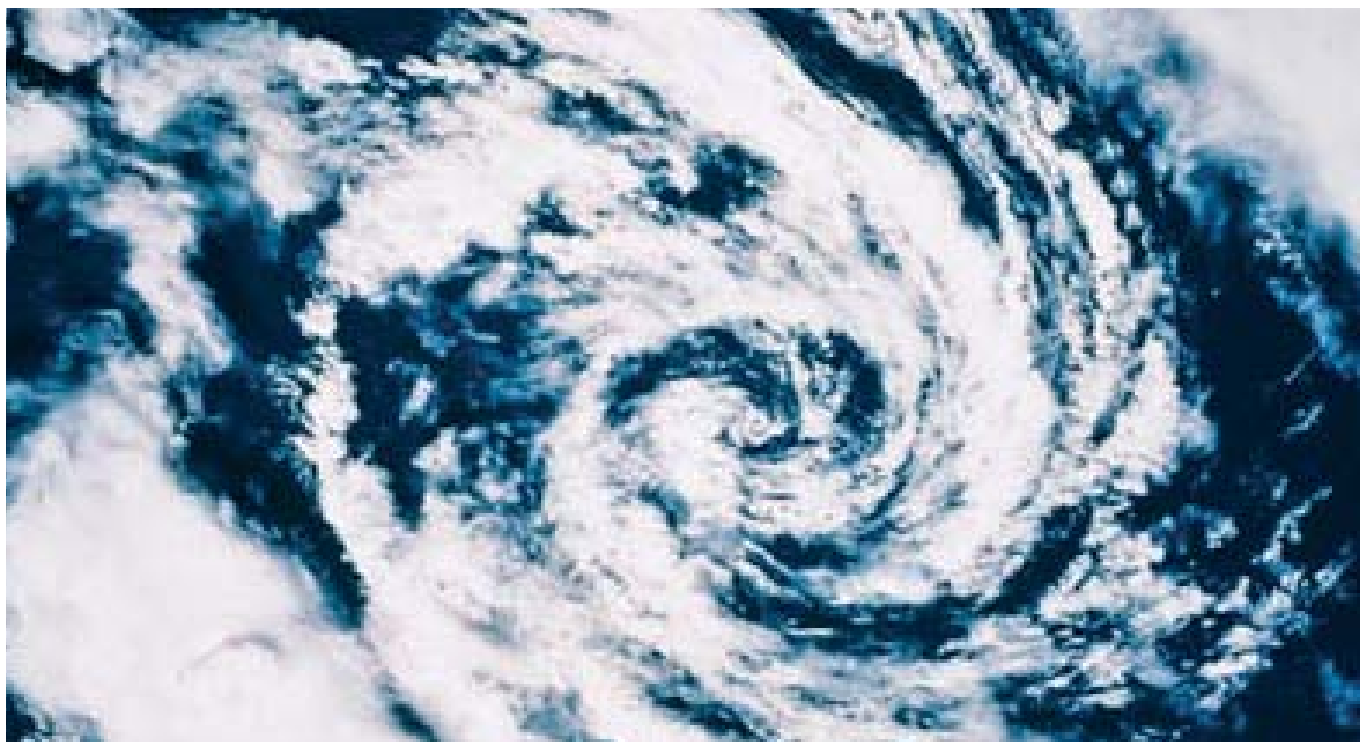
education? The answer is a resounding 'no'. 60% say that the UK has other, more important domestic issues. Only 10% say that protecting the environment is the most

important issue facing Government; fewer put it in the top 3 out of the 4 issues offered to them; and more than a third (35%) think it is the least important when set alongside public services, economic stability and protecting people from crime and terrorism.

So it is that over the past decade and a half, much of the debate over the environment in this country has focused on the global round of international summits and treaties, where there always seemed to be less of a trade-off between environmental concerns and other more pressing issues.

But as the poll shows, this no longer seems to be the case. Since 9/11 the world has grown smaller as hitherto distant threats have been on the advance. The issue of climate change is still important but it no longer has the worldwide stage to itself.

