UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles: a social marketing approach

Final Summary Report

Stewart Barr, Andrew Gilg and Gareth Shaw

February 2006

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

This research was commissioned by Defra as part of a series of projects on behaviour change, managed by the Central Analytical Directorate. The study also forms part of a continuing research programme into environmental behaviour at the University of Exeter. This particular project sought to examine how behaviours for sustainability were practiced in everyday life and how such practices varied according to lifestyle. The research examined behaviour-change in terms of three key issues:

1. Linking environmental practice to everyday behaviour: establishing the link between daily lived experiences and action for the environment;
2. Knowing who to target: through segmentation, providing a basis for targeting policy to specific lifestyle groups;
3. Establishing the potential for change: for each type of activity and lifestyle segment, examining the barriers and motivations for action.

The research employed a two-stage methodology to both re-examine existing data and on the basis of this to collect further data to refine the approach. The existing data were based on an ESRC – funded project from 2001-03 with the collection of 1265 questionnaires in four different areas of Devon, focussing on environmental behaviours (Barr *et. al.* 2003). In addition, new data were collected in the form of eight focus group discussions based on the quantitative findings.

The research examined the quantitative data by first examining how peoples' environmental behaviours were inter-related. Categories of individuals were grouped together into distinctive segments according to their level of behavioural commitment. The properties of each segment were then examined in terms of the variables that influenced different types of behaviour for each group. The focus groups were used to provide a means by which these results could be contextualised.

Key findings

The analysis was divided into two main stages:

1. Further analysis of data collected in our previous research on Devon including the use of path analysis (**Technical Report**, Defra 2005);
2. A qualitative survey based on these statistical analyses investigating the role of branding on consumption using the eight focus groups held in January 2006 (**Final Summary Report**, Defra 2006).

The Practical Guide (Defra 2006) provides practical advice on policy development and implications.

The results from each analytical stage are as follows:

- Quantitative Analysis

There are three key findings from the re-analysis of the Devon data:

1. Factor Analysis of the data divided environmental activity into three distinct patterns based on type of activity, rather than sector of activity; for example, water usage. The three types of activity were:
   - Purchase decisions focussed around shopping habits;
   - Habitual behaviour focussed around the house; and
   - Recycling behaviour focussed around waste management.

2. Cluster Analysis identified four groups of individuals who acted in four environmentally distinct ways; 'Committed environmentalists', 'Mainstream environmentalists', 'Occasional environmentalists' and 'Non-environmentalists'.

3. Path Analysis using an analytical framework of environmental action revealed the key influencing variables of each of the four clusters above. In particular, this revealed the complexity of the variables and that the clusters did not reflect different characteristics that were statistically significant.

- Focus Groups

An analysis of the eight focus groups revealed that cost and convenience were key barriers to acting environmentally. However, most groups were aware of the need to act in an environmentally friendly manner and wanted to do more. Most groups argued that incentives were preferable to controls. There was a graduation in attitudes across the spectrum from 'Committed' to 'Non-Environmentalists'.

Key findings from the Focus Groups were:

1. Very few respondents were keen to adopt radically different lifestyles, but were willing to make incremental adjustments.
2. There is clear evidence of an 'intention – behaviour' gap, with individuals specifying many barriers to action, despite starting they are willing to act.
3. Specific barriers to participation need to be tackled and these vary across lifestyle groups.
4. Personal responsibility needs to be addressed in relation to the ascribed rules attributed to the individual, the State and major companies.

5. Many respondents highlighted the perceived role of 'big business', especially supermarkets and how modern lifestyles necessitated the use of such retailers.
6. Discussions suggested change is most likely to occur at scales where levels of collective action can be readily engaged.
7. Certain groups highlighted the importance of economic factors not in terms of environmental surcharges but more towards creating incentives.

● Policy Implications

The research for this project is underpinned by three inter-related concepts that drive a suite of policy implications as discussed in the **Practical Guide** (Defra 2006). These are; 'practices not problems', 'targeting lifestyles' and notions of 'social marketing'.

The following are the key policy implications emanating from this research:

1. **Incremental Change**. Implicit in the research findings from the focus groups is that very few individuals in the less committed groups were willing to make radical changes to their existing lifestyles. The overall implication is that lifestyle groups require nuanced messages according to the level of behaviour change required and that these need to be incremental.
2. **The intention – behaviour gap**. The research highlighted a significant 'gap' between a desire to act in an environmentally responsible way and reported behaviours. The implication is that policy needs to set relative levels of 'expectation' in terms of behavioural commitment, such that intentions can more effectively be transferred into action.
3. **Identifying and acting to remove barriers**. The most effective transformation of relative intentions into actions was clearly seen as being dependant on the removal of specific barriers to behaviour. Different groups identified alternative sets of barriers. These also related to issues of ascription of responsibility and the role of big business.
4. **Collective action**. All groups argued that collective action was necessary to achieve the goals of sustainability, although they viewed their own specific roles within this differently. The implication is that policy should consider how those who are more committed to environmental action can be used to raise awareness.
5. **Incentives not penalties**. All groups highlighted that incentives were the way forward. Our findings suggest that such incentives would need to be targeted closely to the practices in question.

