

## **SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AT KINGSTON UNIVERSITY, UK**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Steering Group for Sustainability (SGS) at Kingston University was first convened in summer 2002. It was a grass roots response from interested academics in diverse disciplines to the growing environmental and sustainability agenda. It brought together disparate research and teaching developments across the university and from the start included representatives from all areas of the university's support staff and the students. The aim was a sustainable Kingston University: an institution whose strategic vision and day to day operation, as well as courses and curricula encompassed sustainable development principles. The uniquely integrated approach adopted by the SGS coupled with the group's university-wide audit of sustainability in the curriculum, led to national recognition. Communicating ideas, building links and opportunities within the field of sustainable development, is a key focus for the group. The capacity building achieved through these activities alongside the SGS' and Sustainability Team's developing external profile has beneficially underpinned a wide range of activities including research, consultancy and funding bids. In the five years since its inception the SGS has helped to move Kingston from a University with only *ad hoc* internal work on sustainability to major player nationally, with a rapidly emerging international profile.

### **KEY WORDS**

sustainability, steering group, engagement, embedding, making links

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Rio de Janeiro Earth summit in 1992 served as a wake up call to the global community; it gave impetus to disparate worldwide initiatives on environmental conservation and spelt out the link between poverty and exploitive use of environmental resources (UNCED, 1993). Post 'Rio', sustainable development and the avoidance of permanent environmental degradation while at the same time permitting development and growth, has become a priority for governments and societies throughout the world. There is increasing concern about global warming; exploitive use of finite fossil fuels; and our continued failure to ensure even basic living standards, such as clean water supply, to all Earth's people. Irrespective of the validity of the global climate change models and the alleged urgency for response, this issue has highlighted the need for a less profligate use of Earth's resources. Projected responses have shown that given political will and concomitant investment, innovation and change can deliver alternative carbon-free energy, housing and travel; secure waste minimisation, water conservation, and pollution avoidance; and, indeed, achieve sustainable development (*inter alia*, IPCC, 2007).

At Kingston University (KU) these issues have long been established in the curricula of environmental and geographical courses and in curricula focused on sustainable design and buildings and research initiatives in re-use of waste materials. These developments however, largely reflected the isolated activities of interested academic staff and, while educating these students, made little impact on the wider curriculum of the university; on colleagues in other disciplines less overtly linked to sustainable development; and made almost no impact at all on the university estate, its governance, research and consultancy priorities; nor on community relationships.

In 2002, two colleagues from social and environmental geography (including the author and current Chair of the KU Steering Group for Sustainability (SGS)) collaborated in a bid into funds released to the University by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) specifically to support cross-university initiatives. They saw this as an opportunity to employ a dedicated staff member to identify the existing work within the university; to establish effective communication between all areas of KU working on sustainability; and beyond that to begin to influence the management of the university estate such that the operation of the university mirrored its teaching in this important area. It would also enable consolidation of research, consultancy and teaching in the emerging areas of EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment), EMS (Environmental Management Systems), Environmental Auditing (EA) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) where industry standard tools for implementation, measuring and monitoring were still under development and subject to rapid change.

Securing financial support enabled the appointment of a Sustainability Coordinator and establishment of a Steering Group for Sustainability (SGS) bringing together people from across the university who were working on this theme. Additionally, representatives of all major support areas such as estates, facilities management, procurement, computing and learning resources, personnel and administration and most importantly the students' union were invited to participate. Thus from inception the Steering Group for Sustainability represented all major

strands of university activity, with the perhaps significant exception, at that point, of the Senior Management.

The aim was a Sustainable Kingston University. This would be achieved by changes in five key areas *viz*:

- governance
- curriculum and thereby alumni
- research and consultancy
- estates and facilities
- community and outreach activities

A priority in all activities was to be:

- inclusive and accessible
- relevant and visible
- responsive and contributory

The Steering Group thus became the driver to convince others across the university, including Senior Management, that change was needed, was achievable without major expense, and that significant business and reputational benefits could follow as well as environmental and social ‘feel good’ factors. Furthermore the reputational and business risks of taking no action and being left behind in the move to sustainable development would be avoided.

