

## **Developing a Whole School Approach to embed sustainability through the use of a Leadership Toolkit**

### **Rationale**

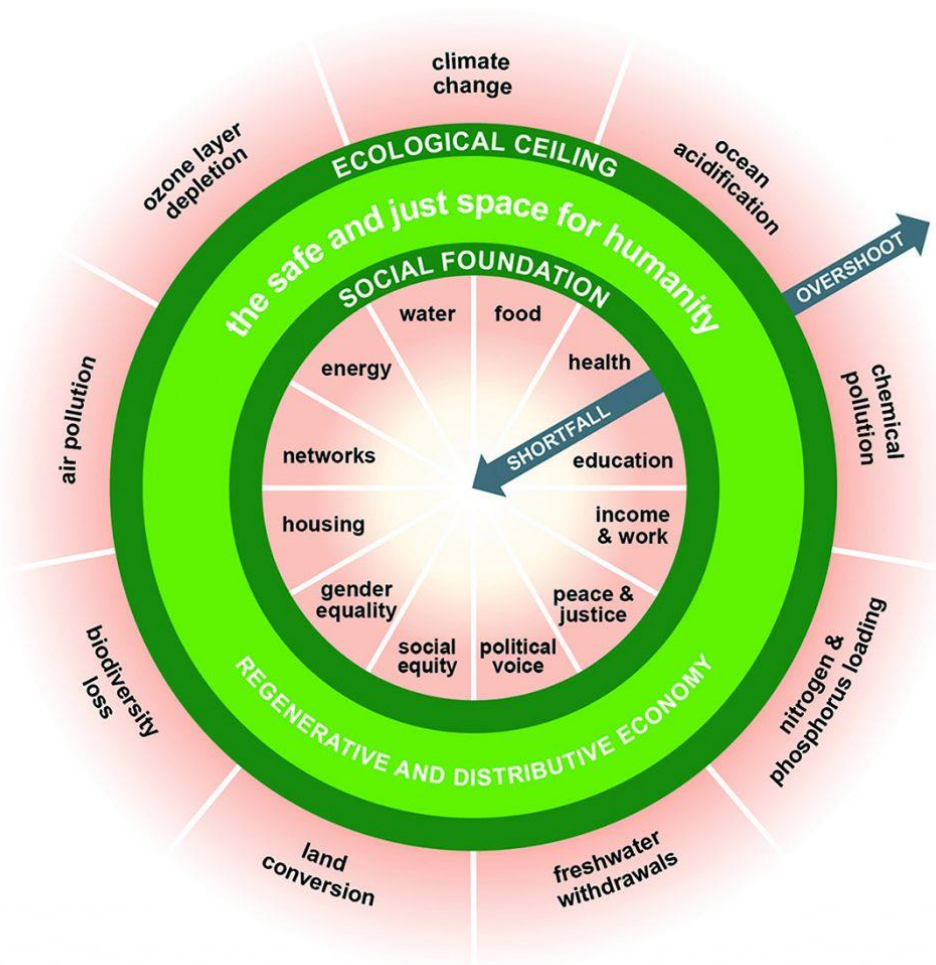
Addressing the area of sustainability and associated climate change has a raised profile in schools and other education sectors. However, despite this, these areas still tend to be on the periphery of what the majority of schools see as their main function i.e. to equip pupils with an education to cope with the demands of the Business As Usual economy and how they can contribute to it once they leave education. There are some 'green' aspects to this e.g. preparation for new 'green jobs' associated with technologies such as renewable energy and the development of new 'eco-materials' which are less harmful to the biosphere and innovations in transport and agriculture.

Some of the above lacks joined up thinking and manifests itself as Greenwash. In the non-education world, an example of this can be seen in the promotion of electric vehicles which are replacing internal combustion vehicles. There is embodied carbon during manufacture, pollution and habitat destruction from battery production and the vast resources needed to maintain and expand the road network. In addition, there are issues of poor working and social conditions for those extracting raw materials for batteries. Also, electric vehicles still have harmful emissions from tyres, brake pads and transmissions. This means that for sustainable transport, we really need less vehicles of all kinds. To achieve this requires more radical social and economic shifts in the form of shorter supply chains to cut van and lorry deliveries and more emphasis on active travel and public transport for commuting and leisure (which embraces the '15 minute City' and 'Cycling & Walking Pound' concepts).

The toolkit encourages school leaders and all stakeholders to look critically at all school functions to see how they can become more sustainable in the widest sense, not just in carbon neutral terms but in all areas of activities.

### **Areas Developed by the Toolkit**

The aim of the toolkit is to provide school leaders with a framework for helping them to achieve a 'Donut Economy' in microcosm. It is designed to be introduced after a workshop for all school stakeholders on what we mean by sustainability.



