



The very first Sustainable Business – the Event was deemed a “roaring success” by those that attended.

The latest addition to the umbrella exhibition Sustainabilitylive! – which includes ET, BEX, Nemex and IWEX – centred on a unique three-day conference programme, addressing the business issues associated with climate change.

Opening the conference and endorsing the event, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Miliband congratulated Sustainable Business magazine for creating the event and said that climate change could only be tackled if governments and businesses worked together.

The 7,725 delegates that poured through the doors of the NEC in Birmingham during the three days of the event heard from a range of different speakers – from government policymakers and academics, to technical experts and business leaders.

The CBI’s director of environment, Neil Bentley kicked off the first session explaining why he thinks the business community is ready for the challenge of helping to cut the UK’s greenhouse gas emission by 34% by 2020. And leading environmental lawyer, Vanessa Harvard-Williams outlined her hopes for the outcome of the UN climate change summit in Copenhagen this December.

Sustainabilitylive!’s headline sponsor, Hyder Environment was delighted with the opportunities delivered by the event. “It presented a focused and serious arena in which to meet and do business with existing clients and to explore new ventures with a host of high quality visitors,” said business development manager, Annabel Britton.

“We were particularly pleased to support Sustainable Business – The Event. It was a well-planned conference programme that covered a host of today’s most challenging issues for business and provided a receptive audience for the sort of innovative and commercially astute approaches to sustainability that are at the heart of our environmental consultancy services.”

Hyder’s managing director, Stephanie Wray used the platform to launch the Hyder Heartbeat, a sustainable masterplanning toolkit. And the company’s exhibition space won the award for most eco-friendly custom-build stand at this year’s show.

The informal nature of the conference space, whereby delegates were free to dip in and out of the sessions, created a unique conference – with short and snappy presentations being the order of the day. Visitors learned about the Carbon Reduction Commitment, the Climate Change Act, carbon labelling, corporate responsibility reporting, carbon offsetting and micro renewable energy generation.

And in one of the best sessions of the conference, business leaders from Adnams, WHSmith, Eurostar and BSkyB told their stories of how sustainability has been successfully embedded into their organisations. The managing director of Adnams, Andy Wood was even good enough to supply the Sustainable Business networking lounge with some samples of its delicious, zero-carbon beer, East Green.

Elsewhere, the role of carbon footprinting was up for debate, with speakers outlining what could be achieved by measuring emissions while warning that carbon accounting did not lead to overnight miracles. Ian Walsh, head of environment at Cadbury-Schweppes, said that footprinting is not an ends in itself but should instead be used as a tool for making actual improvements in environmental performance. Other sessions focused on communications, resource efficiency and sustainable transport.

The success and positive feedback of Sustainable Business – The Event, which was this year sponsored by Hyder Environment, Parsons Brinckerhoff, First Climate and DNV, means it will be repeated in 2010.

Next year, Sustainabilitylive! takes place between the 20–22 April, again at the NEC.