Presented with what might be called the four horsemen of the global apocalypse – international terrorism; climate change;

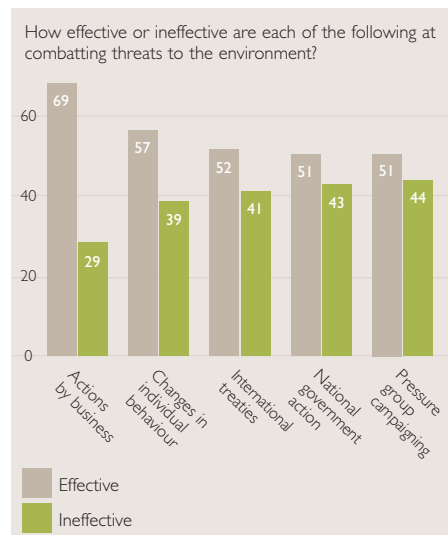


poverty in developing countries; and Third World disease – 31% of Britons say that climate change is the worst of these, but when asked to name their top 3 threats it ranks fourth out of the four and is seen as the least potent threat by the greatest number of people (29%).

The fact that we live in a world of competing priorities is driven home by the results of an experiment in which Populus gave respondents a notional £100 to divide up between different global causes. International medical charities receive nearly £30 in this experiment and humanitarian or disaster relief nearly £28. By contrast, environmental pressure groups receive less than £18. Nor does spending other people's money improve things very much. Repeating the experiment by asking respondents to divide up a £100 billion of public spending on global causes – the size of next year's NHS budget – people would give more than £27 billion to improve access to medicines for the world's poor and nearly £23 billion to reduce trade barriers against developing countries and to cancel third world debt ahead of spending £21 billion to help developing countries protect their environment.

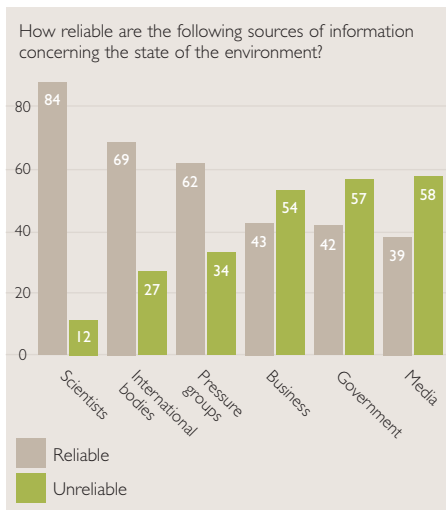
But while climate change is only one competing global priority among many – and not the most important one at that – the public still believes that businesses are paying the issue insufficient attention. 75% believe that climate change is being ignored by

business and this isn't because it is a threat to be taken lightly – only 35% agree with the notion that pressure groups exaggerate the issue of climate change. Instead they are looking for business to take the lead, because they see them as the most effective agents in combating threats to the environment. More than two-thirds (69%) think this, ahead of the 57% who believe changes in individual behaviour are effective and around half of



4 people who think the same of international treaties, national government action and pressure group campaigning.

As far as the public is concerned, then, business clearly has a leadership role to play but it also has a trust issue to address. Though more than two-fifths of people (43%) believe what enterprise has to say about the state of the environment, more



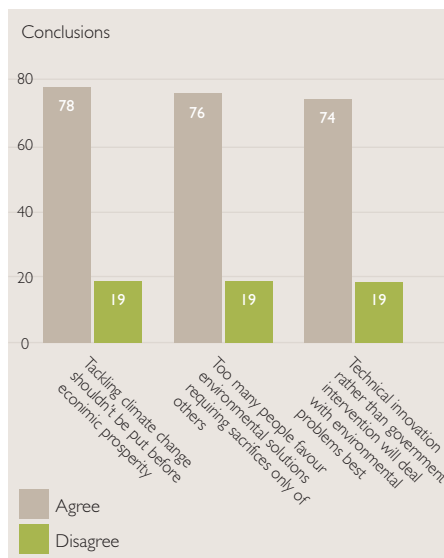
than half (54%) do not. It is not alone in suffering from a trust deficit – so does the media and the Government. By contrast, while pressure groups and international bodies are seen as ineffective, they are also viewed as relatively trustworthy.

As a result, the public has an ambiguous attitude to the degree of encouragement that businesses require to innovate in this direction. Nearly three-quarters (73%) say that they should be forced to tackle climate change and yet three-fifths (62%) say that environmental protection shouldn't come at the expense of the UK economy.

Instead they seem happier to take the initiative themselves in promoting a more environmentally-conscious outlook. 80% of people claim to have undertaken some sort of energy-saving measure in the last year. Chief among these is choosing brands and products which they perceive to be more environmentally-friendly, which 60% claim to have done. Compared with the 10% who say they have attended meetings or demonstrations on issues related to

the environment and the 8% who say they have written to their MP on the subject, most people clearly prefer the democracy of the marketplace to more traditional political means.

