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NESPSS Networking Event Section Blackfriars Meeting Rooms, Newcastle, 3/9/08

Rich Hurst introduced attendees to the session and its aims:

- To highlight an example of an exemplar Sustainable Schools project
- To launch the Local Authority Sustainable Schools Corporate Strategy pilots
- To receive feedback from participants on what they think NESPSS should be including in its new strategy.

Global Murder Mystery Project – Penny Gulliver, One World Network North East

The aim of the pilot was to develop a project which would link the global dimension key concepts; Millennium Development goals and the Sustainable Schools aspirations.

The project worked with 2 primary and 2 secondary schools (year 6 and year 9) and they planned the project into their schemes through humanities, citizenship etc

The primary project is based in Columbia and the secondary in Ghana. It centres around the death of a girl who drank water from a contaminated container and involves actors playing the part of the key suspects involved in a court case. The schools received support before and after the role playing by a project officer from Criticallinks over many weeks.

Penny showed a few snippets of the DVD produced which shows how the project worked in one school. The team learnt many lessons through the pilot particularly the importance of using stories to help explain complex issues and structures. It also highlighted the connections and barriers all people come up against.

More information is available from:

Penny Gulliver

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Local Authority Strategic Approaches to Sustainable Schools

Rich Hurst presented information on the pilot project in collaboration with GOYH which has received a small amount of funding from DCSF to support three local authorities in the region to develop corporate strategies for their support for Sustainable Schools activity.

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest are requested to be one of six 'pathfinder' Local Authorities across the North East and Yorkshire & Humber (3 in each), until initially March 2010, to develop tailored local authority Corporate Strategies, which will serve to:

- Raise the profile of the Sustainable Schools and Sustainable Development agendas within LAs, across-directorates, and specifically as a school improvement tool;
- Highlight how Sustainable Schools' activities enable Local Authorities to meet wide ranging corporate targets, eg in Local Area Agreements (LAA) and National



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Indicators (NIs), Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPAs), (and from April 2009) LA Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAAs);

- Ensure a coherent approach across all the LA services, stakeholders and partners who support schools and authorities on this complex agenda.

Expected project outcomes:

- Each local authority produces an individually tailored, cross-directorate /service Sustainable Schools Corporate Strategy (clearly linked with existing Sustainable Communities' Strategies and Children & Young People Plans), which will set out how the authority and its partners support schools to become sustainable schools.
- Each LA commits to develop a range of activities with their schools and other partners (including a minimum of 2 meetings/year with schools)
- Each authority commits to showcase activities, and spread effective practice across as many local schools as possible. Also to disseminate good practice regionally as well as cross-regionally/nationally through contributing regular news stories (one per term) at the NE and Y&H Regional ESD websites and the new DCSF Sustainable Schools website;
- Each authority produces a minimum of three effective practice case studies, worked up with local authority and school partners, the third sector, (using community best practise wherever possible), to drive more effective LA practice on sustainable development;
- Each authority commits to establishing a local Sustainable Schools network, developing a minimum of 5% of its schools using the S3 tool and planning tool to self evaluate and produce an action plan.
- An interim joint regional seminar for participating local authorities in March '09
- The Sustainable Schools corporate strategies, associated case studies and evaluation of the pilot, will form part of a vibrant cross-regional Sustainable Development and Schools' Workshop Celebration event planned for February/March 2010.

The timescales for submissions have been deferred slightly from the initial launch. The dates are now as follows:

- Deadline for submissions : Friday 10th October
- Successful local authorities will be notified by Friday 31st October.

The funding package has also been enhanced following an additional contribution from The Healthy Schools programme. The funding arrangement will now be:

Less than 150 schools in LA = £2500 + £1000 pump priming from Healthy Schools

More than 150 schools in LA = £3000 + £1000 pump priming from Healthy Schools

Future Development of NESPSS

Mike Tones outlined that it is expected that the GO's have been allocated funding until March 2011 for Sustainable Schools network support. That funding is for building capacity and providing support within the regions. Currently the local authorities do not contribute financially to NESPSS, they were all consulted when the regional funding was made available and all agreed for the funding to be deployed regionally. NESPSS would



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welcome closer engagement with local authorities to influence its future development and direction.

Suggestions for Future Engagement with LA's:

- Map individual LAA targets (held by GONE) - highlight what priorities overlap with sustainable schools priorities.
- Ensure an outcome focussed strategic approach
- The challenge is how we bring together partners in a more strategic way.
- Sustainable Schools activity is disparate across local authorities with different departments/ services taking the lead in different authorities. Build on the evidence gathered in the research by Marketwise Strategies and map Officers who are leading on it.
- Through Campus (Estate) activity highlight five or six headline actions that all schools would be able to achieve

Action for NESPSS/ GONE

- Request government departments communicate more effectively when developing programmes/ activities for schools. The language is often confusing and at worst contradictory
- NESPSS resources are limited. Are they being spent effectively?

Engagement with Other Regional Initiatives

- Suggestion to investigate ANEC (Association of North East Councils) Green Manifesto
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP). There are a number of strands within the RIEP, the Children's Services strand is one of them. Sustainability is being proposed as a cross cutting theme, NESPSS should be in discussion with the RIEP when it is formally established.

Future Engagement

Mike Tones asked attendees to send any views they had to Rich Hurst to be taken to the NESPSS Board. Please send suggestions to:

Rich Hurst, r.hurst100@durhamlea.org.uk

Mike thanked people for attending the event, thanked GONE for supporting the event and encouraged everyone to enjoy the buffet and have the chance to informally network.