



Evaluation of UK Futures Programme

Supply Chain Sustainability
School

Briefing Paper
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Evaluation of UK Futures Programme: The Supply Chain Sustainability School

Ramsay Gray Stephens

UK Commission for Employment and Skills

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Purpose

This report presents the findings of a case-study that has been conducted on the Supply Chain Sustainability School, a training programme targeted at the supply chains of major contractors in the Infrastructure and Facilities Management industries. The school, which consisted of online modules supported by resources and face-to-face workshops, was provided with £326,100 of support by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills through its innovative funding and research approach, the UK Futures Programme.

The UK Futures Programme supports original project ideas through targeted small scale co-investment in order to draw out lessons about what works in addressing specific business issues. The main points of learning from this project are outlined below, and then explained in more detail as the report progresses.

1 Background

1.1 The UK Futures Programme

The UK Futures Programme (UKFP) aims to provide a new way of tackling development issues in the UK workforce by encouraging and learning from innovative solutions. Through 5 “Productivity Challenges” focused on emerging or persistent market and system failures in specific areas and sectors, it aims to support collaboration from employers and wider social partners on innovative ways of addressing their skills and development issues. From this, the aim is to identify possible routes around these barriers to UK competitiveness, and to build up a body of knowledge about “what works” in addressing market failures in workforce development for adoption in policy development and wider business practice.

1.2 UK Futures Programme Evaluation of the Supply Chain Sustainability School

To build this knowledge, the UKFP is being evaluated in real time, to draw out rich lessons from the projects funded, create understanding of the conditions and practices that make for effective solutions, allow continuous improvement of the investment approach, and communicate the learning from the programme to inform policy and practice.

The Supply Chain Sustainability School is one of seven Management and Leadership in Supply Chains and Networked Organisations projects in Productivity Challenge 2 of the UK Futures Programme, and many of the lessons from it specifically address the research questions of this Productivity Challenge.

Productivity Challenge 2 attempts to test whether and how the largest firms (primes) can use their influence and capabilities to improve the management capabilities of their supply chain businesses. Poor management has an adverse effect on businesses' ability to respond to global changes and utilise employees' skills effectively. Smaller firms are the most likely to have poor management and not adopt high performance working practices. There is evidence¹ to suggest that if firms are supported to increase their management capabilities, and adopt 'best' management practice then they can become more profitable, productive, grow quicker and survive longer. By investing in innovative and risky projects that confront this issue, the intent is to build understanding about what works and what doesn't, and use this to inform the actions of business and government.

UKCES's research questions from this Productivity Challenge concern: the possible roles and impacts of supply chains and networks regarding skills investment behaviour across those networks; the means that can be used to exercise influence in a supply chain; and what might motivate primes and businesses in the supply chain to get involved in development initiatives.

1.3 Scope of the Supply Chain Sustainability School

The original Supply Chain Sustainability School was founded in 2012 and targeted the construction industry. Managed by the training consultancy Action Sustainability, it aimed to build the knowledge and the capabilities of managers in the construction supply chain to deliver against industry Sustainability objectives. It used the combined influence of a partnership of supply chain leads, to engage as wide a number of employers in training as possible. This training was primarily online, targeted to the specific skills needs of companies, and supported by face-to-face workshops, a resource library, and a programme of industry engagement. In September 2014, UK Futures Programme funding was agreed to allow this model to be trialled in new industries.

Two new training schools were developed under the main school's umbrella:

- The Facilities Management School, targeted at the suppliers of companies contracted to run, heat and power major buildings
- The Infrastructure School, targeted at the supply chain which supports the delivery of new UK infrastructure projects in areas such as road, rail, and utilities.

¹ BIS (2012). Leadership and Management in the UK – The key to sustainable growth. Available online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32327/12-923-leadership-management-key-to-sustainable-growth-evidence.pdf [accessed 17/09/2015]

Each school was run by a distinct partnership consisting of 'primes' (companies at the head of supply chains in their industry) 'knowledge partners' (who assisted with the content and delivery of the training), and industry bodies such as CEEQUAL and the British Institute of Facilities Management (who supported and promoted the school). They formed part of a wider governance structure organised by Action Sustainability, which project-managed the partnerships and organised the development of the training.