This may be because it seems like less of a sacrifice. Take the looming debate over whether to replace Britain's ageing fleet of nuclear power stations with a new generation of nuclear plants to help the country meet its target for reducing carbon emissions and to tackle our growing reliance on imported energy. The public is divided. Just under half (46%) are prepared to concede that new-build nuclear facilities may



be necessary, but nearly as many (42%) would rather we missed our carbon targets than build more nuclear power stations. As the poll shows, women and young people are particularly unkeen in this regard.

In this there is a glimmer of self-recognition, reflected more widely when people are asked whether they agree or disagree that too many people favour environmental solutions that require sacrifices of others but not of themselves. Three quarters (78%) say this is true and similar numbers agree that, while important, tackling climate change shouldn't be put ahead of economic prosperity (76%) and that technological innovation rather than government intervention is the best way of dealing with future environmental challenges (77%).

What emerges from this study overall is a fairly pragmatic approach from the British population at large. They take the challenge of protecting the environment seriously but when considering other domestic priorities like decent public services, a stable economy and personal safety it has to take its place at the back of the queue. Similarly on a global scale, tackling climate change must fall in behind the war on terror and compete for public attention with combating disease and poverty in developing nations.

People are suspicious about the effectiveness of governmental and even inter-governmental action on the environment but they are also sceptical





of the degree to which businesses in general are prepared to face up to potential environment threats. Those companies that are willing to take the lead in addressing legitimate environmental concerns using market-based solutions that make business sense are likely to be rewarded by their customers.

Another wider message is that worrying for a liberal democracy is that, more so than any other area of public policy, the environment has become quite far removed from public opinion. For too long, environmental policy-making has been an ineffective reaction to lobbyists of all persuasions rather than being responsive to or unaligned with the public at large. And while this has had an undoubted input into government policy, it has not been persuasive to the public mind.

So what needs to be done to re-engage the public? In short, Britain's environmental policy needs re-balancing. It's time to re-engineer environmental policy on a pro-business, pro-technology and above all, a pro-environmental outcome line. In other words, wherever possible, we need to find environmental solutions that have the dual

purpose of benefiting the economy and not harming the environment at the same time.

Eight years on from the 1997 Labour party manifesto pledge, British people have been sounded out on UK environment policy. The findings of this poll suggest that Britons don't believe that the environment should be at the top of the priority list of policy-makers, but they don't want it to be just an add-on extra either.

In July 2005, the government identified 'pressures on natural resources and global climate from population growth and the demand for fossil fuels' as one of the five key challenges it is facing, especially in regard to its spending implications. When next year's report on how to face these public spending challenges is issued, it will be interesting to see just how closely the conclusions of our poll are heeded.

By Helen Disney and Dan Lewis

Notes

1: See "Our Energy Future – Securing the Home Front" published by the Foreign Policy Centre

Poll findings: global threats

Respondents were asked to name the biggest global threat to the future of the world out of 'international terrorism', 'climate change', 'poverty and debt in developing countries', and 'the spread of diseases such as malaria and AIDS among poorer populations'.

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37% place international terrorism first, including 41% of women (but only 33% of men), 42% of 18-24 year olds and 41% of 25-34 year olds (but only 32% of 35-44 year olds), and 40% of skilled manual workers and 41% of semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers (though only 29% of senior professionals and managers). 78% put international terrorism in their list of top three global threats the highest proportion for any of the four options, and only 18% say it is the least potent threat, the lowest proportion for any of the four options.

31% say that climate change is the biggest global threat in the world today. This includes 35% of men (but only 28% of women), 35% of 35-44 year olds (but only 29% of 18-24 year olds) and 40% of senior professionals and managers (but only 29% of junior managers and clerical workers, 29% of skilled manual workers and 27% of semi-skilled and unskilled workers). 67% place climate change in their list of top three global threats, the lowest proportion for any of the four options, while 29% make it their least potent threat, the highest proportion for any of the four options.

