

News Release

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Will the green agenda weather the credit crunch?

The recent May Day conferences held in Peterborough, and across the UK, saw business leaders once again urged to address their environmental responsibility.

HRH Prince Charles addressed assembled delegates by video link saying “I have also been enormously heartened to see the response from companies...At the same time I can’t help pointing out that in many companies a blunt assessment of progress would have to be ‘could do better!’”

“I am fed up with the sound of my own voice going on about all this and you were doubtless fed up with it long ago, but not half as fed up as we are all going to be when we are deafened by all the voices of all the headless chickens as they come home to roost in the only trees left standing!”

Over the past few weeks the credit crunch not the environment has dominated headlines begging the question will the green agenda weather the credit crunch?

A recent survey carried out by Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) and consulting engineers and environmental scientists Royal Haskoning amongst Peterborough businesses, has shown that while 92% of businesses plan to operate in a more environmentally focused manner over the next 12 months, only 41% believed that their customers would accept a 10% price rise for a more environmental service.

Of 40 businesses surveyed 93% believed that the key driver for going green was public perception, followed by cost effectiveness.

Environmental consultant, Brett Miller from PECT’s Business Investors believes that the survey results provide strong evidence of a clear driver within industry to improve business sustainability and obtain green credentials to increase market share and profitability.

He says, “In the current economic climate businesses should be focussing on efficiency and saving money in day-today operations. The benefits of effective waste management and reducing utility costs are not just financial – they are also environmental.”

Dr. Martin Budd, Director of Environment at Royal Haskoning says, “The credit crunch may be grabbing the headlines at the moment, however Nick Stern’s 2006 report highlighted climate change as ‘the biggest long-term threat facing the world economy’.

Martin continues, “Business is responsible for 40 percent of the UK’s greenhouse gas – the time to address our environmental impact is now. Royal Haskoning is currently advising firms across the globe on emissions reduction. We are also addressing our environmental responsibility locally and have implemented ISO14001, the highest international environmental standard, across all our offices.”

“The biggest change for us has been a shift in staff attitudes, for example in our Peterborough

office in Bretton we have implemented a travel plan to increase the use of sustainable transport, we have installed state of the art video linking equipment to reduce the need for travel for meetings, and we have set up a 'green team' to make sure staff take simple steps towards reducing environmental impact such as turning off computer monitors, switching off lights and printing double sided."

"The bottom line is that business can't afford to ignore their environmental responsibility, especially in the current economic climate."

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Notes to Editor

1. **Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT)** is a charity set up following Peterborough's designation as a UK Environment City. 2008 marks 15 years of PECT and 15 years of Peterborough's commitment to the environment. PECT carries out research and implements practical projects to protect and improve the environment. Our mission at PECT is to lead and support the city in delivering growth and regeneration in a truly environmentally sustainable way. As a successful charity we work with a wide variety of stakeholders to make a difference for our environment – through innovation, enterprise and commitment to action on the ground. PECT has a strong track record of delivering projects of regional and national significance. It has a staff of 35 working on initiatives from green spaces to business environmental management to sustainable communities and lifestyles.

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