

# **LEARNING TO LAST**

## **THE GOVERNMENT'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND**

**DRAFT PRESENTED TO MINISTERS BY  
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
EDUCATION PANEL**

**FEBRUARY 2003**

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## Executive Summary

- I. This Strategy sets out the Government's long-term aims for education for sustainable development, and in particular, for the United Nations *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* which will run from 2005 to 2015.
- II. There has never been a greater opportunity nor a greater need for a coherent strategy. No Government has ever invested more or set in train more initiatives in the reform of formal education, workforce development or local and community regeneration and renewal.
- III. What is needed is the establishment of more meaningful connections between, on the one hand, this investment in learning, skills and regeneration and, on the other, sustainable development and education for sustainable development. These are not marginal extras but must be fully integrated into all projects, programmes and initiatives.
- IV. The key focus for action must be at local and community levels. Government's role is not to fill gaps but to set priorities and expectations, to facilitate and support. The challenge is to win hearts and minds and to motivate people to take personal action. This will not happen without mobilising channels of informal communication, including the media, youth and trade associations, non-governmental organisations of all kinds, museums, libraries, galleries, the arts, sports and many more. What is needed is a positive vision reinforced by a simple, consistent message expressed in plain language. That is the platform on which to build with the increasing number of champions, both individuals and organisations.
- V. **The Aim of this strategy is, therefore to ensure that all aspects of life long learning are fully engaged in the provision of effective education for sustainable development.**
- VI. Its **key objectives** are that:
  - All parts of the **statutory education system** have the remit, the professional capacity and the resources to develop knowledge, skills and aptitudes that enable all citizens to engage in the achievement of the goals of sustainable development;
  - All organisations and agencies responsible for **vocational, occupational and post-statutory education** are fully engaged in developing a workforce able to participate in the achievement of the goals of sustainable development;
  - All parts of the **business sector** are engaged in developing a workforce able to participate in the achievement of the goals of sustainable development, through production and consumption and are also keeping their customers fully aware of their policies and practices;
  - All organisations involved in both **local and regional governance** have the professional capacity to engage in the achievement of sustainable development and actively involve in improving the capacity of their various stake holders to engage;
  - The many aspects of **public education**, from mass media, through public places to the civil society organisations are fully engaged in increasing the public awareness and understanding of sustainable development.

- VII. Nurturing effective education for sustainable development will frequently require cross-departmental, cross-sectoral or cross-organisational engagement. That is not easy to achieve. It needs a clear lead from the top, the celebration of successes, the sharing of good practice and the willingness to expose and, if necessary, criticise, under-performance.
- VIII. In formal education, developments in the curriculum, especially the focus on citizenship and the fashioning of a new curriculum for 14 to 19 year-olds and the Foundation Stage provide major opportunities. So, too, do the new Learning and Skills Council and Sector Skills Council infrastructure. Informal learning, particularly youth work, has a major part to play. In all contexts, those in the front line need training and support.
- IX. In schools and early years settings, the key concepts of education for sustainable development must be exemplified within the curriculum and there must be coherence across subject areas, the school ethos and estate management. The new protection afforded to school grounds and huge investment programme for rebuilding and refurbishing school buildings and facilities provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to create sustainable working environments and new learning contexts for pupils, teachers, governors and the wider school community alike. We need to ensure that teachers have easy access to skills, expertise and a body of knowledge in education for sustainable development. It is important to ensure that newly qualified teachers are competent and confident in this area and that they continue to develop these skills throughout their professional life.
- X. Further education is at the cutting edge of Learning and Skills Council plans, workforce development, the 14 to 19 curriculum and the National Learning and Skills Strategy. Transforming Youth Work is reshaping services for young people. In all these, the opportunity to integrate education for sustainable development is without precedent. The opportunity must not be missed.
- XI. The force for action must be the Local Strategic Partnerships, urban and rural. Local Authorities, Learning and Skills Councils and colleges must be active members and ensure that education for sustainable development is integrated into every project and plan, and that appropriate funding is invested in training for front line decision makers and managers.
- XII. Universities have an important part to play, too, not only in creating research bases to inform future planning and skills development, but also as prestigious examples of sustainable development in practice and as major contributors to local strategic partnerships.
- XIII. The lead in increasing awareness of, and knowledge about, sustainable development issues, and problems in workforce development will lie with three newly arrived developments. Area and subsequent plans of Learning and Skills Councils must focus on local education, training and skills needs, and a template needs to be provided. Sector Skills Councils must focus on developing the business cases for sustainable development in each sector, on the establishment of standards and on the accreditation of individuals and organisations. Those concerned with the Union Learning Fund and the training of Union Learning Representatives must include education for sustainable development in their criteria for funding and their training and updating programmes.
- XIV. At community level progress can be both swift and meaningful. Partnership plans and projects need to integrate education for sustainable development. That should be a

condition of funding. Learning and Skills Councils must ensure that partnership and project leaders have the necessary training and access to support. Reviews, inspectors and reports should assess progress. The significance of local partnerships is that here, more easily than at any other level, all involved in education for sustainable development can come together and transform aspirations and generalities into practical action and results.