Poverty and debt in developing countries is seen as the biggest global threat by 15% of

	Biggest	Top 3	Least
International terrorism	37%	78%	18%
Climate change	31%	67%	29%
Third World debt & poverty	15%	71%	25%
Third World disease	15%	73%	24%

people, including 20% of 35-44 year olds (but only 12% of over 65s), and 19% of senior professionals and managers (but only 10% of skilled manual workers). 71% of people place Third World poverty and debt among their list of top three global threats, while 25% say it is the least potent threat of those offered.

15% also say that the spread of diseases like malaria and AIDS among the world's poor is the most pressing global issue, including 18% of skilled manual workers but only 12% of senior professionals and managers. 73% put

Third World disease among the top three most potent global threats, while 24% say it is the least important threat of those offered to them.

Environment

Respondents were asked to answer a series of propositions regarding the absolute and relative importance of the environment, and the roles and interplay of business, government and pressure groups in this debate.



Unsurprisingly, protecting the environment is seen as overwhelmingly important across all ages, genders and social groups. 72% strongly agree that it is an important issue and a further 23% somewhat agree.

Nonetheless 60% of people also agree that other domestic issues are more important, including two-thirds of 18-24 year olds (but only 53% of 35-44 year olds) and more than two-thirds (68%) of skilled manual workers (but only 56% of semi skilled and unskilled workers).

62% agree that environmental protection should not come at the expense of economic strength, though only 53% of 35-44 year olds and 54% of senior professionals and managers are likely to say this against 68% of 55-64 year olds and 67% of skilled manual workers.

Nearly three quarters of people (73%) agree that British businesses should be forced to tackle the problem of climate change even if businesses in other countries are not – a consistent sentiment across the board perhaps because an almost equal number (75%) believe that UK firms are ignoring the issue.



	% agreeing
Protecting the environment is important for the UK	94%
Climate change is being ignored by business	75%
UK businesses should be forced to tackle climate change	73%
Environmental protection shouldn't come at the expense of the UK economy	62%
The UK has other more important domestic issues	60%
Climate change is exaggerated by pressure groups	35%

In all just over a third (35%) of people think that pressure groups exaggerate the issue of climate change. Men (40%) and more likely to believe this than women (30%), 45-54 year olds (40%) are more sceptical than 35-44 year olds (27%) and skilled manual workers (42%) are less believing of pressure groups than junior managers and clerical workers (29%).

Government priorities

Respondents were asked to name the biggest priority for Government out of 'taking measures to protect the environment', 'providing good quality public services', 'creating conditions for stable economic growth' and 'protecting people from criminals and terrorists'.

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33% of people place providing good public services first, including 37% of women (but only 30% of men), 40% of 35-44 year olds (but only 28% of 45-54 year olds), and 41% of senior professionals and managers but only 28% of junior manager and clerical workers. In all 81% put providing good public services in their list of top three government priorities the highest proportion for any of the four options, and only 15% say it is the least important priority, the lowest proportion for any of the four options.

31% say that protecting people from criminals and terrorists should be the Government's biggest priority. This includes 45% of 18-24 year olds (but only 21% of 35-44 year olds) and 37% of semi skilled and unskilled workers (but only 23% of senior professionals and managers). 78% place protection from criminals and terrorists in their list of top three priorities for Government, while 18% say it is the least important Government priority.

Ensuring economic stability is seen Government's biggest priority by 23% of people, including 26% of men (but only 20% of women), 28% of 45-54 year olds (but only 19% of 18-24 year olds) and 26% of senior professionals and managers and junior managers and clerical workers (but only 19% of skilled manual workers

	Biggest	Top 3	Least
Providing good public services	33%	81%	15%
Protection from criminals & terrorists	31%	78%	18%
Ensuring economic stability	23%	68%	26%
Protecting the environment	10%	60%	35%

and 20% of semi skilled and unskilled workers). 68% of people place ensuring economic stability among their list of top three government priorities, while 26% say it is the least important priority for Government of those offered.

Only 10% say that protecting the environment should be the Government's main priority, including just 5% of 18-24 year olds and 7% of skilled manual workers. 60% put environmental protection among the top three most important priorities for Government, the lowest proportion of the options offered, while 35% say it is the least important priority, the highest proportion among the options offered.

Cash priorities

People were asked first how they would divide up £100 among the five types of global cause below, and then how the Government ought to divide up an extra £100bn between the five global priorities listed. While the total of people's allocation did not always precisely equal £100 or £100bn, their responses provide some indication of their relative priorities.



International medical charities are people's most popular choice, averaging nearly £30 a donation (from £26.30 among 18-24 year olds and £26.26 among 25-34 year olds to more than £38 among over 65s).

