

A Practical Approach to Engaging with Sustainable Development

A Governor's Guide



Education for Sustainable Development

Useful resources for Governors

Best Practice: Case Studies

Section 1. Education for Sustainable Development

1.1 Definitions

“Education on the principles of Sustainable Development” can be broadly defined as engaging learners in the process of learning about aspects of sustainability, where ‘Sustainability is a state where social and economic activity does not degrade the environment locally or globally, but maintains natural systems and resources for future generations’ (EAUC website: sorted).

Many organisations consider that embedding Sustainable Development approaches makes sense technically and ethically and demonstrates good governance. The brief descriptions are summarised from resources already available on the LSIS, EAUC and AoC websites.

1.2 The context for the Learning and Skills sector

There are a number of reasons that make sustainability particularly relevant for the Learning and Skills sector:

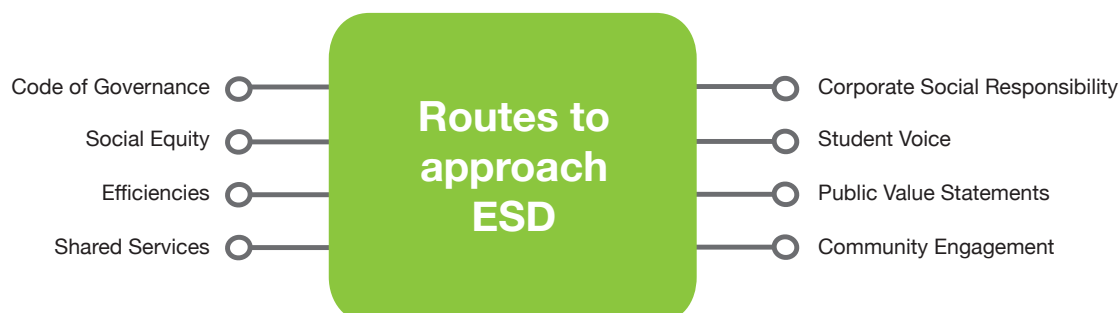
- FE colleges and other training providers are part of a wider community that is having to respond to new environmental, social and economic challenges and these 3 factors are linked
- The Learning and Skills sector has a duty to prepare its students for these challenges and for new ways of living and working. The curriculum, the management practices and the ethos of the organisation are all equally important in performing this duty successfully
- The business case for sustainability in the Learning and Skills sector has been established and it is becoming stronger as environmental legislation increases and as the demand for knowledge and skills associated with sustainable development grows
- Sustainability can provide senior managers with a vision and a long term strategy for their organisation, and form part of the public value statement.

How can governors help?

- Is sustainability discussed at corporation meetings?
- Is energy consumption reduction a target in business plans to cut costs?
- Is sustainability in the college’s strategic objectives and within the curriculum for learners?
- Is there a board ‘champion’ for sustainability?

1.3 Approaches to Education for Sustainable Development

In their work in embedding ESD, corporations and governor champions have used many pathways to achieve objectives – different approaches have included:



All these different approaches are legitimate and the selection of any or all can be an individual governing body choice.

Section 2. Resources and Case Studies

2.1 Useful resources for college governors

At the time of writing the government focus is on critical effectiveness of colleges in offering the highest quality education and training and in preparing our learners for their future in further education, further training and employment.

The following links to resources give a flavour of some of the extremely useful information which already exists to help colleges determine for themselves their strategic approach to Education for Sustainable Development.

A good starting point is www.eauc.org.uk/sorted - an approach used in many colleges using four key themes: leadership, curriculum and learning, organisation capacity, and partnerships. The Reaching Forward Index tool will support you to do an online assessment of your organisation's progress in key areas of sustainable development.

www.excellencegateway.org.uk – provides a wealth of information and resource; search for 'sustainable development' and 'stepping up in sustainability' projects

www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk – information on approaches to best practice in environmental and sustainability management, used by colleges and universities.

www.carbontrust.com – information on energy saving approaches

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supplementary-guidance-and-resources-for-inspectors-adult-learning-and-skills - information on Ofsted reports

You may also consider 'The Future Fit Framework' a guidance document produced in 2011 by Professor Stephen Sterling at the Centre for Sustainable Futures, Teaching and Learning Directorate, Plymouth University, for the Higher Education Academy.

2.2 Case study examples of best practice

www.eauc.org.uk/sorted/carbon_reduction_at_leicester_college

www.eauc.org.uk/sorted/securing_sustainability_at_worcester_college_of

www.wacc.ac.uk – a whole college approach at Walsall Adult Community College to using Sustainable Development for organisational improvement (see also Ofsted Inspection Report January 2013)

www.bicton.ac.uk/business/earth.php – The Bicton College Earth Centre for Training

genesisproject.com – The sustainable conference centre at Somerset College



Award winning sustainable building, the Genesis Centre, Somerset College

Section 3. Regional Activity – The South West region

3.1 What have we already achieved in the south west?

Overview of activity in the south west region – 32 colleges

Baseline survey of SD in SW colleges conducted 2008 – 29/32 colleges responded (91%)

11 Best Practice case studies published 2010 – colleges at all stages of the Sustainability journey

Two Best Practice conferences in 2010 – involving staff and students

AoC SW Sustainable Development and Estates Group meets three times per year - shares best practice and practical problem solving.

South west research analysis 2008:

Leadership:

38% had a policy for SD

14% had an action plan for SD

35% had strategic objectives for SD

Estates:

23% had baseline performance measures

10% had an Energy Management System

48% had action plan to reduce energy use

43% had green travel plan

21% carried out an assessment of impact on climate change

Teaching and learning:

62% encouraged use of ICT in learning

13% recognised ESD in the curriculum

Business and Community:

32% encouraged volunteering

65% encouraged student participation in community benefit projects



Bicton EaRTH: designed to showcase the most up to date renewable technologies at Bicton College, Devon.



Tree planting to offset carbon footprint at Wiltshire College.



Biofuel tractor at Kingston Mauward College, Dorset.