A primary task was to benchmark the current status of sustainability in the curriculum at Kingston. Where did it feature in courses; who championed it; what did staff understand by this concept and what were the barriers to achieving more? A second early priority was to improve communication of sustainability activities and ideas across the university. This led to the appointment of an additional sustainability assistant who took a lead role in establishing the KU sustainability website, now recently updated by the current Sustainability Facilitator ([www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability)).

Taking communication further the steering group sought to establish links:

- with research priorities in the local region
- with national and international initiatives on education for sustainable development (ESD)
- with all staff and students in the Kingston University community
- with local businesses and charitable foundations
- between curriculum and practical learning

In 2005, the Steering Group began the process of making a sustainability audit of the university estates organising a ‘Gap Analysis’ by external consultants. As a response the University’s Vice Chancellor, on behalf of its Executive, has signed an agreed environmental statement benchmarked to ISO 14001 and a permanent post of Sustainability Facilitator has been established, reporting not only to the SGS but also now, significantly, to the University Secretary and thereby its Executive committee. This role, University Secretary, has a major influence on estates development and the university’s purchasing policy. The new Facilitator has created a sustainability team, and now has two permanent, full-time, assistants alongside temporary paid

workers and volunteers drawn from the student body. In short, the SGS has achieved Senior Management engagement with sustainability and secured the platform for embedding sustainability in Kingston University's governance, estates and procurement, and facilities management alongside the existing impetus in curriculum, research and consultancy.

## **2. THE KINGSTON UNIVERSITY PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY: SOME EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES**

The SGS has championed many initiatives, large and small. Inevitably some have achieved more success than others; some such as green mapping are 'on hold' due to resource constraints, time and personnel. This section highlights some of the more substantive developments. A fuller record, including the new Facilitator's regular reports to the SGS (See minutes and papers) can be found at the sustainability website ([www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability)).

### **2.1 THE CURRICULUM AUDIT**

In the early 1990s several attempts were made to engage universities as leaders in the creation of sustainable societies. The Talloires Declaration (1992) by the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future; the Association of Commonwealth Universities' 'Swansea Declaration' (1993) and the Association of European Universities 'Copernicus Charter' (1994) all argued that sustainability policies and practices should be integrated and embrace five core concerns *viz*:

- ecological stability
  - climate change and biodiversity trends
  - societal considerations and stakeholder relationships and responsibilities
  - economic considerations
  - principles of intergenerational equity and justice
- (Dawe, Gant and Taylor, 2003; Wright, 2002)

The thrust of the UNESCO decade of education for sustainable development, 2005-14 (UNESCO, 2004) and the recent sustainability consultation and benchmarking activities of HEFCE and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) have, a decade later, brought these ideas into prominence. What is clearly evident in the UK is that during the intervening period few advances were made. Indeed the promised prominence of environmental education as discussed in the Toyne report (1993) in practice made little impact and its recommendations were largely ignored.

The new initiatives are more inclusive, less exclusively environmentally-led and reflect current government and wider society agendas. There is now a broad consensus on the need for a shared and holistic approach to people and environment. The curriculum audit at Kingston essentially explored the university's readiness to embrace these ideas. It examined staff understanding of sustainability; staff perceptions of the university's engagement with sustainability in terms of its *modus operandi* and as a place of work and sustainable education; the impact of accrediting professional bodies on the curriculum and the extent to which this embraced or precluded

sustainability teaching; the perceived barriers to increasing sustainability teaching within the curricula at KU; and the willingness of staff to engage with and implement sustainability concepts (Dawe, Gant and Taylor, 2003).

