The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) today launched a £20 million capital fund aimed at encouraging Further Education (FE) colleges to implement projects that reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. The scheme is part of the Government’s continued commitment to renew the FE estate and to build sustainable colleges for the future.

Energy Efficiency Grants will be available to FE colleges for projects costing up to £150,000 in total that produce energy savings and reduce carbon emissions over a period of up to five years. Colleges seeking grants for such projects need to apply by 11 February 2008 to be considered for the first phase, and successful projects will receive funding in March and April 2008. Further details on the application process can be found at www.salixfinance.co.uk/

The LSC is working in partnership with Salix Finance to implement the scheme. The LSC will fund projects, assessed by Salix, that deliver energy savings equal to the project’s initial capital costs.

The launch of Energy Efficiency Grants highlights the lead the LSC is taking in renewing the FE estate and achieving sustainable development. The LSC is committed to investing £600 million annually on capital projects by 2011 to renew the FE estate, and over the past six years has approved grants of around £1.5 billion to support 620 building projects in the learning and skills sector, worth a total of around £3.8 billion. More than half of the FE estate has already been renewed, providing high quality sustainable facilities to all learners.
Early next year the LSC will launch a sustainable capital development action plan that will encourage colleges to ensure that their new developments are designed to high standards of sustainability and will also encourage sustainable development in their existing estates.

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC said: “The launch of Energy Efficiency Grants further demonstrates the LSC’s commitment to encourage sustainable development as we work with our partners to renew the FE estate. The FE sector now boasts world class, inspirational environments in which to learn, and these grants will ensure they are also eco-friendly and cost effective buildings.”

Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, said: “Government must lead the way in employing creative thinking to tackle climate change, and this project exemplifies how this can work. Innovative design has the potential to transform the FE estate, creating state-of-the-art 21st century facilities that are not only inspiring places to learn, but also environmentally friendly and sustainable.”

Peter Mallaburn, Chief Executive of Salix said: “Colleges that invest in projects that deliver energy and carbon savings, will over a short period deliver cost savings which free up resources for core services. By improving their environmental performance and energy efficiency, colleges will also enhance their reputation amongst both current and prospective students.

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Notes for Editors:

Learning and Skills Council:
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.
**Funding Criteria**
Projects must deliver both Co² and revenue benefits and, preferably be in line with the Salix objective, offering long term Co² savings. For example, cavity wall insulation will deliver Co² savings far more consistently over a very long period compared to discreet user adjustable heating controls which tend to diminish after just a few years. Domestic and transport projects are not covered by this scheme.

To ensure that the fund is used for projects that deliver long term energy and Co² savings, all compliant projects should be prioritised on the basis of their capital cost per tonne of Co² saved on a lifetime basis (£/tCo²LT2).

Projects must comply with the following three criteria:

- Maximum 5 year payback period
- £200/tCo² lifetime basis
- Technology implemented must have a shorter life expectancy than the location.

To support the application process Salix will be providing an email and helpline service and will be running workshops in January for colleges interested in applying for the grant. Visit [www.salixfinance.co.uk](http://www.salixfinance.co.uk) for more information.

**Sustainable Development Strategy**

- Since 2001 the LSC has approved grants of around £1.5 billion to support 620 building projects in the learning and skills sector, worth a total of around £3.8 billion. More than half of the FE estate has already been renewed, providing high quality facilities to all learners.

- The LSC’s Strategy for Sustainable Development “From Here to Sustainability” was published in September 2005

- To qualify for LSC capital funds all proposals will need to address Sustainable Development by:
  - meeting and preferably exceeding, the requirements of Part 1 of Building Regulations
  - ensuring that the completed development meets the criteria to achieve excellent Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) ratings
  - maximising the use of natural lighting and ventilation by using wind and solar power to generate light and heat and rainwater to reduce water usage and
  - embedding the principles of sustainability in the design of buildings and building systems

**The Green Gown Awards**
The LSC is a sponsor of the Green Gown Awards that recognise and celebrate the progress of universities and colleges in promoting sustainable development.
In 2007, the Pershore group of Colleges won the best college category. Pershore has implemented a range of initiatives to reduce fuel use, reduce the use of chemicals on its land, recycle rainwater, source food locally, enhance biodiversity, train staff on sustainable development and integrate the subject with the college curriculum. Benefits are already being realised for the college, staff students and the local community.

More information on the Green Gown Awards is available at www.heepi.org.uk

**Salix Finance**
Salix Finance is an independent, publicly funded company, set up in 2004, to accelerate public sector investment in energy efficiency and renewable technologies.

Salix has Government funding of £20 million to date and is an integral part of the UK Climate Change Programme. Salix is working across the public sector with central and local government, the NHS and higher education.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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