

EAUC Welsh Region Meeting

Held on Friday 25th January 2012, 10:00 till 14:45

Location: Bay Room, 11th Floor, Mackenzie House, 30-36 Newport Road, Cardiff



Attendees:

Dr Katrina Henderson. Assistant Director – Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Unit Cardiff University
Mr Mark Durdin. Energy and Environmental Engineer Sustainability Team Estates and Facilities management - Swansea University
Mr Chris Long. Health, Safety and Sustainable Development Manager - Bridgend College
Mr Chris Cowburn. Estates Consultant – Hefcw
Mr Liam Suluvan. Head of Estates – University of Wales Newport
Mr Keith Sims. Maintenance Engineer – Cardiff University
Mr Bryn Evans. Consultant
Mr Mark Duthie. Estates Manager – Gower College Swansea
Mr Graham Allen. Environmental Manager – Swansea Metropolitan University
Mr David Giblette. Safety and Environment Support Officer/I.T Officer – Cardiff University
Mr Andrew Walker. Health, Safety and Environment Advisor – Aberystwyth University
Ms Ruth Lovell. Communications – Sustainable Places Cardiff University
Ms Heidi Smith. Sustainability Manager – Swansea University
Mr Tony Cooke. Sustainability Champion – Cardiff and Vale College
Mr Dave Reed. Director of Estates and Technical Services – Coleg Ceredigion
Mr Jim Rollinson. Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Manager – Pembrokeshire College
Mr David Williams. Sustainability Manager – University of Glamorgan
Ms Jane Davidson. Director INSPIRE – University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Apologies:

Mr Derek Jones – Glyndwr University
Mr Rob Imiolczyk – Merthyr
Mr Ricky Carter – Bangor University
Paul Manley – UWIC
Matthew Bellamy – University of Wales Newport
Mr Mike Baldwin - Cardiff & Vale College

1. Welcome and Introductions

A welcome was extended to all members followed by round table introductions.

2. Minutes of last meeting (AGM 8/10/2011)

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Presentation – Communicating the Sustainability Message (Jane Davidson)

- 3.1 Jane's speech opened with a celebration of Wales' approach to the sustainability agenda, reflecting the on the previous success of the former First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, at South Africa; An event which was attended by regional governments under ¹NRG4SD, a network of regional governments for sustainable development, and members who knew that climate change was real (evidence-based). The EAUC members were reminded that ²Kyoto protocol is the only legal mechanism. Jane suggested that use of the term 'climate change' was powerfully 'toxic' in political circles in the USA and that careful use of the words are needed for particular audiences. Indeed, it was suggested that it is perhaps better to concentrate on the science as the effects are clear for all to see – Jane gave an example of the changes one could observe in their own gardens. It was felt that there is a general understanding amongst the general public that there is major scientific debate but that this is not necessarily the case.
- 3.2 The year 2010 was a critical year for biodiversity (International Year of Biodiversity) but there was disappointment that not one proposition came forward from either of the parties within the Welsh Government. In fact, the ³Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) stated that most people were unsure of what biodiversity was.
- 3.3 Jane suggested that there were many words used in treaties which have no resonance with the general public. Sustainability is still recognised as a positive word but sustainable 'development' is in danger of being misused in planning as the planning system allows sustainable development to go through the process without much opposition. In fact, sustainable development as a term could change in England leading to the use of two different terms within the UK! The term sustainability was however, seen as being able to survive 'short term-ism'.
- 3.4 The ⁴Sustainable Development Commission's five principles of sustainable development were described (sustainable economy, promoting good governance, using sound science responsibly, living within environmental limits and ensuring a strong, healthy and just society) and although the Welsh Government thought that the principles were good, they did however, 'tweak' them and brought them into ⁵One Wales: One Planet.

- 3.5 Jane talked about ⁶legislating for sustainable development within Wales and SD as the 'central organising principle' and mentioned her recent ⁷ENDS lecture and the ⁸House of Commons Environment Audit Committee report. She continued, saying that ⁹Rio 20+ will have sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity included within the agendas. A further 'guide' document from ¹⁰Gloucestershire University was mentioned.
- 3.6 Jane closed this section by stating that better decision-making is made through taking a longer-term approach and suggested that the EAUC Cymru group lends its support to the Welsh Government re: legislating for ESDGC.
- 3.7 Sincere thanks were expressed to Jane for her highly valued contribution.
- 3.8 Further discussion ensued including a point raised regarding legislation versus voluntary action. Sustainable development was described as being legislation that is different, i.e. it is a requirement of government and gives greater 'permission' to take the sustainability agenda forwards. It was suggested that ESDGC would be part of that legislation.
- 3.9 The importance of sustainable procurement was briefly discussed and also the 'skills passport'. Katrina suggested that this may be an agenda item at a future meeting.

