

Appendix D

Summary dialogue event 14th November 2012, Westminster

What is the future of education for sustainability in the UK?

The meeting opened with a short address from the Rt. Hon David Heath MP, recently-appointed Minister of State in DEFRA, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. He opened by referring to the Millennium Development Goals, posing the question: “Our ambitions on the environment have not been met. How do we grow our economy and lift people out of poverty without depleting resources, while thinking of people below voting age and those yet to be born? While Rio was the start of a process and the Sustainable Development Goals a significant outcome, there is more work to be done” ([The SDGs aim to balance sustainability and development objectives](#)). As evidence of this government’s commitment to sustainability he pointed to the fact that David Cameron was recently [31 July 2012] appointed to the High-level Panel <http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/?nid=2455> to advise on the global development agenda beyond 2015, the expiry date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Minister also acknowledged that, “The vast majority of our children are rapidly losing touch with the natural world. Connecting young people back to the natural environment is as important as fostering a sense of community and belonging.” He then referred to The Natural Environment White Paper, [The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature](#) (published by Defra on 7th June 2011) which outlines the Government’s vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. He pointed out that Defra are already working with the Sustainable Schools Alliance; the Natural Connections demonstration project in the Plymouth area for learning outside the classroom; the National Trust campaign to get children out of doors and Bio-Blitzes as promoted by the [Bristol Natural History Consortium](#). He asserted that, “We cannot grow our economy without embracing green growth” and acknowledged the need “to engage young people in decisions affecting their lives and the environment”. At the same time, while not being able to speak for the Department of Education, he reminded us that “this government’s philosophy is to let schools manage their own affairs: a slimmed-down version of the curriculum opens up new possibilities”.

In response to the question “Is there a joined-up approach to sustainability in government, especially since the Sustainable Development Commission was disbanded?” David Heath replied that, “The Prime Minister signing up to the High-level UN-appointed Panel is a step forward. As he is co-chairing, this will galvanise all UK government departments”. While this network of stakeholders sees a potential role in opening up communications between the public sector, civil society and government, it is not seeking a consensus in actions that need to be taken, but rather, is collecting evidence of actions currently underway and processes envisioned as useful. Each organisation will bring its own perspective and strategy to the table in a process of sharing, challenging, encouraging and collaborating. What all participating organisations agree on is the clear need to educate young people for a future

that sustains life many generations into the future. What this government, has not formulated so far is a clear process by which that can happen.
Isabel Carlisle (Transition Network)

Delegate List

Association of Colleges - Mr Martin Doel
CADISPA Trust - Dr Geoff Fagan
Copernicus Alliance of Universities - Prof Daniella Tilbury
Earth Charter UK - Rabi Jeffrey Newman
Education Dialogue Group - Mairi Kershaw
Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) - Mr Iain Patton
EAUC / University of Exeter - Ms Harriet Sjerps-Jones
Eradicating Ecocide - Nina Owen
Green Party - Ms Carolyn Russell
Higher Education Academy (HEA) - Dr Simon Kemp
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) tbc
Institute of Education - Dr Doug Bourn
Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) -Mr Conrad Benefield
Leadership Foundation - Ms Rebecca Nestor
London South Bank University - Dr Ross Wade
National Union of Students (NUS) - Ms Danielle Grufferty
Natural History Museum - Dr Robert Bloomfield
Ofsted - Mr Bryan Davies
Race Equality Network - Ms Judy Ling Wong
Sustainability and Environment Education (SEEd) - Ms Ann Finlayson
Soka Gakkai International-UK - Mr Robert Samuels
South West Learning for Sustainability Coalition - Mr Paul Vare
Stakeholder Forum tbc
Sustainability Knowledge Alliance - Mr Ben Shaw
The Independent - Ms Julia Stephenson
Transition Network - Ms Isabel Carlisle
UNESCO Global Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group - Prof Daniella Tilbury
University of Westminster - Dr Myszka Guzkowska
UCU - Mr Graham Peterson

Consulted Non-attending stakeholders

AUDE
Church of England
Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland
Environmental Audit Committee
Ellen MacArthur Foundation
Faith Regen Foundation
Forum for the Future
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Friends of the Earth
Green Economy Coalition
Greenpeace
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
HEFC Wales
Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences
National College of School Leadership
NIACE
Oxfam
Peace Child International
People & Planet
QAA
RSPB
Save the Children
Scottish Funding Council
The Wildlife Trusts
Italic = apologies

