

i For information



Leading learning and skills

LSC Sustainable Development Action Plan 2007/08

May 2007

Of interest to everyone in the learning and skills sector

LSC Sustainable Development Action Plan 2007/08

Introduction

1. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Report 1987). The UK government is committed to developing a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being. The further education system has a significant role to play in achieving this, and the LSC needs to provide leadership for the system and act as an exemplar organisation through its own approach to sustainable development.
2. In September 2005, following extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders across the learning and skills sector, we launched our strategy for sustainable development 'From Here to Sustainability'¹. The strategy identifies what the learning and skills sector and the LSC itself can do to promote and embed sustainable development skills, and manage resources in ways that encourage sustainability. It takes a long-term view, recognising that the process of cultural change will require continued effort over several years.
3. There have been a number of key documents published by the government since the strategy was launched which provide the policy context and direction for the further education system. These include the 14-19 Implementation Plan (November 2005), the Foster review of the role of FE colleges (November 2005), Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances (March 2006), and the Leitch Review of Skills (December 2006). These all point to an economic imperative for FE and a focus on skills for employability. The relationship between this focus and sustainable development will be an important aspect of the development of the action plan for 2008/09 and beyond.

The Learning and Skills Council's vision for sustainable development

4. Over the next 10 years, our vision is that the learning and skills sector will proactively commit and contribute to sustainable development through its management of resources, the learning opportunities it delivers and its engagement with employers and communities.
5. In particular, it is our vision that:
 - all providers and their learners will know about sustainable development and expect it to be part of everyday practice
 - organisations will have strategies, policies and plans in place to integrate and implement sustainable development, and these will be understood and acted on
 - the LSC will have become an exemplar organisation by integrating sustainable development into its policies and everyday practice
 - risks and barriers preventing sustainable development will be understood and strategies to overcome them will be shared
 - continuous improvement in the sustainable development performance of the sector will be recognised and celebrated
 - good practice will be recognised, understood and shared
6. To support our strategy for sustainable development, we have a high level implementation and delivery plan. This sets out key activities under four themes (positioning the sector, buildings and estates, curriculum and community); and includes milestones to be achieved by the end of 2007 together with a further set of milestones for completion by 2010 (see annex 1).

¹ <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/whatwedo/sustainable-development.htm>

Actions for 2007/08

7. The actions that we will undertake in 2007/08 in order to meet our commitments in the implementation and delivery plan are outlined below.

Action 1: Undertake an internal survey of sustainable development activity within the LSC and develop a capacity building programme for LSC staff

8. The LSC has an important role to play in leading and influencing the FE system and we are committed to becoming an exemplar organisation for sustainable development. In order to plan for sustainable development to become an integral part of our every day practice we need to determine not only the current level of awareness and understanding of sustainable development but also the range of activity across the whole of the LSC. This includes all functional areas in national office, regions, economic development and partnership teams.
9. The outcomes of the internal survey will be used to develop a capacity building framework including a learning and development programme that will be available as appropriate to all LSC colleagues. It will be accompanied by an internal communications plan that will raise the profile of sustainable development within the organisation and enable individuals to share ideas and good practice.

Measures of success

10. Success in this activity will be measured by the completion of a survey of current sustainable development awareness, understanding and activity across the LSC and the development of an internal capacity building framework for learning and development.

Action 2: Develop a set of indicators for the LSC that will enable us to demonstrate progress in moving towards being an exemplar organisation for sustainable development

11. In order to monitor our progress and identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement we need to have a consistent set of measures that we can monitor over time.
12. The outcomes of the internal survey will be used, along with other existing information, to develop a limited set of key indicators. Once developed these will enable the LSC's senior management and non-executive to monitor and understand the progress that is being made.

Measures of success

13. Success in this activity will be measured by the agreement of a set of key indicators that will demonstrate the LSC's progress in the sustainable use of resources and its contribution to the development of sustainable communities and a sustainable economy.

Action 3: Work with the FE system to facilitate the sharing of good practice

14. A substantial amount of good practice in sustainable development already exists across the FE system. We have identified some examples of good practice in relation to the LSC's strategy and the four themes of positioning the sector, buildings and estates, curriculum and community through the external baseline survey carried out during 2005/06. These have been disseminated widely both through the publication of the survey report and a conference held in 2006. There are still, however, a significant number of organisations yet to engage strategically or operationally with sustainable development. We need to collectively encourage and motivate these organisations by providing practical tools for embedding sustainable development in their everyday activities.
15. A resource will be developed that can be used for self-assessment, action planning and sharing good practice in embedding sustainable development. This will draw on existing good practice and networks in the FE system and link to wider resources for sustainable development. If there is currently insufficient identifiable good practice in a particular area we will stimulate further research and development work.

Measures of success

16. Success in this activity will be measured by the development and deployment of a toolkit to facilitate capacity building for sustainable development within the FE system. Indicators for the uptake and impact of the toolkit will be developed as part of the activity.

