



House of Commons
Environmental Audit
Committee

**Government Response
to the Committee's
Tenth Report, Session
2002–03 on Learning
the Sustainability
Lesson**

**Sixth Special Report of Session
2002–03**

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The Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

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Sixth Special Report

Learning the Sustainability Lesson: Government response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2002-03.

1. The Environmental Audit Committee published its report on Learning the Sustainability Lesson on 31 July 2003 as HC 472.
2. The Government's Response to the Committee's Report was received on 13 October 2003 in the form of a memorandum to the Committee. It is reproduced as an Appendix to this Special Report.

Appendix

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

MEMORANDUM TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT COMMITTEE (EAC) IN RESPONSE TO THE EAC REPORT ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: “*LEARNING THE SUSTAINABILITY LESSON*”.

Introduction

3. This memorandum from the Department for Education and Skills provides a response to the Environmental Audit Committee on the recommendations and conclusions to be found in the Committee’s tenth report “*Learning the Sustainability Lesson*”.

4. This Department has already submitted two earlier memorandums, to the Committee’s inquiry, providing evidence on how this Department contributes to raising awareness of sustainable development, and particularly, education for sustainable development (ESD). These were submitted on 12 and 27 February 2003. In addition, Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, presented oral evidence to the Committee inquiry on 25 March 2003.

5. The evidence presented in this memorandum compliments the earlier evidence, providing further detail on how this Department will engage with the learning and skills sectors, formally and informally, to promote sustainable development, the way in which we learn about sustainable development throughout our lives and new ideas to change behaviours too.

6. On the whole, we have responded to each of the findings in turn, however, where it seems reasonable to do so, because of the breadth of a subject area, we have provided a larger answer encompassing several findings. We have highlighted where this applies.

7. We have worked closely with Defra officials on collating this response, and again, have highlighted where Defra has provided a Government response to particular findings.

8. For ease of reference we have cross referenced content to the Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills. A copy of this accompanies this memorandum.

9. Annexes attached are as follows: -

- **ANNEX A** : Adult learning inspectorate (ALI): commitment and policy on sustainable development..

Item 1: Learning is a key driver for sustainable change. However, the UK Strategy for Sustainable Development does not set out a clear vision of the contribution which learning can make to achieving the Government’s sustainable development goals. We recommend that the Government rectifies this omission during the forthcoming review of the strategy. (Paragraph 15)

10. The Government agrees that both education and awareness-raising are vital if the UK is to achieve sustainable development. The current review of our UK Strategy is an opportunity to take a fresh look at our approach to sustainable development, in order to improve delivery. The review is still at an early stage, and so it is too soon to say how education and awareness raising might be covered in a revised strategy. This will depend on further work and consultation within government, and particularly with our stakeholders and the general public.

11. The Department for Education and Skills will work with Defra on the review of the UK Strategy indicators, through participation in ENV(G) and SD Taskforce discussion. The Department is also contributing on ESD work related to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and Post Kiev follow up.

Developing a strategic approach

Item 2: We commend the Sustainable Development Education Panel for its achievements over its five year appointment. It is essential that the DfES builds upon the Panel's work to ensure that the momentum is not squandered. (Paragraph 23)

12. The Department for Education and Skills also commends the good work of the Panel, indeed Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, personally acknowledged the work of the Panel and its contribution to both the thinking and practice of sustainable development education, in the forward to the Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills.¹

13. This Department recognises the need for a step change in green operations of publicly funded education in England – schools, colleges and universities, and the need for a radical re-think.

14. The recently launched Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills and signals the start of a process of change, identifying the most powerful levers – what can be achieved immediately and what can be built upon.

15. In the recent Sounding Board meeting, chaired by Charles Clarke and attended by ex members of the Panel, including Sir Geoffrey Holland (ex Chair of the Panel), Charles Clarke presented the action plan which has built on the recommendations within the Panel's *'Learning To Last'* report. Sir Geoffrey Holland gave praise for the considerable advances made by the plan and for the integration of learning and behaviours.²

16. Jonathon Porritt, Chairman of the Sustainable Development Commission, welcomed the action plan saying:

“It is hugely encouraging to see the Department move so rapidly to adopt an Action Plan of this kind, and to do so in a way that should engage the entire sector in bringing sustainable development right to the heart of the educational system.”

¹ Refer to Action Plan page 2 of Foreword and page 5 of Introduction

² Refer to Action Plan page 5

17. This Department's quick response to the Panel's report, and the Secretary of State's decision to reduce bureaucracy, to get started on the actions within the plan as quickly as possible, and to launch the action plan as soon as it was agreed by the Sounding Board, further demonstrates his, and the Department for Education and Skills', commitment to education for sustainable development (ESD).³

Item 3: We welcome the Secretary of State for Education and Skills' statement confirming the DfES as the lead department for delivering and promoting ESD. (Paragraph 32)

18. This Department does lead on education for sustainable development (ESD) and the Secretary of State, Charles Clarke, has provided a clear vision and direction, from the top, as to how we will deliver and promote ESD. Charles Clarke is personally committed to ESD. He chaired the recent Sounding Board meeting; launched the "Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills" at the Sustrans Conference in Leicester, 23 September, and has committed himself to future ESD related events with the Learning and Skills Development Agency and Forum for the Future.⁴

19. At the Sounding Board meeting, Charles Clarke explained that:

- the action plan was not just about buildings and behaviours, but about lifting performance throughout the whole education system;
- there was a need to focus on actions now, rather than discussion and process, and;
- ESD was an important priority for DfES and he would use his influence to push this agenda forward.

