



Managing Your Sustainability

Medium term developments

Martin Baxter:

In the medium term, so 2015 and beyond, we will see much greater moves towards resource recovery and how we optimise that. So the real trick is going to be how do we recover resources in good quality at high volume, at high value which can be used to extract economic value as high as possible going forward. And the very last thing you do is you then take energy out of it before you dump the residue. I think we need to see that bigger shift from a waste hierarchy to a resources hierarchy.

I think when you look at the scale of the challenge and what has to happen in terms of making a transition to a low carbon resource efficient economy and you look at the really big population demands in terms of population growth and potentially demand for resources. Firstly I think it will drive new technology and innovation so we will find better ways of doing things. And I think what you will also see is changes in business models, which will support much greater efficiency on resources. Now in 2011/2012 labour costs tend to dominate in terms of business decision making and resource costs in many sectors are something that are just absorbed. I think over time you will see that actually resource costs become much greater as a proportion of overall cost base in organisations than labour costs.

I think if I project forward into the end of the century what would I be wishing to see? I would want to see greater equity between resource use and resource consumption and particularly resource supply. I think it inevitably leads to potentially more effective use of resources wherever they are consumed in the world. Even if you reduce individual consumption but then you have, you know, significant population growth and something maybe more fundamental has to happen. But ultimately we don't really have a choice. We have to live within the resource capabilities of the planet and that's going to have to drive the solutions going forward. And that's why environment and natural resources are gonna have to be at the heart of our economic planning and our social planning.