Structured interviews were conducted with an indicative sample of 60 staff from all academic faculties and senior management and thereby representative of diverse academic discipline areas. Colleagues were asked about their understanding of sustainability as a concept. They were more specifically asked about their knowledge understanding and awareness of international sustainability initiatives such as the Kyoto protocol; about particular environmental management concepts such as the Precautionary Principle; and also about their awareness of sustainability initiatives at Kingston University. Additionally, colleagues were asked to identify the main barriers they perceived to achieving greater integration of sustainability principles within the curriculum across all disciplines in the university. Figures 1 and 2 exemplify staff responses. The key barriers to further implementation are summarised in Table 1

Figure 1. Kingston University academic staff awareness of sustainability concepts: a 2002-2003 snapshot.

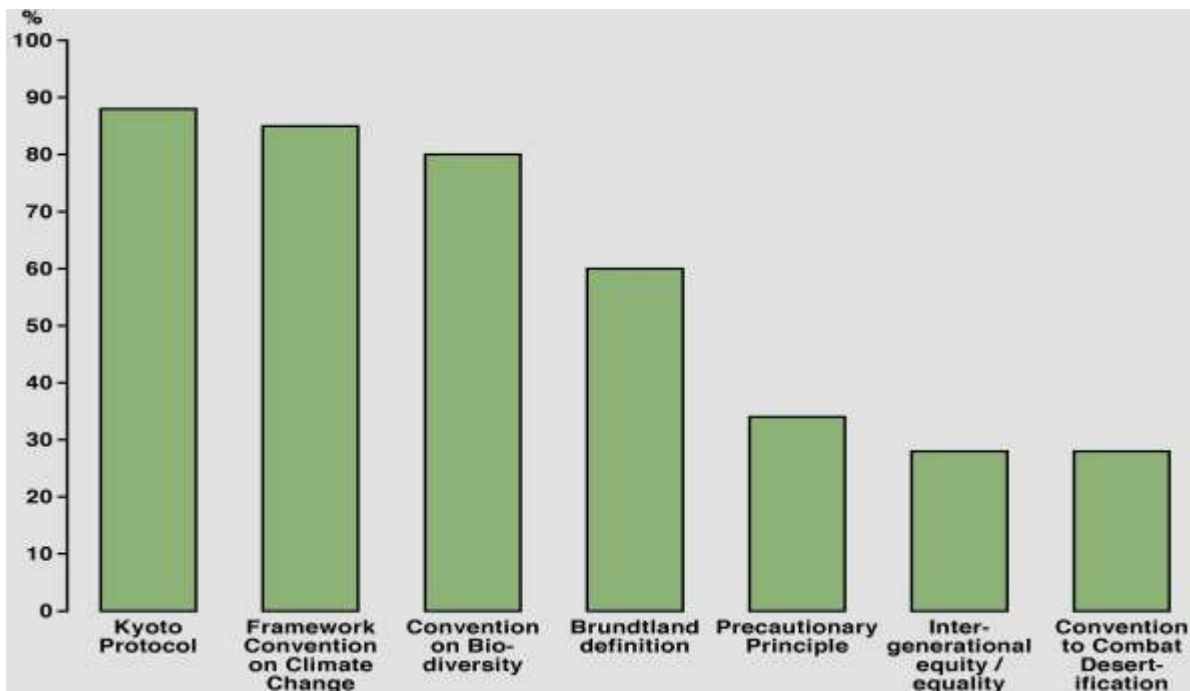


Figure 2. Academic staff awareness of sustainability initiatives at Kingston University: a 2002-2003 snapshot.