20. The plan has a range of actions covering the way in which we *learn* about sustainable development *throughout our lives*, formally and informally, and how we *manage our operations*, in the department, in schools, colleges, universities, lifelong learning as well as in the community.⁵

21. Our Departmental website provides information on how our policies, and the work of the department, impacts on, and contributes to, sustainable development. This will be further developed to support the action plan.⁶

22. We have an internal group of policy colleagues, the "Green Net", who represent key areas of policy which the Action Plan seeks to target, whose remit it was to support the development of the plan and now to take the plan forward.

³ Refer to Action Plan page 5

⁴ Please refer to Action Plan page 3 of Foreword and page 5 of Introduction

⁵ Objectives listed on Page 6 of Introduction

⁶ Web address for Departmental SD website online at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sd/>

Item 4: The DfES has failed to demonstrate any clear vision or strategic thinking relating to ESD. We have been struck by how much has been achieved, despite this policy vacuum, by a range of committed organisations and individual "champions", acting on their own initiative, across the spectrum of lifelong learning. This wealth of activity has flourished despite, rather than because of, DfES. (Paragraph 33)

23. The Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills provides a clear vision on ESD. We will use our delivery partners and channels such as 'Teachernet' to promote and spread examples of best practice already found in education sectors to support awareness and understanding of ESD, with the aim to inspire others to do likewise.⁷

24. The Secretary of State has appointed Board level responsibility for ESD to the Director of Strategy and Communications within the Department for Education and Skills, who is best placed to provide a strategic focus and to keep the momentum going. The key overriding message is that the plan and ESD is neither an "add on", nor is it the "last word".

Item 5: The enthusiasm and body of expertise which already exists within the field of ESD would now benefit from an overall strategic framework. We recommend that DfES develops such a framework which puts ESD firmly within the core education agenda, provides direction and impetus to existing initiatives, identifies and builds upon existing good practice, and prevents any unnecessary duplication of effort and resources. (Paragraph 34)

25. Through our work to develop the action plan, we have seen, and experienced, the enthusiasm, and benefited from the expertise that is to be found within the field of ESD. We are very grateful, in particular, to the Sustainable Development Commission, Forum for The Future and The Council for Environmental Education, as well as many others, who have contributed to the development of the plan, and whose continuing support will be crucial to the further progress and success of the plan.

26. The action plan provides the strategic framework and direction towards resources; sources of expertise and strategic focus for the DfES, and associated bodies, to develop skills and motivation through formal education and informal learning channels to promote and facilitate ESD.

27. The Director appointed to take the strategic direction of ESD forward sees ESD at the core of DfES's strategic thinking and as the 'seed' in, or central to, all of the Department's key communications.

28. We are developing a strategic approach and this includes building on best practice already out there; providing new impetus to existing initiatives and, through our website, provide a 'one stop shop' with access to online resources, websites and tool kits for everyone - not only the education and skills sectors - to easily access.⁸

⁷ Vision found in Action Plan Introduction

⁸ More detail can be found on page 6 of Action Plan

Item 6: We are astonished that DfES has the audacity to offer less than two weeks for comment on its draft action plan for sustainable development. This is not the "full consultation" that was promised, nor is it in line with Cabinet Office guidelines on consultation. The truncated consultation denies key stakeholders the opportunity to contribute fully to the development of the action plan and will effectively prevent the Department from benefiting from the experience and expertise which already exists. (Paragraph 40)

Item 7: We recommend that DfES launches a full twelve week consultation on its action plan in line with Cabinet Guidelines, after the next Sounding Board meeting in September 2003. (Paragraph 41)

29. Joint response to Items 6 and 7

30. The action plan draws heavily on the five year's work of the Sustainable Development Education Panel, which was conducted in public and interested parties had many opportunities to comment. To build on the momentum of the Panel's work, and to cut down on bureaucracy, this Department wanted to act quickly and make a difference now. We have turned aspirations into real achievable actions, some quickly, some longer term, all of which will have an impact on ESD. A full formal consultation would have delayed such actions.

31. The plan is not the 'last word'; delivery of the actions will be a collaborative process, working with stakeholders and partners. We will continue to work with, amongst others, Defra, DCMS, DfID, SDC, CEE, DEA, and Forum for the Future, to build on our knowledge; develop expertise, our online resources and toolkits.

32. We will monitor, evaluate and report on progress, and to review the action plan also. This review would be conducted in a transparent and participative manner.

33. Far from being truncated, the opportunity to comment on a draft plan resulted in comments from over sixty education and environmental organisations, from both the public and private sectors. These comments resulted in the introduction of specific actions within the plan on, for example:

- Engagement and participation of young people
- Curriculum to integrate rather than add on
- Encourage toolkits, website and networks
- International and global contexts

Item 8: We support the development of a stand alone strategy for ESD which builds upon the draft presented by the SDEP and is subject to public consultation. (Paragraph 43).

34. The Department for Education and Skills has developed an action plan identifying specific key activities to promote and support ESD, rather than develop a strategy.

35. The Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills has been universally welcomed by the education and environmental sectors. The actions within the plan are based on recommendations from the Panel's *'Learning to Last'* report.

