

Sustainable Development Policy

wea.org.uk



WEA
Adult Learning
Within Reach

Foreword

Workers' Educational Association, (WEA) is committed to promoting sustainability and our own sustainable development.

In the context of the current economic and financial climate, and the increasing evidence and awareness of environmental impacts, sustainability is becoming a core consideration for organisations all around the world.

For the WEA, it is something which is embedded within the fabric of our vision, mission and values, and concern for the environment and promoting a broader sustainability agenda are integral to WEA's professional activities and the management of the organisation.

It is though more important than ever before that we increase our sustainable development efforts, to not only maintain our own sustainability but also ensure that we increase the positive contribution we make to the wider community.



Ruth Spellman OBE

Chief Executive and General Secretary



Picture of Ruth Spellman, WEA CEO
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Introduction

We aim to follow, promote and embed good sustainability practices across the organisation in order to reduce the environmental impact of all our activities and to increase the positive social and economic impacts of our work. We aim to do this through our education delivery and how we operate internally in our day to day internal support services.

This Policy sets out the framework by which the WEA will undertake its approach to embedding sustainable actions throughout the organisation.

Values

WEA's Vision of: "A better world, equal, democratic and just; through adult education the WEA challenges and inspires individuals, communities and society" supports, informs, and confirms its commitment to sustainable development.

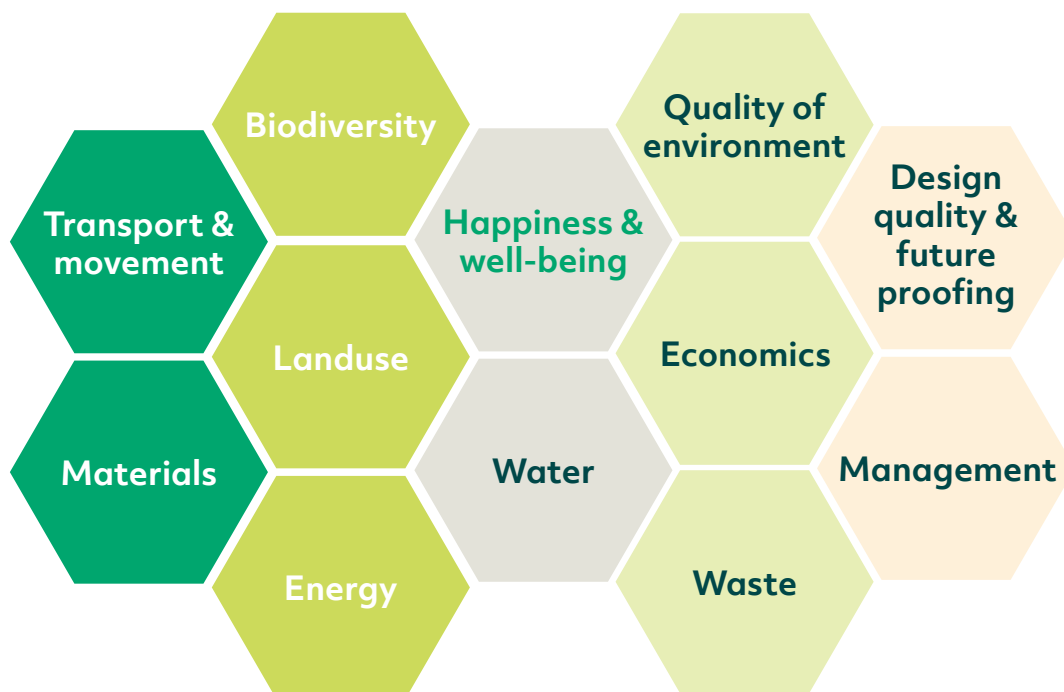
Values delivered through:

- our long tradition of campaigning on key issues based on an ethos of social justice and responsibility
- a community-led, democratic approach to empowered learning
- a whole organisation approach: understanding the impact of our actions and taking practical action as individuals, teams and as an Association
- embedding sustainability in all areas of the association's business
- applying value for money and fair and transparent principles and processes to our procurement activities

What is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development, whilst largely about environment awareness and taking action to mitigate against the negative impacts of global developments, for example climate change, is also concerned with improving social and economic conditions.

It does this through taking actions to ensure future financial security and investing in the population on a social level, observing and promoting actions which lead to fairness and equality, engagement and inclusion and health and well-being.