During the course of UKCES co-investment, a total of 12 online modules were developed, alongside a launch, 10 training workshops, and a series of supplier days, (at which the primes promoted the school to select companies in their supply chain.)

1.4 Case Study Methodology

This case study is based on interviews conducted with:

- Four partners, two from each of the Facilities Management and Infrastructure schools
- Four end users in the supply chain of the partners, two from each of the Facilities Management and Infrastructure schools
- A Director at Action Sustainability

The case study will proceed to explore the methods and activities of the project in order to draw out lessons against the research questions above, considering in particular:

- **The motivations for the partners to act** to improve their supply chain and to collaborate
- The ways in which partners **used their influence over the supply chain to engage companies and bring about change**
- **The motivations of suppliers** to take part in the training
- **The benefits and implications of the ways in which training was delivered**
- **The role of Action Sustainability as an intermediary organisation** without direct business interests in the supply chains concerned.

The broad objectives of each partnership in terms of impact and end-user engagement were similar, and their activities and governance matched exactly. As such implications and lessons that can be taken from them are mostly the same, and the two schools will be discussed together, although any interesting differences will be drawn out.

2 Main Findings

Against the above avenues of enquiry:

Primes acted to train their suppliers because they had clear and pressing needs to improve Sustainability, but were dependent on their supply chain to deliver them.

They co-operated because Sustainability was a whole-industry issue, and changes needed to affect the whole shared supply chain.

Primes were committed to the school, and this helped to attract suppliers to join.

Promotion of the school by senior management and procurement departments showed suppliers that this was more than talk from their primes, and that their customers valued the school.

The school attracted members by showing benefits from joining.

The diverse supply chains in both industries mean many different benefits can be felt by different companies. Broadly, suppliers engaged most when they saw that the time invested in it would lead to increased business opportunities, better relationships, or improved understanding of important issues.

Online training could have a significant impact on skills and attitudes. However, suppliers needed to be engaged and motivated to carry out these changes.

The training was supported by face-to-face contact and a programme of activities to promote the school's message. The training had most impact where suppliers were successfully engaged and committed at a senior-management level.

Action Sustainability was central to gaining the confidence of primes, managing the partnership, and developing the training.

As an intermediary, they had expertise to fill the project needs and the reputation to bring partners in: they were the right intermediary for this job.

Overall, the project met or exceeded all objectives set at its inception, continues to grow and secure further commitments from primes throughout both industries involved, and has a robust plan and prospects to sustain, upscale and succeed in future.

3 What were the motivations for the primes to act?

- 3.1 **Primes shared the same concerns about Sustainability, but were reliant on their supply chains to see improvement**

In both the Facilities Management and the Infrastructure industries, Sustainability has become a general concern. Major customers are demanding that the environmental, social and community implications of the activities of their contractors have been considered and that these activities are positive and viable in the long run. Government in particular is a significant client in both industries and sees Sustainability as a priority.

There is therefore an industry agenda around Sustainability, with primes working to demonstrate action on the issue, and to drive up the long-term viability of their models and processes. Large companies commonly have dedicated Sustainability teams and Sustainability Managers, and Sustainability features in their company objectives and mission statements.

At the bottom of this are a range of incentives:

- **Business:** supply chain primes have lost contracts and business through being unable to demonstrate action on sustainability
- **Strategy:** there is a desire among more forward looking companies to future-proof the industry and secure their position in it
- **Company identity:** as this is a general high-level concern in both industries, action on it demonstrates a public willingness to work with government and business on shared industry issues.

However, much of the work on the ground in Facilities Management and Infrastructure is performed by sub-contractors to the main primes – each industry relies heavily on supply chain SMEs, often with less than 10 employees, to deliver services. In common with the UK economy in general, these smaller companies are less likely to be aware of or follow international standards of best practices in management, strategy and training.² In particular, they are less likely to share strategic objectives and commitments to Sustainability. There is a tendency to focus on more immediate business concerns, and to not see the impact of Sustainability on their bottom line. If primes in the industries are to deliver more sustainable services, their suppliers will need to change their practices, but they generally do not have the outlook or see the incentives to do so. As such, for many primes, changing the skills and the attitude of the supply chain has become a key Sustainability priority.