- XV. Finally, the resources necessary for implementing the strategy should be regarded as an integral part of the major allocations already made by the Government in education reform, learning and skills and neighbourhood and other regeneration and renewal. Government will expect them to be a cost legitimately incurred in producing successful outcomes for those programmes. Government remits to the agencies involved will make that clear. The finances, people and time involved will be an investment made in order to achieve large social, economic and environmental gains.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The United Nations *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* will run from 2005 to 2015. UNESCO will co-ordinate it. The Government is wholly committed to its success. This strategy sets out the Government's aims for the decade, the steps it will be taking and the steps it will look to others to take.
- 1.2. Throughout this strategy the words education and learning are used interchangeably. Both are to be understood very widely to include all kinds of learning and all places where learning can occur, both formally and informally – such as the home, the community, the workplace, museums, and the cinema – as well as in schools, colleges and universities.
- 1.3. The 1999 UK Sustainable Development Strategy *A Better Quality of Life* clearly describes the Government's commitment to sustainable development. It identifies a range of indicators of progress relating to environmental quality including such issues as transport and housing, economic performance including investment and employment, and social issues including crime and health.
- 1.4. *A Better Quality of Life* recognises that all people, at home, in the work place and in the wider community make decisions that impact on all these indicators and will need to be engaged if they are to be addressed. It also recognises that this engagement will not be effective, or even possible, without effective education or learning in relation to all aspects of the lives of all citizens.
- 1.5. **The Aim of this strategy is, therefore to ensure that all aspects of life long learning are fully engaged in the provision of effective education for sustainable development.**
- 1.6. Its key objectives are that:
  - a) All parts of the **statutory education system** have the remit, the professional capacity and the resources to develop knowledge, skills and aptitudes that enable all citizens to engage in the achievement of the goals of sustainable development;
  - b) all organisations and agencies responsible for **vocational, occupational and post statutory education** are fully engaged in developing a workforce able to participate in the achievement of the goals of sustainable development;
  - c) all parts of the **business sector** are engaged in developing a workforce able to participate in the achievement of the goals of sustainable development, through production and consumption, and are also keeping their customers fully aware of their policies and practices;
  - d) all organisations involved in both **local and regional governance** have the professional capacity to engage in the achievement of sustainable development and actively involve in improving the capacity of their various stake holders to engage;
  - e) the many aspects of **public education**, from mass media, through public places to the civil society organisations are fully engaged in increasing the public awareness and understanding of sustainable development.
- 1.7. There is already a richness of practice in many of these areas - developed by individuals, teachers, youth workers, community groups, colleges, firms and many others especially in

the voluntary sector, and in recent years progress has accelerated. We have increased significantly the sustainable development content of the National Curriculum, and provided web-based support for schools. In further and adult education, the Learning and Skills Council has supported several initiatives on education for sustainable development. Some Regional Development Agencies have begun to include education within their strategies. The New Opportunities Fund has also reflected sustainable development as both a feature and a focus of funding. More widely, the underlying principles of sustainable development we outlined in *A Better Quality of Life* are increasingly accepted as important components of learning programmes.

1.8. There is still, however, much to be done if we are to overcome all the obstacles to progress, notably:

- a) *The lack of a positive vision;*
- b) *Fatalism and feelings of helplessness*, arising from the difficulty of maintaining a conviction that what individuals or institutions can do for sustainable development will really make a difference, given the complex and apparently intractable difficulties that it appears to present;
- c) *The short term driving out the long term* where uncertainty over the timescale of the apparent threats means that the issues are not considered, in comparison with more clearly defined and immediate problems;
- d) Sustainable development often being *compartmentalised* either by separating out responsibility for its environmental, economic and social components or by making it solely the concern a specialised unit or person so it is poorly integrated into the organisation's other activities;
- e) *Lack of capacity*, whether knowledge, understanding, status, staff, facilities, or financial resources to carry out the task.

