

OUR VISION – THEMES FOR THE FUTURE

Our vision for the environment and a sustainable future is:

*a healthy, rich and diverse environment in England and Wales,
for present and future generations.*

Set out on the opposite page are our nine themes for the future and how they will contribute to this long-term goal.



Putting sustainable development into action
through the regeneration of contaminated land:
new homes on the site of a former power station
in North Somerset

The fundamental goals¹ we want to help achieve:

- **a better quality of life.** People will have peace of mind from knowing that they live in a healthier environment, richer in wildlife and natural diversity – an environment that they will care for and can use, appreciate and enjoy.
- **an enhanced environment for wildlife.** Wildlife will thrive in urban and rural areas. Habitats will improve in their extent and quality to sustainable levels for the benefit of all species. Everyone will understand the importance of safeguarding biodiversity.

The environmental outcomes for which we are striving:

- **cleaner air for everyone.** We will have cleaner and healthier air. The emission of chemical pollutants into the atmosphere will decline greatly and will be below the level at which they can do significant harm.
- **improved and protected inland and coastal waters.** Our rivers, lakes and coastal waters will be far cleaner. They will sustain diverse and healthy ecosystems, water sports and recreation such as boating and fishing, and those uses needed by a thriving and healthy community.
- **restored, protected land with healthier soils.** Our land and soils in the countryside and towns will be exposed far less to pollutants. They will support a wide range of uses, including production of healthy, nutritious food and other crops, without damaging wildlife or human health. Contaminated and damaged land will be restored and protected.

The changes we will seek:

- **a 'greener' business world.** Industry and businesses will value the services that come from a rich and diverse natural environment. In the process, they will reap the benefits of sustainable business practices, improve competitiveness and value to shareholders and secure trust in the wider community.
- **wiser, sustainable use of natural resources.** Business, public agencies, other organisations and individuals will minimise the waste they produce. They will reuse and recycle materials far more intensively, and will make more efficient use of energy and materials.

The risks and problems we will help manage, prevent and overcome:

- **limiting and adapting to climate change.** Drastic cuts will have been made in the emission of 'greenhouse gases' such as carbon dioxide and society as a whole will take account of, and be prepared for, the probable changes to our climate.
- **reducing flood risk.** Flood warnings and sustainable defences will continue to prevent deaths from flooding. Property damage and distress will be minimised. The role of wetlands in reducing flood risks will be recognised and all the environmental benefits from natural floods will be maximised.

¹Our assessment of the activities which would help us to move towards these goals in the medium term will be described in a series of documents to be published during 2001.