Disaster Relief is the next most popular option averaging £27.73. It is marginally more popular among men (£28.73) than women (£26.83) and more popular among older people (45-54s: £30.24; 55-64s: £30.18; over 65s: £29.38) than among the very young (18-24s: £22.91).

Debt relief attracts average donations of £26.10, broadly consistent across age, class and sex, though 18-24 year olds allocate £27.40 and 11% of people say they would contribute nothing.

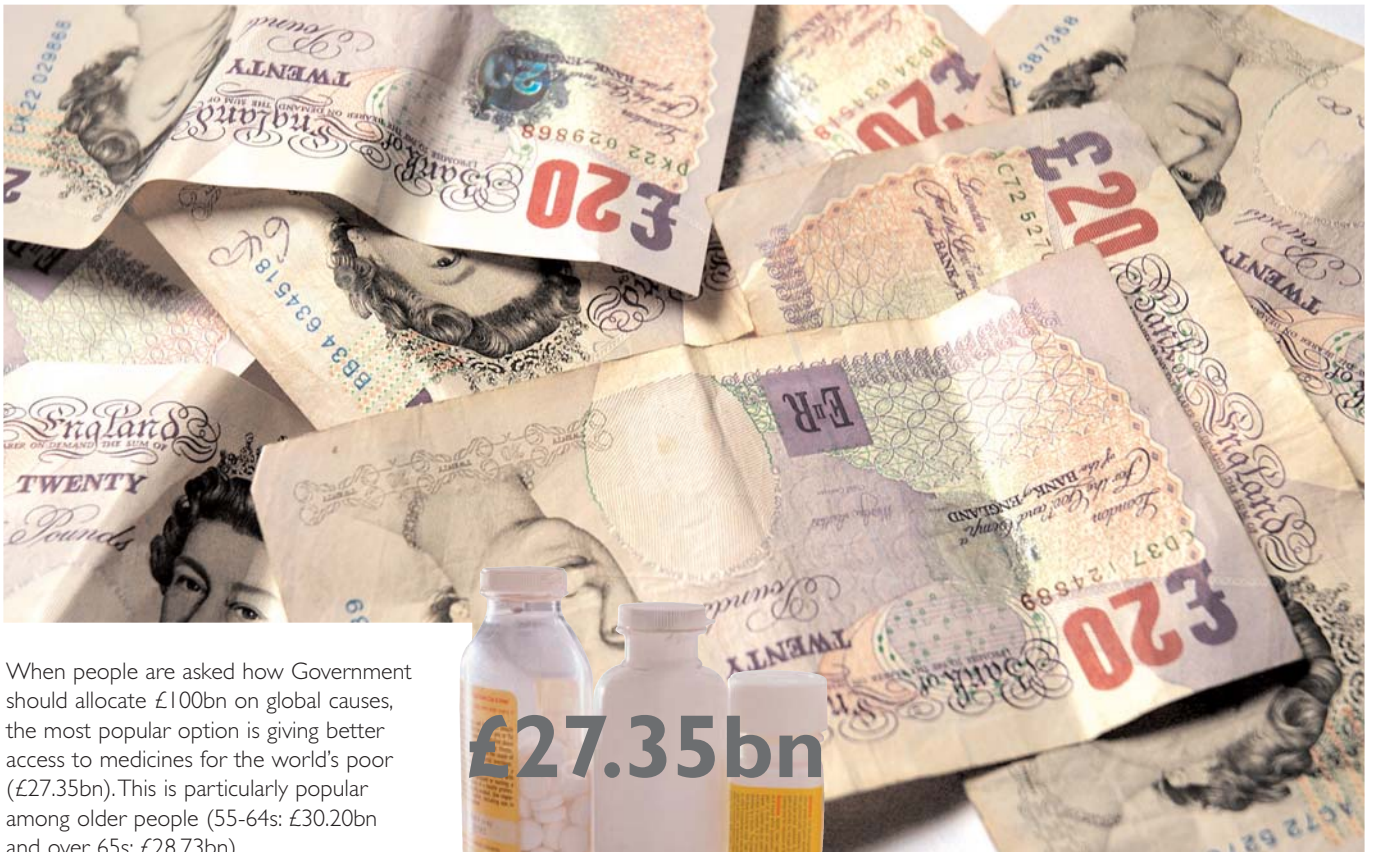
There is then a big drop to environmental pressure groups receiving an average donation of just under £18. This is a slightly more popular cause among women (£18.67) than men (£17.20). However 14% say they would contribute nothing.