Final Summary Report

1: Introduction

The substantive part of this report deals with the findings of the Focus Group research undertaken in January 2006 as part of the second phase of the project. The report also draws on the Quantitative Analysis outlined in the **Technical Report**. In addition, the report contains key information from the **Practical Guide** to Influencing Behaviour submitted with this report in Spring 2006. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

1: Key Issues set out in the Guidance for Proposals
2: Target Group Segmentation and Branding
3: Focus Group Analysis
4: **Practical Guide** (summary)
5: Key Conclusions and Policy Implications

2: Key Issues set out in the DEFRA Guidance for Proposals

The original brief set out nine key issues, which can be grouped into the following for the purposes of this report:

- Why is changing behaviour a key issue for DEFRA?
- Who are the target actors/audience for influencing behaviour?
- A description of existing knowledge
- Key theoretical and methodological issues
- Contribution of this project to the knowledge base
- Policy and research implications

2.1: Why is changing behaviour a key issue for DEFRA?

DEFRA's remit is based around sustainable development, although the overwhelming evidence from research is that our society is far from sustainable. For example, in January 2006 two reports (Royal Society, *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change* and Department of Transport, *Transport Trends*) argued that global warming is in danger of becoming irreversible and that car use would continue to increase towards gridlock. The rapid growth in developing countries, notably China and India, means that resource and pollution pressures will continue to grow beyond foreseeable technological fixes. The only solution is therefore to change lifestyles and aspirations by changing attitudes and behaviours through a combination of regulation, economic instruments, controls, price signals and information programmes. Unfortunately, the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is complex as we demonstrate in this research. Moreover, there is a gap between intended and actual behaviour as identified in the **Technical Report**. Changing behaviour is likely to be a slow and

incremental process but fortunately the Royal Society report estimates that we have some 20-30 years to 'put our environmental house in order'. In conclusion, changing behaviour is the most practical way forward and likely to be the most cost effective.

2.2: Who are the target actors/audience for influencing behaviour?

Although behavioural change in a democratic society can only be achieved by common consent and thus by a collective will, this can be strongly influenced by policy signals from the state. This report focuses on quantitative and qualitative analyses of the general population in order to understand how their behaviour is shaped by a range of variables. These are then extrapolated into implications for policy. In addition, four distinct groups of people and three distinct patterns of behaviour are highlighted by this and related reports (**The Technical Report** and **The Practical Guide**). In this context, certain consumers are identified as the main target, but senior civil servants and ministers are seen as key actors for promulgating a political climate in which sustainable behaviour can be encouraged, along with the role of big business.

2.3: Description of existing knowledge

Recent desk research published by DEFRA (*Driving Public Behaviour for Sustainable Lifestyles,* 2004) has emphasised that the policy interventions most likely to work are linked to appreciating the complexities of behaviour and behavioural change. The study also argued that a combination of measures were most likely to succeed. The report also recommended that policies should persist until environmental habits were formed, via the use of a package of measures, which were tailored to different target groups.

An earlier report for DEFRA in 2003 by Demos/Green Alliance (*Carrots, sticks and sermons: influencing public behaviour for environmental goals*) used consumer preference theory and social learning theory to emphasise the role of brands in influencing behaviour. The report also identified the key role of policy protagonists who could influence people to change their behaviour and identified the concept of a 'tipping' point at which one behaviour is replaced by another. 'Tipping' points can best be induced by using 'protagonists' (persuasive opinion informers in local networks) to influence 'perceivers' the majority into believing that they should change their behaviour. These concepts have been used by Global Action to set up local 'champions' or 'Eco-teams' to change behaviours.

Similar findings and recommendations have been made by Jackson in his 2005 report on *'Motivating Sustainable Consumption'.* Jackson emphasises the need for a concerted approach focused around the habits of peer group norms. He also argues that general models of changing behaviour along the lines of the Theory of Reasoned Action / Planned Behaviour could be used to provide a

framework for studying changes in environmental behaviour similar to the framework used in the **Technical Report**.

In summary, all three reports emphasised the complexity of human behaviour, the role of norms and peer groups in reinforcing behaviour, and the potential role of brands. In terms of changing behaviour, they identified how individuals could act as influencers in 'spreading the work' of behavioural change by leading people to 'tipping' point where they changed their behaviour. In more detail, 'champions' have been used by Global Action Plan to demonstrate how small changes can make a difference. 'Tipping' points have been identified within decision making theory as the point when individuals perceive that they need to change their behaviour, perhaps when given a trigger by a local 'champion' or through peer emulation within their lifestyle groups.

3: Target Group Segmentation and Branding

This part of the report is based on the **Technical Report** delivered to DEFRA in December 2005 and deals with the ways in which questionnaire work can be analysed by different statistical techniques. It provides a summary of the **Technical Report** and is structured into the following parts:

1: Introduction, Rationale, Aim and Objectives

2: Methodological Approach

3: Stage 1: Target Group Segmentation

4: Stage 2: Branding, Behaviour and Policy Implications

3.1: Introduction, Rationale, Aim and Objectives

3.1.1: Introduction

The aim of Target Group Segmentation is to research how the behaviour patterns of individuals are formed, in relation to mainly environmental behaviours, and how different types of public policy interventions can modify people's behaviour.

3.1.2: Rationale

The rationale is based on two linked stages, all of which introduce innovative ideas into how behaviour can be researched.

Stage 1 is based on the development of a methodological framework. This framework has three sets of variables drawn from the research literature, which are known to influence both behavioural intention and action. These three groups of variables are used to create a 14-page questionnaire, which provides

data on knowledge, attitudes and actions, as well as the socio-demographic attributes of households.

The questionnaire data is analysed by three advanced statistical techniques: Factor Analysis, Cluster Analysis and Path Analysis. Detailed examples of how these results provide important information are provided in the **Technical Report**.

Stage 2 combines the concepts of brands and branding widely used in the marketing industry, with the methodology of focus groups to tease out why the variables identified in Stage 1 modify behaviour and what implications these have for policy. These are explored by the use of Focus Groups.