36. We do not plan to consult further on the plan, but have mechanisms in place to review the plan in the future.

Item 9: We are concerned that the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has chosen to incorporate the Panel's ESD strategy into one action plan which sets out measures for the delivery of objectives relating to both environmental management and ESD policy. We recognise the importance of reflecting sustainable development principles in both departmental operations and policy but we believe that this approach is inherently risky: the Department will need to take particular care to ensure that ESD in educational policy receive the profile it deserves. (Paragraph 44)

37. The Secretary of State and the Sounding Board felt that we should not separate ESD from the environmental and other aspects of sustainable development, and that we should fully integrate these in the plan, so that learners and school managers would be able to clearly see and recognise sustainable development including the social and economic aspects, not just the green actions.

38. There is a common belief that people are aware of Sustainable Development, but that they do not fully understand it. They do not fully comprehend how it impacts on their everyday lives, their surroundings, and how they impact on it everyday and in every way throughout their lives - that it is not exclusively about recycling and the 'green issues'.

39. The activities within the plan will promote a whole school ethos, and encourage teachers and school managers to 'practise what you teach', reinforcing ESD principles and teaching in the learning environment.

40. The action plan includes activities to inspire and stimulate knowledge and awareness of sustainable development, particularly how people learn about and manage their operations to support the environment, society, and economic growth. We will do this through formal and informal learning; by engaging schools, colleges, universities, lifelong learners, and our communities. We will also put this into action in how these and this department operates.

Item 10: We are surprised that the Teacher Training Agency has been omitted from the membership of the Sounding Board which is developing the DfES action plan on sustainable development. We recommend that DfES' extends membership to include this key stakeholder. (Paragraph 46)

41. We had not previously invited a member of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), as we were restricted by numbers. However, we appreciate that the TTA's involvement is crucial, and we welcomed Marilyn Leask from the TTA to our Sounding Board meeting on 16 September and she has agreed to remain as our TTA contact.

Item 11: The DfES has yet to confirm the existence of the Sounding Board beyond the development of the action plan. Effective implementation of the plan will be dependent upon the continued engagement with stakeholders. If the Sounding

Board is to be discontinued we recommend DfES put in place an alternative mechanism for stakeholder involvement. (Paragraph 467)

42. We agree the Sounding Board should continue, and will continue, but in a virtual form. For example, the Sounding Board will inform us of how the activities in the plan are working on the ground, and what messages we should be sending to what audience and how.

Item 12: We recommend that DfES incorporates appropriate responsibilities for ESD within the remit of each of its Non-Departmental Public Bodies. This should become a matter of routine when new agencies and delivery partners are established. (Paragraph 499)

43. Government agrees that new public bodies should be required as part of their remit to have a commitment to sustainable development within their areas of responsibility. The Cabinet Office is currently revising its guidance for all departments to make sustainable development a routine consideration when any new NDPB is established.⁹

44. We provided evidence in our earlier memorandums of sustainable development good practice within NDPBs. The partnerships that this department has with some of these NDPBs were established long before sustainable development became an issue. For this reason sustainable development was not mentioned in our remit letters to them, and therefore, is not formally within their aims and objectives. We issue remit letters every five years when we review NDPBs. However, when establishing a relationship with one of our newer NDPBs, the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), sustainable development did feature in our remit letter to them.

45. The ALI already has an objective in it's 03-04 Business Plan as follows 'Develop an effective environment policy' with a series of linked deliverables.

46. The ALI is also currently engaged in many environmental/green practices, examples of sustainable development activities at the ALI can be found at **Annex A**. This clearly sets out the steps the ALI is taking under the sustainable development banner.

Item 13: In exerting a leadership role on ESD, DfES will need to be sensitive to DEFRA's legitimate role in promoting sustainable development and co-ordinate its efforts closely. It will also need to consider the implications of the withdrawal of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme for those NGOs on whom it might rely to effect change. (Paragraph 511)

47. This Department has strong links with Defra and will continue to work together with Defra to promote sustainable development in a co-ordinated way.

48. Defra inform us that the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme will still exist, but is a smaller fund. The Scheme can no longer be used to fund sustainable waste management (category c and cc) projects. Funding is still available under the other categories and in fact a new

⁹ Objective 1 refers

category (biodiversity) is now eligible.¹⁰ There is not a general sustainable development category.

49. It is therefore only waste NGOs that have been affected. Some of them carried out educational work but this would have been specifically waste-related. Defra is continuing to fund waste education and awareness-raising through the EAF.

Item 14: We do not believe that a strategic approach to ESD would necessarily require significant new resources. It can be achieved by realigning current priorities to integrate ESD into existing work. We recommend that the DfES reviews its current range of ESD initiatives and seeks to rationalise them into a more cohesive programme, concentrating on those approaches which have delivered results. (Paragraph 522)

50. Please refer to earlier response to item Number 5.

51. This Department does not plan to introduce any additional resource to support the work of the plan. Rather, we will better use existing resource, and embed ESD throughout the Department.

Item 15: DfES has developed a range of guidance on building design in educational establishments. It now needs to take an active role in promoting this guidance and monitoring and evaluating the extent to which it is being adopted. (Paragraph 577)

52. The guidance on building design is being promoted through the energy and water websites (which include information on sustainable design) which will be part of the sustainable development communication strategy, and the Exemplar Design programme (part of Building Schools for the Future). The Exemplar Designs will be evaluated using a bespoke version of BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). The bespoke version of BREEAM will be developed further to allow all new school buildings and major retrofits to be evaluated. The reports produced from this will be used as part of the monitoring process.¹¹

53. DfES are also producing post occupancy evaluation tools as part of Building Schools for the Future which are intended to assess the user acceptance and technical merit of designs.

