

FE Sector Guide



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This document presents a national FE Sector Guide to help manage carbon budgets and achieve ambitious sustainability targets. It is based on work developed with the FE EKC Group, Mid Kent College and Morley College for their Net Zero and Sustainability Strategy (NZSS) and First Year Action Plan (February 2022) under the Collaborative College Fund (CCF) Project.

The brief for the guide was to detail the guiding principles as to how the FE Sector could address the government's "10 Point Plan for the Green Industrial Revolution"¹ (17 November 2020) focused on increasing ambition in the following areas:

1. Advancing offshore wind
2. Driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen
3. Delivering new and advanced nuclear power
4. Accelerating the shift to zero-emission vehicles
5. Green public transport, cycling and walking
6. 'jet zero' and green ships
7. Greener buildings
8. Investing in carbon capture, usage and storage
9. Protecting our natural environment
10. Green finance and innovation

The Plan signalled a clear intention for the UK to be a world leader in an array of clean technologies and to eradicate the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050, which has been enshrined into law as part of the net-zero emissions target. The £12bn plan declared support for up to 250,000 green jobs and aims to secure three times as much investment from the private sector by

2030. This was followed by an Energy White Paper on 14 December 2020². Both these initiatives were regarded generally as being: "big in ambition, but lacking in detail". A recognised improvement came on 18 October 2021 with UK government's Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener document³. This provided much-needed detail and a holistic perspective on the steps to achieve Net Zero by 2050 and set out priorities to reduce emissions in power, transport, industry and buildings, with a compelling case of the benefits to provide the economy with green jobs.

The FE Sector is key education and skills provider that can respond in numerous ways to aid the Government's aims through its curriculum and student management programmes. At the same time, the College's own resource, estate and institutional management processes can adapt and pivot to deliver their own new approaches to transition to Net Zero and deliver Sustainability targets with a new 'normal' that will characterise the post-fossil fuel and post-Brexit economy.

The following highlights the most relevant general principles that are tied to the new directions implied by the NZSS and provides high-level opportunity responses to the challenges that signpost where the FE Colleges can lead the way and avoid lagging behind in delivering the Government 10 Point Plan.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution>

2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future>

3 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028157/net-zero-strategy.pdf

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The use of the terms 'revolution; and 'emergency' in Government plans are to be highlighted and should not be taken lightly. They are clear expressions of where we are and just how much needs to be changed quickly to enable us to deal better with the crises faced. These changes, for the FE sector – as for us all, are not just technical in nature. They require a change in thinking (more holistic), a change in culture (better connecting people with people, and people and planet) and a change in how we organise and manage (going beyond siloed operations into better interconnected cross-cutting collaboration within and between organisations and institutions).

The following general principles reflect the type of paradigm, philosophy and values on offer that Colleges and their communities can act upon. They are, otherwise, commonly applied, for example, in UN Declarations^{4 5} and Corporate ESG Plans⁶ and organisational Codes of Conducts⁷. They are relevant to the FE Sector to help guide and cut deep into where and how the much-needed changes can be explored in upgrading what FE College may already have engaged with.

Developing the Culture

The FE Colleges have a role and a responsibility to support the Government's 10 Point Plan and the public's needs. They should be showing the way in creating the new normal for the future. The transition to Net Zero and a sustainable future is all about bold social, economic and environmental innovation, experimentation, feedback and learning. A regenerative College operation can create novel ways of living, working, educating and operating

together to transform relationships with money, work, health, the earth and each other. The Colleges, as leaders and entrepreneurs, have the opportunity to mould this new normal. This can be spearheaded by novel new curriculums, skills development and business models. These will be most effective when also taken together with innovative forms of cooperation and collaboration between the Colleges and between the Colleges and Industry at large that focus values on our humanity and our dependency on the fruits of the earth.

The general principles involved to develop a supportive cultural setting incorporate these sorts of ideas and values:

- **Colleges as Community.** Recognise community potential and limits. Create structures that support and nourish each College community and the other communities they connect to, including the Community of Life.
- **Develop Strengths.** Build each Colleges' own skills, talents and abilities to make choices that demonstrate alignment with core values.
- **Interconnection and collaboration.** Cultivate respectful, healthy relationships at the heart of College operations with all the people, plants, animals and resources on which our shared future depends. Value, nourish and nurture the connections that sustain all communities.
- **Build empathy.** Create frameworks into the heart of College operations that support empathy within and with others to better fulfil needs and address ecological integrity across all FE College estates.