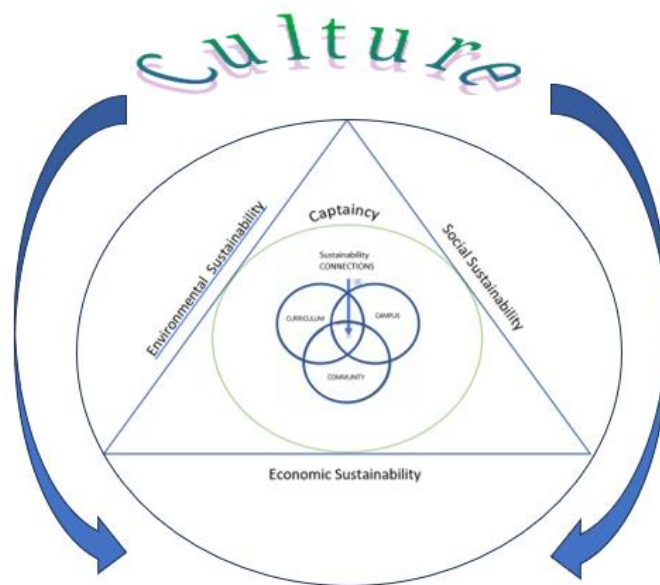
This follows a briefing given to all participating Headteachers which explores some of this and asks for an undertaking to embed sustainability in their schools using a six-stage process using 10 Doorways (as featured in my recent book and shown below). The Sustainable Development Goals also feature in this, but very much as integrated elements rather than 'stand-alones' and provide a constant Local to Global perspective and back again. The importance of Environmental Education as a cross-curricula strand also features prominently, as does how sustainability can improve standards as understood by Ofsted and 'conventional' school improvement advisors.

The key selling points (in no particular order) for introducing sustainability via the toolkit are:

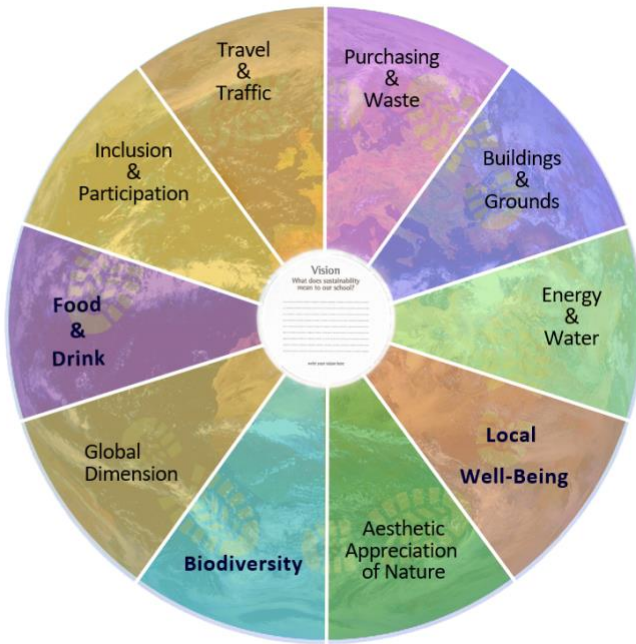
- Developing a School Vision which is fit for purpose at this point in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and encouraging all stakeholders to develop and incorporate the values behind this in their everyday practice.
- Enhancing curriculum provision through experiential learning and multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches.
- Increasing the quality and range of pedagogical techniques.
- Empowering stakeholders at all levels of the school and community.
- Potentially saving money through more efficient and effective use of resources, utilities and energy.
- Improving relationships within and outside the school.
- Using the school estate and catchment area as a learning resource and strengthening community cohesion, plus helping the local economy.
- Encouraging and developing pupil voice and engagement in practical activities to improve the environment (which can help to alleviate Climate Anxiety).

- Enhancing leadership skills at all levels, in particular developing systems thinking and holistic approaches, rather than linear 'silver bullet' solutions.
- Links to Citizenship Education, Global Learning, Healthy Schools and Decolonising the Curriculum.
- Potential for raising standards as measured by school improvement processes and inspections.
- Providing leaders with additional strategies to help them create a highly successful school e.g. holistic approaches and systems thinking.

The toolkit is designed to instigate a change process through whole school participation. This is delivered through the '6 Cs' of **Captaincy** (leadership), **Curriculum** (what is taught), **Campus** (school estate) and **Community** (internal and external) with the many **Connections** that are needed to knit the strategy together into a cohesive whole to change the overall **Culture** of the school, with a golden thread of sustainability running through everything. All stakeholders are deemed to be significant and everyone's needs taken into account so that people can see what's in it for them. This inclusive approach also leaves scope for everyone to contribute to the plans and implementation and for people to work at different speeds. The toolkit is flexible because every school situation is unique and there is 'no size fits all'. However, as the project progresses, the schools will be encouraged to look at the practice of others locally and further afield.



The toolkit enables participants to audit their current position in terms of sustainable activities and then plan actions to take things further or address areas that are currently without a sustainability perspective. It also helps to put together a coherent Vision which drives everything else and which can be used for defining bench-marks for planning and actions. This is undertaken in the context of 10 Doorways for Sustainability.



Establishing a School Vision that will guide the development of sustainability in the context of 10 Doorways

All this is guided by six steps and a school may start with any of them, although in reality most tend to begin with the Vision.

A school or group of schools can start from any of these six steps

