

**Kingston
University**
London

Sustainability at Kingston University

.....
2021/22 Annual Report





1.0 Introductory Message

The publication of Kingston University's first Sustainability Plan in September 2021 demonstrated that sustainability had remained a clear priority during the pandemic. The plans developed during lockdown have begun to be implemented and as we look to the future, sustainability remains central to our campus transformation, our drive to ensure we create sought after graduates and our commitments to having a positive impact on our staff and on our communities.

The Sustainability Plan outlined our intention to bring together operational and academic sustainability, and committed us to being transparent about the challenges of delivering our ambitions. We are delighted to share progress in this, our first Annual Sustainability Report.

We will also make clear how our sustainability activity aligns with the [Town House Strategy](#), the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and carbon reduction challenges. The report links to the ambitions outlined in the Town House Strategy and the importance of alignment with local and global agendas, in particular the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and carbon reduction challenges.

We are committed to demonstrating that Kingston University's Senior Leadership Team will lead from the front, but our plans for the year ahead will also focus on providing opportunities for practical engagement. Sustainability is everyone's responsibility - we will be looking to colleagues, students and our communities to get involved in the next phase of implementing our plans.

2.0 2021/22 Sustainability overview

Kingston University has signed up to The [London Higher Sustainability Pledge](#) and the [SDG Accord](#)



18,787 students including
5,400 non-UK students
from more than 140 countries

1912
members of staff

Strand 1

Sustainability in
Teaching, Learning,
Knowledge Exchange
and Research

New Strategic Academic Lead for Sustainability Appointed

The appointment of an Academic Lead for Sustainability was made in October 2022. The initial priority has been to undertake a mapping exercise to understand if/how Sustainability/UN SDGs are addressed at the course level (in the curricula or as extracurricular), in research and knowledge exchange.

Making Connections Between Sustainability and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The use of the SDGs to frame the Kingston University response to sustainability has highlighted the strong connections between sustainability and inclusion. Relationships building on the work of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Inclusive Curriculum Consultant Programme and the ED&I Champions network are all being strengthened to coordinate effort and maximise collaboration and impact.

Embedding Sustainability into Academic Processes

Opportunities are being taken to ensure sustainability is built into the learning and teaching process and ensuring alignment with the Futures Skills activity.

Supporting Events and Activities

Events and activities are already raising awareness, providing opportunities for engagement, and enabling conversations with students and academics across the University. Sessions in collaboration with the Student Hub, the HackCentre and with the Black History Month organisers are early examples.

London Student Sustainability Conference 2023

For the first time, Kingston University is co-organising this [student-led conference](#) (a hybrid event) with City, University of London, GCU London, Imperial College London, King's College London, London School of Economics, London South Bank University, UCL, University of Greenwich and University of Westminster. Kingston University students have applied to present and volunteer at the event and our academic community has been part of the steering group and Review Committee for this event.

£60m

spent on goods and services from around 5000 suppliers

4

campuses in and around Kingston upon Thames rich in wildlife sites

Strand 2

Sustainability through our Estates and Operations

New Strategic Operational Lead for Sustainability Appointed

This replaces the previous role of Sustainability Manager in recognition of the need for a strategic lead for Strand 2 activity. A new role of Sustainability Officer has also been created within the Estates and Sustainability Team to provide additional capacity for delivery.

Biodiversity Management

Active management of biodiversity since 2007, our position is that *other species with which we share our space, have a right to exist without being negatively impacted by our actions* and we strive to manage our spaces according to best practice for wildlife conservation.

Our [Biodiversity Policy](#) was updated during 2022 to reflect our ambitions.

Supporting Active Travel

Dr Bike spent a total of 24 hours on our campus sites. Kingston University regularly hosts Dr Bike sessions and bike marking events with the police. The bike doctors will comprehensively check any bike brought to them, make minor repairs and give advice on more major work that may be required, as well as any general maintenance.

Securing Funding

£174,000 awarded through the Low Carbon Skills to support decarbonisation of heating sources.

Our [Biodiversity Action Plan \(2020-24\)](#) guides this activity and reports are provided monthly to the Estate Committee to ensure progress is monitored.

Awards and Accreditations

[Hedgehog Friendly Campus](#) Initiative following a busy 18 months since joining the scheme during lockdown.