4 <http://www.un-documents.net/earth-ch.htm>

5 <https://davidsuzuki.org/about/declaration-of-interdependence/>

6 https://irsociety.org.uk/files/IU_ESG_White_Paper_Full.pdf

7 <https://www.ethics.org/resources/free-toolkit/code-of-conduct/>

- **Promote trustworthy, thoughtful, honest doers who act with social, economic and environmental integrity.** Promote the means for the College communities to share and use their voices; to admit what they do not know; to speak the truth and rebuff lies, deceptions and misrepresentations; to hold everyone accountable; and, to advocate for those who can be believed in.
- **Redefine definitions of success.** Engage with a wider vision beyond society's expectations of the value of money and corporate global consumerism. Promote that which nourishes joy as reward and health as wealth.
- **Succeed through curiosity and accepting uncertainty.** Embrace learning from mistakes and experimenting that values the need to improvise, to iterate, to question, to be spontaneous, to be receptive and responsive, and not just predictive and defensive.
- **Examine and affirm cores values.** Democratic, non-violent, peaceful behaviour and acting for the common good should not present a cultural dilemma as a lens to view the role of the FE Colleges to deliver education, training, skills and access to the jobs and wealth market vested in them. The adjacent box provides some guiding food for debate and thought for staff and students in this respect.⁸
- **Healing by example.** For every action that leads away from the problem and delivers a solution is a step to solve a College's need and offers one to be shared with others to do the same, or similar.

Meritocracy and the Common Good

We do not have much equality of condition today. Public spaces that gather people together across class, race, ethnicity, and faith are few and far between. Four decades of market-driven globalization has brought inequalities of income and wealth so pronounced that they lead us into separate ways of life. Those who are affluent and those of modest means rarely encounter one another in the course of the day. We live and work and shop and play in different places; our children go to different schools. And when the meritocratic sorting machine has done its work, those on top find it hard to resist the thought that they deserve their success and that those on the bottom deserve their place as well. This feeds a politics so poisonous and a partisanship so intense that many now regard marriages across party lines as more troubling than marrying outside the faith.

It is little wonder we have lost the ability to reason together about large public questions, or even to listen to one another. Merit began its career as the empowering idea that we can, through work and faith, bend God's grace in our favor. The secular version of this idea made for an exhilarating promise of individual freedom: Our fate is in our hands. We can make it if we try. But this vision of freedom points us away from the obligations of a shared democratic project. If the common good consists simply in maximizing the welfare of consumers, then achieving an equality of condition does not matter in the end. If democracy is simply economics by other means, a matter of adding up our individual interests and preferences, then its fate does not depend on the moral bonds of citizens. A consumerist conception of democracy can do its limited work whether we share a vibrant common life or inhabit privatized enclaves in the company of our own kind. But if the common good can be arrived at only by deliberating with our fellow citizens about the purposes and ends worthy of our political community, then democracy cannot be indifferent to the character of the common life. It does not require perfect equality. But it does require that citizens from different walks of life encounter one another in common spaces and public places. For this is how we learn to negotiate and abide our differences. And this is how we come to care for the common good.

Managing the Policies, Programmes, Projects and Operations

To deliver the Government's 10 Point Plan, the FE Colleges should recognise which of their tried and tested management methods of the past will remain valuable and relevant in the future. It will also require new approaches that challenge the status quo and may require organisational restructuring and new institutions. The following are some general principles already embedded within the Kent-based FE Colleges' Net Zero and Sustainability Strategy.