Therefore, in both industries represented:

- Concerns about Sustainability were **rooted in clear business needs and well-established before the project launched**

²https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378810/14.11.26_GTP_V18.3_FINAL_FOR_WEB.pdf p.11

- Primes were **willing to dedicate resources to Sustainability**, and had a high-level company interest in the issue
- It was **widely recognised that these objectives could not be delivered without the supply chain**, and that the supply chain was in need of support

3.2 The partnership met the needs of the companies and individuals involved

Almost every partner was a Sustainability Manager, working for a company with explicit objectives to drive up Sustainability in their supply chain. At a professional and company level, joining made sense.

The original Supply Chain Sustainability School secured over 20 Construction contractors as partners, and around 7,000 trainees, and this attracted significant industry attention. There was strong demand for an extension before the project started. UKCES funding allowed this demand to be met, and mitigated some of the risk involved.

Between the schools, a total of 21 primes had signed up to be partners by the time of interview. Each committed £50,000 to the project, alongside significant company time and resources. These companies:

- Saw the need for change in their supply chain
- Had confidence in Action Sustainability's model for the school
- Recognised that they could have the most impact on Sustainability in the supply chain by working with other primes

The involvement of major primes and Action Sustainability's record of success indicated a high potential impact for the project. This was another motivation to take part. However, as the model was an unproven innovation in both the Facilities Management and Infrastructure industries, it still carried some risk, which all partners had to tolerate.

Therefore:

- Joining the school **lined up with existing objectives and priorities for companies and individuals**
- There was **existing demand for action on the Supply Chain** using the model of the Supply Chain Sustainability School
- Partners had **confidence in this model, and a tolerance for risk.**

3.3 Conclusions

The school effectively attracted a wide range of primes to work together on the project. This was because:

- **The school worked to address clear and existing industry issues**
- **Primes were working on these issues already**
- **It was recognised that they could not be effectively solved without collaborative action**
- **There was high demand for a solution, and confidence in the model proposed to solve them**
- **Individual partners had professional reasons to get involved.**

All of these factors meant that there was a strong commitment to the school's success amongst partners. This would prove important in engaging and upskilling the supply chain.

4 What role did Action Sustainability play as an intermediary?

The Supply Chain Sustainability School was a large and complex project delivered to a tight schedule. This process needed strong project management. Action Sustainability provided this.

Each online module was developed by a specific project group, headed by a prime partner, and supported by knowledge partners and subject experts. Material was tested with focus groups of engaged supply chain companies for content and language, with each module going through several stages of review, before being presented to the management group for final approval. Simultaneously, a launch event was organised, and a communications strategy to promote the school was agreed.

Action Sustainability:

- **Provided a governance structure** under which these activities were organised
- **Centrally organised communications** about the project to the supply chain
- **Scheduled the activities** needed to launch the school

- **Provided an expert project manager** who received universal praise from the partners.

They also brought experience of managing collaborations between competing primes, expertise in developing training, and a strong industry reputation from the success of the previous school. This reputation in particular was highlighted by primes as a factor in their decision to commit.

Some individual or entity had to perform this co-ordinating role for the project. It did not have to be an intermediary, but in this case, Action Sustainability had the knowledge and ability required, and was well-suited to demands of the project.

In addition, several partners commented that Action Sustainability, as a neutral body, helped set the culture of the partnership, and made collaboration easier.

4.1 Conclusion:

Action Sustainability performed an essential role in forming the partnership, project management and facilitating collaboration. Most of this role did not absolutely require them to be an intermediary to perform it, but **as an intermediary, they provided a baseline of neutrality and trust that was helpful to the project.**

5 What were the motivations for suppliers to engage in the school?

5.1 Primes used their supply chain influence, and worked to engage suppliers in a number of ways

For the school to be successful, it needed to engage a wide range of suppliers. The primes in the partnership intended to communicate the challenges and opportunities presented by Sustainability so that as much of their supply chain as possible saw the importance of them, took part in the training, and changed their practices.

