



Friends of
the Earth

Local Groups'
Youth and Education
Network



“Greenest government ever” to axe sustainable schools

People & Planet and Friends of the Earth Local Groups' Youth and Education Network are calling on the Government not to jeopardise green education for students across the country. Having controversially cut the schools rebuilding programme and recently cut a scheme to create 5000 green work experience placements, the Education Secretary's department now looks set to drop a coordinated approach to creating sustainable schools.

Education Secretary Michael Gove has made it clear in briefings that he intends to drop Department of Education support for the Sustainable School Strategy. Evidence from the previous education department and numerous other sources has shown that those schools who implement sustainability have raised standards as well as staff and pupils well being.

People & Planet, which coordinates the Go Green campaign to help schools cut their carbon emissions, today called on the Government to ensure that there are opportunities and resources for all students to learn about sustainability issues.

Matt McMullen, a student member of People & Planet, said:

"As a young person, I and the rest of my generation recognise the colossal challenges ahead. It is vital that we continue to support schools to become sustainable, especially at this critical moment, so that we can create a big society where we can tackle the defining issues of our generation. We want a better future"

Jamie Clarke, People & Planet's Education Manager, said:

“Abandoning a coordinated approach to creating sustainable schools, is akin to abandoning hope that the next generation can tackle the greatest threats to our society. It further compounds the impression that the coalition government is saddling the future generation with an environmental debt. Schools produce a fifth of all public sector greenhouse emissions, tackling these emissions would not only help climate change it would also save millions in public spending.”

Mr Clarke continued “a truly green government would see sustainable education being at the heart of learning. The coalition government framed itself as the 'greenest' government ever but is planning to end support for schools to teach sustainability.

Schools need to be at the heart of the green society, preparing the next generation for the challenges that face our world and to be at the forefront of the future economy. Now is the time to invigorate young people's understanding of environmental, economic and community needs, not the time to drop it. By doing so we can improve students achievements and make significant financial savings now and in the future.”

For further analysis and interviews or , please contact Jamie Clarke on **01865 245678** or **07534 290369** or jamie.clarke@peopleandplanet.org

Notes to the editor

- People & Planet is the UK's largest student organisation campaigning on poverty, the environment and human rights in the UK. Operating in schools, colleges and universities the organisations educates students about sustainability issues and supports them to take positive actions.
peopleandplanet.org
- The Sustainable Schools Strategy was developed by the Department for Schools and Families to enable all schools to become sustainable, providing guidance and resources for teachers and pupils.
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools/>
- State schools produce 21% of the public sector greenhouse emissions, second only to the NHS (21%).
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/lc_uk/lc_business/reducing/reducing.a.spx
- Evidence of the positive impact of sustainable schools on students, teachers, their schools and community has come from numerous studies and were compiled into a report in March 2010 by DCSF called Evidence of the impact of sustainable schools
<http://www.se-ed.org.uk/news/evidence-impact-sustainable-schools.html>
- Funding for the Green Talent initiative, that aimed to place 5000 14 – 16 year olds in 'green' work placements is currently being reviewed as part of the government cuts.
<http://www.greentalent.org/>
- Michael Gove controversially froze the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Scrapping plans for the rebuilding or refurbishing over 715 schools but being unable, on frequent attempts, to identify which schools. Many of these schemes planned to 'green' schools and sparked fears that one of the major work sources for companies specialising in green construction techniques could be lost.