

# Sustainable Development Policy

[wea.org.uk](http://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.

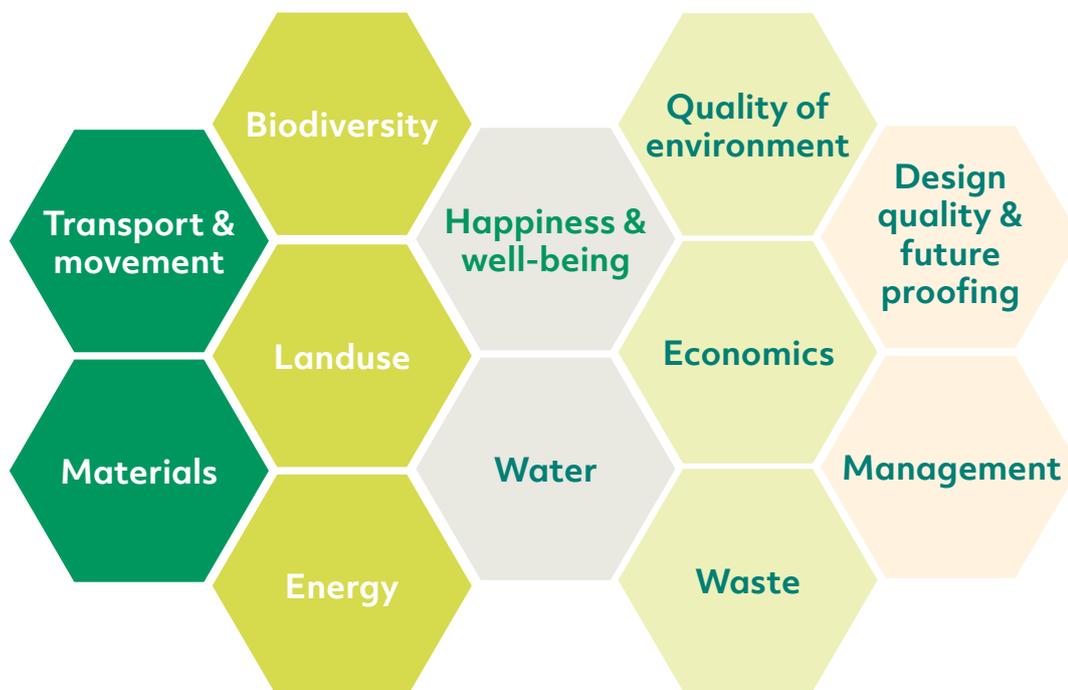
Values delivered through:

- 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 setting 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.

## Leaders at all levels

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

## Sustainability 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 form the baseline for setting future priorities and targets, and for measuring our progress.

From 2018 formal progress reports will 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
- Responsible use of resources
- 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 our teaching, learning and curriculum
- Active promotion and creation of equal opportunity
- Help facilitate health, well-being, fulfillment and social engagement through education and lifelong learning



### 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 engage staff and stakeholders
- 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

### We will achieve this through:

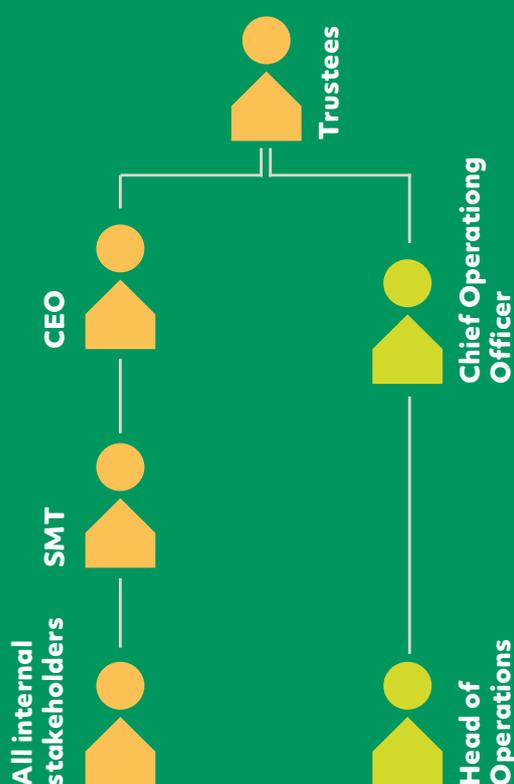
- Compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations and codes of practice
- Integration of sustainability considerations in all our business decisions and into our teaching, learning and curriculum
- Ensuring that all staff and other stakeholders are aware of our Sustainable Development Policy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

## 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. All are encouraged to share a sense of responsibility and purpose and collaborate to achieve the organisation's sustainable development aims.

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.

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 plans
- Waste & disposal reductions
- Use of recyclable materials
- Water consumption

## Financial Resources

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

## Supply Chain

- Suppliers that publish sustainability policies
- Ethical practices and corporate responsibility
- Tendering processes

## 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

## Social Impact

- Measuring and quantifying the benefits of our educational impact
- Links with Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and strategy
- Threading sustainability awareness and values through our education provision and delivery
- Threading sustainability awareness and values through our communications
- Volunteering opportunities and support

# Links to other policies and documents

Sustainable Development is linked to and embedded within all WEA Policies, with explicit links to:

Association Strategic Plan and Objectives	Procurement Policy
Improvement and Development Plan	Educational Contracts
Induction Policy	Procurement Policy
Partnership policy	Performance Management
Student documents including documents for the classroom	Education & Skills Funding Agency Contract
Recruitment policy and documents	Financial Regulations and procedures
Volunteer policy	Operational management procedures
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	Curriculum development
IT Strategy (including Digital Inclusion)	Premises and facilities arrangements
Travel & Expenses Policies	Budgets and financial management

# External Resources

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

## **Forum for the Future**

[forumforthefuture.org/](http://forumforthefuture.org/)

## **The Sigma Project**<sup>1</sup>

[projectsigma.co.uk/Guidelines/default.asp](http://projectsigma.co.uk/Guidelines/default.asp)

## **Education for Sustainable Development**

[esdtoolkit.org/discussion/default.htm](http://esdtoolkit.org/discussion/default.htm)

## **Carbon Trust**

[carbontrust.com/home/](http://carbontrust.com/home/)

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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).

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