'We're interested in developing the capability in the market... The capability of the market determines what you can buy.'

Head of Sustainability, Interserve, (Partner, Facilities Management School)

In both the Facilities Management and Infrastructure industries, primes rely on large and diverse supply chains to deliver their activities. Nationally, each prime engages with thousands of companies, from large-multinationals to SMEs and sole traders. These companies have varying levels of commitment to the primes.

This was one of the attractions of working in partnership – primes could communicate a shared message through a number of channels, and to companies that might supply more than one prime.

In each partnership, primes co-operated in a number of ways to spread the message of the school. Each partner produced a list of suppliers who would be invited to join the school, and helped design the communications sent out by Action Sustainability. Both partnerships delivered:

- **A launch event**, which promoted the school and involved attendees in workshops about the importance of its objectives to their own businesses and the industry as a whole. This was publically hosted by a prime, and each partner sent at least two senior employees.
- **A series of communications about the school**, sent out by Action Sustainability to a list of suppliers provided by each of the primes.
- **A “Supplier Day”** hosted by each prime, linking their own customers directly with their supply chain businesses so both could discuss the commercial reasons for improving sustainability.
- **A resource library**, stocked by the knowledge partners and the primes, where further information about the areas covered by the modules could be found.

As well as this, primes worked independently to contact suppliers about the school and convince them to join.

- **Interserve made the school an official part of their accreditation process for suppliers** – material promoting the school is part of the default pack offered to all new suppliers
- **Cofely have made driving up membership of the school one of the ten annual objectives of their Sustainability Manager**
- **Several partners interviewed had involved their procurement departments in promoting the school**, contacting their suppliers and spreading information about the school.
- Some primes **organise their supply chains, identifying 200-300 “key” suppliers** that they do business with most. **These suppliers tended to receive tailored or personal contact encouraging them to join the school.**

These activities reflect the commitment of individual partners and their wider companies to the school, as well as the importance of Sustainability to the industry as a whole.

Primes wanted suppliers to see the importance of Sustainability, and see the reasons for acting on the information provided by the training. The aim was for a change to more sustainable business practice and more co-operation on Sustainability in the supply chain. This was less likely to be achieved if suppliers were mandated to join.

“What we really want is the suppliers to be thinking about Sustainability and working on it before we go out and ask them. We want them to be in a position to come to us.”

Head of Sustainability, Interserve, (Partner, Facilities Management School)

5.2 Supply chain companies got involved in the school because they saw the benefit to their business

Involvement in the school required a commitment of time and resources from members, from relatively small amounts of time completing online modules, to full business days at events.

There were two types of supplier engagement with the school:

- **Suppliers who took part in the “focus groups”** mentioned above, which tested the training modules before their release.
- **Suppliers who joined the school after launch** and took one or more forms of training.

5.3 Focus group suppliers tended to be already “switched on”

These companies committed a good amount of time to the school before there was a product and before engagement activities had begun. They were engaged through personal contact with the primes or individual partners. These suppliers tended to have strong existing relationships with primes that were more than contractual, and might have co-operated in the past. In contrast, one supplier interviewed had no business relationship with the primes, but considered it important to get involved in a major industry initiative on an important industry problem.

The reported benefits from participation therefore came either from continuing a strategic relationship with a customer, or having insight and influence over a major industry issue. Both of these benefits require a degree of strategic and industry awareness, so companies working here were not “hard to reach” employers, and were already engaged to some extent in the same concerns as the primes.

5.4 End-users of the school joined for a wide range of reasons

At time of write-up, the school had 509 individual members across both partnerships. The scope of school, and the diverse nature of the supply chains involved, meant that there were many different reasons to take part:

In interviews, some suppliers highlighted the importance of relationships with their primes. More switched-on suppliers were aware that primes had “favourites” and were more willing to do business with them. This was also stated by the primes - they want to do business with suppliers that can be seen to share their priorities. This was an incentive to join for companies that already supplied one or more of the primes in the partnership and were aware of the sales benefits a stronger relationship could bring.