One Star Fairtrade University status secured and publication of our first ever [Fairtrade Impact Report](#).



Key Targets and Measures

Targets:

2038/39

net zero carbon emissions for scope 1 and 2 (our direct impacts*)

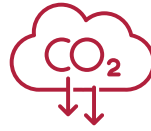
2050/51

net zero carbon emissions for scope 3 (indirect impacts**)

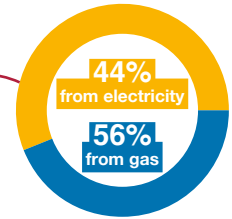


Year on year increase in recycling rates

21/22 Measures:



Total Carbon Emissions (tCO2e) from Scopes 1 and 2*
4,416 tCO2e



978
tonnes of waste created

Biodiversity:

2181

Biodiversity volunteers

1518

contributing hours

98

surveys

resulted in **308** species records shared with local records centre



Impact on Biodiversity:
NEUTRAL
(with remediation)

No change in pollinator habitat created or lost



Invasive species cleared

Rhododendron

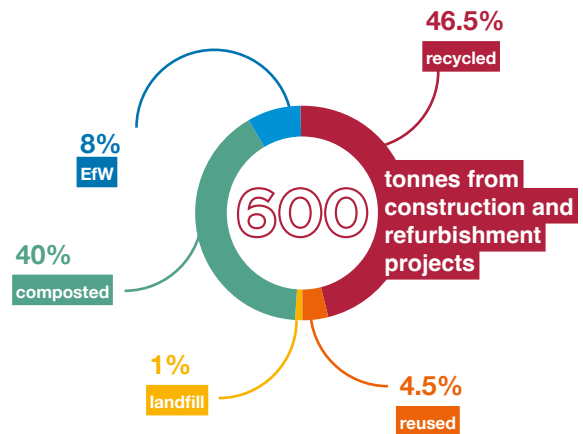
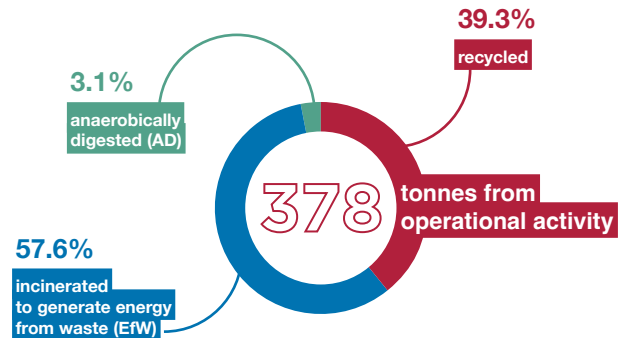
600m² virgin 137m² regrowth

Himalayan balsam

406m²

Bamboo

130m²



5%

reduction in recycling rate from 20/21 (44.3% recycled in 20/21)***

Water consumption (m3)

152,438 m3



* from the burning of natural gas to provide heating and hot water and from the consumption of electricity.

**from activities such as procurement and travel.

***campus use during covid restrictions has affected waste performance figures in recent years, a significant challenge is contamination in bins and we are currently working with our waste contractor to implement initiatives to reduce contamination.



Collaboration between the two strands

Kingston University will seek to bring the two strands of our Sustainability Plan together and create opportunities for our staff and students to present solutions and ideas to improve our operational sustainability performance through teaching, learning and research. For example, this summer, degree apprenticeship environmental science students from the School of Engineering and the Environment came together with the Estates and Sustainability team to deliver a real-life project on the theme of minimising food waste. The four month project tasked the team with identifying areas where changes can be made to improve the circularity of the food system at the University. This collaborative project is an example of developing sustainable solutions by bringing together our academic and operational expertise. This resulted in a robust and valuable report setting out recommendations for minimising food waste.

3.0 Embedding our approach

During the first year of implementation, we have focused on:

Challenging those with responsibility across key operational areas to outline a pathway to net zero carbon

Developing a strong narrative that we can communicate clearly to staff, students, and our communities

Formalising how we monitor and manage our environmental impacts

We have also ensured our ambitions are supported by strategic leads with responsibility to drive each of the strands of sustainability activity.