3.1.3: Aim and Objectives

Aim: To create a methodological approach for providing and analysing quantitative and qualitative data on how behavioural patterns are formed and may be modified.

Objectives

- To use our framework to examine the different types of action people undertake;
- To segment behaviours so that different groups can be identified;
- To identify the key variables that influence each segment and behaviour type;
- To use branding to identify how changing these variables can change behaviour.

3.2: Methodological Approach

Our approach is a hybrid one that combines quantitative and qualitative methods, but the key innovative element is the emphasis on segmentation of behaviours and groups.

3.3: Stage 1: Target Group Segmentation

Segmentation is achieved by using two statistical methods: Factor Analysis and Cluster Analysis of data collected from 1265 respondents during a 2001-2003 study in Devon.

The Factor Analysis grouped behaviours into three factors, which can be termed: 'Purchase Decisions', 'Habitual Behaviour' and 'Recycling'. This is an important finding since it cuts across most policy measures, which are based on sectors, e.g. energy or water use.

The Cluster Analysis grouped people into a spectrum of behaviours ranging from: 'Committed Environmentalists', 'Mainstream Environmentalist' 'Occasional Environmentalists' and 'Non-Environmentalists'. The largest group were 'Occasional Environmentalists' followed by 'Mainstream Environmentalists'. Detailed analysis of the behaviour of each group and the three influencing variables in the framework can segment the sample into groups where policy measures can be targeted at their characteristics.

Segmentation was followed by a Path Analysis, which examined the statistical links between the three groups of variables in the framework and the three behavioural patterns identified in the Factor Analysis for each of the four groups of people in the Cluster Analysis. Aligning this with the previous analyses provides a powerful policy tool for linking variables with behaviour and thus the most likely areas where policy should be targeted.

The key findings of Stage 1 were:

- The Factor Analysis revealed that behaviours can be grouped into three types of actions not based on the traditional sectors but on related decision-making processes.
- Cluster Analysis defined four distinct groups of people defined by their behavioural patterns.
- However, these clusters did not reflect very significant different socio-demographic characteristics; instead there was a gradation between the first three clusters, with perhaps a significant break to the minority Cluster 4, the 'Non-environmentalists'.
- This pattern is repeated when individual behaviours were studied for each cluster, with Cluster 4 again standing out.
- When social and environmental values were studied the clusters are quite similar.
- When psychological variables were examined significant differences between the clusters were found, but as before with a gradation from Cluster 1 to 4.
- The Path Analysis produced a finely tuned set of predictive variables in terms of differentiating between the Factor Analysis patterns of behaviour and the Clusters Analysis groups of people.

Further details are given in the **Practical Guide**.

3.4: Stage 2: Branding and Behaviour as an antecedent to Focus Group Work

Increasing attention has been paid by many consumer industries to marketing around specific brands. A brand is any name, design, style, words or symbols that help distinguish a particular product. These can create value for customers in terms of:

- Reducing search costs by identifying one product as being different; and
- Offering an implicit assurance of quality.

To date, these ideas have been largely restricted to specific products and companies rather than abstract concepts like sustainable development. Our research assessed the degree to which sustainable behaviour could be marketed as a brand and the extent to which this could be used to encourage behaviour.

4: Focus Group Analysis

The **Technical Report** revealed three key characteristics about behaviour patterns:

1) Behaviour can be grouped into three different types of actions:
   Purchase decisions, e.g. shopping habits
   Habitual behaviour e.g. turning off lights, taking a shower rather than bath etc.
   Recycling behaviour, e.g. mainly waste management

2) Individuals can be segmented into four types of behaviour patterns
   'Committed environmentalists'
   'Mainstream environmentalists'
   'Occasional environmentalists'
   'Non-environmentalists'

3) Explanatory variables are complex but psychological and situational variables stood out, for example, the availability or otherwise of facilities for environmental behaviour and predisposition or not to act environmentally.

These three characteristics were used to frame the discussion topics and types of groups selected and used in the Focus Group stage of the project. Finally, the **Technical Report** identified one further question, namely: Is there an intention-behaviour gap and if so how might it be bridged? Accordingly the focus groups were given 7 key issues to discuss:

1) General environmental attitudes and awareness
2) Recycling and conservation behaviour
3) Consumption attitudes
4) Attitudes towards branded products
5) Intended behaviour and actual behaviour
6) Policy making and behaviour
7) Description of environmental attitudes

The focus groups were held in the second week of January 2006 and each group of approximately eight people was recruited to represent one of the four clusters identified above. Recruitment was undertaken by research staff (trained to British

Market Research Society standards) and participants were recruited using a questionnaire modified from previous research undertaken as part of an ESRC project (See Appendix III). The focus groups were recorded and transcripts were made from which the following analysis is derived. The transcripts are available as WORD files.   Further details about the Focus Groups are provided in Appendices I. II. III and IV.

The analysis of the focus group discussions found that 6 main themes emerged related to the 7 key issues outlined above. These were:

1) Awareness and responsibility towards the environment (Issues 1 and 7)
2) Experience of actions and role of facilities (Issue 2)
3) Cost and convenience (Issues 2 and 3)
4) Branding (Issue 4)
5) Intended and actual behaviour and barriers preventing behaviour (Issue 5)
6) Awareness and influence of policy making by controls and incentives (Issue 6).

These are now discussed in more detail, first via an overall analysis of all 8 groups and then broken down by the four cluster groups for each of the 6 key themes.