Formal Education

Item 16: We believe that it is important that schools have the freedom to establish ESD learning programmes which suit their individual ethos and ways of working. However, their activity could be better supported by a national framework. We recommend that the DfES develops a National School Standard for ESD akin to that used for Healthy Schools. (Paragraph 633)

¹⁰ Online information is available at www.ltcs.org.uk.

¹¹ Objective 3 refers

Item 17: We recognise Eco-schools as a valuable initiative in the promotion of ESD. However, we would not like to see DfES follow the example of the Scottish Executive and promote Eco-Schools, almost exclusively, as the key ESD model. (Paragraph 644)

54. Joint response to items 16 & 17

55. As the recently published Ofsted report: *Towards an education for sustainable development* makes clear, schools move into ESD through a variety of openings, based on teachers' professional judgements of their pupils' needs. The Department does not consider that a new framework would add value to this process. Elements of the existing National Healthy Schools Standard – such as the need for equalities issues to inform targets, and the opportunities for local programmes to adopt a whole school approach to citizenship or safety, for example – already provide routes for schools to develop ESD. The same is true of Eco-schools although the Department does not intend to promote it as the key model. There are also a number of local authority and regional approaches. Both the recently published Primary Strategy *Excellence and Enjoyment* and the Humanities specialism and Rural Dimension within the specialist schools programme provide impetus and encouragement for schools to move forward on ESD.

56. The Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills sets out the department's aim to explore regional and local networks to support both formal and informal learning sectors.

Item 18: Although ESD is integrated into the National Curriculum, it is a theme which schools are expected to develop "across the curriculum". As past experience with citizenship has shown, this requires strong leadership within schools. We recommend that the DfES evaluates the opportunities for integrating ESD more effectively and explicitly into the existing framework of citizenship teaching. (Paragraph 777)

57. Charles Clarke said at the launch of the action plan:

“We also have a duty to help young people develop the knowledge, values and skills to become responsible citizens in their communities. They should be aware of wider global environmental and developmental issues.

58. The importance of ESD is made very explicit within Citizenship. The Programme of Study (PoS) identifies ESD among the required knowledge and understanding which pupils must be taught. For example, pupils aged 11-14 learn about the world as a global community and the political, economic, environmental and social implications. From 14-16 they learn about the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility, including sustainable development and Local Agenda 21.¹²

59. Existing resources and materials support these elements of the citizenship national curriculum, including:

¹² Objective 1 refers

Units within detailed guidance for teaching citizenship education produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) offer young people the chance to explore sustainable development.

60. For example, Unit 6 – ‘*Developing our school grounds*’ with links to ESD and Geography is designed to help Key Stages 1 & 2 pupils to, among other things, consider how economic choices affect the community and sustainability of the environment. Unit 18 – ‘*Developing your school grounds*’ helps Key Stage 3 pupils to build on what they have learned at Key Stages 1 & 2 by helping them to explore, among other things, how and why environments may be planned and managed. They are further extended at Key Stage 4 by Unit 12 – ‘*Global issues, local action*’ by exploring how local plans and priorities for sustainable development (Local Agenda 21) are established and monitored.¹³

61. The DfES has funded a number of organisations to produce resource materials to support schools. For example, with the Department for International Development (DfID) we produced a guide ‘*Developing a Global Dimension in the school curriculum*’.

62. Until recently, the DfES hosted the Standing Committee on Education for World Citizenship, which includes members from Oxfam, DfID, DEA, UNICEF, the British Council and others. The group share examples of current practice and identify priorities for future work. The group will be represented on the planned re-constituted Citizenship Education Working Party, to be chaired by Education Minister, Stephen Twigg.

63. The Department will continue to consider how citizenship is being implemented in schools, through the QCA curriculum monitoring exercises and OfSTED inspections.

64. The Department recognises that more can be done to embed ESD. Within the context of subject specialism, we will lead on strengthening ESD links within geography, design and technology, science and Citizenship within the National Curriculum and across 14-19 pathways.

65. DfES, working with partner organisations, will also explore the benefits of a ‘whole school’ approach and identify models of good practice. ‘Growing Schools’ is designed to encourage hands on learning in the outdoor classroom and is particularly relevant to encouraging schools to spread good practice across a number of curriculum subjects for pupils of all ages.

Item 19: We welcome Ofsted's initiative to investigate current ESD activities in school. We recommend that the Secretary of State requests Ofsted to include ESD in its inspection framework, encompassing ESD both in the curriculum and the learning environment. (Paragraph 844)

66. The Department welcomes this useful insight from Ofsted into how schools are tackling sustainable development. It will help to inform our thinking as we develop our action plan. We are identifying similar examples of good practice through our Growing

¹³ These units can be found at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes.

Schools initiative, which helps pupils understand more about sustainability through first-hand experiences in the outdoors. We will refer to the earlier survey work of the Panel, and explore further with Ofsted the contribution which could be made by inspections, while avoiding any additional burdens on schools.