1.9. Yet there has never been a greater opportunity nor a greater need for a coherent strategy. No government has ever invested more or set in train more initiatives in schools, colleges, universities, workforce development and community partnerships. There are key changes in the infrastructure: Learning and Skills Councils, Sector Skills Councils, regional and local development agencies and partnerships. The most significant opportunities include:

- a) Local strategic partnerships and neighbourhood renewal;
- b) Learning and Skills Councils' Area Plans;
- c) The significant new capital in education announced by the chancellor in the 2002 Spending Review which will rise to £7 billion per annum by 2005-06;
- d) The emerging Sector Skills Councils with their responsibility for standards and qualifications;
- e) The *Transforming Youth Work* agenda to reshape local youth services;
- f) The emphasis on workforce development in public sector services and private sector alike;
- g) Developments in the curriculum at Foundation Stage; introduction of citizenship into the secondary curriculum and, perhaps greatest of all, 14-19 reforms, not forgetting the Connexions Service;
- h) The greatly increased importance attaching to risk management whether at work or in the community or education.

- 1.10. The Government's vision is that, for sustainable development to become a reality, it must be understood and embraced by all sections of the community. It must not be seen as remote, mysterious and abstract, but rather as down-to-earth and important for the way we all live our daily lives. Our aim is for sustainable development so to have caught the public's imagination that there is an unstoppable drive towards it becoming a reality. It is for a time when the vast majority of the population will, without thinking, balance the way they carry out all of the activities that generate their incomes and improve the quality of their lives – their work, leisure and daily activities – with the impact they have on the world's natural resources and on the lives of others; a time when people automatically seek to meet their present needs, without damaging the ability of future generations to do the same. With the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development we have the greatest opportunity we have ever had to bring the achievement of those aims very much closer.

## 2. Overview and Major Themes

2.1. The Government's strategy has seven major themes:

- a) **Integration:** The world is changing. Formal education is being transformed. Structures for the development of learning and skills and the regeneration of local communities are finding their feet. There is a widening understanding that sustainable development is about much more than concern for the environment. What is needed is for connections to be made between learning and regeneration initiatives, and the total integration of the understanding and knowledge that will lead to sustainable development;
- b) **Partnerships:** A key focus of action must be at community level and the local strategic partnerships, urban or rural. Schools, colleges, informal education should be seen as part of those partnerships. So, too, should Learning and Skills Councils as they draw up and implement their local area plans. Learning for sustainable development should not be a marginal after thought but an integral part of those plans, threading through them and all activities within them;
- c) **Practical Business Solutions:** Sector Skills Councils have a key part to play as far as employers are concerned. They will be setting standards but they will also be formulating plans for their sector for the development of learning and skills. They need to develop the business case for sustainable development not in terms of generalities which can easily pass employers by, but through focussing on a small number of core problems and issues that need to be tackled, and which decision makers in firms can acknowledge. Such problems might be found in the supply chain, reputational issues, concern or controversy about chemicals or waste disposal;
- d) **Training:** In whatever context (formal education, organisations responsible for training, skills and regional development, the workplace, the youth service or the voluntary sector) those in the front line need to be trained and supported;
- e) **Government Responsibilities:** Government's role is limited but of critical importance. It is not to fill gaps. Government should not direct but facilitate. Government will enable and support. It must also establish priorities, for example through remit letters addressed to the bodies for which it is responsible;
- f) **Planning and Resources:** This strategy does not call for additional financial resources. Very large sums of money are now being allocated to reforms in formal education, neighbourhood and community development, workplace development and

the national learning and skills strategy and its implementation. What the strategy does require is that education and learning for sustainable development must be an integral part of planning and delivering the results looked for in all those far reaching programmes – an investment in people with as big a return as any other.

- g) **Evaluation** - Evaluation of what is happening and the success of approaches, projects and programmes is essential at all levels. Without evaluation there will be no learning.

2.2. The remaining parts of this strategy set out the most important actions and results looked for in each of formal education, workforce development, the community and informal learning. The strategy concludes by briefly indicating how a start will be made on making it happen.

### 3. Formal Education

#### a. Schools

3.1. So far as schools are concerned our three objectives are clear:

- a) Young people will acquire the skills, knowledge and value base to be active citizens in creating a more sustainable society.
- b) Teachers, including Headteachers, will acquire, or have access to, the skills, knowledge and support to deliver good quality education for sustainable development within schools, seeing education for sustainable development not as a bolt-on extra or a series of projects or initiatives, but as an integral component of the ongoing life of the school.
- c) Schools will not only meet their statutory responsibilities but also ensure that the environment in which young people learn is a sustainable one.