4.1: Awareness and responsibility towards the environment (Issues 1 and 7)

All groups had a sound awareness of the key issues, such as not wasting resources and recycling, but there were two key differences between the segmented categories. The 'Committed Environmentalist' groups (Focus Groups 1 and 2) had the widest knowledge and one of these groups was able to express concerns over and above local and day-to-day activities. In other words, they used abstract concepts like food miles and global warming and the duty to future generations rather than focusing day to day practical issues such as which recycling bin to use.

The need to foster more responsibility was clearly articulated by one participant who argued that: 'We need to get out of the mentality that I'm not going to do anything because nobody else does'.

The problem of a lack of collective will was mentioned by both 'Mainstream' groups (Focus Groups 3 and 4). One group highlighted the snowball effect of car use mitigating against public transport and forcing people into their cars, while the other group argued that lifestyle changes would take a whole generation to evolve.

Similarly, one of the 'Occasional' groups (5 and 6) showed quite wide awareness and emphasised the need for everybody to act, although the other group was

somewhat confused by the range of facilities offered and wanted more information and argued that big business and the state should take the lead.

The 'Non-environmentalists' (groups 7 and 8) were the only groups to express some ignorance or limited understanding of the issues. They focussed on issues such as plastic bags in supermarkets and wanted the state to do more and to provide them with information. One group seemed to think that being environmentally friendly was 'uncool' and 'Swampy' was mentioned as a role model to be avoided. With one participant stating: 'I feel really dodgy saying you're an environmentalist, sort of like you're Swampy and his mates'. (Focus Group 8).

In conclusion, awareness is variable across the different environmental clusters ranging from a high level through to rather limited views and misunderstandings of those less committed to pro-environmental behaviour.

4.2: Experience of actions and role of facilities (Issue 2)

Most groups were well aware of what actions they should and could undertake but their take up was influenced by psychological attitudes and situational variables. Most notably, composting was not popular because of 'poor' perceptions (smelly and dirty), laziness (too much bother to separate organic waste) and lack of facilities (notably internal space or the lack of a garden big enough to hide unsightly waste).

The 'Committed' groups (1 and 2) emphasised the role of situational variables. Both groups eulogised the beneficial impact of water meters in making an explicit link between water saving and saving cash. The groups were concerned that labels and bins were not clear enough; for example, what types of plastic could be put into one bin or not. Finally, even this group noted that environmentally friendly behaviour still needed a 'bit of an effort'.

The 'Mainstream' groups (3 and 4) admitted that laziness was often a factor in not always acting in an environmentally friendly manner. Thus, devices, which reduced toilet flushes were welcomed, but ironically some respondents thought that they abused showers by leaving them on too long in a perverse reaction to saving water from the bath they had forsaken. They also expressed concern regarding confusion about what could be recycled.

The 'Occasional' groups (5 and 6) claimed that they did most of the 'little things' well and that these had become second nature. Some people noted that they felt a 'warm glow' when they acted well, but others acted erratically.

Finally, the 'Non-environmentalists' (group 7 and 8) supplied several reasons for failing to act in an environmentally friendly manner. Most bluntly, one participant

claimed that such actions were: 'A pain in the arse' while others claimed laziness, expense and lack of space as a reason for failure to act.

In conclusion, most people acted in an environmentally friendly manner some of the time and felt that the provision of facilities helped them to act in this way. However, inaction was easily engendered by slight difficulties, inconvenience or 'laziness'. Environmental habits it seems are easily learned but just as easily lost in the heat of day-to-day living. In this context it was clear that although the different clusters displayed different attitudes and behaviours, their actions were also conditioned by similar constraints. This may be illustrated by the following comments from participants in the focus groups on the difficulties of adopting an environmentally friendly lifestyle:

- **'Committed environmentalist'**

  - 'Inconvenience again really'
  - 'Well where you live, it can be inconvenient'
  - 'It needs to be made easier'
  - 'It's not practical yet is it?'
  - 'And it costs money'.

- **Mainstream Environmentalists**

  - 'Time and effort and awareness as well'
  - 'You want it to be environmental but also cheap'
  - 'I think another barrier is people not giving a damn and you think to yourself why do I bother'.

- **Occasional Environmentalists**

  - 'Yeah, I think it is very difficult, I think part of it is that you need to be more or less re-educated'.
  - 'I think it boils down to awareness'.
  - 'It's an inconvenience to start isn't it…… It's just that you have to put yourself out a lot to start with'.
  - 'You kind of think is it worth me doing this?'

- **Non-Environmentalist**

  - 'Inconvenience'
  - 'I think its just habit as well. Normally when you throw something away it's just habit'.
  - 'I think it's down to the fact that it's a lot more effort to act in an environmentally friendly way

4.3: Cost and convenience (Issues 2 and 3)

9   -

All the groups argued strongly that cost and convenience were key factors in acting in an environmentally friendly manner, notably with regard to shopping in supermarkets and choosing the car rather than public transport. However, some respondents went out of their way to purchase local and /or organic products, sometimes claiming they were cheaper. In contrast, no respondents used public transport as an environmental act of faith, although there were some who supported congestion charging schemes.

The 'Committed' groups (1 and 2) did purchase local, organic or 'Fair Trade' goods as a matter of principle, but also because it was sometimes cheaper, although most respondents were willing to pay higher prices on principle. However, most shopping was still done by car and at the supermarket because of convenience and the availability of staple goods.

The 'Mainstream' groups (3 and 4) expressed ambivalent views. For example one participant did not wish to 'pay through the nose' for organic products while another group member claimed that farm shops were cheaper, albeit less convenient. Some saw congestion charges as another tax and most noted that people preferred to sit in their own cars because these were more convenient than public transport.