Item 20: We are pleased to note the recent efforts by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) to identify the opportunities that it can provide to further the ESD knowledge and practice of newly trained teachers and teacher trainers. (Paragraph 855)

67. The Department also welcomes the TTA's work and will continue working closely with them, particularly on how ESD developments can be shared with the wider Initial Teacher Training community, through SD Action Plan communications.¹⁴

Item 21: We recommend that DfES takes account of any implications for Continuing Professional Development which are highlighted by the Teacher Training Agency's current work to support ESD in different subject areas. (Paragraph 899)

68. DfES recognise the importance of linking any CPD for existing teachers with initial teacher training and will continue to work closely with the TTA.

Item 22: We urge the DfES and Teacher Training Agency to maximise the potential of the QCA's ESD web resource and encourage its use in the context of initial teacher training and continuing professional development. However, this website does not obviate the need to continue to develop a more comprehensive range of ESD support for teachers. (Paragraph 911)

69. It has been at this Department's request that QCA has been developing and maintaining an ESD website since 2001 providing ESD support material for teachers. DfES is the sole funder, has provided £117,500 to date and is represented on the Project Advisory Group. DfES will continue to support development of content on the QCA ESD website, including for initial teacher training and CPD.

Further and Higher Education

Item 23: We are disappointed at the dismal response shown by the Government and the majority of Further and Higher Education institutions to the Toyne Report and its review. (Paragraph 111)

70. This Department acknowledges the contribution made by the Toyne report and its recommendations to the environmental and sustainable debate within further and higher education.

71. We believe that Further and Higher Education has the potential to play a much stronger role in terms of teaching, research and the community. There are already good

¹⁴ Objective 1 refers

examples of sustainable development in universities and colleges and we are working with the sector to build on existing good practice and realise this potential.

Item 24: We recommend that DfES and the Higher Education Funding Councils carefully evaluate the findings of Forum for the Future's Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability report and consider how they can best support and promote ESD in Higher Education Institutions both through strategic guidance and changes to funding criteria. (Paragraph 112)

72. The Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability project was commissioned by the UK funding bodies and we will consider the findings carefully. HEFCE are planning to commission a study into the demand for ESD by graduate employers and it is hoped that the results from this will stimulate such provision on courses not traditionally associated with ESD.¹⁵

Item 25: There is little evidence that ESD is being effectively integrated into higher and further education syllabuses. The DfES should assess the adequacy of the range of guidance available to FHEIs relating to the integration of ESD and strengthen this as necessary. HEFCE should evaluate whether its funding mechanisms for both teaching and research sufficiently support cross-curricula activities such as ESD. (Paragraph 113)

73. HEFCE is working on a strategy for its engagement with HEIs on ESD and this will include the relevant parts of the recently published Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills. The strategy will consider the extent to which additional guidance and funding are required in order to achieve a step change in this area.

74. The plan also sets out¹⁶ how the Department and key partners in the learning and skills sector will work together to help improve the content of and engagement with lifelong learning, and to secure appropriate support and guidance.

The post-16 learning and skills sector

Item 26: We welcome the range of pilot projects which have been supported by the LSC and LSDA to explore a range of approaches to ESD. We also welcome the willingness of the two organisations to work together in this manner. It is now important to build on the experience of these initiatives and develop a coherent and focused programme of activity. (Paragraph 119)

75. The LSC will build on the experience of the development projects, with a range of outcomes, including the production of guidance on good practice on green and SD issues for the LSC supported FE and Adult & Community Learning estates.¹⁷

¹⁵ Objective 1 refers

¹⁶ Objective 1 paras 1.4 and 1.5 refer

¹⁷ Objective 3 refers

Item 27: We welcome the LSDA's intention to use its involvement with the new Leadership College and Sector Skills Councils for teachers to integrate education for sustainable development into its programmes from the start. These developments represent an important opportunity to embed ESD into the activities of key players in the learning and skills sector and cannot be missed. (Paragraph 121)

76. This Department will work with the LSDA, NCSL and SSCs to ensure we explore this important opportunity for capacity building and that ESD is included in new programme development.

Informal public education

Item 28: DEFRA's two major awareness raising campaigns relating to sustainability to date have been less than half-hearted and ill-focused. We believe that the funding of any further large-scale, general awareness campaigns would not provide value for money. To stimulate the behavioural change required we recommend the Government funds and develops a coherent, long-term, targeted approach to promoting sustainable development which focuses on specific, priority issues such as waste and energy use (Paragraph 136)

Item 29: We welcome DEFRA's plans to consider replacing the general awareness raising approach of its Are You Doing Your Bit? campaign with a more targeted approach. Any new initiative should be fully funded to completion, subject to monitoring and evaluation, and protected from resource leakage. (Paragraph 137)

Item 30: Future mass media campaigns should concentrate on reinforcing positive behaviour through incentives, rewards or reassurance and be supported with a range of practical opportunities for behavioural change at both individual and institutional levels. (Paragraph 138)

Item 31: We welcome DEFRA's initiative to develop a new communications strategy for sustainable development. (Paragraph 144)

Item 32: Education will be a priority communications area in the strategy and DfES should actively contribute to its development. (Paragraph 145)

Item 33: Although Defra is the lead department for awareness raising of sustainable development, it is a cross-Government responsibility and all departments should be actively seeking to contribute to this review and the promotion of the final outcome. We look to the Sub-Cabinet Committee on Green Ministers (ENV (G)) to ensure this. (Paragraph 146)

Item 34: We are aware that a number of departments are participating in a review of their sustainable development communications by FUTERRA. We will draw upon this work in the course of our ongoing scrutiny of the 'greening government' initiative. We recommend that all Departments, even those who have not

participated in this exercise, draw upon its findings in shaping their communications response to sustainable development. (Paragraph 147)

77. Response to items 28 -34

78. Defra are committed to ensuring, through the use of a strategic marketing approach, that any communications activity undertaken by Defra on sustainable development is planned and executed to ensure maximum possible effectiveness.