Action 4: Contribute to the development of sustainable communities and a sustainable economy through working with local authorities and regional development agencies to align strategic plans and actions.

17. The LSC works in partnership with local communities, local authorities and regional development agencies on economic and skills strategies and has an opportunity to influence and support partners engaging with the sustainable development agenda. We need to ensure that LSC colleagues working with these partners are able to maximise the contribution that the FE system makes to sustainable communities and a sustainable economy through the education and training it delivers.
18. The internal survey above will provide the basis for an analysis of gaps in skills and knowledge of LSC staff working with local and regional partners. A programme of learning and development will be introduced where appropriate for these colleagues and opportunities for networking and sharing examples of sustainable development in practice will be created.

Measures of success

19. The extent to which the contribution of the FE system to the development of sustainable communities and a sustainable economy is evident in local and regional strategies will be assessed.

Action 5: Work with stakeholders to support and challenge progress towards the milestones for 2007 and 2010.

20. In September 2005 we published our strategy for sustainable development and we have now published this action plan which sets out our commitment for 2007/08. The development of the strategy was supported by a network of experts and advisers from the FE system and beyond. This group will now act in an advisory capacity to the LSC to support and challenge the implementation and delivery of the strategy, working with LSC colleagues on specific activities as appropriate. The current membership of this group is given in annex 2.
21. The strategy recognises that there is a need for cultural change as well as systems change and so commits the Council to a set of milestones that run, in the first instance, to 2010. We will work with the implementation and delivery group and other partners and stakeholders across the FE system to identify further actions for 2008-2010 that will enable us to meet the milestones in the strategy and to develop a longer term vision to 2020.
22. The actions that we are considering for 2008 and beyond are likely to include: working with committed individuals in colleges and other providers to develop a business case for change in the FE system; continuing to work with partners such as the Centre for Excellence in Leadership to develop and embed leadership and governance skills for sustainability; engaging Sector Skills Councils and employer organisations in working with the FE system on sustainable development; and investigating appropriate indicators for the FE system to be able to measure its progress as part of the development of self-regulation for the system. We would value comments on these or other potential areas for action from all parts of the FE system.

Measures of success

23. The Sustainable Development Implementation and Delivery Group will produce a report on progress towards the 2007 milestones set out in the LSC's strategy for sustainable development. The 2007/08 end of year progress report will set out planned activity for 2008-2010 in order to meet the milestones for 2010.

Annex 1: Milestones from Implementation and Delivery Plan

Milestones for 2007

Providers and the LSC will:

- Be able to decide how they can contribute to sustainable development through a structured programme of capacity building
- Have done an audit of current sustainable development activity and identified examples of good practice
- Agree on the guiding principles and approaches they will adopt
- Include criteria for sustainable development in all guidance and reporting requirements
- Use their experience of implementing sustainable development to identify risks and opportunities
- Understand what improvement looks like for the sector and develop a reporting framework
- Agree longer term milestones for 2020 and beyond
- Launch pilot projects to develop good practice.

Milestones for 2010

Providers and the LSC will:

- Embed sustainable development skills in education and training programmes so that all learners are able to acquire these skills
- Produce sector plans and policies that integrate the principles of sustainable development in all areas of their work
- Have identified and trained sufficient 'champions' for sustainable development within their institutions
- Understand and manage the risks and opportunities of promoting sustainable development
- Monitor and report on their contribution to sustainable development
- Operate a sector-wide programme of activity to implement sustainable development

Annex 2: Membership of the Implementation and Delivery Group

Sheri Leigh Miles	Bishop Burton College
James Friel	Black Environment Network
David Marren	Borough of Crewe and Nantwich
Martin Wiles	Bristol University
Karen Pimley	Construction Industry Training Board
Libby Grundy	Council for Environmental Education
Nick Jones	Council for Environmental Education
Julie Hull	Department for Education and Skills
Jonathan Jones	Department for Education and Skills
Jake Reynolds	Department for Education and Skills
Amy Dunkley	Development Education Association
Nicole Ashdown	Environment Agency
Iain Patton	Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges
Jimmy Brannigan	ESD Consulting
Andy Johnson	Forum for the Future
Chris Southwood	Groundwork
Richard Sharland	Groundwork
Joanne Simpson	Higher Education Funding Council for England
Elaine McMahon	Hull College
Mary Kelly	Learning and Skills Council
Ilona Murphy	Learning and Skills Council
Debbie Watson	Learning and Skills Council
Roger Taylor	Learning and Skills Council
Suzanne Ashe	Learning and Skills Council
Caroline Neville	Learning and Skills Council (CHAIR)
Judith Cohen	Learning and Skills Network
John Baines	London South Bank University
Bryan Davies	Ofsted
Heather Barrett-Mold	Pershore Group of Colleges
Sue Ferns	Prospect
Martin Pritchett	Redbridge College
Grisel Tarifa	Sector Skills Development Agency
James Harris	South West Regional Development Agency

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