Suppliers were positive about signals that their primes were committed to the school, including:

- Procurement departments involved in direct contact about the school.
- Involvement of senior management and CEOs at school events and in publicity.
- Favourable treatment when material covered in the school was mentioned in contracting discussions.

These indicated that involvement could lead to better relationships or more business with that prime.

‘Businesses want to do business with like-minded organisations.’

Sales Manager, medium-sized infrastructure contractor. (End-user, Infrastructure School)

Certain companies could make significant gains through networking in the school.

Contractors offering a general service, such as cleaning or waste-disposal, could do business with almost any of the primes, and joining was a way of making new contacts.

‘Just by having the sustainability school logo on our communications, it encourages organisations, especially larger organisations, that are involved in the school to be more receptive to talking to you... It’s definitely opened doors for us.’

Managing Director, growing waste-management contractor. (End-user, Facilities Management School)

Networking with other companies in the supply chain wasn’t mentioned as a specific priority in interviews, but suppliers reported new contacts with fellow contractors or training experts through taking part in the school.

The school was an important initiative in the industry, with a large number of major industry players co-operating. This gave a number of incentives to join – it was clear that the school had the potential to change the industry, and that current and potential customers took it seriously.

One supplier interviewed (a major multinational company) was moving to become a full partner in the school, to have a chance to influence what they saw as an initiative that could affect the national climate in the infrastructure industry around Sustainability.

Sustainability has been a key issue in both industries for some time now. ISO 14001 standards, for example, now mandate that company directors demonstrate a commitment to Sustainability. Equally, lack of awareness can lose suppliers business. Awareness of Sustainability isn’t yet general but some companies had a prior interest in this issue, and welcomed the chance to find out more.

"We've got more of an understanding of how our customers are using sustainability, definitely - it [the school]'s opened up discussions for us which we didn't have with our customer base before."

Managing Director, growing waste-management contractor. (End-user, Facilities Management School)

It is important to note that all of these reasons relate to a business advantage in one way or another.

5.5 Conclusions

- **Primes** wanted to improve their supply chains for their good and the benefit of the wider industry. To do this, they **used a number of channels and methods to show the school was important to them, and convince their suppliers to join.**
- **Suppliers got on board for their own reasons** – they have limited time and resources, and joining tended to make business sense. Different companies with different positions in the supply chain might have different incentives to get involved.
- **Suppliers valued evidence that involvement in the school would lead to clear business benefits** – the clear commitment of the partners was essential to engaging the supply chain here. The involvement of senior managers and procurement departments in promoting the school showed that current and potential customers valued it.

In general, the school engaged the supply chain through communicating as many potential benefits as possible from involvement.

6 What were the benefits and limitations of online learning, and what impact did the training have?

6.1 Online learning was the primary delivery model of the school, but the purpose of the school was to communicate with supplier and engage them in upskilling themselves

The 12 modules produced by each partnership formed the main body of the school. On sign-up, suppliers would complete an online diagnostic and receive an action plan steering them towards the most important modules for them. Suppliers were encouraged to take this action plan and then reassess their knowledge.

Online learning was chosen mainly for reasons of scale and flexibility – the school targeted busy contractors, and would not have been able to reach as much of the supply chain as desired with face-to-face learning.

Partners were not simply aiming for an increase in skills, however. They aimed for a change in attitudes. Each module was a half-hour long audio-visual presentation – which would not on its own have worked to change the perceptions and practices of the supply chain. Activities were supported – by the extensive campaign of engagement mentioned above, and by face-to-face workshops and research library. The intent of the whole programme was to show suppliers that their primes needed them to change, to give them incentives to change, and to make it as easy for them to do so as possible.

‘We’re saying: “We want you to be changing because you want to do it and this is the reason why and here’s the school that supports us in helping you want to do it.”’