79. Therefore, whilst Defra are minded to agree that specific issue communications are likely to be more effective than activity aimed at general awareness raising, they are keen to ensure that this approach is fully evidence based.

80. On this basis, Defra will shortly be undertaking a feasibility study to consider the potential impact of an issue-specific communication campaign aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions and better addressing climate change impacts, linked to the recent Energy White Paper. The study will:

81. Map the current marketing environment (including social, legal, environmental, political, technological, and competition factors) within which any communications activity would operate;

- Identify and segment the potential target audiences;
- Identify the requirement for primary marketing research where existing data/information is insufficient;
- Suggest the level of behaviour change which could realistically be effected through a public information campaign in this marketing environment and estimate the timescale and budget required to bring about this level of behaviour change;
- Identify those factors within the current marketing environment which are barriers to a public information campaign making effective impact, and the potential for removing or reducing these factors;
- Suggest the level of behaviour change that could realistically be effected through a public information campaign, and estimated budget and timescale, in this revised marketing environment.

82. Defra aim to have the study complete by April 2004. Defra will also be taking account of the results of a study which is looking at public influencing and the environment.

83. The information it provides will ensure that communications activity is only taken forward on the basis of a strong, evidence based business case.

84. Such a business case will help ensure that any activity is appropriately resourced. However, further consideration will need to be given as to how, within current financial planning systems, the required funds can be most effectively protected for the full, planned duration of any planned activity.

85. This approach recognises that communications are just one factor in a complex marketing environment. Many factors will interact to determine the extent of any change in public behaviour.

86. The findings of this feasibility study will feed in to the further development of a wider communication strategy for sustainable development. This project will be taken forward as part of the review of the UK sustainable development strategy. In this way Defra aim to ensure full integration of communication within overall UK sustainable development policy and implementation.

87. Communication through education provides a key communication opportunity. Defra developed strong links with DfES and will continue to work together to help develop effective sustainable development communication through education.

88. Defra agree that it is vital that all departments are engaged in the process of reviewing and developing sustainable development related communications activity. We believe that this process of engagement can be most efficiently and effectively taken forward as part of the process of reviewing the UK sustainable development strategy. This will again help to ensure the full integration within the overall UK sustainable development policy and its implementation. ENV(G) will continue to play an important role in promoting sustainable development and improving the performance of Departments in contributing to its delivery.

89. The current *Futerra* review of government sustainable communications will help identify opportunities for improved practice. It will therefore provide an excellent basis on which to build constructive engagement and dialogue across government on sustainable development communications. Defra fully support, and are pleased to have co-sponsored, the *Futerra* review.

90. Defra agree that it is important for a range of government departments to be involved in the ongoing review of sustainable development related communications activity. ENV(G) will continue to play an important role in promoting sustainable development and in improving the performance of Departments in contributing to its delivery.

Item 35: We welcome the recent announcement by Culture, Media and Sport and Education and Skills to collaborate more closely through their work with museums. The two departments have a key role to play in promoting ESD through informal learning channels. (Paragraph 154)

91. We are working closely with DCMS to develop proposals for how museums' resources can contribute more fully to both formal and informal education across all subject areas.

Item 36: DCMS has offered to support DfES in developing the lifelong and informal dimensions of its Sustainable Development Action Plan. We recommend that DfES draws upon DCMS' experience in this area. (Paragraph 155)

92. We are working with DCMS to develop lifelong learning and informal learning.¹⁸

Item 37: We were impressed by the EcoTeams programme run by Global Action Plan which is successfully promoting behavioural change at household level. We recommend that the Government funds the expansion of this programme to operate on a trial basis across diverse communities, with a full evaluation of the resulting costs and benefits both in qualitative and quantitative terms. (Paragraph 163)

93. DfES agree that the EcoTeams programme run by Global Action Plan is one of a number of voluntary sector community based initiatives that offer considerable potential for behavioural change at household level. We will consider any evaluation that the Global Action Plan carries out of its pilot programme, with a view to the possibility of supporting it through the Environmental Action fund, should the Fund's priorities after 2005 (the earliest year for which new applications could be invited) include education for sustainable development.

Item 38: We welcome the commitment, in the recent Skills White Paper, to make sustainable development a priority theme across the Skills for Business Network in relation to its work on generic and cross-sector skills. However, we are disappointed that the Government chose to present its future skills policy so visibly and exclusively within the narrow context of economic competitiveness rather than against the wider backdrop of sustainable development. The White Paper will be a key point of reference across the employment and education sectors and the Government has missed an important opportunity to embed sustainable development as a guiding principle. (Paragraph 175)

94. Whilst there are only a few, but significant overt references to sustainable development in the White Paper, much of the substance of the document, with its focus on tackling low skills and social exclusion and the proposal to develop learning communities are clearly focused on ensuring sustainability within communities and providing disadvantaged areas with the capacity to create a better future for themselves.