3.2. Since 1999, education for sustainable development has had an increased profile in the school curriculum. The aims and purposes of the National Curriculum state that pupils “should develop awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, national and global level”. This statement is supported by explicit requirements for education for sustainable development in geography, science, design and technology and citizenship.

3.3. The priorities now are:

- a) To ensure that the key concepts of education for sustainable development are clearly exemplified within the statutory curriculum and within criteria for GCSE and A-level examinations;
- b) To address the development of education for sustainable development within schools to achieve coherence across subject areas, the school ethos, and school and estate management.

3.4. Four opportunities present themselves. They are not to be missed:

- a) Above all, to take maximum advantage of the far-reaching work on a new approach to 14-19 education;

- b) To derive maximum benefit from the development of new “hybrid GCSEs”, notably in Geography and Science;
  - c) To strengthen the relationship between education for sustainable development and citizenship;
  - d) To take forward sustainable development education for the whole school community (pupils, teachers, governors and the wider community) as an integral part of the changes in educational infrastructure made possible by the new capital investment in schools.
- 3.5. In all of these developments it will be important to draw on the *Life Skills for a Sustainable Future* developed by the Sustainable Development Education Panel as these life skills make important links between education, social inclusion, citizenship and the world of work. They are especially relevant to the 14-19 curriculum.
- 3.6. The huge new investment in refurbishing school buildings and other facilities presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to create sustainable working environments in schools and greatly enhanced opportunities and contexts for learning for pupils and teachers alike. Developing and implementing sustainable development and education for sustainable development need to be requirements for contracts for capital improvement in schools and grounds. We need to draw this clearly to the attention of Governors and school managers, alongside the need to include the sustainable stewardship of land and built environments into the Asset Management Plan process.
- 3.7. If all these opportunities are to be pursued successfully, teachers must have easy access to skills, expertise and a body of knowledge in education for sustainable development. We intend to:
- a) Work towards regionally coordinated frameworks of support for teachers on education for sustainable development;
  - b) Identify professional development opportunities for teachers, and Headteachers in education for sustainable development, and ensure they have appropriate accreditation and reinforcement from key stakeholders in the sector;
  - c) Ensure that there is coordination with other initiatives which could potentially have an education for sustainable development component;
  - d) Continue to develop the QCA education for sustainable development website extending its information on best or innovative practice and giving special attention to making the site available as a tool for education for sustainable development learning across all curriculum areas, including Citizenship.

3.8. We also need to ensure that newly qualified teachers are competent and confident to deliver the curriculum's education for sustainable development requirements. The Teacher Training Agency will work with the National College for School Leadership, teacher training institutions and other partners to develop a strategic approach to teacher training for education for sustainable development, to complement the current citizenship teacher training initiative and to draw lessons from other initiatives, such as ICT, which have sought to raise the understanding and skills levels of serving teachers very quickly. We will ensure that education for sustainable development is developed in partnership with the relevant key stakeholders in the sector

3.9. OFSTED has a significant role to play in establishing the extent to which standards are being met by schools and colleges, by head teachers and principals, and by teacher training institutions for both initial and in-service training. There is a requirement for all of these sectors to have an inspection framework which includes education for sustainable development criteria, together with associated programmes of inspector training. An evidence base needs to be established. During 2002-03 OFSTED carried out an initial research project into the contribution of education for sustainable development to school improvement and achievement. We will follow this up with wider research into the extent to which schools understand and are delivering the education for sustainable development curriculum and work towards education for sustainable development being an integral component of inspection frameworks.

3.10. In these ways our objectives are to ensure that:

- a) Sustainable development is recognised as a key component of the delivery of citizenship within schools;
- b) All schools are aware of where to secure support for delivering good quality education for sustainable development in their schools;
- c) Local Education Authorities have policies on the nature and form of their support for education for sustainable development in schools;
- d) Within the Standards Fund an allocation is set aside during the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development for all schools to access education for sustainable development training for their teachers;
- e) Teacher training providers include sustainable development within their provision and as a key component of their provision for continuous professional development;
- f) Headteachers have the ability to provide leadership on sustainable development both in respect of the curriculum and the school's overall ethos

## b) Further and Higher Education

3.11. As the Government's programmes for learning and skills and regeneration develop, more and more people will be found in further and higher education, not only full-time students but many others: young workers and mature students who are studying both full and part-time. The challenge is to ensure that further and higher education address the understanding and skills needed to enable learners to live and work in a sustainable way and to take a lead in decision-making for a sustainable future. Education for sustainable development needs to take place through the curriculum but it also needs to be experienced in the day-to-day management of these learning communities.