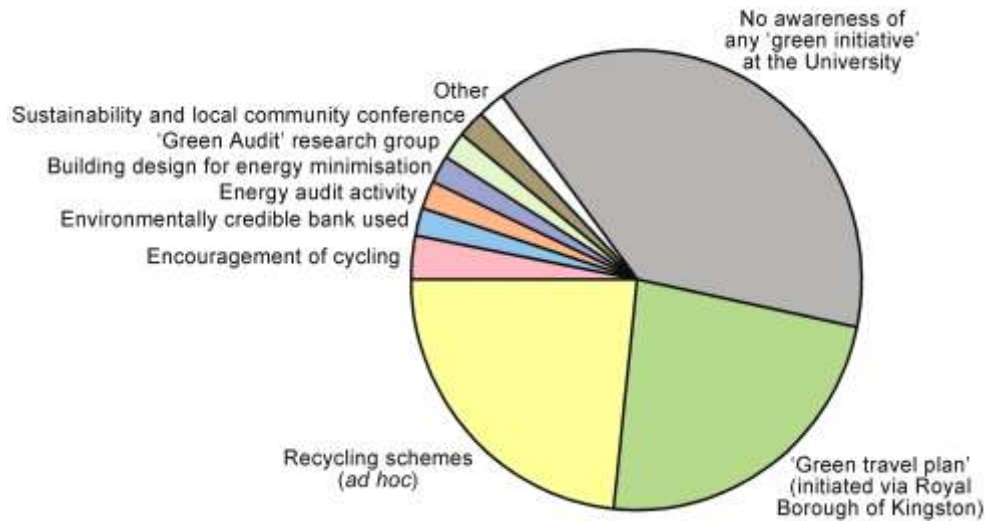


Table 1 The five main barriers to increasing sustainability teaching as perceived by Kingston University academic staff in the 2002-2003 audit of sustainability in the curriculum.

Perceived barrier	% citing barrier
Curriculum overload	16
Not relevant to core discipline	16
Not required by professional accrediting body and no room to include	12
Lack of staff expertise	11
Students unlikely to see the relevance of sustainability nor to understand the concepts	10

The main findings were subsequently presented to the University's executive as part of a bid for continued funding to support sustainability work at Kingston University. A key benefit to the SGS was the take up of this work by HEFCE in its consultation exercise regarding education for sustainable development in English Universities (HEFCE, 2005a). This wider recognition included an invitation to the University's Vice Chancellor to lead one of the four nationwide seminars within the consultation exercise. As a consequence, sustainability was firmly established on the agenda at Kingston University.

Raising the profile of sustainability initiatives at Kingston University *via* the establishment of the SGS, its consolidated cross university links and its national recognition has given many benefits, some unexpected. For example, this new connectivity led to close co-operation with and support by SGS to the School of Surveying in its successful bid to become a national centre of excellence. This nationally acknowledged Centre, funded up to £3 million, was awarded both in recognition of emerging excellence and as a reward for previous activities. The built environment has been targeted since some 50% of carbon dioxide emissions, a major concern for climate change, are connected with buildings. Though C-SCAIPE's (Centre for Sustainable Communities Achieved through Integrated Professional Education) initial focus is on professions related to the built environment, its remit extends to all professional education. Its newly refurbished facilities (Plate 1) have given renewed awareness of sustainability work within the university and the wider local community.

The SGS similarly strengthened external funding applications to the UK government's Higher Education Innovations' Fund (HEIF). A consortium of seven Higher Education Institutions in west London and Surrey (called Westfocus) established in 2004 attracted £1.6million funding. Westfocus formed a 'Sustainability in Practice' Network with a £755,000 budget. £300,000 was allocated to Kingston for projects run by SGS members from engineering, design, environmental science, and surveying ([www.Westfocus.ac.uk](http://www.Westfocus.ac.uk)). In effect, the presence of SGS activities was, and still is, underpinning external funding bids.

Plate 1 Students working informally in the C-SCAIPE resource area



## **2.2 MAKING LINKS**

From its inception the SGS realised that communicating ideas and learning from others would be an important part of its remit. These activities would raise awareness of sustainability work. Within the university they would inform staff and students of SGS activities and wider sustainability debates; they would also reinforce the capacity building and awareness triggered by the curriculum audit. Links were also sought with national and international initiatives; between the university and local government for the Royal Borough of Kingston, Greater London and south east England generally; and with the local and regional business community.

### **2.2.1 Links with curriculum and practical learning.**

The key aim was to promote understanding for all parties; students, academics, and support staff, and to demonstrate the important integration of environmental work both scientific and technical with social and political knowledge and economic understanding alongside an appreciation of the importance of cultural context and intergenerational equity.