Least popular are human rights campaigners, who receive an average donation of £16.15. There is again a discrepancy between men (£14.59) and women (£17.54) and between the young (18-24s: £18.39) and the old (over 65s: £15.30). 18% say they would contribute nothing, the highest proportion among the causes listed.

£16.15

If you had £100 to spend on global causes how would you divide it up?

International Medical Charities	£29.78
Humanitarian/Disaster Relief	£27.73
International Debt Relief/Poverty Reduction	£26.10
Environmental Pressure Groups	£17.98
Human Rights Campaigners	£16.15



When people are asked how Government should allocate £100bn on global causes, the most popular option is giving better access to medicines for the world's poor (£27.35bn). This is particularly popular among older people (55-64s: £30.20bn and over 65s: £28.73bn).

Next, and close together, come reducing trade barriers (£22.75bn) and cancelling Third World Debt (£22.67bn). Reducing trade barriers is most popular among senior professionals and managers (£24.14bn), cancelling debt is the most popular choice of semi skilled and unskilled workers (£24.80bn).

Helping developing countries to protect their environment attracts notional spending of £20.70bn. It is slightly more popular among women (£21.34bn) than men (£20.04bn), less popular on average among the very young (18-24s: £19.15bn) and less popular among senior professionals and managers (£19.40bn) than with semi skilled and unskilled workers (£22.24bn).

The least popular object for Government attention is promoting democracy and ending corruption with an average notional spend of £19.92bn, though 18-24 year olds would allocate £21.69bn.

If your Government had an extra £100bn to spend on global causes how should it divide it up?	
Better access to medicines for world's poor	£27.35bn
Reducing trade barriers against developing counties	£22.75bn
Cancelling Third World Debt	£22.67bn
Helping developing countries protect their environment	£20.70bn
Promoting democracy & ending corruption in developing nations	£19.92bn

Reliability of information about the environment

Respondents were asked to rate the reliability of a range of different sources of information on environmental issues.



The public trust scientists more than any other source concerning information about the environment. 84% do so, though this drops to 73% of over 65s and 76% of semi skilled and unskilled workers. With only 12% saying scientists are unreliable they have a net credibility rating of 72%

There is then a large gap to international bodies such as the EU and the UN who are given a net credibility rating of 42%. Young people (18-24s: 81%) and higher social groups (senior professionals and managers: 78%) are far more likely to find these bodies reliable than older people (over 65s: 54%) and lower social groups (semi and unskilled workers: 55%)

Environmental pressure groups have a positive net credibility rating of 28%, bolstered by the number of young people (18-24s: 68%; 25-34s: 71%) who find them reliable. Among the over 65s pressure groups actually have a slight negative credibility rating (47% find them unreliable against 44% who say the opposite).

Business has a negative net credibility rating of -11%, mainly as a result of the middle aged and the middle class. 18-24 year olds believe business by 56% to 43%, skilled manual workers do so by 53% to 45% and semi and unskilled workers by 49% to 45%. But senior professionals and managers think



How reliable are the following sources concerning the state of the environment?	Net % saying reliable
Scientists	84%
International bodies	69%
Pressure Groups	62%
Business	43%
Government	42%
Media	39%

business is unreliable by 62% to 35%, junior managers and clerical workers by 60% to 38%, 35-44 year olds by 60% to 38% and 45-54 year olds by 61% to 37%.

Government has a larger negative net credibility rating of -15%, most pronounced among 55-64s who are inclined to disbelieve it by 64% to 34% and among skilled manual workers who disbelieve it by 60% to 39%. Among 18-24 year olds however a slim majority believe government by 53% to 47%.

