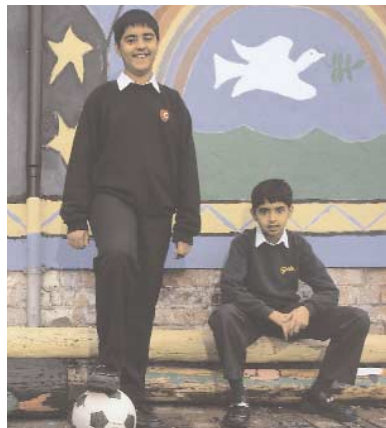


Strategy for Sustainable Development For Consultation



Learning+Skills Council

“From Here to Sustainability”

The Learning and Skills Council’s Strategy for Sustainable Development

For consultation

Responses are requested by 31 March 2005

Summary

This strategy describes sustainable development, explains why it is important and discusses ways in which the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) can contribute to sustainable development through: the learning opportunities it delivers; its management of resources; and its engagement with communities. A supporting document giving the full background and details of this strategy is available on our website. We wish to consult widely on this strategy and the supporting document. We will consider all responses to the consultation issues carefully.

December 2004

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Background

- 1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is committed to developing and producing a strategy for sustainable development (SD). It will be incorporated into our policies and practices and will make clear how the post-16 education and training sector, and the LSC itself, will promote and embed SD skills and manage resources in ways that encourage sustainability.
- 2 A vast amount of good practice in sustainable development already exists. This strategy builds on that good practice. It has been produced using the guidance of an external advisory group, and takes in comments from a series of focus group discussions.
- 3 Readers can access a supporting document* giving the full background and details of this strategy at www.lsc.gov.uk. We wish to consult widely both on this strategy and the supporting document. We have listed the consultation issues at paragraph 26 in this document, and repeat them in the supporting document. We will consider all the responses to the consultation issues carefully. We hope to produce an agreed, final strategy for sustainable development by summer 2005.

What is Sustainable Development?

- 4 Sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, both now and for generations to come. A widely used international definition is:

development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(The World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*

(The Bruntland Report), Oxford University Press, 1987, page 43)

- 5 Although the idea is simple, the task is substantial. It means meeting the following four objectives at the same time, both in the UK and in the world as a whole.
 - Social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone.
 - Effective protection of the environment.
 - Prudent use of natural resources.
 - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 6 It is important to recognize that these objectives should be met at the same time. The **simultaneous** progression of our economic, social and environmental goals is essential if development is to be truly sustainable.

Why Sustainable Development is so Important

- 7 Increasingly, people are recognizing that we are living in an unsustainable world.
 - Global temperatures are rising faster than previously recorded, bringing chaos to weather systems across the world.
 - Humanity consumes almost 40 per cent of the world's biological resources.
 - Just 20 per cent of the world's people use 80 per cent of the world's resources.
 - That 20 per cent have an average income of over 80 euros a day, while one quarter of the world's people live on less than 1 euro a day.
 - One fifth of people have little access to health care or clean water.
 - The world's population will grow by half – another 3 billion people – by 2050, having grown from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 6.1 billion in 2000, almost all in the poor world.

- In the UK, road traffic has more than doubled since 1970, 16 per cent of mammals and birds are assessed as "threatened", and 1 in 3 adults do not engage in any education or training after leaving school.
- 8 Although sustainable development might be easy to sell as a long-term concept, it is much more difficult to sell in the short-term because it is commonly seen as a cost and another task and responsibility, rather than as an opportunity. But experience shows there is a strong and powerful business case for sustainable development. Businesses, companies, colleges and training providers that adopt environmental management systems can make significant financial savings. They can also enhance their reputation, gain access to new markets and better motivate their staff.
- 9 The LSC has a key role in helping the post-16 education and training sector develop sustainability. For example, colleges and providers have significant "buildings and estate" responsibilities that are relevant to sustainable development. In addition, they can make sure sustainable development is a part of the way that learning is delivered by making it a "curriculum" responsibility. And in their local areas, colleges and providers can act as catalysts for and promoters of sustainable development among businesses and the wider community, as part of their responsibility to their communities.

