

A Summary of The Egan Review - Skills for Sustainable Communities

Title: The Egan Review - Skills for Sustainable Communities

Author: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Dates published: April 2004

Number of pages: 104

The Egan Review, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, looks at how to define and develop skills needed for Sustainable Communities. It tackles a series of questions directed towards what sort of communities we are trying to create. The report defines what a sustainable community is, what needs to be done to create such a community, and who is responsible for delivering it. It also looks at how to bridge the gap between the current skills base, and skills required.

People are very clear about what they want from their communities - places that are safe, clean, friendly and prosperous with good amenities. These priorities are widely known and have been shown to work in successful communities.

To understand the skills needed to deliver such communities, we need first to have a good grasp of the meaning of the term 'sustainable community', and the processes by which such communities are delivered.

Sustainable communities definition

Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion, and strengthen economic prosperity.

Key Issues

Factors influencing the development of sustainable policy and practice direction include the:

- Existing environment
- Sense of place
- Traditional economy
- Physical environment
- Existing community

Recommendations

The following recommendations suggest how to deliver the best direction towards this goal.

Common goal

The definition of the 'sustainable community' should become a common goal for everyone involved – central and local government, service providers, communities, and the private and the voluntary sectors. It is based on the criteria in the [Sustainable Communities Plan](#), which have been tested by MORI focus groups and which are supported by a wealth of historic and research data. This definition is backed up by a set of 7 components and associated sub-components, and together they constitute the 'common goal'.

Components of Sustainable Communities

The set of 7 components that constitute the 'common goal' are:

- **Housing and the Built Environment** - a quality built and natural environment.
- **Services** - a full range of appropriate, accessible, public, private, community and voluntary services.
- **Social and Cultural** - vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities.
- **Governance** - effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership.
- **Transport and Connectivity** - good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.
- **Economy** - a flourishing and diverse local economy.
- **Environmental** - providing places for people to live in an environmentally-friendly way.

Delivery

Local authority chief executives and leaders, with the support of their cabinets, are best placed to develop a vision for the future of their area based on the sustainable community components identified, and to secure the buy-in of the community and other stakeholders. Regional bodies must be key partners in the delivery process, but only local authorities have the right blend of local knowledge, presence and accountability to make this work.

The current approach to Community Strategies often lacks clear direction and is insufficiently comprehensive to deliver sustainable communities. Existing and future Strategies should be aligned better with the objective of delivering sustainable communities, and should articulate clearly how sustainable development can be used to promote economic prosperity, social cohesion and environmental quality in their area. In particular, Sustainable Community Strategies and their associated action plans need to identify infrastructure requirements to support development opportunities and growth.

Skills

The work to define the common goal, clarify responsibilities, and outline process improvements, made clear to us that there is a much larger range of skills needed to deliver sustainable communities.

The vital link between the responsibilities and processes and successful delivery of sustainable communities is skilled and knowledgeable people, working together to deliver the common goal. Only by developing the skills, behaviour and specific knowledge of everyone involved in this agenda – albeit to different degrees and at varying levels, depending on their role and responsibilities – can sustainable communities be delivered.

Communities and leaders must evaluate and build upon:

- who is involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities?
- what skills, behaviour and knowledge do they need to contribute to this agenda.
- where are the skills gaps (both amongst the current workforce and in the size of the workforce) and how good is the evidence supporting this?

Source: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/152086>