

Welcome to the first Sustainability First E-Newsletter! This is a brand-new output aiming to showcase the best of our organisation's work, as well as a range of research and updates from our core areas of energy and water and beyond. We hope this broad approach will help you think about new approaches to sustainability and cross-cutting public interest themes.

This quarter, with its extreme weather events, has brought home the importance of planning long-term resilience in an uncertain and unpredictable future. This has been a major theme of our New-Pin project, and features prominently across the board this newsletter, whether it's in our section on the risk outlook for users of essential services, or our personal account of the Cape Town drought. You'll find more detail in the 'A view across the sectors' section below.

The past few months have also been a hugely exciting time for our organisation, seeing the culmination of several of our major projects. The 'Sustainability First At A Glance' section gives you a brief overview of everything that we've been up to.

We hope you enjoy reading it, and please let us know what you think!



Sharon Darcy
Director, Sustainability First



Sustainability First At A Glance



Energy For All: Innovate For All, Project Inspire Report Launch

On 29th January Sustainability First launched its Project Inspire report on innovation and customers in vulnerable circumstances, a landmark 174-page document featuring four good practice guides and over 70 case studies. The event featured demonstrations of 15 different innovations. Dermot Nolan, CEO of Ofgem, delivered the opening address, and indicated that he would be taking the recommendations outlined in our report forward. Teresa Camey from BEIS said that there was a 'Real mandate to keep pushing in this space.'

[READ MORE HERE](#)

[PROJECT INSPIRE REPORT](#)

Smart Meter Data Public Interest Advisory Group

Sustainability First, in partnership with CSE, is working with a wide range of public interest stakeholders, including government, ONS, the National Infrastructure Commission, Ofgem, the Smart Data Communications Company, Elexon, National Grid, several academic organisations, Citizens Advice, and Which?, to begin to baseline how smart meter data might be used for legitimate public interest purposes, while making sure that safeguards and privacy protections are maintained. The first workshop took place on the 19th of March. This will inform BEIS' review of the Data Access and Privacy Framework, and Ofgem's work on settlement reform, as well as UCL's Smart Meter Research Portal project.

Power Responsive

Sustainability First continued its advisory work to National Grid on the topic of demand-side flexibility for energy business users this quarter. The Power Responsive Annual Report 2017, largely drafted, driven and coordinated by SF associate Clare Dudeney, was published this February.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



New Pin 'Looking To The Long-Term: Hearing The Public Interest Voice in Energy and Water' Conference

The final major New-Pin conference on the 28th of February was a huge success despite happening in the middle of the 'Beast from the East'. Over ninety attendees contributed to a stimulating and productive discussion about how to build understanding, and where possible consensus, on the long-term public interest in the energy and water sectors. Speakers included Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, Adrian Gault from the Committee on Climate Change and David Gray, Chair of Ofgem.

The final New-Pin summary report launched at the conference contains 'Agendas for change' on the hard public interest topics in the sectors and ten 'Levers for change' – decision making frameworks and sets of principles to help companies and regulators embed the public interest in their work.

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[NEW-PIN REPORT](#)