One major activity has linked students on undergraduate degrees in environmental science and environmental management and postgraduates taking the MSc programmes in Environmental and Earth Resources Management or Sustainable Environmental Development with Management Studies with practical issues surrounding the challenges of waste management at Kingston University. Initial auditing of student residential sites was achieved as part of the academic curriculum but with linked input from estates and facilities staff, local authority waste managers and waste disposal contractors. These activities have extended student understanding of practical waste management. At the same time they have also given useful bench marking data for decision-making by estates and facilities management staff. Alleged barriers to establishment of a waste minimisation policy and practice within the university have been overcome. Recycling facilities have been established and cleaning and estates staff have become enthusiastic supporters of waste minimisation and recycling. The initiative has now extended to amendment of the University's paper purchasing policy and review of student printing facilities since paper waste was identified as a major concern. Changes to these linked activities have 'closed the loop' in terms of (waste) paper management at Kingston University.

### **2.2.2 Linking student learning to global environmental issues and development challenges**

Staff developing a new module, Achieving a Sustainable Future, core to a range of environmental degree programmes and also taken by geography and biology students, were concerned to include a significant element of active learning. This would enhance student understanding of the complexities faced by decision-makers worldwide. A series of role playing activities around themes such as sustainable futures for small island developing states, gaining income from tropical biodiversity, sustainable cities and energy security were designed. These included diverse stakeholder roles ranging from, for example, Minister for the Environment, US Ambassador to the United Nations, and Governmental Chief Scientific Advisor, to representatives of pharmaceutical companies, airline operators, tourism and travel

companies and local citizens (Taylor and Harris 2007). Each thematic game includes 8-12 stakeholders. Individual students are required to take on the role of a particular stakeholder and to research and prepare a position statement from that perspective. This is submitted as a referenced document at the same time as they participate in a live debate chaired by a staff member with a second staff member acting as minute taker and co-assessor. Student observers (the rest of the module class) are required to write a judgemental review of a 'game's' proceedings and to make recommendations for the way forward. These debates have stimulated significant student extra curricula debate, research and innovation. The three activities; referenced position paper, participation in debate, and judgemental review and resolution of a different debate, demand in-depth research, ability to understand contrasting stakeholder viewpoints, and wide ranging awareness and understanding of environmental and sustainability problems. Use of a mix of written, debating and reflective tasks gives a fair assessment model for work that that comprises half the module assessment. These games are readily transferable to students from diverse disciplines (Taylor and Harris, 2007).

### **2.2.3 Linking with learning for the professions**

One of C-SCAIPE's chief roles is to promote interaction with practitioners and thereby assist in the drive towards adoption of more sustainable values. It is achieving this through a number of mechanisms. First it has an Advisory Board which has practitioner representation to ensure that its activities are appropriately focused. This is important but perhaps less so than the programme of events that it runs which are outward facing. These include, for example, an Annual Question Time with a Panel of Industry speakers event on sustainability issues concerning the professions; a research programme on sustainability for real estate which has resulted in close industry collaboration and numerous industry seminars for practitioner organisations; the achievement of funding through the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) scheme for a research associate to assist a small enterprise reduce their carbon footprint. Additionally the C-SCAIPE facilities, which were completed a year ago are now proving to be a well-used venue for a range of sustainability focused events such as a recent Human Rights Festival. Much of this external facing activity has direct benefit for the students who can attend events and exhibitions or view video recordings and the research output flows directly to the teaching. Additionally, C-SCAIPE's distinctive 'debating chamber' layout is enabling a more inter-active style of teaching and learning which promotes engagement and critical thinking. Students are also being monitored for their sustainability 'literacy' as they arrive within Surveying and pass through the programmes. This will take time to percolate through to practice- but by changing students' knowledge and value sets, it is the ambition that they will be better placed to lead change in the workplace. ([www.c-scaipe.ac.uk](http://www.c-scaipe.ac.uk))