Head of Sustainability, Cofely GdF Suez (Partner, Facilities Management School)

In this way, the online training gave suppliers the information they needed to improve their Sustainability practices, but they needed reasons to apply this information and change their practices

For the school to be effective therefore, it had to succeed in getting supply chain companies to commit to the practices introduced by the training.

6.2 The training offered has had a significant impact in companies that engaged fully

The following analysis will consider three companies interviewed during the course of the case study, and draw out the impact of the school in detail. Whilst involved in the training to different degrees, and for different reasons, all individuals taking part in the school had clear incentives to do so, and saw changes in their working practices as a result.

From their examples, it is clear that where incentives to commit, complete and apply the information exist, online training can be a strong tool:

Company A was a **medium sized waste services contractor**, with about 50 staff, supplying a wide range of companies in the Facilities Management industry. It had lost work in the past from not being able to show action on Sustainability and management was embarking on a major rebrand to reposition the company as an authority on Sustainability.

Use of training: The modules and resource library were made available to all staff, and a team was set up, responsible for going through the modules and the resources, and spreading all useful information out to the company.

Changes and impact: Company has completely changed its operations and how it converses with contractors about Sustainability. It has won new business through taking part in the school.

Company B was an **Infrastructure and Construction contractor** with around 450 staff, already engaged in a separate stand-alone Sustainability initiative for one significant customer. The company had just started contracting with one prime, securing a £50 million contract.

Use of training: The Environmental and Equality Manager attended workshops in areas relevant to his work, and encouraged a junior employee to do so, but did not accessed any online training.

Changes and impact: The Manager has organised Sustainability training through experts met in the school and won business using concepts from it.

Company C is a large multinational with interests across the sector and prior commercial and collaborative relationships with several of the primes. Their aim is to become a full partner of the school.

Use of training: Modules have been made a major part of in-house Sustainability training, time has been set aside for staff to gather in groups with a moderator and complete the training together, and the modules have been supplemented to fit the specific needs of the company.

Changes and Impact: Company has built on already strong relations with industry primes and has a wider understanding of the direction that primes are taking sustainability in the industry.

These companies had varying incentives to take part in the school:

- The school **met a range of training needs in different organisational contexts.**
- **Business relationships**, current or potential, were important reasons for all three companies engaging.
- Companies A and C **had organisational and senior-management commitment to the school.** Company structures were put in place to support training and learning, and staff set time aside to complete it. Online training had a significant impact because this wider commitment was in place. In Company B, the training competed with the manager's day job and time was only made for face-to-face training.
- **Company A saw the most impact from participation** – the school supported a pre-existing desire to change the company's attitude to Sustainability, and there was strong engagement.

All the individuals had clear reasons to take part in the school that lined up with existing personal or corporate objectives – building relationships, securing business, or furthering their professional aims. They have applied information from the training in ways that made business sense, and the school has seen some significant changes in company practices coming purely through online training.

However, the impact of the training may be less pronounced in less engaged companies. At present, of the 509 companies registered for the school, 209, or 45%, have conducted the initial self-assessment and developed a training plan. Of these, 28, or 13%, have indicated they have completed their training plan and conducted a re-assessment to demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning. Whilst the examples above do indicate that changes and impact can be achieved without companies committing to an action plan, this still suggests that not every company engages equally in the school.

6.3 Conclusions

- The online training **provided suppliers with the information they needed to improve their skills to manage Sustainability**. They then needed to apply this information in their businesses.
- To do this, companies needed **reasons to join up and reasons to use what they learn**.
- **More engaged companies** seem to apply the training more widely in their organisations. In particular, **senior-management engagement** with the school and its message led to wider commitment to the use of the training.
- **The training was used in many different ways**. Companies can engage with it superficially, or make lasting changes to their practices.

Online training had real effects, but had the most impact when supported by face-to-face contact, and real-world incentives to apply what was learned.

For the training to have full effect, **the partnerships will have to continue to work to give companies incentives to apply the training and communicate these incentives well**.