Item 39: We recommend that DfES works with the trades unions to maximise the potential for promoting and incentivising education for sustainable development through the mechanism of the Union Learning Representatives and the Union Learning Fund. (Paragraph 183)

95. This Department agrees that working with trade unions offers excellent opportunities for promoting and incentivising education for sustainable development which is one reason why the Government established and continues to support the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC). We will therefore continue to work with Defra and TUSDAC to establish how the potential for promoting and incentivising education for sustainable development can be maximised through the mechanism of Union Learning Representatives and the Union Learning Fund, and which department should lead on this.

¹⁸ Objective 4 refers

96. The SSDA has initiated a project to investigate the skills issues of sustainable development, the results of which will influence the way in which Skills for Business network engages positively with sustainable development matters in the future.

Item 40: The development of standards and qualifications for sustainable development is at an early stage for both the professions and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The DfES should convene a standing conference of all those responsible for developing qualifications in this area to facilitate a co-ordinated approach. (Paragraph 192)

97. The DfES and Defra will work with TUC Learning Services, the LSC and the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) to explore how best to promote and incentivise education for sustainable development in the workplace, including the potential for Union Learning Representatives and the Union Learning Fund to act as mechanisms for this. The Union Learning Fund and, in particular, Union Learning Reps have proved to be very effective in helping to encourage workers to improve their skills, particularly workers with low skills and those with literacy and numeracy problems – the very people who so often miss out on learning opportunities. Tackling basic skills problems is a necessary first step for many to take to enable them to increase their understanding of sustainable development issues and the role that they can play as active citizens in creating a more sustainable society.

Monitoring and evaluating progress

Item 41: We recommend that DfES commissions research into effective indicators for ESD to support the monitoring and evaluation of its proposed sustainable development action plan. The forthcoming review of the UK Strategy for Sustainable Development, and its associated indicators, provides an opportunity to revise current indicators. (Paragraph 195)

98. National sustainable development indicators T7 (Public Understanding and Awareness) and T9 (Individual Action for Sustainable Development) are based on the Defra survey of public attitudes to quality of life and the environment. Results of the 2001 survey were published in October 2002. Attitudinal results often do not vary greatly from one year to the next, significant changes only being seen over a period of several years. Little more insight would therefore be gained by undertaking more regular data collection on people's knowledge or actions in relation to sustainable development.

99. Defra plan to review existing indicators as part of the forthcoming review of the UK Strategy for Sustainable Development. In the review Defra will consider the need for indicators that provide effective monitoring of sustainable development education, knowledge and action.

100. DfES is still in the process of identifying its research priorities for next year. The requirement for a review of indicators will be considered alongside other priorities.

Item 42: We recommend that QCA and Ofsted undertake joint, qualitative research on the benefits of ESD in the light of the findings of Ofsted's recent investigation of ESD in schools. (Paragraph 200)

101. The Department is aware of several existing and planned related research and development exercises, and is also directly supporting three such pieces of work:

102. Jointly sponsored by the, DfES, the Countryside Agency and FACE. "Improving the Understanding of Food, Farming and Land Management Amongst School-Age Children: A Literature Review (RB422) was published by the DfES in May 2003. In Phase 2 the partners plan Action Research to provide evidence of how outdoor experiences provide wider educational benefits (academic, social personal)

103. The DfES is providing funding for The Field Studies Council (FSC) study "What Fieldwork can do for you".

104. The DfES is directly supporting the Council for Environmental Education to develop guidance on measuring the effectiveness of education programmes being carried out by organisations working for sustainable development.

105. The Department intends to gain an overview of findings and recommendations before considering the need to commission further work.

Item 43: We acknowledge the substantial contribution made by the ESRC Global Environmental Change Programme. There is now a clear need for new basic and applied research to support the design, implementation and evaluation of formal and informal education for sustainable development. We recommend that the ESRC investigates the viability of such a programme. (Paragraph 204)

106. This Department agrees that there would be value in research and evaluation of ESD.

ANNEX A

Department for Education and Skills, September 2003.

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE (ALI): COMMITMENT AND POLICY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

ALI is developing and implementing a comprehensive sustainable environment policy as one of its corporate objectives during 2003-04. A working group lead has been set up to achieve this objective. The group has specific targets to achieve and have already met on a few occasions to develop and implement an action plan, policy and strategy for supporting the department's commitment to sustainable development.

Examples of initiatives and best practice include:

Travel & Transport

- Fleet car policy includes essential users only i.e. Full Time Inspectors (FTIs) and Directors

- Fleet cars exhaust emissions ceiling reduced to 180g/km from 1st July 2003
- 82% of current fleet have CO2 emissions of less than 180g/km
- 80% of current fleet (124 vehicles) is diesel - low CO2 emissions and greater fuel consumption
- ALI finalists in 4 Fleet News awards in 2003 for: Best Environment Policy, Best Risk Management Policy, Fleet Manager of the Year 101 - 400 vehicles, UK Fleet of the Year
- Won Fleet Manager of the year award.
- Inspectors encouraged to share vehicles when travelling to inspections
- Promote the use of video and audio conferencing at Spring Place.
- Staff encouraged to use alternative transport to the office
- ALI investing in a cycle shelter - will be partly funded by Travelwise of Coventry City Council
- ALI has developed links with Coventry City Council for sustainable development and is receiving support and co-operation on initiatives such as alternative transport and presentations to promote the awareness of 'green' transport.

