



## One Million Sustainable Homes

moving sustainable homes from the fringes  
to the mainstream of UK housing

WWF launched its One Million Sustainable Homes (OMSH) campaign in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002. For the last four years WWF has been working with government, industry and consumers to bring best practice from the fringes to the mainstream of the UK housing sector.

"From the beginning I could see the tremendous appeal of OMSH as a campaign that would break down the barriers to sustainable homes at a national level. I didn't quite expect WWF to achieve so much in such a relatively short time! I'm excited about the possibilities for WWF to build on this success and look forward to the Government doing more to help make our homes sustainable – not least our existing housing stock. I'm proud to be in a position to help take WWF's vision of One Planet Living to a broader public audience."

*Kevin McCloud, Writer and presenter, Grand Designs*



[wwwf.org.uk](http://wwwf.org.uk)

*for a living planet*<sup>®</sup>

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The mission of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- reducing pollution and wasteful consumption

## Why focus on homes?

WWF's *Living Planet Report* tells us that if everybody around the world consumed natural resources and emitted CO<sub>2</sub> at the same rate as we do in the UK we would need three planets to support us. Clearly, we only have one. Our homes contribute almost 30% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and 55% of timber used in the UK goes into our homes, much of it from unsustainable sources. Furthermore, each year we use more and more water in our homes. Today, each person uses on average 150-180 litres per day, and much of that is wasted<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the way homes and communities are developed and managed determines our lifestyle decisions and our overall impact on the environment, particularly the food we eat, the waste we generate and the way we travel. Tackling the environmental impacts of our homes and communities is therefore essential if we are to achieve One Planet Living<sup>TM2</sup>.

## Overcoming the barriers

In January 2002, WWF initiated a stakeholder consultation to identify the barriers to sustainable homes. We consulted over 350 stakeholders, through a combination of questionnaires, workshops and meetings. As a result, WWF identified six key barriers to sustainable homes, and together with leading partners from across a range of sectors, our 'OMSH Task Force'<sup>3</sup>, we have been working to implement strategies to overcome these barriers. Below are some key highlights and successes.

### 'There are no fiscal incentives to develop sustainable homes or for consumers to demand them'

WWF has consistently called for the introduction of a range of fiscal incentives to facilitate sustainable homes, particularly through stamp duty and council tax. Our first success came in 2004, with the introduction of landlord energy saving allowances. Furthermore, WWF is delighted that after four years of campaigning, the Chancellor announced in his Pre-Budget Report 2006 that new zero carbon homes will be exempt from stamp duty, representing a very significant step forward, and a huge success for WWF.

### 'Current planning and building regulations do not help to deliver sustainable homes'

WWF has undertaken a wide range of activities to try to improve these key regulatory frameworks, including:

- Lobbying at the national and regional level for planning policy to require more sustainable developments. We strongly welcome the introduction of the Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on Climate Change, and are working to ensure that the Regional Spatial Strategies will require high sustainability standards in all new developments.
- Developing Regional Sustainability Checklists for developments with regional partners, DCLG and BRE, to provide a consistent national framework of issues to be considered in planning new
- Working closely with Andrew Stunell MP, WWF was instrumental in changing the law to allow sustainability to be addressed for the first time through the Building Regulations, with the enactment of the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act.
- Working to ensure that the Code for Sustainable Homes clearly sets out the future direction of the Building Regulations, and offers challenging but realistic steps towards zero carbon, sustainable new homes.

**"The work I did with WWF, is about supporting its One Million Sustainable Homes campaign... I worked closely with WWF in drawing up and promoting the [Sustainable and Secure Buildings] Bill, I had a very productive partnership with it. The WWF's role was engaging with its members to make sure other MPs were lobbied... and putting me in touch with experts who were able to give me practical advice about how to put forward the arguments."**

*Andrew Stunell MP, Shadow Secretary for Communities and Local Government*



J. BIRDSALL

<sup>1</sup> [www.blueprintforwater.org.uk](http://www.blueprintforwater.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> One Planet Living is a joint initiative between WWF and BioRegional. For further information see [www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanetliving](http://www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanetliving)

<sup>3</sup> Our partners included BRE, BioRegional, Constructing Excellence, Countryside Properties, Energy Savings Trust, Environment Agency, HBOS, Home Builders Federation, Housing Corporation, English Partnerships, Sustainable Homes, and SEEDA

<sup>4</sup> See, <http://southeast.sustainability-checklist.co.uk/> for the South East version, developed by SEEDA

**‘Investors aren’t interested in sustainability, they want a quick return and maximum profits’**

In partnership with Insight Investment, the asset manager of HBOS plc, WWF has undertaken two benchmarking studies to assess the sustainability performance of the top listed house-builders. The response from house-builders has been very positive, with many reviewing their business practices as a direct result of our findings and subsequent discussions with them. The second study demonstrated a significant improvement in the performance of house-builders, with the average score rising from 47% to 68%. Going forward, WWF and Insight Investment are committed to continuing this exercise and are very pleased to launch the sustainable homebuilders club in partnership with the Housing Corporation, run by Upstream<sup>5</sup>.

