

# WWF and North East Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Schools

(partnership/ whole school community programme)

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Trigger, Drivers and external factors**

The Department of Education and Skills (DfES) has launched a national framework to support Sustainable Schools, including a variety of different initiatives. North East Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Schools (NESPSS) is an emerging partnership of key organisations who influence or work with education in the region. They are looking to develop ESD as a school improvement strategy for the region, enabling the delivery of many of the national initiatives. WWF-UK's programme looks at how to support whole school change towards sustainability and is therefore well placed to support them achieve this aim.

### **Description**

NESPSS, supported by the EWE centre, is looking to develop a programme of work that supports their aim. This programme will be a practical experiment with those from the partnership who wish to understand and develop their practice toward whole school change. It is hoped that this will lead to wider engagement and dissemination throughout the partnership.

A group of practitioners will be formed that will be supported by a local coordinator and facilitated by WWF over the course of 18 months.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Purpose**

Develop the regional capacity to support schools take forward a whole school approach to sustainable schools

### **Outputs**

- A piloted framework for practitioners to work with schools on whole school change towards sustainability
- A mechanism for working together within the region so as to support the continuation and further delivery of this framework

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **WWF**

WWF will be the external facilitator for this programme; providing

- direct support to the local coordinator
- knowledge of WWF experience of whole school approach and supporting schools
- 3 facilitated days – scoping, designing and evaluation
- support in the design of the framework
- sharing of practice within other regions
- coordination of a national group (TBC)

### **Local coordinator**

The coordinator will be the local facilitator on the ground providing:

- technical support for the group
- conduit between WWF and school supporters
- support M&E
- organising the local logistics of the programme
- support the design of the framework
- ensure transparency, involvement and participation of the wider group

### **The group**

The group will be self selected from the base of NESPSS (70/80 people), who are involved in some form of sustainability in the region from Local Authority, NGOs and public bodies.

NESPSS has a governing body as well as regional groups which include, One World, Eco schools, Forest schools and school grounds. This group is to be a cross cutting group to support their strategic development.

Should we therefore try to recruit people from all of the groups?

This group should be formed of 5-15, and supported by ‘advisors’ (To be discussed). The people in the group have to be committed to developing and piloting a framework with schools; they therefore have to have direct contact with schools.

Things they will commit to

- to discuss

## **VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

### **Partnerships**

A partnership is fundamentally a process and a relationship between people. The success or failure of it is determined by how the challenges and opportunities are handled.

All partnerships will encounter problems and challenges. Establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial partnership is rarely simple. How these are negotiated and resolved provides an indication of the maturity and resilience of the partnership as well as the commitment each party has to the success of the partnership.

Successful partnerships between organisations unlock, combine and leverage the creativity, insight, energy and resources of their participants. It is the quality of the dynamic interplay between a partnership’s context, purpose, participants, organisation and outcomes that makes the difference between success and failure.

As the partnership develops so do individual and collective insights into what is possible and desirable. Early successes may lead to more ambitious aims being set. In other cases, ambitions may have to be scaled down in the face of unexpected problems.

Partnerships may be established with minimal organisational and legal infrastructure, focusing on the pragmatic needs associated with addressing shared goals. Other partnerships may be more formalised

through development of a joint mission statement and objectives, memoranda of understanding, legal contracts or in the case of joint legally constituted bodies, articles of association.

### **Action Research**

Action research offers a practical method for capturing learning in order to develop good practice that can be shared. It is based on self reflective research, usually cyclic, conducted by practitioners that follows a process of examining existing practices, implementing new practices, and evaluating the results, leading to an improvement cycle. This is done in order to improve practice through understanding practice and the situations in which they are carried out.

### **Partnership characteristics**

These characteristics have (will) been agreed between the two parties as important characteristics and ways of working:

To discuss!

### **WORK PLAN**

This programme will be based on action research approach.

### **Scoping and forming the group**

A day will be held to look at what is needed and how they might go about designing a framework and support mechanism. This will be facilitated by WWF for those who are interested in the project and being a part of the group.

### **Design**

A working day, facilitated by WWF, will be held (June/July). This day will be for the practitioners who will carry the pilot with schools and will about designing the framework. The balance between NESPSS, WWF and the group designing the finer details needs to be ascertained.

### **Pilot**

The participants carry out the designed programme with schools. This could a single school each or a group of schools depending on the framework or capacity.

### **Support and Monitoring**

The local coordinator supports and mentors the group and its participants through the course of the pilot.

### **Evaluate**

A participatory evaluation day will be held. This will also be along side other evaluation tools

### **Coherence**

The results of this pilot will be built into a coherence framework that can be used with the rest of the region.

### **Engagement**

A mechanism for engaging with the rest of NESPSS and beyond will be designed and implemented.

### **Timeframe**

4 April – scoping meeting between WWF and local coordinator

24 May – Scoping day

June – Working day

Sept 2006 – July 2007 – Pilot the approach (one academic year), including support meetings  
August 2007 – Evaluation meeting  
Documentation (local and or national)  
November 2007 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Bi-annual conference – to share the practice of the group

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **Success indicators (year and a half)**

- To discuss (together or with WWF and coordinator?)

## **EXIT STRATEGY**

The commitment of this partnership is intended to last 18 months (April 2006 – September 2007), so as to include planning time and to be piloted within one academic year. Once the work has been completed both parties have expressed an interest in maintaining a more informal partnership. Through the course of the year we need to explore how to embed (or not) aspects of this programme into the wider work on NESPSS.