Approach

We adopt a whole organisation approach to sustainability, with action plans developed to ensure that targets span all areas of our business.

Our sustainable targets will be challenging but SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound).

Action plans will be aligned with and developed to support the WEA's strategic objectives to support the WEA's strategic objectives and meet the expectations of our stakeholders.

Leaders at all levels

To facilitate a whole organisation approach, all staff and stakeholders are invited to actively contribute to the design of our annual action plans to ensure that these are achievable and effective through practical ideas and experience gained on the ground. Initiatives to advance sustainable development will be shared and celebrated.

Sustainable Development Team

Our Sustainable Development Team monitor progress and take a day to day lead on driving strategy and actions to advance our sustainable development objectives.

Sustainability Champion Forum

Our Sustainability Forum acts as a conduit for gathering, sharing and considering new ideas and initiatives and mapping these to real practical actions to achieve the objectives set out in sustainability action plans.

Membership of the Forum will be by self-nomination or recommendation based on specialist role/expertise/interest.

Monitoring and Reporting

A baseline review, undertaken using SIGMA's Performance Review and LSIS Reaching Forward Index for comparison purposes was conducted during spring 2013. These reviews provided the initial baseline for identifying priorities and targets and will be used to compare and measure progress against updated baselines in 2018.

From 2018 our sustainable development progress is reported and considered quarterly by the Senior Management Team, twice yearly by our Finance and General Purposes Committee and annually by the Board of Trustees. From 2018/2019 progress reports will also be published at least annually and made available on WEA's website.

Strategy

Guiding Principles

Our five guiding principles for sustainability and sustainable development are:



Living within Environmental Limits

- Minimise waste and disposals
- Promote and maximise recycling
- Sourcing environmentally sustainable resources and ways of working and using these responsibly
- Efficient use of energy and water consumption



Ensuring a strong, healthy & just society

- Promote actions and deliver education which helps people make informed choices and helps create sustainable communities
- Embedding sustainability into all of our teaching, learning and education delivery
- Active promotion and creation of equal opportunity
- Help facilitate health, well-being, fulfillment and social engagement through education and lifelong learning
- Apply and embed our sustainable development objectives across all areas of our business including our approach to partners and projects



Achieving a sustainable economy

- Efficient use of WEA resources and elimination of waste/duplication
- Income streams maximised
- Maximising financial support opportunities for students and staff



Promoting good leadership and governance

- Policies, processes and procedures which promote good practice and wellbeing
- Strong leadership with clearly stated aims and objectives which actively promote sustainable development and engage all staff, stakeholders, education contracts and projects and partners in its advancement
- Acknowledge and celebrate achievements



Using science responsibly

- Using credible scientific evidence to underpin our policy and action plans
- Respecting and listening to the views and ideas of our stakeholders
- Using credible measuring and monitoring tools for analysing and reporting our progress
- Observe and adhere to environmental and other relevant regulatory frameworks and requirements for example waste management

We will achieve our objectives through:

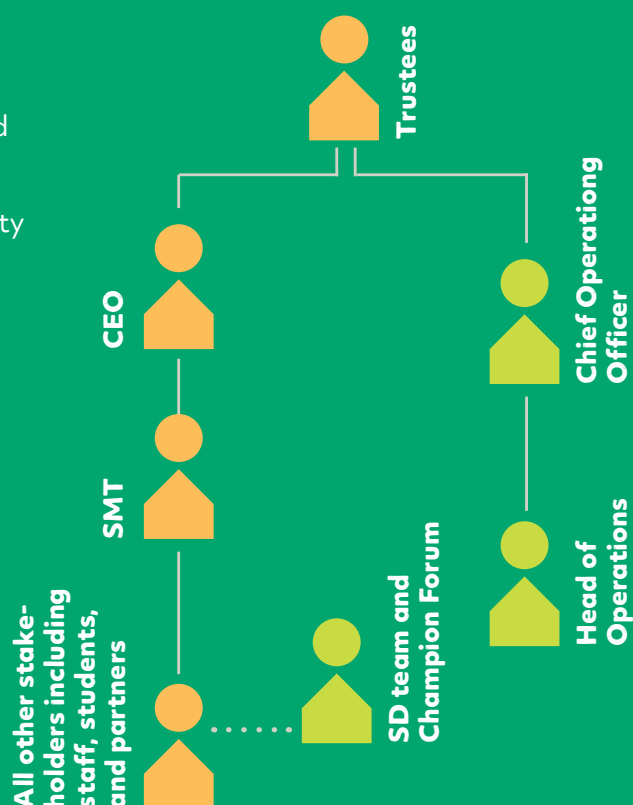
- Compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations and codes of practice
- Integration of sustainability considerations in all our business decisions and into our teaching, learning and education delivery
- Ensuring that all staff and other stakeholders, students, funders and partners are aware of our Sustainable Development Policy and accompanying documents
- Setting annually, an action plan for further advancing and improving our sustainability performance
- Regularly monitoring our progress against specific agreed key performance indicators
- Engaging staff and other stakeholders to implement and contribute to the design and achievement of our sustainability aims, objectives and performance