Vision

- 10 The LSC's vision is that the post-16 education and training sector will commit to embedding sustainable development within:
- the learning opportunities it provides
 - its management of resources
 - its engagement with communities.

- 11 In particular, the LSC's vision is that over the next 10 years:
- the culture of the sector will change so that all providers and learners will know about sustainable development and expect it to be part of normal practice
 - strategies, policies and plans that integrate and implement sustainable development will be in place, understood and acted on
 - the LSC itself will integrate sustainable development into its policies and everyday practices at all levels
 - risks and barriers that prevent sustainable development will be anticipated and managed
 - continuous improvement in the sector's performance in sustainable development will be reported and recognized
 - good practice in learning, management and community interaction will be recognized, understood and monitored.
- 12 To achieve this vision, we have set out a series of milestones for achievement by 2007 and 2010. These are explained in more detail in the supporting document.

How we get there – Guiding Principles and Approaches

- 13 Having described and agreed our vision, we need to develop an approach that will help us achieve it. In its 1999 Strategy, *A Better Quality of Life*, the UK Government suggested a set of guiding principles for sustainable development. Some were established legal principles; others were "approaches" to decision-making. The principles that support and most directly relate to our vision are:
- putting people at the centre
 - taking a long-term perspective
 - combating poverty and social exclusion

- respecting environmental limits
 - using scientific knowledge
 - transparency, information, participation and access to justice.
- 14** We recommend that the LSC adopts the Five Capital Model as a robust framework for exploring the range of potential contributions providers and partners can make to sustainable development. The Model is based on the premise that we are facing a sustainability crisis because we are consuming our stocks of natural, human, social, manufactured and financial capital faster than they are being produced. Unless we control the rate of this consumption, we cannot sustain these vital stocks in the long term. By maintaining and trying to increase stocks of those capital assets, we can live off the income without reducing the capital itself. But for this to happen, we have to manage these capital assets in a sustainable way.
- 15** We recommend that the post-16 education and training sector:
- adopts the proposed vision and guiding principles
 - provides learning that inspires and equips learners for lifelong learning
 - uses learning methods that help staff and learners become better at relationships and social participation
 - provides access to varied and satisfying opportunities for work and personal creativity, and a safe and supportive working environment for staff, learners and the community
 - promotes and supports a high standard of health for staff, learners and the community
 - works with others to improve green space and encourage the existence of a wide variety of plant and animal species (biodiversity)
 - minimizes the natural resources it uses and the amount of waste it produces
- uses accurate systems of finance and trusted systems of leadership, governance and management.
- 16** We recognize these objectives will only be achieved if the LSC itself provides strong strategic management and leadership.

Skills for Sustainable Development

- 17** Many of the commentators and advisory and focus groups who helped us prepare this strategy told us that sustainable development should be at the heart of all learning. They stressed the importance of education for sustainable development (ESD) and the need for all learners to acquire SD skills – skills that will equip them to lead their lives in a sustainable way and to influence others to do the same.
- 18** The Government's Sustainable Development Education Panel has said that ESD should enable people to acquire the knowledge, values and skills that will help them contribute to decisions about the way things are done, both as individuals and as part of a larger community. ESD will help people to see how we can all improve the quality of life now for ourselves (locally) and for others (globally), without damaging the planet for future generations.

Working with Partners

- 19** The primary audience for this strategy and supporting document is the whole range of LSC-funded providers and their staff, and staff within the LSC itself. These are the colleagues that must be convinced of the need for the strategy, and supported and empowered to deliver it. We recognize that for LSC-funded providers and the LSC to succeed in achieving this vision, we will have to will work with and influence a vast

and diverse range of partners. Some of these have far greater experience and knowledge of the sustainable development agenda than we do at both a strategic and operational level.