7 Overall Impact and Prospects

The project has succeeded in signing up a wide range of supply chain companies to Sustainability training, has achieved industry recognition, and has a reach outside of the supply chains of the primes involved. It has spread the partnership's understanding of the Sustainability issue and made information about its importance available to the supply chain.

Beyond the changes to practice and policy referenced in above sections, a number of changes due to involvement have been noted, for primes and in supply chain companies:

- Some suppliers gained a broader understanding of Sustainability, going beyond the environmental to reflect business and social concerns.
- There is a more general awareness in the sector that progress on Sustainability issues is important to primes.
- Primes have noted a wider use/mention of Sustainability concepts in tenders and conversations with potential suppliers.
- Sustainability managers have increased networks and increased profile, and have reported more communication with their suppliers on Sustainability issues.
- Primes have altered their procurement procedures to include and promote the school, and some have begun to segment their supply chain or identify priority suppliers as a result of involvement.

The project has also established a presence within the industry. Since its launch, 210 suppliers have registered with the Infrastructure school to date, and 299 for the Facilities Management School, and each school has begun to engage suppliers outside the direct supply chain of each prime. In the same time period membership of both partnerships has doubled.

It is worth noting that the business benefits expected, such as improved efficiency and profitability for the primes, will take time to emerge in a measurable way. This makes it hard to make definitive claims for impact at this point.

However, both schools have a robust plan for the future, with all partners committed to supporting the full cost of the school after the end of UKCES funding. Partners aim for the schools to grow and to become a default part of industry resources on Sustainability.

In the short term, the emphasis is on continuing and stepping up the school's engagement activities, reinforcing the online training so that suppliers have more ability and reason to apply it. More face-to-face training is being organised, and Action Sustainability is exploring the idea of targeted coaching for individual companies.

7.1 Messages for stakeholders

Arising from these conclusions are a set of key messages for a range of audiences which have been summarised in the table below.

Employers	UKCES	Policy Makers
<p>The involvement of a partnership of primes gives maximum reach, and gives current and potential suppliers the widest range of incentives to join up.</p> <p>Suppliers are motivated by evidence that primes are committed to an initiative</p> <p>When a project has momentum in the industry and key players are involved, then it may attract larger and more strategically aware members of the supply chain.</p> <p>It is important to be sensitive around communications – there is a risk that primes seem to be instructing rather than advising the supply chain.</p> <p>It is harder to get full commitment to the message behind a project: primes have to work to create incentives for suppliers to engage more fully.</p>	<p>Online training can have an impact, but works best if end-users are engaged in the training, it is supported by face-to-face contact, and there are real-world incentives to apply the learning</p> <p>Employer collaboration can be a means of delivering change in an industry and affecting the supply chain.</p> <p>Different companies in a supply chain will have different needs and relationships with their primes: the nature of the companies being targeted will affect how much supply chain influence can be had.</p> <p>There was an existing need, partnership and governance structure before funding was sought, which helped the project run smoothly.</p>	<p>When industry primes are committed to a project, it has a higher chance of success: it's important to consider issues with existing industry interest.</p> <p>When the right individuals and companies are willing to co-operate on an issue, the project can gain momentum, and attract a wide range of other companies in the industry.</p> <p>A small amount of funding to the right project in the right context can have a significant effect.</p> <p>Government can set the agenda in an industry and create a significant drive to action, through making policy, and as a contractor setting commercial requirements.</p>

In this case an intermediary helped establish and facilitate collaboration – without them, someone else would have had to take a governance/project management role.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is a publicly funded, industry-led organisation providing leadership on skills and employment issues across the UK. Together, our Commissioners comprise a social partnership of senior leaders of large and small employers from across industry, trade unions, the third sector, further and higher education and across all four UK nations.

UKCES

Renaissance House
Adwick Park
Wath-upon-Dearne
South Yorkshire
S63 5NB
United Kingdom
T +44 (0)1709 774 800

UKCES

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Wesminster
London
SW1P 3BT
T +44 (0)207 227 7800

www.gov.uk/ukces
info@ukces.org.uk
[@ukces](https://twitter.com/ukces)