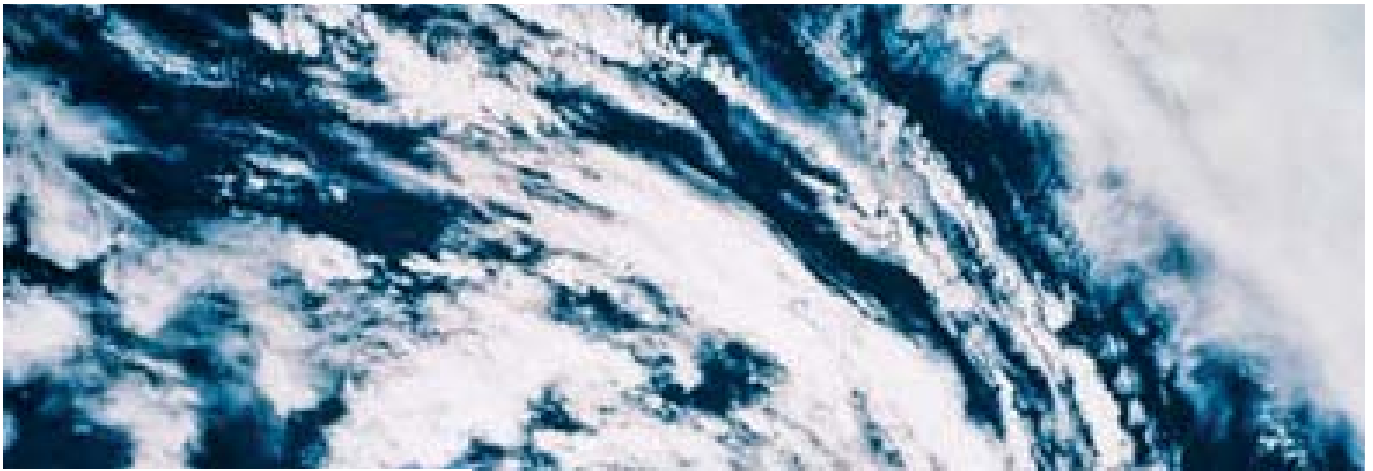
Worst in credibility terms are the media with a negative net rating of -19%. Men are

slightly less inclined to believe them (net -23%) than women (net -17%) and skilled manual workers (net -30%) are the least likely to believe them of all.

Effective action on the environment

Respondents were asked what was most likely to be effective in combating threats to the environment.

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People overwhelmingly opt for actions by business to develop more environmentally-friendly products and technologies. 69% say this will be effective against 29% who say the opposite, giving it a net effectiveness rating of 40%. Women are more likely to think it will be effective (71% against 26%) than men (66% against 32%), young people (18-24s: 80% v 19%; 25-34s: 80% v 18%) are more likely to think the same than older people (55-64s: 60% v 36%; over 65s: 62% v 33%) and senior professionals and managers (72% against 27%) believe this to a greater extent than semi and unskilled workers (64% to 33%).

A long way behind actions by business come changes in personal behaviour, believed to be effective by a majority of 18%. Women are more likely to believe this matters (by 57% to 36%) than men (56% to 41%) and young people (18-24s: 63% to 36%) are more likely to do so than old people. In fact a majority of over 65s by 50% to 42% believe that changes in behaviour are ineffective. Senior professionals and managers think behavioural change is effective by 64% to 35% but semi and unskilled workers do so by only 46% to 43%.

Women rate international treaties effective by 58% to 34%, but men say the opposite by 49% to 47%. This gives treaties a net effectiveness rating of 11%. Belief in the effectiveness of treaties declines with age from 18-24 year olds believing in them by 76% to 21% to the over 65s who think they are ineffective by a small majority of 47% to 43%.



How effective are the following at combating threats to the environment?	Net % saying effective
Actions by business	69%
Changes in individual behaviour	57%
International treaties	52%
National government action	51%
Pressure group campaigning	51%

National government action is deemed effective by a small majority of people (51%:43%). People's belief in it declines broadly by age and social class. Whereas 18-24 year olds think it's effective by 66% to 32%, 55-64 year olds say it is ineffective by 51% to 44% and over 65s say the same by 48% to 43%. Similarly senior professionals and managers believe government action is effective by 58% to 39%, while semi and unskilled workers divide evenly at 44%.

Campaigning and direct action by pressure groups is seen as effective by the slimmest majority of all, 51% to 44%. This is sustained

mostly by women who think they are effective by 54% to 41%, whereas men divide equally on the issue. The largest margins to be found in favour of pressure group activity are among 35-44 year olds (by 60% to 35%), 45-54 year olds (by 57% to 40%) and among senior professionals and managers (by 55% to 43%). By contrast a majority of over 65s (55% to 38%) and of semi and unskilled workers (48% to 45%) think pressure group tactics are ineffective.

Personal action on the environment

Respondents were asked whether they had personally undertaken any of a series of actions perceived to be environmentally-friendly during the last twelve months



More than nine out of ten people (93%) claim to have taken one or more of the above steps over the last year out of concern for the environment.