20 It is essential therefore that we use and build on this existing experience and knowledge by developing sustainable development partnerships at national, regional and local levels between:

- the LSC and other bodies involved in education, training and employment
- the LSC and other bodies engaged in related social, environmental and economic policy
- the LSC and providers.

21 We acknowledge that partnership working is a continuous process with significant resource implications for all partners. We also acknowledge that our partners will need to understand and support our strategy for sustainable development. Equally, the LSC must understand the culture and working styles of other organizations so that collaboration can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes. We will learn from existing good practice and will ensure that we share information on practice which is proven to have led to sustainable development.

Key Areas and Recommended Actions

22 We recommend that the learning and skills sector and the LSC together develop actions in the following key areas.

23 Buildings and Estate

- **Estate management and sustainability policy:** Demonstrate good governance of sustainable estate management by reviewing and identifying the key social, environmental and economic aspects of the organization and adopting a sound sustainability policy.

- **Design:** Demonstrate a commitment to sustainable building design, taking into account the impact and cost of decisions on energy, water, materials and resources.
- **Waste:** Demonstrate a commitment to minimizing waste by outlining ways in which this can be achieved.
- **Accounts:** Ensure accounts reflect social and environmental as well as economic costs.
- **Biodiversity:** Maximize the contribution to encouraging a wide variety of plant and animal species.
- **Travel:** Have a travel plan that tackles the issues of providing access for all as well as reducing the environmental impact of travel.

24 Curriculum

- **ESD:** Promote and encourage acceptance and delivery within learning programmes of the Sustainable Development Education Panel's key concepts of education for sustainable development.
- **Learning materials:** Consider adopting and using currently available SD learning materials and develop appropriate SD programmes and modules.
- **Whole-institution approach:** Implement a whole-institution approach to SD, taking account of both institution-based provision and virtual learning environments, and informal as well as formal learning approaches.
- **Links and partnerships:** Develop links between providers and industry and between pre- and post-16 education and training providers (including higher education). Also consider European and international partnerships.

25 Community

- **Community engagement:** Ensure there are good communications with the local community at all levels, including employers, and that this leads to greater community and employer involvement.

- **Local and regional networks:** Maintain and develop partnerships with local authorities and Regional Development Agencies. Ensure that higher education and LSC providers are linked in regional networks.
- **Sustainable development champions:** Identify and train champions for sustainable development so that every college, training provider and local LSC has at least one knowledgeable, committed champion who promotes sustainable development.
- **Local markets and ethical trade:** Support local markets, ethical, fair trade and socially responsible initiatives within the community.
- **Share facilities:** If this is not already happening, consider sharing facilities with local community agencies and groups to make the best use of resources.
- **Local economic strategies:** Be aware of, support and connect to the local economic strategies drawn up and developed by the local authorities and Regional Development Agencies.

Consultation Issues

- 26** All responses to the consultation issues listed below will be carefully considered. Responses are requested by 31 March 2005.
- **Consultation issue 1: vision** (paragraphs 10 to 12 here and 22 to 27 in the supporting document). Please comment on the appropriateness of the proposed vision and how it can be best measured.
 - **Consultation issue 2:** guiding principles (paragraphs 13 to 16 here and 29 to 36 in the supporting document). Are the proposed guiding principles, approaches and objectives appropriate and adequate?
 - **Consultation issue 3:** skills (paragraphs 17 to 18 here and 38 to 41 in the supporting document). Please comment on the suggested critical importance of

skills for sustainable development and how they can best be achieved.

- **Consultation issue 4:** working with partners (paragraphs 19 to 21 here and 43 to 46 in the supporting document). Please comment on our proposals for working with partners.
- **Consultation issue 5:** key areas and recommended actions (paragraphs 22 to 25 here and 48 to 75 in the supporting document). Are the key areas and recommended actions appropriate and adequate? Please suggest any further areas for action.
- **Consultation issue 6:** other comments. Do you have any other comments?

27 Please post, fax or email responses to:

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