3.12. Further and Higher Education providers are understandably under pressure to deliver short term results. This militates against taking a long term view on sustainable development. Other challenges include:

- a) The lack of appropriate leadership;
- b) An absence of empowered champions;
- c) Insufficient capacity to inform, support, guide, provide relevant training, and show examples of good practice.

3.13. There are, however, major opportunities:

- a) The Area Reviews and Development Plans of the Learning and Skills Councils;
- b) The development of the new 14-19 curriculum and the chance to build sustainable development education into the new model teaching and learning framework;
- c) The chance to devise programmes giving effect to Life Skills for a Sustainable Future, and in particular to develop transferable skills in the new curriculum at present being developed in Technical Certificates, Foundation Degrees and revised management qualifications;
- d) The scope to embed learning for sustainable development within the award of Centre of Vocational Excellence;
- e) The opportunity to integrate understanding and knowledge of sustainable development within the remit of the National Leadership College and include it as a priority within the leadership of new and reformed institutions;
- f) The fact that the Further Education National Training Organisation will shortly be reformed into a Sector Skills Council with a remit that will include training for the private sector, giving opportunities to have common occupational training standards for Sustainable Development Education;
- g) The new responsibilities for Ofsted and the chance to blend its inspection work in schools and local authorities with its activities in FE colleges.

3.14. In short the current wave of educational reform of the post-16 sector of formal education provides a unique opportunity to create a climate for education for sustainable development. Now is the time for all agencies engaged in this reform - DfES, Colleges, Learning and Skills Councils, Sector Skills Councils, QCA, OFSTED and the Adult Learning Inspectorate – to ensure that it creates a platform for sustainable skills development. How we intend to make that platform effective at local level is set out in the next part of this strategy.

3.15. Meantime the higher education sector has special additional responsibilities. It has a unique role in creating national and international research bases to inform future planning and skills development to support the new strategic planning frameworks currently under development. This is particularly important in regard to business and technical innovation, in science, economics and risk assessment. Moreover, universities should:

- a) Be visible and prestigious exemplars of sustainable development in practice;
- b) Be key partners in local strategy development;
- c) determine, through degree programmes, the importance, quality and standing of sustainable development for the professionals and managers of the future through their remit letter from HEFCE.

- 3.16. The Government will ensure that these matters receive increasing attention.
- 3.17. We will use the opportunity provided by our plans to create an Academy for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education to consider the inclusion of Sustainable Development as a Subject Group within the new arrangements for the HE sector.

## 4. Workforce Development

- 4.1. Throughout most of business and commerce, short-term considerations can dominate boardroom and management decision-making. There are some companies that set good examples, but, for others, sustainable development can seem a liability. The business case for education for sustainable development is not widely understood. Many stakeholders in the workplace feel that they know little or nothing about the subject. Others fail to see its relevance to themselves.
- 4.2. Tools that could help to deliver sustainable business decisions and working practices are barely known and poorly supported. At national, regional and local levels, information, support, guidance, examples of good practice and training support for business have been lacking. There is still an inadequate body of knowledge about what effective education for sustainable development looks like. What knowledge there is, is not well shared.
- 4.3. Despite the downside, many employers, trade unions and professions are starting down the road, discovering their own methodologies and what works for them. Professional bodies are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainable development and bringing it to the forefront of their qualification and accreditation processes. A group of professional institutions have now formed the Sustainability Alliance with the aim of addressing the needs of professionals jointly in relation to learning and practice. TUSDAC for trade unionists and ACBE for employers both have significant work under way.
- 4.4. Notwithstanding the efforts of many professional bodies, many more steps need to be taken before the professional population as a whole embraces learning for sustainable development. The first of these is the adoption of a common language for sustainable development that all professionals, regardless of their technical expertise, understand and can act upon, preferably together. The second is making the business case for sustainable development more widely known and recognised as the route to professional and corporate success – financially and otherwise. The third relates to making firm the connection between performance on sustainable development and funding. Incentives to business and the professionals who lead them to manage the way they do business more sustainably, will encourage many to act differently. The promotion of business success as a result of more sustainable action will encourage other businesses to find out more and to look for the learning to support it.
- 4.5. The work of professional institutions also has a direct impact on many higher education courses – both in relation to the curricula and accreditation. As employers, professionals also have the opportunity to drive workforce demand in terms of the skills, knowledge and values that support sustainable development. Whilst work in this area has started it is by no means universal and will require a more sustained and coordinated effort to have the desired impact. The need for existing, as well as emerging, professionals (whether in business or academia) to learn about sustainable development is crucial. So too, therefore,

is the integration of sustainable development as a core element within continuous professional development.

