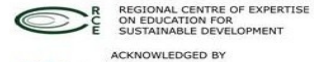


RCE Severn



Regional Centre for Sustainability Education

promoting transformational learning and change in the West Midlands and South West



TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

April 2015

Name

RCE Severn – UNU Regional Centre of Expertise in Sustainability Education

Vision

The RCE vision is to assist the Severn area in moving towards sustainable development¹ through a process of learning, participatory engagement and partnership building.

Aims

RCE Severn exists to work with partners to develop and implement innovative projects and programmes in sustainability education and engagement to promote transformational learning and change in the West Midlands region and the South West region.

It aims to do this by:

- Bringing together **a supportive network** of organisations from different sectors, with diverse skills and experiences of delivering both formal sustainability education, and informal public engagement with a broad range of audiences – building a consortium of partners from the voluntary, public, education and business sectors, linking those with expertise of the sustainability agenda with those skilled in communication and public engagement.
- Facilitating **shared learning** from partners engaged in sustainability education and engagement projects and programmes, both formal and informal, and share and develop best practice designed to change mindsets and build capacity to implement change
- **Collaborative working** on innovative projects and programmes in sustainability education to achieve outcomes beyond what it is possible to achieve by working in isolation, encouraging both implementation projects and research and development initiatives
- Engaging with partners (both within RCE Severn and with other RCEs nationally and internationally) to identify resource needs and to seek opportunities for **joint project funding**
- **Raising awareness** of sustainability issues in ways which build the capacity, skills and

¹ UNU RCE Severn uses the UNESCO definition of sustainable development which can be found on the webpage: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-sustainable-development/sustainable-development/>

knowledge to bring about long-term and sustained change in the face of key sustainability challenges

- Supporting opportunities for gaining first-hand experience of sustainability through **volunteering and work placements** with RCE partners, with a focus on developing the skills and capacity of existing and potential employees
- Complementing and **adding value to existing initiatives and networks**, extending these to provide cross-sectoral and cross-regional learning opportunities and developing new innovative projects and programmes, and
- Seeking to influence and improve the sustainability contribution of key national and regional strategies and policies that impact on the work of RCE partners, especially those areas that the RCE working groups are collaborating on
- *Seeking to challenge the 'business as usual' approach towards climate change and to increase understanding of the implications for social, economic and environmental wellbeing*

A pyramid diagram showing the core values for the RCE, key outcomes and vehicles for change is set out in Appendix 2.

Operating principles

The centre is endorsed by the United Nations University and is one of 136 similar centres throughout the world. The centre is co-ordinated by the University of Gloucestershire.

The geographical focus for the RCE is on the West Midlands region and the South West region.

All partners and partnerships will commit to the following principles:

- Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly show advantage or disadvantage to any person
- The sovereignty of a particular agency, where that agency has clear responsibility for delivering a particular service, will be recognised and respected
- Members should be as open and transparent as possible about their actions and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions
- Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability

Information provided by members for the purposes of the work of the RCE will be treated in confidence but shared appropriately amongst the network to progress towards the vision and goals of RCE Severn. All groups set up as part of the RCE will be expected to adhere to these principles

Communication

The RCE is committed to the principle of openness and transparency in all its operations. The preparation and implementation of strategies and action plans will be transparent, with information provided in a variety of formats to increase access to it.

Structure

The RCE is committed to ensuring good leadership and management in its operations.

RCE Steering Group – to steer overall development and direction of RCE, and coordinate delivery of actions and projects. Steering Group should consist of 8-12 partners and meet 3-4 times a year unless the steering group sees fit to meet more frequently. (The Steering

Group membership for 2015 is set out in Appendix 1)

Chair and Vice Chair – to chair all meetings, provide a broad, independent steer for RCE Severn. Positions of Chair and Vice Chair to rotate on an annual basis and to represent different sectors. This will be agreed and discussed along with direction for RCE Severn at an annual general meeting for which all RCE Severn members will be invited.

Members of RCE Steering Group should include representation from each of the following categories, and should, as much as possible, be drawn from across the RCE region:

- Higher and Further Education
- Non-government organisations and the voluntary sector
- The business sector
- Schools and their communities
- Local government/public sector
- Media/communications and the cultural sector

RCE Director – responsible for the overall performance of the RCE and brokering relations with the international RCE community

RCE Co-ordinator – will facilitate delivery of the RCE partnership and outcomes, through acting as a central point for RCE communications, supporting development of projects and initiatives, liaising with partners, exploring funding opportunities and preparing agendas and minutes of Steering Group

RCE Partnership – All those who wish to be involved with the work of RCE Severn will be invited to meet at least twice a year, possibly to coincide with learning and collaborative opportunities.

RCE Working Groups – These will be identified through a process of dialogue with established partners.