The 'Occasional' groups (5 and 6) were also convinced that cost and convenience were big factors, but one group argued that supermarkets/manufacturers could help by giving each product an environmental credit rating from say 1-10. This would enable consumers to trade-off price with the environmental footprint of one product with another.

Finally, the 'Non-Environmentalist' groups (7 and 8) were the most influenced by price and argued that petrol prices were too high. Nonetheless some respondents expressed a desire to buy locally if it was affordable.

In conclusion, price is a factor for everybody but some people were willing to pay more for environmental goods, even if somewhat perversely they then went on to claim it could be cheaper. In contrast, convenience resonated strongly across all the groups and it seems inescapable that most shopping will continue to be done in supermarkets.

4.4: Branding (Issue 4)

Branding was perceived very differently depending on the type of product. Clothes and other non-food goods were seen as fashion items. Accordingly, some respondents bought branded goods to be in fashion, while others avoided such goods because they disliked the idea of being fashionable and sporting advertising labels. As one respondent from the 'Mainstream Environmentalist'

group stated (Focus Group 3): 'I do buy some branded clothes but I wouldn't wanna buy something that had the brand printed all over it.'

Views about branded foods were very polarised. Some believed that branded goods were the same as 'own label' goods, while others argued strongly that 'own label' goods were cheap and nasty compared to famous brands like Heinz. Quality was often mentioned as a factor in discriminating between branded and non-branded goods, most often for food but sometimes for non-food as well. In this context focus group participants stated: 'I do go for brands sometimes because they suggest quality' (Focus Group 3); 'Its just that brands that I buy, I know I'm going to get quality', (Focus Group 7, Non-Environmentalists).

A number of respondents claimed that labelling schemes were unreliable using evidence supplied by friends who worked in the food industry. For example, the same batch of food being packed under different labels or free range eggs being substituted by battery eggs. A good deal of cynicism was also revealed by this issue and raises the difficulty that, in a society like Britain where trust in politicians and advertising is waning, policy campaigns can encounter a good deal of cynicism and apathy.

However, some respondents would not buy brands perceived to use cheap labour in the developing world, demonstrating that even expensive marketing and branding does not always work. However, as the following statements illustrate there was some variation. Thus, one respondent claimed 'The brand would actually sometimes make me avoid certain products for example, with Nike and Gap, where the media has associated their brands wit sweatshops' (Occasional Environmentalist, Group 5). In contrast another person stated 'In terms of brands I wouldn't be thinking about where it's made and sweatshops and all that (Mainstream Environmentalist Group 3).

In conclusion, views about certain aspects of branding were not very different between the four groups with one fairly constant theme being the perception of quality and value for money that some brands had over others or non-branded goods. There was limited evidence that niche environmental brands like 'Fair Trade' could break into the mainstream, although some respondents sought out such goods where they could. In terms of Fairtrade, most groups could identify the scope of these products but some of the Mainstream and Committed Environmentalists raised questions about the environmental credentials of their production. People across all the groups had made limited purchases usually for ethical reasons but many stated they were too costly. That aside what the Fairtrade brand does show is that as an ethical marketing concept it appears to have had a fairly wide influence across all out environmental groups. This has obvious implications for developing environmentally friendly brands.

4.5: Intended and actual behaviour and barriers preventing behaviour (Issue 5)

All the groups noted a big intention-behaviour gap, in that they often thought about how they could act more environmentally and then found reasons for not doing so.

The 'Committed' groups (1 and 2) thought a great deal about the issues but were prevented from acting by a lack of choice, for example, only the car could provide the transport they needed. Other issues were cost and convenience and a common complaint was the overuse of plastic bags at supermarket checkouts.

The 'Mainstream' groups (3 and 4) expressed similar concerns but also mentioned laziness as a factor. Crucially one group expressed the bleak view that individuals acting alone can have little impact, and thus by implication 'Why should I bother to act environmentally' (Focus Group 3).

The 'Occasional' groups (5 and 6) were divided into one group who 'Were not really bothered' (Group 5) and one that wanted to do better and had good intentions, but who were prevented from doing so by impracticability, inconvenience and a lack of awareness of how they could act in an environmentally friendly way. The group displaying apathy, in contrast, fell back on the staples of cost and convenience as reasons for not acting in an environmentally friendly way.

Finally, the 'Non-environmentalist' groups (7 and 8) added reasons like time and effort for not acting. A striking example was provided by one respondent who noted that on a long journey they started off by driving at 70 mph in order to save fuel but abandoned the attempt after five minutes because other factors took over, for example time constraints and the lack of other people obeying the speed limit. This raises two crucial points in changing behaviour:

- The creation of a culture which engenders low levels of response efficacy (the extent to which individuals believe their behaviour can have a tangible impact) when many are driving at 80 mph, which again might engender a similar culture in other environmental activities; and
- A perception of spending resources by time rather than by resource cost. For example, almost everybody in groups 7 and 8 noted that they did a journey in the time taken, rather than by the petrol consumed or the by the wear and tear on the car.

Therefore, our motoring behaviour is informed by the most basic sense, the passing of time, rather than by more abstract concepts such as the extra costs of driving at 80 mph rather than 60 mph. Even though it might be perceived that the environmental footprint of driving at 80 rather than 60 mph might be double in

extra fuel consumed we do not act. Similarly, the long-term effect of overheating rooms is not immediately apparent.

The main policy challenge is therefore to find ways to:

- Make the links between behaviour and consequences much more explicit; and
- To use such links to help change behaviour.