- 4.6. The Government for its part is committed to extending to everyone access to learning and the opportunity for upgrading their skills right throughout life. This emphasis on workforce development is prompted by the sheer pace of change at work and the demands of globalisation. The programme to overturn the effects of years of educational neglect provides a major opportunity for pushing forward sustainable development learning in the workplace. This year's national Learning and Skills Strategy provides the framework for action. The Learning and Skills Councils, the Sector Skills Councils, and the Union Learning Fund and Union Learning Representatives are all key to success.
- 4.7. At the local level, local strategic partnerships must be the focus of action, bringing together all stakeholders, including employers and unions. It is here that the plans and actions of the Learning and Skills Councils must make a major contribution by securing a commitment to sustainable development a condition of funding for all providers, appraising all projects for the steps that will be taken to utilise education for sustainable development, and including such issues in the regular review of contracts. The Learning and Skills Councils are in a unique position to nurture, support and champion learning for sustainable development within the private/public sector partnerships centred on regeneration. The Learning and Skills Council needs to ensure they do this, as well as fulfil the requirement it sees for curriculum development.
- 4.8. Government will include these matters in our remit to the Learning and Skills Council itself. We shall also look to the Learning and Skills Council to develop a guidance toolkit for local Learning and Skills Councils and others. This should be based on the templates developed by the Sustainable Development Education Panel for a number of sectors.
- 4.9. The Sector Skills Councils and the Funding Councils have significant opportunities to raise the profile and performance of education for sustainable development. They can secure the development of the business case in terms of the circumstances, issues and problems facing each sector. They should assemble and publicise examples of good practice. They can and should set standards for each sector. They have a powerful incentive in course and provider accreditation. Lastly, they can assess current and future skills needs. Government will make all these expectations clear in a remit letter.
- 4.10. Trade unions have long been pioneers of workers' education. Their involvement is being revitalised by their role in helping to create new initiatives and learning opportunities at work. This is a role the Government recognised through the establishment of the Union Learning Fund and, more recently, the appointment of Union Learning Representatives. The sustainability of a workplace project is already a factor taken into consideration in a project's chances of receiving funding support from the Union Learning Fund. This presently only necessitates a project having to declare that its life and the outcomes it delivers will continue beyond its period of funding. This is a very different test from the one that is required - one that demonstrates the contribution the project will make to Education for sustainable development. We will make this clear to the Learning and Skills Council which is now responsible for the Fund.
- 4.11. The appointment of Union Learning Representatives to date is an opportunity missed. Many have already received preliminary training through their union or, in many cases, via the TUC - without Education for sustainable development taking its rightful place on the learning agenda and in the pantheon of training needs analysis. This situation is not,

however, beyond retrieval. Further information, advice and training need to be delivered to existing, trained representatives to rectify the omission and training for new representatives needs to give education for sustainable development the weight and the course time it demands. We look to the Trades Union Congress to pursue these matters.

4.12. Learndirect, with its role in the development of new ways of learning and new qualifications, e-learning more generally, and the potential for wider participation that broadband technology offer for workforce development; all provide a unique opportunity to integrate education for sustainable development into workforce and professional development. Learndirect have already produced a modular programme entitled *Sustainable Development for All*. This promising start needs to be built on and expanded.

4.13. Finally, it is disturbing that so very little of education leading to management qualifications includes sustainable development as a core element. We look to providers, especially business schools, to rectify this omission as soon as possible. There are opportunities here for centres of excellence to emerge and for basic frameworks for learning for sustainable development within business and commerce to develop.

## 5. In the Community

5.1. Education for sustainable development requires much more than off-the-peg courses. It implies the development of a range of opportunities in non-formal community settings, in ways that directly relate to the people's everyday lives and to the concerns facing different communities and age groups. Local government has statutory duties directly related to sustainable development. Making it central to these statutory duties and developing, the capacity of council staff is crucial. Local authorities are providing community leadership to promote the economic, social and environmental quality of life of their communities by working through Local Partnerships to develop and deliver Community Plans, which cover significant sustainable development objectives.