**‘It will cost too much to develop sustainable homes’**

WWF remains convinced that developing sustainable new and existing homes need not result in significant additional cost. However, to help eliminate any extra costs, WWF and partners have supported the development of the One Planet Products<sup>6</sup> group, run by BioRegional. This is a buyers group aimed at bringing costs down and enabling easy access to sustainable products and materials through bulk purchasing.

WWF is also continuing to call for further fiscal incentives to enable and provide incentives for the cost-effective improvement of existing homes.

**“The One Million Sustainable Homes initiative is unlike any other campaign, having changed very quickly from a concept to seeing real changes, both in terms of policy thinking and on the ground. WWF’s work has been a major catalyst in driving change around this whole agenda”**

*Martin Townsend  
Environment Agency*

**‘No one will agree on a definition for sustainable homes’**

WWF was the only NGO represented on the government’s Sustainable Buildings Task Group which recommended the development of a Code for Sustainable Buildings, and the Senior Steering Group for the development of the new Code for Sustainable Homes. Having resigned from the group a year ago ‘in despair’, WWF has supported the government’s efforts to strengthen the draft and is delighted to welcome the new Code. WWF firmly believes that the Code will be a vital tool in improving the performance of new build homes, particularly with the stamp duty rebates announced by the Chancellor, and we look forward to the extension of the Code to existing homes.

**‘There is no consumer demand for sustainable homes’**

WWF has always believed that, given the choice, the majority of people would choose to live in more sustainable homes and communities. WWF, CABE and Halifax undertook research which demonstrated overwhelming interest in sustainable homes, with 87% of intending home buyers saying that they wanted better information about the environmental performance of homes they were considering. WWF has also been active at major public events such as *Grand Designs Live* where the appetite and enthusiasm for more sustainable homes has been unbounded!

Attitudes towards sustainability in new housing have been transformed since the start of WWF’s One Million Sustainable Homes campaign in 2002. The aim was to bring sustainable homes from the fringes to the mainstream, and with the government’s recent announcements of stamp duty rebates for zero carbon homes, a commitment to ensure that all new build meets zero carbon standards in 10 years, a new PPS on Climate Change and a strong Code for Sustainable Homes we feel we have achieved our objective. There is, of course, still an awful lot more to do, not least in existing stock, issues we have begun to explore in our new report *One Planet Living in the Suburbs*<sup>7</sup>.

Going forward, through our One Planet Living campaign, WWF is intending to focus on improving the environmental performance

**“HBOS/Insight has worked closely with WWF since the inception of the One Million Sustainable Homes campaign. It has been an extremely productive and effective partnership. We congratulate WWF on all its impressive achievements and look forward to continuing to work together to make sustainable homes a reality in the UK.”**

*Rachel Crossley, Director, Insight Investment*

of our existing homes, as well as engaging with the power sector to ensure that our homes and communities are powered with energy from sustainable sources. We are also working internationally to share best practice and lessons learned from the campaign and our work with partners BioRegional to develop exemplary One Planet Living Communities that will make it easy, affordable and attractive for people everywhere to live within their fair share of the Earth’s resources.

Finally, WWF would like to warmly thank all our partners over the last four years who have helped us turn the concept of One Million Sustainable Homes into reality.

**“The WWF One Million Sustainable Homes campaign has pushed sustainable homes into the mainstream. The Housing Corporation appreciates working with WWF on the Code and Sustainable House Builders Club. Enterprises such as these are making it easier for people to live lower carbon lifestyles”**

*Clive Clowes, Head of Procurement,  
Housing Corporation*

<sup>5</sup> [www.upstreamstrategies.co.uk](http://www.upstreamstrategies.co.uk)

<sup>6</sup> [www.oneplanetproducts.co.uk](http://www.oneplanetproducts.co.uk)

<sup>7</sup> Executive Summary available at: [wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/OPL\\_suburbs.pdf](http://wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/OPL_suburbs.pdf)