Working Groups will provide opportunities for partners to:

- Share experiences of delivering existing education and engagement sustainability projects, identifying best practice, and
- Generate and deliver new projects, building on the energy and expertise of RCE partners to develop initiatives using existing and potential new sources of funding
- Each Working group will need to develop and deliver one activity a year in order to exist – these could include an event, seminar or project

Working Groups may take a sector focus (business; media; community; schools/young people; universities and colleges) or may be themed (e.g. climate change/carbon reduction; local food and health; lifestyle and culture) or may reflect learning approaches such as work placements and volunteering; transformational learning.

Working Group Leaders needed for each working group to coordinate and lead development of each strand of work, via a combination of email communications and face-to-face meetings.

- Leaders will be invited to attend Steering Group meetings and to report back on initiatives to both the Steering Group and the full RCE partnership
- The RCE Co-ordinator will support where possible, but each group will be responsible for organising their own agendas, minutes etc.

Financial arrangements

None at this point

Meeting arrangements

Meetings can be rotated around different RCE Severn partners, in fully accessible venues within easy reach of the public transport network. Partners with suitable meeting rooms will be welcome to offer their facilities, but will be asked to provide refreshments for meetings.

Agendas

Agenda and papers will be sent out 5 working days before each meeting.

Reports

Reports can only be tabled by prior agreement with the chair

Minutes

Minutes will normally be issued within two weeks of the meeting. All partners have 14 days from receipt of minutes to challenge or lodge a disagreement with a decision taken at a meeting they did not attend or send a substitute to. Following this 14 day period, minutes will be made available to all members on the RCE Severn webpages:

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/sustainability/partnerships/rce/Pages/default.aspx> .

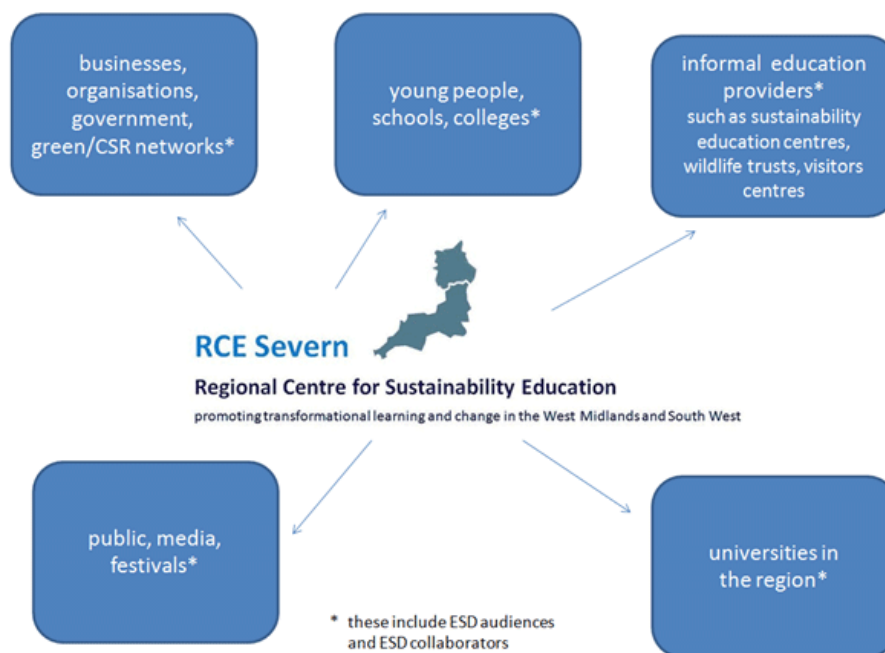
Decision-making processes

Decisions will be taken on the basis of a consensus or in the absence of a consensus a simple majority vote. All decisions should be made with a quorum of a minimum of five Steering Group members.

Monitoring and evaluation

The RCE will ensure that performance and progress is in accordance with the UNU RCE guidelines and that regular reports on implementation are made to both RCE Severn Steering Group and to the national and international RCE networks.

The terms of reference for the RCE will be reviewed annually and agreed at the annual general meeting.



Appendix 1

RCE Severn Steering Group Membership

Sector	Steering Group Members/Deputies
Higher and Further Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katherine Foot (Royal Agricultural University) • Paul Warwick (University of Plymouth)
NGO/Voluntary Sector/ Community Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gareth Parry (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust)
Business Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Henry Looney (Sustainable Direction Ltd) • Paul Thomas (SuperGroup Plc)
Schools and their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Bailey (Global Learning Programme)
Local Government/ Public Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Corrall (Worcestershire County Council) • Georgina Smith (Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust)
Media/ Communications and the Cultural Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. John Blewitt (Aston University) – RCE Chair
RCE Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Daniella Tilbury
RCE Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meg Baker

Appendix 2