- **This approach must be alive, agile and interactive (continuous improvement).** Stakeholder participation and feedback constantly updated, refined and redirected operations to stay abreast of changing conditions and moving targets.
- **There will always be a range of pathways.** There should be no expectation of just one route or approach, given that the opportunities and challenges are changing constantly. To increase understanding, advance new approaches and reduce the costs of existing ones requires experimentation and adaptability.
- **Each College does not have to reinvent the wheel.** Some HE/FE colleges are already leaders drawing and establishing best practice. For example, the EAUC FE Colleges Roadmap⁹ is designed to be practical, easy to follow, affordable and outcome driven.
- **Success evolves from monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.** Employing proper systems to enable this are not difficult to install to provide the insight and foresight managers and decision/policy makers need on where initiatives started (the baseline), what has changed and why (progress or not), and where to go now (evolving solutions and responses).
- **Adopt a systems approach.** The challenges require actions by multiple parties (on, off and across campuses and departments) to deliver at pace and tackle the many uncertainties. This needs strong coordination in policy development and managing expectations.



A whole systems approach is designed to navigate complex policy and implementation challenges. Viewing the environment, social, educational and economic issues as one interconnected system can identify interdependencies, as changes in one area can directly or indirectly impact others. This approach reduces the risk of unintended consequences, ensuring individual decisions designed to achieve Net Zero and sustainable outcomes avoid hindering these or other important objectives.

- **Create the right forums.** Dialogue, share knowledge and learning is essential to coordinate a cross-cutting multi-disciplinary approach to deliver shared goals, identify key issues through cross-system governance and participation structures and work towards a shared understanding of interdependencies and risks across different parts of the Net Zero and sustainability challenges that are at the heart of the Government's 10 Point Plan.

9 https://www.eauc.org.uk/climate_change_how_to_become_a_net-zero_college

RESPONDING TO THE 10 POINT PLAN

An integrated way for the FE Sector to align with the Government's 10 Point Plan (or any other policy, programme, plan or project) can, as a starting point, use the following structured headings to identify operational opportunities and challenges and assess how best to respond:

- Curriculum Development
- Research Development
- Student/Community Participation
- Estates/Infrastructure Development
- Business Development
- Institutional Management
- Financial Management

Any assessment should pay particular attention to how these operations link responsively with each other in a coherent way. A trial exercise was run in the CCF project setting with the Team Leaders and Sustainability Officers (see Appendix A). This produced some answers that were particular to just one topic. For example, the potentially controversial 10 Point Plan Item No. 3. "Delivering new and advanced nuclear power". Here, any FE response could be challenging given the lack of staff/student knowledge and/or resistance based on principled grounds. This might require senior management and leadership to make high-level College policy decisions as to whether to engage in this industry (or not) and raise staff/student awareness levels accordingly.

Similarly, for Plan Item No. 7. "Greener Buildings", the current lack of embedded inter-connected College collaboration means economy of scale solutions, e.g., renewable energy production or advanced energy management methods, are not on the radar and business/income generating potential remains hidden, except in the odd case of individual building upgrades or new building plans in isolation. This would require new organisational and

institutional mechanisms to reconfigure managing budgets and infrastructure on and between campus to maximise income from grid flex markets and micro-grid trading options.

Meanwhile, many responses were generic and could apply to any of the 10 Plan initiatives:

STRATEGY ACTION AREA	CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE
Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and novel skills need direction with reliable job prospects
Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding job demands in future markets
Estates/Infrastructure Development	Cost and lack of a collaborative scaled approach with other colleges	REGO and sleaving options and new renewable supply agreements
Business Development	Lack of business model	Appraise new industry skill supply analysis and agreements
Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry

ANNEX A. 10 POINT PLAN STRATEGY ACTION AREA RESPONSES

10-POINT PLAN ITEM	STRATEGY ACTION AREA	CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE
1. Advancing offshore wind	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Cost, time and lack of a collaborative scaled approach with other colleges, infrastructure limitations	REGO and sleaving options and new renewable supply agreements
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New industry skill supply agreements
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry
2. Driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Cost, lack of on-campus scalable transport, lab and educational options	Assessing industry needs for new skills, courses and research
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry

10-POINT PLAN ITEM	STRATEGY ACTION AREA	CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE
3. Delivering new and advanced nuclear power	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Student objection, lack of knowledge, perceived dangers to community	Increase student awareness
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Cost and acceptability, higher risks of health and safety	Unclear, possible REGO access
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Political governance, corporate aversion and lack of forums	Option to show leadership and engage (or not) in these solutions
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry
4. Accelerating the shift to zero-emission vehicles	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance, cost of change and maintenance, lacking charging points, limited to log distance travels	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets, less pollution which improves health
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Cost and lack of a collaborative scaled approach with other colleges	Assessing industry needs for new skills, courses and research
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry

10-POINT PLAN ITEM	STRATEGY ACTION AREA	CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE
5. Green public transport, cycling and walking	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Caring, engagement, bike theft	Incentive schemes, health and well-being benefits, bike discounts for students
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Budget, electricity consumption	EV charging, bike sheds, cycle paths
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Create appropriate budgets that deliver the NZSS
6. 'Jet zero' and green ships	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Limited on-campus application options	Assessing industry needs for new skills, courses and research, working and collaborating with external partners (e.g. Dover college is next to Dover port)
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry

10-POINT PLAN ITEM	STRATEGY ACTION AREA	CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE
7. Greener buildings	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions, lack of capacity to conduct research	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements and educational opportunities
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Cost, lack of collaboration between colleges to scale opportunity, limited green contractors, current condition of buildings (old buildings have higher costs for transformation)	REGO and sleaving options and new renewable supply agreements, using eco-friendly materials for new buildings that promote biodiversity
	Business Development	Lack of business model	Capture the income potential from campus power generation and grid and micro-grid trading mechanisms
	Institutional Management	Status quo and risk aversion	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of prior experience. Lack of collaboration between colleges to scale opportunity	Configuring the budget and income mechanisms on and between campus to maximise the grid and micro-grid trading options
8. 'Jet zero' and green ships	Investing in carbon capture, usage and storage	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Limited on-campus application options	Assessing industry needs for new skills, courses and research, working and collaborating with external partners (e.g. Dover college is next to Dover port)
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry

10-POINT PLAN ITEM	STRATEGY ACTION AREA	CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE
9. Protecting our natural environment	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects, govt. funding opportunities
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets, promoting mental health by increasing green spaces
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Assessing industry offers for new skills, courses and research and College opportunities for new on-campus solutions
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional funding from government and industry
10. Green finance and innovation	Curriculum Development	Lack of links to evolving new industries	Appraise new course and skills needs direction with reliable job prospects
	Research Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Increase FE role to develop new technologies and leadership to highlight novel skills requirements
	Student/Community Participation	Lack of job insight, knowledge and relevance, resistance to change (some jobs are transformed or made redundant for people working in fossil fuel industries)	Expanding local, regional and international job demands in future markets
	Estates/Infrastructure Development	Lack of prior experience with new tech and solutions	Assessing industry offers for new skills, courses and research and College opportunities for new on-campus solutions
	Business Development	Lack of business model	New skills links and industry choices
	Institutional Management	Status quo, risk aversion and lack of forums	Reconfigure management portfolios and staffing to cement industry relationships
	Financial Management	Lack of decision and links to engage coherently	Additional impact funding and investment returns, supported by government and industry

ANNEX B. USEFUL RESOURCE LINKS

(source: <https://www.aoc.co.uk/useful-resources-and-links>)

This resource support tool can be expanded as appropriate with each new future review.

ESFA guidance on energy and carbon reporting for colleges¹⁰ – aimed at finance directors, principals, and governors of sixth form and further education corporations.

SORTED Guide to Sustainability in Further Education¹¹ – specific guidance on embedding sustainability into every aspect of your organisation.

Making the case for business sustainability¹² – a guide for sustainability leaders

Climate Emergency Framework¹³ – areas that institutions need to develop their own response to, along with resources to help and guide.

Engaging professional departments with sustainability¹⁴ – Guides aiming to foster further collaboration and embed sustainability at a departmental and institutional level.

Climate change adaptation¹⁵ – why, and how, to effectively embed considerations of climate change risk within your existing risk and business continuity procedures.

Guide for members of governing bodies¹⁶ – a guide to highlight the institutional benefits available through making sustainability a 'top team, top table issue', and one that complements and enriches current agendas.

10 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-corporation-financial-management-good-practice-guides/streamlined-energy-and-carbon-reporting-for-college-corporations>

11 https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/sorted_guide_to_sustainability_in_further_education

12 https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/making_the_business_case_for_sustainability

13 <https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/cef>

14 <https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/epd>

15 <https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/adaptation>

16 https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/a_guide_for_governors