4. Sustainable Development Charter

- 4.1 Ruth Lovell gave a brief introduction to the SD Charter and asked who else had signed up to date. A very small show of hands was given by those who are already signatories to the Sustainable Development Charter. It was mentioned that the voluntary aspect and resource constraints (sometimes only one person 'steering the ship') sometimes could make this low priority. Ruth reported that a meeting had been set up for signatories to discuss the way forward.
- 4.2 The Charter was designed to give organisations the opportunity to plan and to report. The critical issue here is that organisations share what works. At this point ¹¹Hay on Earth was mentioned as an excellent opportunity to share. The Charter is closely related to One Wales; One Planet.
- 4.3 A question was posed as to organisations response to the Charter. Examples were given regarding implementing the Charter – Chris Long described how the Charter was reflected in policy and suggested that individuals may like to take a look at the Bridgend College Sustainability Vision and Strategy from their ¹²website.
- 4.4 It was suggested that the Charter should be an agenda item at a future meeting and that perhaps Simon Billsborough or Huw Charles could be invited from the Welsh Government – all agreed.

5. Update from Hefcw

- 5.1 Chris updated the members on the hot topics coming from ¹³Hefcw. He commented on the funding structures and student fees, stating that the 9K maximum fee appeared to be norm and that Hefcw were uncomfortable with this. He stated that equity and value for money must be seen. High priority course needed to be cherished and supported and lower priority courses should be reflected by their cost. The funding structure is not operating as envisaged and should reflect social needs.
 - 5.2 Hefcw recognises the difficulties with regards ESDGC but they are looking to re-energise ESDGC within the legislation and re-engage sustainability in the curriculum.
 - 5.3 About 10 people are, under severance conditions, leaving Hefcw but under the emerging new structure hope to maintain high levels of support.
 - 5.4 The Hefcw draft sustainability framework will, it is hoped, pick up all the 'levers' for sustainable development. The document is to be circulated to members who may wish to feed back.
 - 5.5 Policies and circulars will be designed to encourage others to engage with sustainability issues.
 - 5.6 Hefcw will push for enhanced reporting from organisations.
 - 5.7 A discussion ensued regarding the Life index and the Newport-Swansea tools. Caution was suggested as was a possible demonstration of both tools at a future meeting. Care needs to be given as there is an existing HE ESDGC group – this is to be revisited.
 - 5.8 Hefcw as an organisation is progressing well but they are not working within a defined framework with clear goals and objectives. There is ongoing discussion around this issue.
- 6. Proposed objectives and targets from the Welsh region**
- 6.1 Katrina introduced the idea of adopting objectives and targets for the group. The objectives were projected on the whiteboard for the members. It was noted that the merger of colleges would increase % membership but invitations should be sent.
 - 6.2 Video conferencing and telephone conferencing were recognised as good tools to reduce travel but face-to-face meetings were also valued. It was felt that future meetings would include video conferencing. All agreed.
 - 6.3 A future meeting to discuss the Charter may encourage further uptake.
 - 6.4 Academic presence at future meetings (at least one per year) was recommended.

6.5 Sustainable procurement was recognised as a significant aspect and requires further joined up thinking – all agreed. A HE/FE working group is to be offered to organisations. A discussion ensued regarding procurement of energy, renewable energy sources and biomass.

7. Update from EAUC

7.1 EAUC is happy to see Wales engaging with the organisation..

7.2 EAUC is looking to develop a 5 year strategy. If there is anything that you feel EAUC should be providing or that you would like considered, please provide any feedback to Katrina.

7.2 EAUC is looking to engage with the Welsh Government. Perhaps there are links via Simon Billsborough or Huw Charles. To be progressed.

7.3 Institutions are encouraged to register to attend the EAUC in University of York (March 27-29th) http://www.eauc.org.uk/annual_conference

8. Update on the Green League

8.1 Heidi advised the members that the new ¹⁴2012 document was released last week.

8.2 The freedom of information documentation is available on 13th February and the deadline for submission is 23rd March.