The list is topped by taking energy saving measures in the home. 80% of people claim to have done this. This is pretty consistent across the board apart from among the very young (18-24s: 72%), older people (over 65s: 71%) and semi and unskilled workers (73%).

60% claim to have changed some product or brands they normally use to those that are more environmentally-friendly. 68% of women and 35 to 44 year olds say this but only 51% of men and 48% of 18-24 year olds.

Nearly half (47%) say they have deliberately taken fewer journeys by car, including 54% of 18-24 year olds, 53% of 25-34 year olds and 52% of senior professionals and managers.

A third (32%) say they have signed a petition, including 37% of 18-24 year olds, 37% of 35-44 year olds and 38% of senior professionals and managers.

A quarter (24%) have donated to environmental pressure groups, including nearly a third (32%) of 45-54 year olds but only 17% of those aged over 55 and 16% of semi and unskilled workers.

Which of these have you done in the last 12 months out of concern for the environment?	
Taken energy saving measures	80%
Changed to more environmentally-friendly brands	60%
Taken fewer car journeys	47%
Signed a petition	32%
Donated to a pressure group	24%
Deliberately avoided flying	19%
Attended a public meeting/demonstration	10%
Written to my MP	8%
Nothing specific	7%

One in five (19%) say they have deliberately avoided flying, including 22% of 55-64 year olds and skilled manual workers.

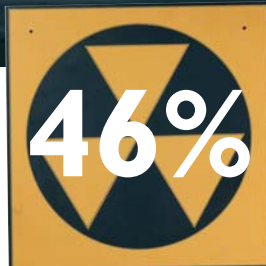
One in ten say they have attended a meeting or a demonstration, including 16% of 18-24 year olds.

And roughly one in twelve (8%) say they have written to their MP, including 13% of 18-24 year olds and 12% of over 65s.

Nuclear power & carbon emissions

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding Britain's long-term energy strategy, with particular focus on the role of nuclear power and the issue of carbon emissions.

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The public is divided on whether they would rather Britain failed to meet its carbon emissions targets and continued to rely on foreign energy imports than build new nuclear power stations in this country.

46% admit the possibility of having to build new nuclear power stations, while 42% would rather miss the carbon targets and rely on energy imports if necessary. However this masks divisions by gender, age and class.

Men accept the potential need for new nuclear facilities by 55% to 36%. Women reject the idea by 47% to 38%.

Young people are also unkeen. 18-24 year olds reject the idea by 47% to 41%, but 45-54 year olds back it by 53% to 38%.

Senior professionals and managers accept the potential need for nuclear by 51% to 40% but semi and unskilled workers reject it by 47% to 40%.

If Britain is to lessen its dependence on foreign energy imports and meet its targets for reducing carbon emissions we may have to build new nuclear power stations in this country	46%
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I would rather Britain failed to meet its carbon emissions targets and continued to import energy from abroad than build any more nuclear power stations in this country	42%
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Conclusions

Finally, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with three propositions regarding solutions to climate change, balancing economic growth with environmental protection and the role of technology.



78% of people agree that 'although the problem of climate change is important, we need to deal with it in a way that will not risk the country's economic prosperity'. Women (by 79% to 17%) are slightly more inclined to agree with this than men (77% to 20%). 18-24 year olds are the most likely to agree of all (by 82% to 15%), while senior professionals and managers are the least likely to agree, though they do so by 74% to 25%.

76% of people agree that 'too many people are in favour of environmental solutions that require sacrifices from others but not from themselves'. Over 65s are least likely to agree with this, though they still do so 71% to 21% while skilled manual workers are the most likely by 80% to 15%.

74% of people agree that 'in the long run most of the environmental challenges we face are more likely to be tackled by technological innovation than government intervention'. Men (by 78% to 19%) believe this more than women (71%:19%) but there is general agreement across the board.

Do you agree or disagree with the following?	% agreeing
Dealing with climate change should not come before economic prosperity	78%
Too many people favour environmental solutions requiring others to sacrifice but not themselves	76%
Technical innovation rather than government intervention is more likely to tackle environmental challenges	74%

The poll

Populus interviewed a random sample of 1,003 adults aged 18+ by telephone between July 25th & 26th 2005. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to be representative of all adults. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For more details go to www.populuslimited.com.

The authors

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