### **2.2.4 Linking research and consultancy with practical sustainability initiatives in the local region.**

Volunteering work between students and the Royal Borough of Kingston's business advisor has helped to improve the environmental and sustainability performance of local businesses and, at the same time, given student's opportunities for further training in environmental management systems and work experience as environmental mentors. The scheme, which is known as PEK (Positive Environment Kingston) trains students in the implementation of environmental management systems as needed by businesses to secure sustainability

credentials. The particular focus is small business enterprises which cannot readily spare time for staff training in environmental issues and implementation of EMS and which lack understanding of sustainability concerns. Students receive training in return for volunteering as business advisors or company mentors enabling a small company to establish an EMS and / or CSR policy. Students gain valuable career enhancing work experience while businesses benefit in terms of improved performance and the Borough benefits by the reduced environmental impact and improved social awareness of its small businesses. The scheme was highly commended in the recent round of 'Green Gown' awards run by HEEPI (Higher Education Performance Improvement) (2007) (See also [http://www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability/news\\_Green\\_Gown\\_award.html](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability/news_Green_Gown_award.html))

The Kingston 'Sustainability in Practice' network facilitates exchange of research ideas across the university with particular reference to outreach activities with local businesses. Over 150 local companies have been actively participated in this network. Particular foci include all aspects of the building industry from architecture and design to building contractors; recycling and re-use of waste materials; and sustainability seminars and training courses for small and medium enterprises and local authorities in the Kingston area and in Surrey. Sayce and Ellison (2005) ran a series of industry seminars to promote awareness of sustainability (Making Sense of Sustainable Property: Seminars for Property People) funded partly by HEIF and partly by DTI and industry partners. Bray, Gant and Taylor (2006) surveyed local small businesses to identify their environmental and sustainability awareness and their training needs and priorities. Kingston's sustainable design centre, led by Chick and Micklethwaite, has researched and developed resources to assist designers and entrepreneurs to create markets for products incorporating UK recycled materials ([www.kingston.ac.uk/design/SDRC](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/design/SDRC); [www.inspirerecycle.org.uk](http://www.inspirerecycle.org.uk)). In 2006, they instigated 'Green Growth London' workshops ([www.greengrowthlondon.co.uk](http://www.greengrowthlondon.co.uk)) to promote new business start-ups in the green marketplace. Further details of these and similar activities can be found at [www.westfocus.org.uk/sustainability](http://www.westfocus.org.uk/sustainability)

An 'Enviro-Entrepreneur Summer School' set up in summer 2005 supports selected graduates to develop their recycled product and business ideas by taking them through an intense three-day programme delivered by seasoned entrepreneurs, environmentalists and academics. They take participants through the process of starting and growing a business and provide them with the entrepreneur and business skills that will help them to get off to a successful start. It works with current and recent London graduates from Business, Arts, Engineering, Environmental and Design backgrounds. The School is presently the only one of its kind in the UK. Each programme had 30 participants who were selected from hundreds of applicants.

Creating sustainable alumni, students from all disciplines who can contribute to sustainable development, is a key objective of the SGS. The group is currently researching sustainability careers *via* an alumni search. A recent edition of Source (2005), the alumni magazine for Kingston University, highlighted sustainable graduates working in fields ranging from fashion and furniture design, to waste management, materials re-use and river restoration.

### **2.2.5 Linking to national initiatives**

The SGS's initial work, most notably the curriculum audit, was included in the HEFCE

review of good practice for Education for Sustainable Development in England. The purpose of this review was to highlight the differing approaches adopted at a range of universities active in the field of sustainability and in particular to see how higher education in England could best move forward the agenda for teaching sustainable development to all graduates. HEFCE also wished to ensure its own institutions, English Universities and Colleges of Higher Education, reflected sustainability practice in their day to day activities.

Kingston's SGS was one of just five national case studies used in this review. (HEFCE, 2005a). It emerged that Kingston was distinctive in its joined up academics plus students plus support staff approach to sustainability; it was also unique in benchmarking staff and student awareness of sustainability in the curriculum. This national recognition spurred the group to seek further national and international links *via* workshops and visits to exchange ideas and discuss both successes and failures in terms of implementing sustainability.