Embedding sustainability is a significant undertaking. We have chosen to tackle it in very practical ways designed to fast-track progress in some of our key impact areas and support key leads and teams to their role in delivering our ambitions. We began with sustainability training for the Board and Senior Leadership Team to build sustainability thinking into all areas of operational activity.

This enabled sustainability to be embedded at a strategic level, aligned and integrated within the new Town House Strategy and Future Skills activity.

Three Task and Finish groups were established to deliver practical strategic activity across operational areas.



Dr Tania Dias Fonseca
Strategic Academic Lead
for Sustainability



Stephanie Todd
Strategic Operational Lead
for Sustainability



1



Pathway to Net Zero Carbon

What?

Achieving a net zero campus will require significant coordination of effort and investment across the University. To do this we set up the Net Zero Task and Finish group that brings together key players from multiple operational areas, providing a space to focus on collaboration to achieve carbon reduction targets.

Who?

Representatives from Estates and Sustainability, IT Services, Procurement and Kingston University Service Company (KUSCO) have been exploring the scale and implications of the net zero carbon challenge and taking practical steps to build decarbonisation into future planning.

How?

Practical steps taken include:

Streamlining data capture and reporting

We are developing a robust baseline to calculate and monitor progress and key environmental data is now provided monthly to the Estates Committee to improve transparency and timely scrutiny.

Understanding the limitations of the data, especially relating to Scope 3 calculations

Data gathering needs to be improved in some areas, the University's travel footprint for example. Some carbon calculations also have known limitations, procurement and Scope 3 calculations are proving challenging across the sector. Awareness and transparency are guiding the work of the group.

Identifying decarbonisation opportunities relating to contract renewals

A key task is to identify opportunities for carbon reduction through key procurements. The University's Procurement team have reviewed contract renewal dates, outlining a plan for prioritising low carbon when re-tendering.

Reviewing policy and process

The group have begun to review policies that will support or enable carbon considerations to become part of business as usual, this includes changes to the Treasury, Procurement and [Environmental](#) Policies in the first instance.

Building carbon considerations into business cases

The group has adapted the business case template to ensure carbon considerations are part of all business cases.

Links to other Task and Finish group activity

Engagement and communication across the staff and student communities are an important part of reducing energy demand and building sustainability into procurement decisions. Staff and students will need to understand the University's journey and how behaviours should adapt as we transition to a low-carbon campus.

The Environmental Management System (EMS) ensures compliance, monitoring and reporting are built into sustainability activity. The legislative landscape is changing rapidly as the UK tackles the energy crisis and net zero ambitions, the EMS group provides the evaluation and expertise needed to identify opportunities for improvement and for our approach to be responsive rather than reactive.

2

Environmental Management System



What?

A key commitment in the Kingston University Sustainability Plan is to achieve an externally certified EMS to the standard of ISO14001:2015. This will provide assurance that we comply with environmental legislation, understand and manage our environmental risks and manage our resources sustainably.

Who?

An EMS provides a framework for use across the whole organisation. Key operational leads, including KUSCO, are represented on this group. As we map our environmental impacts, this group will be supported by engagement across all faculties.

How?

Guided by the requirements in the EMS Standards this group is:

Mapping existing environmental performance
Understanding energy use, carbon emissions, waste production, biodiversity and water consumption across the university.

Understanding legislative obligations and routes to compliance

Ensuring the key role holders understand their role in developing the EMS.

Identifying and managing risk

A key task is to identify environmental risks across campus. The group has been working with key teams to raise awareness of the EMS and clarify roles and responsibilities in key areas.

Creating appropriate reporting mechanisms

The group has approved use of software to support the embedding of audit activity.

Training needs analysis

The group has begun a process of identifying training requirements to ensure delivery of the EMS.

Links to other Task and Finish Group activity

Engagement and communication across the staff and student communities will be an important part of delivering a successful EMS. Staff and students need to understand the role of the EMS and how they can support its successful implementation and continuous improvement over time.

3

Communications and Engagement



What?

Communication is critical to delivering the ambitions of Kingston University's Sustainability Plan. We want to develop practical approaches with inputs of expertise and energy from staff and students.

Who?

This group includes operational and academic staff, members of the Communications Team and the Union of Kingston Students.

How?

The group is developing a robust and trusted sustainability narrative for Kingston University guided by a set of clear principles that ensure transparency and openness.