8.3 Results will be published on 29th May but organisations will receive their results by 23rd May.

8.4 The changes to the 2012 reporting structure are (1) more lenient on 'staff involved in environmental management', (2) requirement within the environmental policy is relaxed –ESDGC in the curriculum 'where relevant' (3) for organisations in Wales and with regard ESDGC principles, there are allowances for inclusion of SD or ESDGC in the curriculum (see page 33 of the document)

8.5 Construction waste is removed from the reporting criteria.

8.6 With regard the food policy, you must be registered for the ¹⁵Food for Life Award and there is a set of criteria for those not. Heidi described the award for those unfamiliar with it.

8.7 Potential changes in 2013 are (1) a move from policy to performance (2) stripping residential data for energy and water from the reporting requirements (3) bring construction waste back into data reporting

- 8.8 There is ongoing discussion regarding the allocation of points for those organisations that place N/A into boxes.
- 8.9 Sincere thanks to Heidi for attending on behalf of the group.

9. Updates from institutions present

- 9.1 Pembrokeshire College: Excellent progress being made with level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard being achieved and striding towards application for Platinum level of the Corporate Health Standard. Awards won for the Green Gown and the National Training Award. The STEG group has two projects ongoing (1) a food co-op and (2) paper logs production.
- 9.2 Cardiff and Vale: The merger has taken place during this summer and maintenance of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard at level 4 is ongoing. They are currently looking at voltage optimisation and are looking to use 100% recycled paper at Barry (already used at Cardiff).
- 9.3 University of Glamorgan: There has been a change in organisation with regards estates. A sustainability report is being prepared, fair-trade maintained, ISO14001, conservation areas, discounted travel and a raft of other excellent work.
- 9.4 Swansea University: A sustainable development strategy is being written and a sustainability policy drafted which is related to Life Index. A carbon management plan is being devised, food growing project for students and biodiversity plan are in the pipeline. They are moving away from the Green Dragon Standard toward Eco-Campus.
- 9.5 Cardiff University, Sustainable Places: An overview was given regarding the task to bring together different academic schools and develop research on a number of areas (agriculture and food, risk and resilience, environmental governance, mobility and flow, climate change adaptation). There is also an affiliate assisting and hopes for research to apply globally.
- 9.6 Aberystwyth University: The 14001 project has lost pace but hopes to revive. The sustainable food programme is ongoing and two new BREEAM builds are completed.
- 9.7 Cardiff University: Both 14001 and 18001 are now achieved – we believe the only University to hold both (congratulations given). Biodiversity is the next focus with a policy statement being consulted. Looking a basic biodiversity survey but there are limited resources. DEC's are in place and WEEE central service in place. A sustainable food policy is being drafted.

- 9.8 Swansea Metropolitan: Recycling figures are anticipated to improve this year after moving to a new waste contractor. The Green Dragon Environmental Standard at level 4 is being maintained. There is good progress being made towards a reporting system utilising self-developed software and a travel survey has been completed.
- 9.9 Gower College: The Green Dragon Environmental Standard at level 3 is being maintained. There is ample background work continuing.
- 9.10 Coleg Ceredigion: An energy best practice group has been formed with plenty of work carried out on a variety of buildings of differing age.
- 9.11 Newport University: ISO14001 is maintained, refurbishment works are ongoing and student allotments in place. A bus service is available providing cost reductions.
- 9.12 Bridgend College: Green Dragon level 5 audit this April and application for the platinum level of the Corporate Health Standard later this year. Awarded bronze level of the Welsh Green Travel Plan Award. Biodiversity survey almost completed and biodiversity action plan to be completed next month. Loads more can be found in our sustainable development strategy.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 7th March in Newport. Details to follow.

Links to information discussed in the meeting:

1. <http://www.nrg4sd.org/>
2. http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php
3. <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/about-ccw/newsroom/latest-news/international-year-of-biodiver.aspx?lang=en>
4. http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/the_principles.html
5. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/onewalesoneplanet/?lang=en>
6. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/sdbill/?lang=en>
7. <http://www.endsreport.com/31468/a-small-country-with-big-sustainability-ambitions>
8. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenvaud/504/504.pdf>
9. <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>
10. <http://insight.glos.ac.uk/sustainability/education/documents/efs%20educators%20guide%20final%207july11.pdf>
11. <http://ecosapiens.squarespace.com/hay-on-earth-2011/>
12. <http://www.bridgend.ac.uk/health-safety-environment>
13. <http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/>
14. <http://peopleandplanet.org/dl/greenleague/2012/guide.pdf>
15. <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/Awardsforschools/Criteriaandguidance.aspx>