4.6: Awareness and influence of policy making by controls and incentives (Issue 6)

Awareness tended to reduce down the clusters, and most groups were against controls on individual actions, but in favour of incentives and controls on 'big businesses'.

The 'Committed' groups (1 and 2) were aware of campaigns and policies but one group still wanted more publicity. One group (2) wanted controls but initially on business and industry, backed up with education, whilst the other group favoured education rather than controls. Both groups wanted more incentives based on more 'freebies' or better facilities.

The 'Mainstream' groups (3 and 4) were both agreed that more publicity was needed but for different reasons. One group (4) wanted publicity to emphasize the level of threat caused by not acting in an environmentally friendly way, whilst the other group wanted to improve awareness. Both groups wanted better enforcement of existing control, most notably litter. One group did not want more controls (4), while the other group only wanted controls on industry. Both groups wanted more incentives; one group in order to induce new habits, while the other group wanted examples from the top.

The 'Occasional' groups (5 and 6) both mentioned a prize scheme initiated by the local council, which encouraged people to recycle goods and one group (5) emphasized the need to educate children into environmental awareness. Controls on big firms and industry were favoured by both groups, with one group wanting much higher environmental standards in new houses and the other wanting taxes on big firms. Both groups wanted more incentives with one group favouring tax reductions for 'good' environmental actions.

Finally, both the 'Non-environmentalist' groups (7 and 8) were aware of the issues, but wanted different policies. One group wanted the government to lead by example, but the other group was fairly cynical about campaigns to make them act environmentally. This group was against controls but in favour of taxes related to recycling rates. The other group thought that existing controls were not enforced enough, notably speed limits and they were not very convinced about incentives.

In conclusion, controls on individuals were not welcomed while incentives were favoured. Most groups also wanted large organizations to be more strictly controlled or to set a better example. These findings confirm the challenge of the behaviour-action gap identified in the previous section, in that individuals want someone else to be controlled but to get incentives personally. The environment is therefore very often seen as someone else's problem. Either 'big' business needs to be targeted or 'someone else needs to give you an incentive'.

The challenge remains, therefore, of how to most effectively link day-to-day behaviours with abstract and long-term concepts like global warning. Given the intractability of changing some critical parts of our physical infrastructure in the short-term one solution is to make the impacts of day to day activities more explicit by producing footprint measures for each activity; for example, innovative schemes, which measure the carbon dioxide created by a journey, translated into the number of trees that need to be planted to counteract the carbon dioxide generated.

These schemes could be extended to a wider range of activities so that people could be made much more aware of the consequences of their actions either by market-orientated financial incentives and disincentives.

4.7: Summary and conclusions from the Focus Group Analysis

The focus groups expressed widespread awareness of environmental issues, but a reluctance to embark on substantial changes in lifestyle. Given the difficulty of changing society and some parts of the physical infrastructure, the powerful conclusion is that policies based on making small incremental changes to behaviour are the only realistic ones.

In order to achieve such changes people need to be made more aware that the environment is an issue of personal responsibility. Marketing policies can help in this, as can the use of branding but more information also needs to be provided about the explicit link between day-to-day behaviour and long-term environmental impacts by using graphic and powerful indicators based on footprint measures.

The main findings from the Focus Groups were:

- Very few respondents were keen to adopt a radically different lifestyle, but were willing to make **incremental adjustments**. Such incremental change must also be seen within the context of incremental change in related physical infrastructures for sustainability;

- There is clear evidence of an '**intention-behaviour' gap**, with individuals specifying many barriers to action, despite stating that they are willing to act;

- **Specific barriers** to participation (which vary across lifestyle groups) need to be tackled. These barriers range from perceived inconvenience to lack of trust in both national and international authorities to act effectively and work to weaken levels of response efficacy;

- Low levels of response efficacy mean that **personal responsibility** needs to be tackled in relation to the ascribed roles attributed to the individual, the state and major companies. Crucially, there is a lack of response efficacy amongst individuals who ascribe a greater responsibility to external agents for 'being responsible' for the environment, before an individual behavioural commitment will be forthcoming. This can be framed at a range of scales and was expressed both in terms of a lack of national government commitment as well as at the international level;

- Related to this lack of response efficacy, discussion centred on the perceived **role of 'big business'** and in particular supermarkets and how modern lifestyles necessitate the use of such retailers that are perceived as being less sustainable. Shifting away from this way of living was seen as problematic because of time and cost factors;

- Based on the previous two conclusions, behaviour change is most likely to occur at scales where **levels of collective action** can readily be engaged and measured, such as at the community level. The focus groups were all framed within discursive contexts where respondents used each others' behaviour as a measure of their own level of activity;

- Certain groups highlighted the importance of economic factors significantly. There was a clear signal that although further environmental surcharges or disincentives would be unpopular, **creating incentives** to act in a more environmentally responsible manner would be effective.

5: Practical Guide (Summary)

The Practical Guide (Spring 2006) is based on the research outlined above in sections Two to Four. This work is also underpinned by three inter-related concepts as detailed in the Practical Guide, namely; 'practices not problems', 'targeting specific lifestyles', and notions of 'social marketing'. In turn these have seven key implications for policy relating to: (i) incremental change, (ii) the intention-behaviour gap, (iii) identifying and acting to remove barriers to change, (iv) the role of 'big' business, (v) the importance of collective action, (vi) incentives not penalties (vii) the role of Community-based social marketing and branding.

6: Key Conclusions

A number of key conclusions arise from this study and these can be grouped around three main themes:

6.1: Methodological Approaches

- Key groups of people, patterns of behaviour and influencing variables have been identified by our quantitative analysis and the use of advanced statistical techniques. These form the basis of a segmentation of lifestyles based upon environmental behaviour.