Water, energy waste and recycling

- ALI already has a number of recycling systems in place which include: waste paper, cardboard, plastic cups, printer cartridges, confidential waste, postage stamps, newspapers, packing materials such as jiffy bags and bubble wrap,
- Soon to implement a recycling system for aluminium cans.
- Heating & Ventilation system conforms to EU standards on low energy consumption and energy saving and is time controlled.
- External lighting is time controlled
- Toilets and shower room lights are controlled by light sensors.
- IT hardware conforms to EU standards on low energy consumption and energy saving
- Office equipment such photocopiers have energy saving systems
- Use of equipment such as office stationery made from recycled materials to be encouraged
- Targets to be set within the sustainable development policy to reduce office waste, reduce energy consumption, reduce use of water, reduce mileage for business travel, increase recycling etc.

Environmental Management

- ALI will implement systems and standards to at least ISO 14001
- Measure and benchmark performance of CO2 emissions, business mileage, energy consumption etc.
- Promote and increase the awareness of sustainable development throughout the ALI by way of Excalibur, bulletins, posters, events such as a 'green week' to be held in September, presentations by partner organisations
- Develop and implement an education and training programme so that the ALI staff will be good citizens of sustainable development.
- Seek to achieve recognition for best practise from organisations responsible for sustainable development.

Past reports from the Environmental Audit Committee since 1997

2002-03 Session

First	Pesticides: The Voluntary Initiative, HC100 (<i>Reply, HC 443</i>)
Second	Johannesburg and Back: The World Summit on Sustainable Development–Committee delegation report on proceedings, HC 169
Third	Annual Report, HC 262
Fourth	Pre-Budget 2002, HC 167 (<i>Reply, HC 688</i>)
Fifth	Waste – An Audit, HC 99 (<i>Reply, HC 1081</i>)
Sixth	Buying Time for Forests: Timber Trade and Public Procurement - The Government Response, HC 909
Seventh	Export Credits Guarantee Department and Sustainable Development, HC 689 (<i>Reply, HC 1238</i>)
Eighth	Energy White Paper – Empowering Change?, HC 618
Ninth	Budget 2003 and Aviation, HC 672
Tenth	Learning the Sustainability Lesson, HC 472
Eleventh	Sustainable Development Headline Indicators, HC 1080
Twelfth	World Summit for Sustainable Development – From rhetoric to reality, HC 98

2001-02 Session

First	Departmental Responsibilities for Sustainable Development, HC 326 (<i>Reply, Cm 5519</i>)
Second	Pre-Budget Report 2001: <i>A New Agenda?</i> , HC 363 (<i>HC 1000</i>)
Third	UK Preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, HC 616 (<i>Reply, Cm 5558</i>)
Fourth	Measuring the Quality of Life: The Sustainable Development Headline Indicators, HC 824 (<i>Reply, Cm 5650</i>)
Fifth	A Sustainable Energy Strategy? Renewables and the PIU Review, HC 582 (<i>Reply, HC 471</i>)
Sixth	Buying Time for Forests: <i>Timber Trade and Public Procurement</i> , HC 792-I, (<i>Reply, HC 909, Session 2002-03</i>)

2000-01 Session

First	Environmental Audit: <i>the first Parliament</i> , HC 67 (<i>Reply, Cm 5098</i>)
Second	The Pre-Budget Report 2000: <i>fuelling the debate</i> , HC 71 (<i>Reply HC 216, Session 2001-02</i>)

1999-2000 Session

First	EU Policy and the Environment: An Agenda for the Helsinki Summit, HC 44 (<i>Reply, HC 68</i>)
Second	World Trade and Sustainable Development: An Agenda for the Seattle Summit, HC 45 (Including the Government response to the First Report 1998-99: Multilateral Agreement on Investment, HC 58) (<i>Reply, HC 69</i>)
Third	Comprehensive Spending Review: Government response and follow-up, HC 233 (<i>Reply, HC 70, Session 2000-01</i>)
Fourth	The Pre-Budget Report 1999: pesticides, aggregates and the Climate Change Levy, HC 76

Fifth	The Greening Government Initiative: first annual report from the Green Ministers Committee 1998/99, HC 341
Sixth	Budget 2000 and the Environment etc., HC 404
Seventh	Water Prices and the Environment, HC 597 (<i>Reply, HC 290, Session 2000-01</i>)

1998-99 Session

First	The Multilateral Agreement on Investment, HC 58 (<i>Reply, HC 45, Session 1999-2000</i>)
Second	Climate Change: Government response and follow-up, HC 88
Third	The Comprehensive Spending Review and Public Service Agreements, HC 92 (<i>Reply, HC 233, Session 1999-2000</i>)
Fourth	The Pre-Budget Report 1998, HC 93
Fifth	GMOs and the Environment: Coordination of Government Policy, HC 384 (<i>Reply Cm 4528</i>)
Sixth	The Greening Government Initiative 1999, HC 426
Seventh	Energy Efficiency, HC 159 (<i>Reply, HC 571, Session 2000-01</i>)
Eighth	The Budget 1999: Environmental Implications, HC 326

1997-98 Session

First	The Pre-Budget Report, HC 547 (<i>Reply, HC 985</i>)
Second	The Greening Government Initiative, HC 517 (<i>Reply, HC 426, Session 1998-99</i>)
Third	The Pre-Budget Report: Government response and follow-up, HC 985
Fourth	Climate Change: UK Emission Reduction Targets and Audit Arrangements, HC 899 (<i>Reply, HC 88, Session 1998-99</i>)