5.2. At the same time we have developed Local Strategic Partnerships to support the development of learning communities. These both promote better local coordination and ensure that communities and residents have a powerful voice in neighbourhood renewal in ways that suit them. However in order to be successful decision makers, people must have access to, and take part in, learning activities that will support sustainable development. It is insufficient to add "sustainable development" to a list of criteria if either the bidder or the funding agent has only a limited understanding of what is meant or expected.

5.3. These partnership frameworks now being developed sub-regionally provide an important opportunity, therefore, for meaningful education for sustainable development in a known local context, especially where regeneration and renewal are involved. They also enable expertise within a range of agencies who work at local and regional level to be engaged. Most importantly, they present an opportunity to strategically measure the effect of educational reform on local, regional and national Quality of Life indicators.

5.4. The partnerships are the point where the facilitating activity of Government and its expectations of many different agencies can be transformed into results and progress. Some fear that the scale of the issues to be addressed is too large to move forward on all fronts. If, however, there is a focus on local issues and national themes are determined annually, progress might be much more swift. Moreover, this focus enables policy-makers

and politicians to work more closely and easily together, for example in the field of public health.

- 5.5. We will look to the Learning and Skills Council implementation team to set guidance for both the integration and evaluation of national priorities for education for sustainable development, and for the development of excellence in an education for sustainable development skills strategy. In doing this they will draw on Area Reviews and Area Inspections which will be asked to assess the current sustainable skills needs of the local workforce and any necessary re-design of skills-based provision in partnership with the new Sector Skills Councils. They will need to take a wide view of the different locations and styles of learning: colleges, youth work, adult education and many more.
- 5.6. The strategic plans for local Learning and Skills Councils and for providers in sub-regions and regions will have clear objectives with measurable outcomes demonstrating progress towards education for sustainable development. This will be a condition of funding – and all projects will be appraised in terms of their contribution to those local and regional objectives. These will form part of the Learning and Skills Council system of Performance Review.
- 5.7. To assist this process, we shall ask the Learning and Skills Council to provide a guidance toolkit drawing on the template work undertaken by the Sustainable Development Education Panel. This will encourage all providers to adopt excellent standards of leadership as sustainable organisations, local and local stakeholders.
- 5.8. Finally, accounting for sustainable development will be made a transparent part of partnership reporting and the Learning and Skills Councils should promote the good practice already adopted by the many companies which include explicit statements in their annual reports about progress towards sustainable development.

## 6. Informal Learning

- 6.1. However, this cannot be just a top-down process. Many people, not least young people, are seeking a greater involvement in the decisions which affect their lives – as individuals and in communities. This concern requires opportunities for expression and for action. The challenge of this strategy is to win hearts and minds. The challenge can be met by marshalling the power of channels for informal learning that exist in this country. These include the media, youth and non-governmental organisations, trade organisations, companies - particularly their staff organisations, sports, arts and cultural bodies, museums, libraries, science and development education centres, heritage and environment organisations, faith groups, transport organisations, and many others.
- 6.2. Our strategy to promote a wide public understanding of sustainable development through informal methods of learning will be as follows. We will:
  - a) Develop a simple, consistent message explaining sustainable development in plain language, having taken advice from the professional media on how best to communicate important but somewhat obscure or nebulous subjects to a general public. We will aim to do this by the end of 2008;
  - b) Initially work closely with a small number of organisations, particularly youth agencies, which are proving themselves to be active and effective in helping their members, customers

or users to develop practical, down to earth examples of good practice for subsequent use by a wide range of organisations and individuals;

- c) Based on this experience, we will promote an informal learning initiative for sustainable development among a wide range of publicly funded institutions including, for example the Natural History and Science Museums;
- d) We will consistently promote sustainable development policies and practices across all Government departments;
- e) We will use all means at our disposal to advocate to the public at large the importance of sustainable development in all their working, consuming and recreational decisions and practices.

6.3. As in the past, we will assess progress by surveys of public attitudes and behaviours. Formulating a simple statement capturing the essence of sustainable development will itself be a milestone. Public awareness of this statement will be monitored through annual surveys thereafter, with a target of 50% of those surveyed recognizing the statement by the end of 2005, and incremental annual increases. In parallel we will develop an array of measures to assess the extent to which the public is adopting behaviours that promote sustainable development. We would aim to define this by the end of 2003, and establish and publish a reasoned view of the percentage of those surveyed exhibiting such behaviours annually thereafter. Progress with this programme will depend principally upon the willingness of organisations outside government to commit time to work with us. We are clear that Government departments will equally need to commit time to enable the work programmes to be implemented.