- The application of focus groups was used to identify in much greater detail how particular groups of people behave along with their attitudes and perceptions of pro-environmental behaviour.

6.2: Behaviour Traits

- Costs and convenience remain key factors in consumer decision-making, which all the lifestyle segments identified with.

- The intention-behaviour gap was identified as significant in that individuals often had a desire to pro-environmentally but reported behaviour highlighted a significant gap.

6.3: Policy Implications

- Many individuals identified barriers limiting behaviour changes. These varied across different lifestyle groups but all were clear of the need to remove such barriers.

- All groups highlighted the role of 'big business' in preventing pro-environmental action. These perceptions related to notions of barriers to

change, but the message to policy makers was of the need to work with large corporations to promote sustainable practices.

- All the lifestyle groups argued that collective action was necessary to achieve change toward greater levels of sustainability.

- Changes in behaviour amongst individuals was perceived by all the groups as being best achieved by incentives rather than penalties.

Appendix I

The Focus Groups were convened in January 2006 by a market researcher trained to Market Research Foundation standards. The Discussion Guide shown in Appendix ii was developed by the research team. Participants were recruited either in Exeter's shopping centre or at a recycling point. Respondents were asked to complete the recruitment questionnaire shown in Appendix III.

The Focus Groups were held in a meeting room at the Southgate Hotel in the centre of Exeter at either 6.00 pm or 7.30 pm and participants were offered light refreshments at the outset to engender a relaxed atmosphere. Participants were given £20 as a contribution to their travel costs. Each focus group lasted around an hour and a half. The proceedings were tape recorded by an unobtrusive recorder and were transcribed onto WORD files for analysis.

The number of participants ranged from 7 to 11. Details of each group are provided in Appendix IV. The recruitment questionnaire was based on one successfully used in the previous ESRC funded project. This questionnaire was designed in collaboration with the market researcher, who provided advice on both the length and content of the questionnaire, which was brief given that over-recruitment is necessary for focus group research, as only approximately 70% of respondents who agree to participate actually attend the groups.

The questionnaire differentiated participants according to the characteristics that were most evident in defining the four clusters identified in the quantitative part of the research. In particular, behaviours such as composting, purchasing environmentally-friendly products and recycling were used as a means by which to differentiate groups. Confirmation of an individual's identification in terms of their allotted group was also undertaken in the focus groups and this demonstrated that the recruitment survey accurately assigned individuals to the relevant groups.

The analysis was undertaken using a matrix of each of the key themes and writing-up notes about each group as the transcripts were read through. These notes were used to make observations general to all groups and then comparisons between groups based on the four clusters. Occasionally one cluster in one focus group expressed different views in detail from their corresponding cluster group over specific issues. However, overall the clusters stood out strongly in their different attitudes and commitments to environmental behaviour.

Appendix II

Discussion Guide – Focus Groups

January 2006
Exeter

Issue 1   <u>Attitudes and practices towards the environment</u> (a general warm-up discussion to last about 5 minutes)

- What do you think it means to act in an environmentally friendly way?
- How convenient do you find it to behave in an environmentally friendly manner generally in everyday activities?
- Do you feel in any way responsible for or worry about global climate change?

Issue 2   <u>Recycling, energy issues and water conservation</u> (discussion of key themes around 15 minutes)

- Do you live in a recycling area? What do you think about recycling?
- What would your attitude be to making recycling compulsory?
- Do you find it easy to compost household / garden waste?
- What do you think is meant by energy saving?
- What kind of things do you do to save energy?
- Are you aware of how much water you use at home?

Issue 3   <u>Consumption and attitudes to environmentally friendly products</u> (discussion about 20 minutes)

- Are you aware of the products you buy and whether they are kinder to the environment than others?
- Do you currently buy products like that?
- Do you know what 'fair trade' products are?
- Do you buy any of these products?
- Do you do your main shopping in a national supermarket chair?
- Why do you shop in the store you currently use?
- Do you ever think of the distance the food you buy has travelled?
- Do you use low-cost airlines?
- Are you interested in sustainable holidays?
- What do you think an example of environmentally friendly consumption would be?

- Would you be willing to pay a congestion charge to enter congested city centres and use busy motorways?

Issue 4   <u>Attitudes towards branded products</u> (discussion approximately 15 minutes)

- What do you think the term 'branded products' means?
- When you are buying clothing how much importance do you attach to the brand or label?
- When you are buying groceries do you tend to look for recognised brands?
- How important is price when you are shopping for groceries?
- What do branded products represent to you?
- When buying 'white' good (washing machines, fridges etc.) how much importance do you attach to the brand?

Issue 5   <u>Discussion of intended behaviour and actual behaviour</u> (discussion approx. 15 minutes)

- Do you often think about being more environmentally friendly?
- What do you think are the major difficulties in adopting environmentally friendly lifestyle? (interview to suggest thinking back to issues of behaviour in other sections).
- What do you think is the one main barrier to buying environmentally friendly products?
- In terms of your own behaviour towards being environmentally friendly, do you think there is a difference between your <u>intentions</u> and your actual behaviour?

Issue 6   <u>Policy making and changed behaviour (discussion approx. 15 minutes)</u>

- Are you aware of any well publicised campaigns encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour?
- Have you seen advertisements about the 'Carbon Footprint'?
- Would more government campaigns encourage you to change your behaviour towards environmentally friendly products?
- Do you think that more legislation is needed to change people's behaviour to make them more responsible towards the environment?
- Should there be more incentives to help people change their behaviour towards the environment?