Representatives from SGS have since led seminars at Higher Education Academy (HEA) subject centre workshops for Engineering and the Built Environment (Lewis, C-SCAIPE's Director of Teaching and Learning, 2005) and for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (Taylor, 2005). Dawe, the part-time sustainability co-ordinator, who with Gant and Taylor (2003) piloted the curriculum audit at Kingston, has since run workshops for all (22) Higher Education Academy subject centres. Kingston's methodology, refined and developed further, has thus underpinned the overall review of education for sustainable development commissioned by the HEA in response to the HEFCE consultation exercise (Dawe, Jucker and Martin, 2005).

### **2.2.6 Linking Internationally**

International links have built upon and developed the national work. Academic and support staff exchanges with Kingston's partner university in the USA, Grand Valley in Michigan, have taken place in 2005 for Facilities Management and 2006 for academic development. Sustainability links with Calgary, Canada, have also been established through C-SCAIPE. In autumn 2006, the SGS hosted a workshop, 'Sustainability in Higher Education: Overcoming Barriers' including participation from the University of the Western Cape, an exchange facilitated by a sustainability sabbatical visit to South Africa in January 2006 by the chair of the SGS. Group members have recently worked with other European Universities on a Sustainability Masters programme within the Erasmus mundus framework and contributed to seminars and conferences in Alicante, Dublin, Florida and Vancouver. In Vancouver, Sayce, (Head of Kingston's School of Surveying and C-SCAIPE and also a SGS member) represented UK Education at a conference to promote the signing of an international accord entered into by professional bodies to promote sustainability within the core of real estate practice. The present (2007) opportunity to visit Bilbao and learn about Spanish and Latin American initiatives is a valued extension to these activities.

### **2.2.7 Linking with the KU and local town community**

During the past two years especially the SGS emphasised consolidation of links with the local town, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and with organisations in Greater London, in which Kingston sits, and in Surrey the immediate county. It has also sought to make the wider university community, many of whom are local citizens, much more aware of

its activities. It was realised that in a busy working day few people took time out to visit the sustainability website, they needed prompting more obviously. This situation has been improved by sustainability team's development of a staff sustainability news letter. Bulletins are also regally posted on the university's electronic news board which all staff and student see when accessing the computing facilities. The invitation and opportunity *via* a suggestions box to recommend improvements or activities and report related local initiatives has also been made available.

Links with the Borough have included volunteering as described in Section 2.2.4; linking with the public through Town-Gown debates; better citizen initiatives such as the 'students end of year donation scheme'; and active participation in Kingston's annual Green Fair ([www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability)) a long established event, run by assorted voluntary groups, and renowned in south east England.

The first Town-Gown debate was run in Spring 2006 as part of the Kingston Festival of Ideas, 'Think Kingston'. The theme was climate change and over 200 people, a mix of the public, schools, university students, academic and support staff, took part in a session led by a guest celebrity supported by local panel members. The focus was 'what can you do? By popular request two debates were run in Spring 2007, on the themes of 'sustainable homes and cities' and biodiversity' again emphasising participation and what may be achieved by individuals personally. Links made at the most recent biodiversity debate have led to active participation of external biodiversity experts in a newly established Biodiversity Implementation Group which has a remit for biodiversity and landscape management across all Kingston University's campuses, including sports fields and residential areas.

The Kingston University 'end of year donation scheme' was established in 2004. It encourages students leaving hall at the end of their first year at Kingston to donate unwanted items for recycling and re-use to charity rather than discarding them as waste. In this respect student awareness of sustainability issues, social and environmental, is raised; local charities benefit; and the local borough benefits in that less waste goes to landfill. The University also benefits reputationally, as a good neighbour, and financially, in terms of reduced waste costs. The scheme has grown year on year, overcoming initial resistance from Hall Managers and cleaning staff to engage their full support and now securing Borough support for waste collection, whereas the first event required hiring skips and transport for waste removal. In 2005, 5665 items, representing 250 black bin bags were collected representing between 5 and skips (about 6 tonnes) saved from landfill. Items ranged from clothing and shoes to electronic goods and unused food items ([www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/sustainability)).