6.4. Many such organisations already provide their members or users with information on an impressive list of topics, whether it be the energy implications of transport; practices to promote sustainable agriculture; social inclusion projects based on sports participation; advice on buildings design; or informal training and educational initiatives such as lectures, web pages, guides, leaflets, outreach programmes and publicity campaigns. The media too have unrivalled skills and experience in communicating difficult and abstract concepts to mass audiences, and Government will look to them to play a powerful role in heightening public awareness of sustainable development.

## 7. Making a Start

7.1. The implementation of this strategy will require leadership, champions, organisation, resources, structure, motivation and accountability. Many of the issues involved in making it happen, together with some possible solutions, have been explored above. The most important is to engage and motivate partners effectively to coordinate the action of a range of bodies in each of the areas that we have outlined. For most purposes, action can be most effectively coordinated at a local level and with a bottom-up momentum.

7.2. Competing departmental (in Whitehall) and regional (in local government) priorities present a particular challenge. It is the nature of sustainable development that no one entity can have ownership of all of it and therefore there is a temptation to give it a lower priority than clearly identifiable departmental or local objectives.

7.3. We must therefore secure explicit and sustainable commitment in deeds as well as words, not just in Whitehall but throughout Government agencies and local and regional government as well. This implies planning, target setting and regular monitoring and

reporting. It requires a clear lead from the top, at both political and official levels. It calls for the celebration of successes, the sharing of good practice and also a willingness to expose, and, if necessary, criticise under-performance.

- 7.4. Over and above a direct commitment to and involvement in sustainable development, many departmental aims and objectives of Government cannot be achieved in isolation and are inherently related to the achievement of some aspect of sustainable development. This implies a key responsibility for individual departments in the sustainable development learning function. Each one has both internal and external opportunities to promote and champion sustainable development learning: internal in order to build the understanding and capacity for sustainable development in each department; external in the delivery of its remit.
- 7.5. Nurturing sound education for sustainable development requires cross-departmental engagement. We do, however, need to clarify leadership on education for sustainable development as opposed to sustainable development per se. In particular we will ensure that the role of the Department for Education and Skills, in promoting education for sustainable development, is explicitly part of its remit in relation to formal education (including youth work and adult and community education, and the Learning and Skills Councils, and e-learning).
- 7.6. We are clear that the resources necessary for this strategy to become a reality should be regarded as an investment in order to achieve the large social, economic and environmental gains that are available in the next decade. We believe the costs can and must be met from existing baselines by the effective use of current resources. Many existing sustainable development remits have been laid upon or assumed by many of the key stakeholders. The costs of this strategy must be met from within those sectors.
- 7.7. The strategy of necessity requires those responsible for delivery to be aware of latest developments and good and successful practice elsewhere, together with particularly interesting innovations. We shall explore with Regional Development Agencies the establishment of nine regional resource centres – one per region, there are embryonic centres of this kind in a number of regions already. These centres would serve as one-stop-shops for those enquiring about education for sustainable development, a hub for the activities of local authorities, voluntary bodies and others supporting schools and other institutions of formal education, and a centre for the collection and dissemination of good practice
- 7.8. We have suggested a range of sector-specific reporting mechanisms which will ensure transparency and accountability within the sectors and help celebrate and disseminate good practice. We have considered what benefit there might be in a new overall reporting mechanism, but are not convinced of its added value. However, we intend that education for sustainable development will be fully addressed in annual reports such as Making It Count, as well as more specific and detailed reports such as the National Communications on Climate Change. It is however, the Government's intention to make fuller reports in 2005 and 2015, at the start and end respectively of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
- 7.9. Meantime, within each Whitehall department we will identify a champion for sustainable development, to include education, who will draw up a plan of action. Once a year the Minister in charge of the Department will review progress and report through Green Ministers to the Prime Minister.

- 7.10. We will also actively promote the programme for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development through speeches, debates, the media and published reports. Those governmental bodies or agencies required to publish annual reports on their activities and responsibilities will be required to include an identifiable section on their activities in this field. We will also seek to agree a monitoring role for the Audit Commission as part of its programme of Comprehensive Performance Assessment of local authorities.
- 7.11. Finally, we will encourage parliamentary committees of both Houses of Parliament to review progress with this strategy. We will particularly encourage the House of Commons Select Committees for Education and Skills; Environmental Audit; and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and also the Committee of Public Accounts to be active in this respect.
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