Creating a foundational web presence

A crucial foundation of our communications is a web presence that reflects the approach of incorporating the operational and academic strands of this ambition.

Producing communicable materials to support engagement

A series of Sustainable Short films, which communicate Kingston University's academic and operational approach and sustainability ambition have been produced and shared internally with our staff and student community.

Training

The group has also been identifying training needs across different university constituencies, including professional, academic and student groups.

The sustainability communications plan has three phases: discovery > update > embed. The communications plan aims to support the discovery of sustainability activity, provide an update on the activity and ultimately embed sustainability activity across the University.

Links to other Task and Finish Group activity

This group provides a hub for activity across all task groups and wider sustainability activity. It is also actively making connections with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activity, the Communications Team and Human Resources to ensure communication and engagement are embedded in appropriate systems and processes.



4.0 Looking ahead – priorities for 2022/23

Our focus for the year ahead is to continue to build momentum and strengthen collaboration across Kingston University in ways that enable our communities to better understand how they can get involved.

Strand 1

Sustainability in Teaching, Learning, Knowledge Exchange and Research

Creating a Sustainability in Teaching, Learning, Knowledge Exchange and Research Steering Group to support and scrutinise progress and impact in the delivery of Strand 1 of the Sustainability Plan.

This group will use the skills, knowledge, and expertise of Kingston University staff and students to share decision-making and establish robust and detailed Key Performance Indicators for this activity. This supports the new Town House Mission and Strategy and the Futures Skills Agenda.

Strengthen links between sustainability and equality diversity and inclusion activity to extend well-established approaches such as the Inclusive Curriculum Consultants Programme.

Staff will need support to embed sustainability into the curriculum and reflect on whether their current practice fosters the development of sustainability competencies. Using existing mechanisms and expertise from the inclusive curriculum approach as the foundation for embedding sustainability will strengthen both. A focus will be on ensuring student engagement is promoted and that both student voices and multiple perspectives are part of any curricula development.

Create and promote Sustainability Curriculum Guidelines with support from the Education Committee

It is critical to the successful delivery of Strand 1 of the Sustainability Plan that this is addressed in the curriculum development processes including curriculum design and validation processes.

Practical support to embed Sustainability

Kingston University will be developing and delivering an action based approach to embedding sustainability in learning, teaching, research and knowledge exchange. This will ensure resources, support, training and guidance are provided to departments and faculties and will bring together the strands of the Sustainability Plan for maximum impact.

Curriculum mapping exercise

A mapping exercise to understand if and how sustainability is embedded in the curricula, knowledge exchange and research. This exercise includes a questionnaire to course leaders, Associate Deans of Research, business and partnerships to identify best practices, and module descriptors and programme specifications (undergraduate and postgraduate) that refer to sustainability.

Strand 2

Sustainability through our Estates and Operations

Delivering campus decarbonisation ambitions.

Achieving our net zero carbon ambitions will only be possible if we decarbonise our campus. Detailed studies and strategies to systematically reduce our reliance on natural gas for heating and hot water generation are in progress. The Net Zero Task and Finish Group will continue to develop a scope 3 greenhouse gas inventory.

Auditing our environmental performance.

The EMS Task and Finish Group will continue to support the establishment of a Kingston University environmental management system. During the year ahead we will extend this activity to develop and deliver environmental sustainability training for key stakeholders and undertake initial EMS Audits to test our approach and ensure compliance across all the estate.

Key Content

Operational priorities

The importance of delivering sustainability through the estate, the university operations and [staff](#).

Curriculum priorities

The importance of ensuring Kingston University graduates are equipped with knowledge, skills and experience relating to sustainability and global human challenges.

Support staff and student engagement.

As we further operationalise the Sustainability Plan we will need deeper and wider engagement across all schools and departments. A key priority for the year ahead will be identifying ways that staff and students can get involved in the delivery of our sustainability ambitions. From maintaining (and enhancing) our Fairtrade University status to achieving our biodiversity priorities, we need to get our stakeholders involved. We will be developing ways to deliver this with impact during 2023.

Key Messages

- As we get deeper into implementation, we will need to deliver progress against targets.
- Some targets are established, and we want to drive further progress in these areas, some are being established.
- The whole University community needs to engage with our Sustainability Plan to achieve our aims and objectives.



