

OUR ECONOMY: OUR FUTURE

The South West Debates

Issue 6



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the sixth edition of the SW Debates e-bulletin. This bulletin will be published every other month between now and March 2008 and is designed to update interested parties on the progress of the SW Debates Programme. It will also provide details of how you can contribute and take part in the Debates themselves.

LATEST NEWS

The seventh provocation piece is about to go live on the website. A range of key thinkers, politicians, business people and celebrities in the region were invited to contribute to the South West Debates: more than meets the eye. These short pieces broaden the perspective, inject a bit of passion and inspire some really creative thinking – so go on, [be provoked!](#)

Also in November, CBI, partners in the region on the Environmental Limits debate, have just released the Task Force report – [Climate Change: Everyone's Business](#). This report is the culmination of ten months' intensive work by 18 Chairmen and Chief Executives from some of the UK's biggest companies and explains how business will play its part. It also commits the CBI to continue to play a leading role, both nationally and internationally.

UPDATES

Environmental Limits

One of the priority areas of research currently in progress is looking to define what a future economy within environmental limits would look like, to describe how the private and public sector will need to adapt, and to plot the major economic implications. Outputs of this research will include a first attempt to provide a range of business model options for economic growth within environmental limits in the South West.

Also underway is work towards establishing just what the limits in the South West are. The Environment Agency is currently undertaking research to map out the potential remaining environmental resources in the region. Details of the research will soon be available on the website.

The Mark Lynas and Mark Edwards presentations held in November (part of [more than meets the eye](#)) were both very well received. Both were incredibly thought provoking and provided a great opportunity for networking. If you haven't already, please give us your views through the website [forum](#).

Energy

October was an exciting time for Energy issues. The Sustainable Development Commission laid down tough conditions for a renewable energy initiative in the south west, the Severn barrage. A barrage in the Severn Estuary could supply 4.4% of UK electricity supply (17TWh) from the second greatest tidal range resource in the world, generating electricity for over 120 years. Developing a Severn barrage would result in significant climate change and energy security benefits. BERR will now undertake further studies that will look at the feasibility of a tidal power scheme in the Severn. Working closely with a number of other

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SOUTH WEST DEBATES WEBSITE

The SW Debates website is the key centre of information for the SW Debates Programme. Here you will find the latest news on each theme; the latest reports and research papers plus useful links to other sites.

As well as all of the above there are also several ways on the website through which **you** can contribute and have your say:

- Be provoked by a regional personality
- Blog with Simon Hooton
- Open a topic for on-line discussion
- Find out about related events

www.swdebates.info

Government Departments it will consider in greater depth the social, environmental and economic impacts, both nationally and regionally, that are raised by any such development. For more, please visit the [BERR](#) website.

Also in the news this month, the Climate Change Bill - this will make the UK the first country to put carbon emissions reduction targets into law. This Bill sets out legally binding targets for the UK to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by at least 60 per cent by 2050, and 26 to 32 per cent by 2020, against 1990 levels. Gordon Brown also said the UK would meet existing EU targets to increase renewable energy use to 20 per cent by 2020. And the Queen's speech in November saw further obligation for the UK to strengthen the drive for greater and more rapid deployment of renewable forms of energy.

Globalisation

Globalisation is more relevant to the UK economy and public policy now than ever before. Globalisation is having a significant impact on our economy, and this poses a range of policy challenges for the Government if it is to maximise the chances so that the gains of globalisation for the UK will continue to outweigh the losses. In a report published by the Treasury select committee on 16th October [Globalisation: prospects and policy responses](#) recommendations were made for the government to publish an annual review to assess the impact of globalisation on the UK's economy, suggesting that such an assessment should be released at the time of the pre-Budget report. Please keep your globalisation [questionnaires](#) and comments coming in.

Population

On 14th November a seminar on culture and the impact of demographic ageing in the region was organised by Culture South West and fed into the debate on population. The seminar was extremely successful in bringing together agencies concerned with older people and the cultural sector within the region to gain a greater understanding of the issues, and to explore how policies can be developed to meet the needs and maximise opportunities for older people. It was attended by 35 individuals from a wide variety of organisations ranging from Help the Aged, Age Concern, Devon Primary Care Trust, SWOOP, Marchmont Observatory to Arts Council England South West, Devon Library Service, Natural England and Gloucestershire County Council to name but a few. The seminar also presented the findings and recommendations from research commissioned by Culture South West and Age Concern entitled [The Cultural Third Age](#) – *understanding the impact of demographic ageing on South West England's cultural sector*.

For more information on any of the above, please visit the [SW Debates website](#).

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

Everyone is welcome to join in the dialogue through the on-line discussion forum and to host their own discussions around any of the Debate topics. To further support discussions around the region, the debates team is available to provide presentations to regional groups. If you would like to arrange for a presentation at your meeting then please contact [Jo Johns](#).

The outcome of all these discussions will be fed directly into the Debates process. Please make sure you let us know about your conversations and highlight any meetings/events so that they can be included to help shape the future direction of the South West economy.

To update the Debates programme with your comments, meetings and issues, please email Jo Johns at swdebates@southwestrda.org.uk.

To find out more information on any of the Debates themes and to view the latest issues, news and reports, visit the website – www.swdebates.info.

The next bulletin will be published in January 2008

CONTACTS

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