Issue 7   Closing Section (discussion approx. 15 minutes)

- Having had this discussion about the environment and your behaviour which of the following labels do you think best sums you up?:
  'committed environmentalist'
  'occasional environmentalist'
  'non-environmentalist'

- Do you think there is much more you could do to help protect the environment?
- Do you think the public should be made more aware of environmental issues?
- Whose role do you think it is to inform the public?
- Where do you find out about environmental issues?
- Do you think it is boring when news items or people talk about environmental issues?

Thank you all so much for your time. I think that we have everything covered that I had intended to talk about. I hope you have a safe journey home.

Appendix III

Focus Group Recruitment Question

1)
Gender:

Female		Male	

(50:50 SPLIT)

2)
Do you, or any of your immediate family or close friends, work in any of the following industries:

Market Research		Advertising	
Marketing		Journalism	
University of Exeter		Defra	

(CLOSE IF ANY MENTIONED)

3)
Can you please tell me your occupation, if any?

(MIX OF A's, B's, C's, D's and E's IF POSS)

3a)
Do you ……………..?

Work full time		Work part time	
Don't work			

4)
Marital Status?

Single		Married/cohabiting	
Divorced/separated		Widowed	

(MIX OF ALL IS IMPORTANT)

5)

Number of children:	
Ages:	
Living at home (Y/N)	

6)
Are you over 18?

Yes		No	

(RECRUIT ALL AGES)

10)
Do you recycle your household waste?

Yes		No	

11)
Do you look for environmentally friendly products?

Yes		No	

Respondent Name	
Respondent Address:	

Post Code	

NOW, EXPLAIN GROUP DISCUSSION PROCESS AND INVITE
RESPONDENTS WHO FIT THE QUOTA

This interview was conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society
Code of Conduct. I confirm that the respondent is not known personally to me
and to the best of my knowledge will not be known to other members of the
group.

Recruiters signature: ……………………..   Date recruited: ……………………

For Focus Group on: …………………………   At: ………………………………….

Appendix IV

Characteristics of Participants in the Focus Groups

Group (Environmentalist)	Respondent	Gender	Occupation	Marital Status	Children	Age
1 Committed	A	Female	Artist	Married	3 = 13, 15, 17	38
	B	Female	Organic Farmer	Single	0	54
	C	Female	Housewife	Married	2 = 13, 14.	45
	D	Female	Local Government Worker	Single	1 = 4	32
	E	Male	Shop Owner	Cohabiting	2 = 10, 14.	43
	F	Female	Accounts Officer	Divorced	1 = 8	37
	G	Male	Retired	Married	2 = no ages given	69
	H	Female	Sales person	Married	1 = 37	62
2 Committed	A	Male	Engineer	Married	?	63
	B	Female	Customer relations	Divorced	2 = 22, 21.	51
	C	Female	Unemployed	Single	0	20
	D	Female	Care Worker	Divorced	0	40
	E	Female	Semi-Retired	Married	0	65
	F	Female	Retired	Married	2 = 32, 30	72
	G	Female	Nurse	Married	2 = 22, 25.	52
3 Mainstream	A	Female	Shop Assistant	Married	4 = 36, 34, 32, 30	55
	B	Male	Engineer	Cohabiting	0	22
	C	Female	Insurance Consultant	Single	0	20
	D	Male	Office Manager	Married	2 = 25, 23.	55
	E	Female	Retired	Married	1 = 35	63
	F	Male	Electrician	Cohabiting	4 = 25, 22, 20, 18	57
4 Mainstream	A	Female	Nurse	Cohabiting	0	35

	B	Female	Operations Manager	Married	1 = 15 months	30
	C	Male	Local Government Officer	Single	0	33
	D	Male	Postman	Single	0	47
	E	Male	Engineer (Health)	Cohabiting	0	26
	F	Male	Estate Agent	Separated	0	30
5 Occasional	A	Female	Shop Assistant	Married	1 = 25	55
	B	Female	Voluntary Worker	Married	4 = 29, 32, 34, 38	59
	C	Male	Science Student	Single	0	25
	D	Female	Nurse	Single	0	27
	E	Female	Call centre worker/student	Married	1 = 2	24
	F	Male	Chef	Married	0	26
6 Occasional	A	Female	Shop Assistant	Married	1 = 30	60
	B	Male	Trainee Doctor	Single	0	23
	C	Male	Mechanic	Single	0	24
	D	Female	Receptionist	Single	0	35
	E	Female	Housewife	Divorced	2 = 24, 22	48
	F	Female	Dental Assistant	Cohabiting	0	20
7 Non	A	Female	Visual Merchandiser	Single	0	22
	B	Male	Warehouse Worker	Married	1 = 4	26
	C	Male	Student	Single	0	23
	D	Female	Waitress	Cohabiting	0	27
	E	Female	Housewife	Divorced	2 = 24, 22	48
	F	Male	Hotel Worker	Single	1 = 7	30
	G	Male	Trainee Teacher	Single	0	27
8 Non	A	Male	Postgraduate Student	Married	0	31
	B	Female	Call centre worker	Single	0	24
	C	Female	Hospitality Manager	Single	0	28

	D	Female	Psychologist	Cohabiting	2 = 3, 5	31
	E	Female	American Visa – Full Time Barmaid	Single	0	20
	F	Female	Fitness Instructor	Single	0	22
	G	Male	Bricklayer	Cohabiting	1 = 4	25
	H	Male	Mechanic	Married	2 = 1, 3	27
	I	Male	Chef	Single	0	29
	J	Female	Legal Assistant	Single	0	27
	K	Male	Student	Married	1 = 1	29