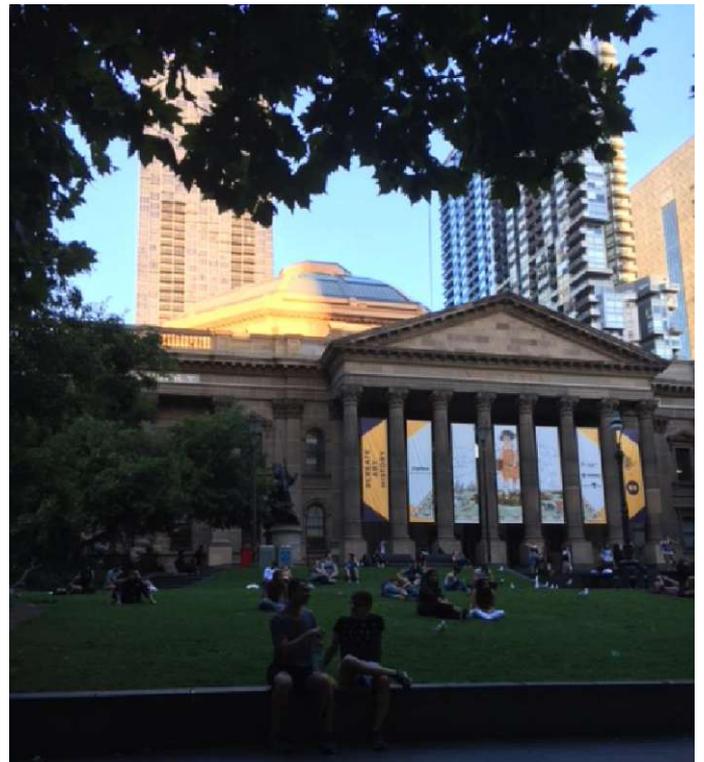
Gill Owen Memorial Lecture in Melbourne

Stakeholder engagement is very much a hot topic this quarter as the price review in water comes to a head and the next round of energy network price controls gets going. On 7th February, our director, Sharon Darcy, gave the Gill Owen memorial lecture on 'Putting customer, future consumer and wider stakeholder interests at the heart of company and regulatory decision making' in the State Library of Victoria, Australia. A former SF associate, Gill was a leading light in the energy sector, both in England and Australia, with her tireless championing of the rights of consumers. The lecture, which was accompanied by the announcement of the winners of the Gill Owen Essay Prize, was a tribute to Gill and an opportunity to forge stronger international links. Thanks to the Australian Energy Regulator for organising.

[READ THE SLIDES FROM SHARON'S SPEECH HERE](#)



[READ THE WINNING ESSAYS FROM THE GILL OWEN ESSAY PRIZE HERE](#)



Project Compact Launch

This new major SF project will help energy and water companies better address the politics of fairness and the environment by developing 'Sustainable licences to operate.' It will explore how governance structures in these sectors need to embrace societal and environmental disruptors that are threatening business models and help all sides get a better grasp of the cost of reputational, regulatory and political risk. The project will

develop new, direct structured relationships with stakeholders to build a bridge between often polarised debates – whilst not being political. The project launches at a kick-off meeting on the 1st of May.

If you are interested in getting involved in this project E Mail Sharon Darcy: Sharon.darcy@sustainabilityfirst.org.uk

Risk Outlook for Users of Essential Services

1. **Technology** **46%** jobs at risk from automation for those educated to GCSE level or lower
2. **Economic** **150%** projected household debt to income ratio in 2023
3. **Environment** **12%** chance of a 'severe' drought in East/South East England over a 25 year period
4. **Social** **5%** minimum increase in child poverty to 2021 in North East, E. Midlands and Wales
5. **Political** **36%** trust in UK government. Majority do not feel their views are represented in politics today

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A view across the sectors

Sponge cities

The scientific steering committee for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have outlined 6 research priorities on cities including extending the types and quantity of data collected including a global network of 'urban observatories' and supporting transformative, strategies such as China's 'sponge city' where streets are turned green to combat flooding.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Just cause

The IPPR's Commission on Economic Justice has produced several new reports in the last quarter: Capital gains: Broadening company ownership in the UK economy; and Our Common wealth: A citizens' wealth fund for the UK.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Mind the carbon gap

The independent assessment of the UK's Clean Growth Strategy from the Committee on Climate Change concludes that the policies and proposals set out in the Strategy will need to be firmed up and that the gaps to meeting the fourth and fifth carbon budgets remain and must be closed.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Time to talk tax

Common Vision's Responsible Tax Lab has produced a new report examining how the tax system could or should be used to achieve the goals set out in the Government's Industrial Strategy. Meanwhile UKERC research suggests that a climate change levy may actually be the least equitable way of funding energy policy. Raising the money for the low carbon transition through income tax would be fairer, reducing costs for 70% of UK households.

[READ MORE - COVI.ORG.UK](#)

[READ MORE - UKERC.AC.UK](#)



Talk about an EV revolution

Research by the Green Alliance indicates that the UK is falling behind in the global shift to electric vehicles. As the transport sector has recently become the biggest source of CO2 in the country, addressing this will be essential to keep the UK on track for the fourth and fifth carbon budgets. The report contains several recommendations, including bringing forward the ban on petrol and diesel vehicles from 2040 to 2030.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

A Personal view on the Cape Town Drought

"This drought has cost us a lot of money and hardship"

Our reporter, Francesca Moll, speaks to somebody with a personal experience of the Cape Town drought, and considers how this fits in to Sustainability First's New-Pin learning.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Thanks



If you have any research your organisation would like us to feature in our next newsletter, please contact us here:

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Many thanks to all our partners and supporters.

We'd love your feedback! If you have any comments or queries, or if you'd like to share something for us to include in this newsletter, email Francesca Moll (francesca.moll@sustainabilityfirst.org.uk) or Sharon Darcy (Sharon.darcy@sustainabilityfirst.org.uk).

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