The Sustainability team is currently working on a green office guide for administrative staff including a purchasing guide. This reflects consultation with university office staff and also builds on the HEIF activities with local businesses, Surrey Economic Partnership and Surrey Chamber of Commerce, which have included establishing a Sustainable Procurement network, regular seminar series and training scheme. (Bray and Taylor, 2005 and ongoing).

### **3. PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES**

In any initiative it is important to review progress and to regularly re-assess priorities. Sustainability work at Kingston and the endeavours of the SGS are no exception. Undeniably

since its inception in 2002 the SGS and its work have developed from a small in-house initiative to an internationally recognised group and activities. Particular achievements have been securing recognition by Kingston Senior Management and Executive, adoption of a formally endorsed KU environmental policy, and the inclusion of sustainability principles and targets in the university's strategic plan. The establishment of C-SCAIPE has given further impetus, while the SGS' series of conferences seminars, and workshops has enriched sustainability work at Kingston and given external awareness. Securing a permanent Sustainability Facilitator post and building a Sustainability Team, is another major milestone. A five year plan for sustainability, benchmarked to ISO 14001 has been outlined for approval in summer 2007. This includes updated targets in all areas. A major current priority is the university's estate where significant challenges remain, in part reflecting the diversity of buildings and rather *ad hoc* estate developments during Kingston's 100 year history. Kingston University is far from being a carbon neutral institution: the first steps, however, are in place.

**TABLE 2. Sustainability progress at Kingston University: a schematic summary**

Focus area	2002	2004	2006
Curriculum	☺	☺ ☺ ☺	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ N
Research and Consultancy	☺	☺ ☺ (☺)	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ N
Estates and Facilities Management	x	☺	☺ ☺ (☺)
Governance	x	☺	☺ ☺ (☺)
Community	☺	☺ ☺	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ L N

### Key to Table 2

#### Activities and Impact

- x No activity, no awareness
- ☺ ad hoc in houses activities
- ☺ ☺ co-ordinated KU activities
- ☺ ☺ ☺ national links and KU activities embedded
- ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ international links and KU activities embedded and routinely monitored

*Bracketed entries denote some initial progress and activity in the next category but further consolidation needed*

#### External Awards and recognition (additional to grants and income)

- L Local awards and recognition
- N National awards and recognition
- I International awards and recognition

Table 2 represents a schematic and qualitative assessment of progress. Development of an agreed set of sustainability indicators for Kingston University is a current research objective. Immediate priorities for the SGS and Sustainability team include:

- reduction of KU energy consumption in conjunction with the Carbon Trust
- co-ordinated progress on all aspects of estates and facilities management, *e.g.* biodiversity review and enhancement, water conservation, waste minimisation, carbon- free travel alternatives
- upgrading sustainability in the curriculum, in conjunction with C-SCAIPE and HEIF initiatives including
  - entry audits for all students
  - accredited courses for business
  - review of KU staff progress in sustainability understanding
- maintaining and extending in-house, local and regional community initiatives
- greater involvement with London's ethnic minority students including targeted events
- maintaining and extending developmental links as exemplified by our forthcoming conference, Sustainability in Practice: from Local to Global: Making a Difference

Our immediate specific aim is to make Kingston a vibrant and sustainable place in which to live, work and study; to link more closely to and to enhance the sustainability priorities of our municipal authority, the Royal Borough of Kingston; to engage with the sustainability debates and activities in Greater London; and to contribute to strategic south east England regional sustainability developments. Links with other universities, businesses, external non-governmental, governmental and international agencies indeed to all players in this field are vital to our continued progress. Good ideas swap shops, learning what does and does not work, how best to overcome barriers to adoption of sustainability ideas and practicalities, dissemination of good practice, alongside establishing best practice at Kingston University, these remain our priorities and purpose.

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