Responsibilities and Accountabilities

All WEA staff and governance are required to be aware of and adopt this policy within their areas of responsibility and across the wider association and in all areas of our business and with all stakeholders including projects, partners and funders. All are encouraged to share a sense of responsibility and purpose and collaborate to achieve the organisation's sustainable development aims and objectives.

At a senior level, the Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the organisation's continued sustainability and its environmental and societal contribution to the wider society. Trustees will receive and consider progress reports on our sustainable development performance annually.

The diagram below shows explicit responsibility/ accountability; the roles on the right of the diagram are responsible for operational delivery of the sustainability agenda:



Key areas of focus

Key areas of focus will be, but not limited to:

Environmental Impact

- Energy efficiency improvement targets
- Responsible waste disposal and reduction of waste
- Sourcing and use of recyclable materials wherever possible
- Water consumption

Supply Chain

- Sustainability/sustainable development embedded as a scored criteria into our sourcing and procurement arrangements
- Ethical practices and corporate responsibility
- Tendering processes

Social Impact

- Measuring and quantifying the benefits of our educational impact
- Links with Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and strategy
- Threading sustainability awareness, values and practices throughout all of our educational contracts and projects provision and delivery
- Volunteering opportunities and support

Financial Resources

- Reducing costs through efficiencies
- Cost effective procurement
- Maximising income opportunities
- Financial management

People & Services Resources

- Sharing best practice
- Sharing and celebrating successes
- Internal support services improvements
- Facilities which encourage sustainable practices, i.e. Cycle Scheme
- Induction and training
- Clearly stated aims and objectives which actively engage staff and stakeholders
- Simple and efficient systems and processes
- Publish and make available our approach to sustainable development to all stakeholders, contracts, projects, partners and supporters

Links to other policies and documents

Sustainable development is linked to and embedded within relevant WEA Policies and practices.

What	How
Procurement Policy and procedures	Scored criteria for supplier selection, preferred suppliers utilising responsible use of resources and waste elimination/reduction
Tutor Surveys	Practices for embedding sustainable development into our teaching and learning and to help inform targets and measures
Financial Regulation and procedures	Cost efficiencies and due diligence
Volunteer Policy	Social impacts and active engagement
Induction Policy	Awareness and active engagement
Travel and expenses policy	Equitability and promotion of environmentally and financially aware practices
Equality , Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Equitability and social justice
Partnerships	Widening awareness and joint responsibility and approach to embedding good sustainability practices
ICT strategy and procedures	Responsible use and disposal of physical resources
Data retention policy	Responsible and compliant data storage, retention and disposal
Premises and facilities arrangements	Quality standards and use of resources, energy efficiencies
Digital inclusion strategy	Social impacts, embedding awareness and engagement through our teaching, learning and education delivery practices and experiences
Contracts and projects	Embedding, awareness and engagement, social impacts
Education / curriculum approach	Embedding, awareness and engagement, social impacts
Systems and process improvements	Eliminate/reduce waste and energy usage and increase energy efficiency

External Resources

Various externally available resources will be used in the development of our sustainability aims, including:

Forum for the Future

forumforthefuture.org/

The Sigma Project¹

projectsigma.co.uk/Guidelines/default.asp

Education for Sustainable Development

esdtoolkit.org/discussion/default.htm

Carbon Trust

carbontrust.com/home/

1. The Sigma Project - Sustainability – Integrated Guidelines for Management. Launched in 1999 by the British Standards Institution, Forum for the Future and AccountAbility, with support from the UK Department of Trade & Industry (DTI).

Version control

Version No.	Date	Details / description of change(s)
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Note: current version in bold

V1.0	September 2013	New Policy launch
V1.1	March 2018	Rebranding
V1.2	August 2018	General updates including to the Approach and reporting arrangements

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