

Aston University Sustainability Working Group
Action Sheet

Meeting: 17th January 2008

Meeting Date	Action	Who By	By When	Priority	Date Completed
03:10:07	Confirm Student Membership of Group	PH	March 08	High	
03:10:07	Produce Catalogue of Taught Sustainable Modules	PH	March 08	Medium	
19:12:07	Organise Sustainability Research Seminar	PH	March 08	Low	
19:12:07	Diagram of structure for delivering sustainability	PH	Jan meeting	High	Jan 08
19:12:07	Feasibility of Group web site	PH	Jan meeting	High	Jan 08
17:01:08	Temporary replacement for Reiner Grundman	PQ	Mar meeting	Medium	
17:01:08	Organise Environmental Policy launch via Web, Aston Aspects, Aston Sun	LJ/PH	Mar meeting	High	
17:01:08	Organise Aston Sustainability Web pages	LJ/PH	Mar meeting	High	
17:01:08	Viability of Aston event to coincide with World Environment Day - June 5	LJ/RM/GE	Mar meeting	Medium	
17:01:08	'Baseline' status report.	LJ	Mar Meeting	Medium	

Sustainable Aston Working Group

Minutes of Meeting 17th January 2008

Present:	Richard Middleton	RM	Chief Operating Officer
	Garry East	GE	Estates
	Dr Peter Hedges	PH	SEAS (Chair)
	Breno Nunes	BN	ABS
	Dr Julia Brown	JB	SLHS
	Dr Caroline Witton	CW	SLHS
	Dr Stuart Cooper	SC	ABS
	Lynnette Jones	LJ	Estates
	Dr Peter Quaife	PQ	SLSS
In attendance:	Emma Sutton	ES	Secretarial support
Apologies:	Professor Michael West	MW	ABS
	Dr Robin Clark	RC	SEAS
	Luke Davies	LD	Guild Chairperson and Member of People and Planet Student Society
	Dr Reiner Grundmann	RG	SLSS

Apologies and Welcome

Apologies received from Professor Michael West, Dr Robin Clark, Luke Davies and Dr Reiner Grundmann. Brief welcome to Lynnette Jones, the new Environmental Manager.

1. Membership

PH updates the contact details of current members, adding Lynnette Jones to the list. PH comments on the difficulty of finding a permanent student representative. Luke Davies, Guild Chairperson and member of the People and Planet student society has shown great interest in the group, but has yet been able to attend a meeting. PH wants to find another student representative to attend the meetings in reserve for Luke Davies. CW and PQ offer to ask a group of their own students to take up the role.

PQ has been asked to look for a replacement for RG who is currently away on sabbatical.

PH

CW/PQ

PQ

2. Minutes of 19th December 2007 meeting

Minutes were agreed and accepted.

3. Matters Arising/Action Points

3.1 Action Points

A diagram demonstrating the possible structure for delivering sustainability to other areas of the University is handed out in the meeting. PH asks if there are any suggestions or problems with the design. Overall, all members agree that the diagram is the most sensible way for tackling the deliverance of sustainability. However, there is one main concern that combined honours are not included, whether they should be is a question left to be explored by

PH

the group at a later date.

3.2 Photocopiers in the University

Since the last meeting of the Sustainability Working Group, GE has found a further 60 photocopiers in the University to add to the figure of 12 which was presented as part of item 4.3 initial environmental review on the 19th December 2007. GE & LJ

GE suggests that there could be a lot more photocopiers which are in use around the University which have not been purchased through the procurement department and therefore have not been recorded. LJ hopes to set up a procurement group which can get more heavily involved in promoting sustainability through purchasing. The University will be able to minimise the number of photocopiers by encouraging offices to buy multifunction photocopiers rather than individual desktop printers. RM echoes this, as Personnel have reduced their printing costs by 15% as a result of a networked and multifunctional machine in their department.

3.3 Procurement Initiative

LJ has arranged to meet with the Procurement Office to take forward the idea of a sustainability procurement group. LJ

The Procurement Office has arranged an environmental day with Lyreco, the University's main stationery supplier. This is to take place on Friday 15th February 2008. The idea is to show staff the amount of environmental friendly stationery there is to purchase.

The group has not seen any publicity for the Lyreco Environmental day. ES is to arrange for an all staff email to go out advertising the event. ES

3.4 Environmental Manager

LJ began her role as Aston University's Environmental Manager on 2nd January 2008. LJ is encouraged by how many people at Aston are enthusiastic about the idea of sustainability.

3.5 Aston's Sustainability Aims

It was agreed at the meeting at the 19th December 2007 that the document which supports the Environmental Policy should be called 'Aston's Sustainability Aims'. PH is to email copies. PH

4. Immediate Goals

4.1 Environmental Policy Launch

The Environmental Policy is now up on the Aston University website. However, the current version is only in black and white. RM has asked if this can be changed to a signed colour copy. ES has agreed to arrange this. LJ has asked whether alongside the Environmental Policy there could be a newspaper feature updated regularly by the group. PH is wary as he wants an official launch of the Environmental Policy to take priority. ES

RM has spoken to Stewart Comfort, director of Communications to get a piece in the February Aston Aspects about the Environmental Policy and a LJ/RM

complete pull out section in the March issue to help promote sustainability at Aston. The group agrees that the March issue will be a great way to raise its profile and also as a way to launch the Environmental Policy.

The group also concurs that any other profile raising awareness should be done in March to link in with the pull out section in Aspects. LJ proposes that the group tries to develop a brand logo for the group and also the Environmental Policy to help make the idea of sustainability more fun and attractive. LJ is liaising with Dawn White to develop potential designs. LJ

The group also suggests that the same pull out be printed in the March edition of the Student times.

RM puts forward the idea of a pledge. LJ agrees that this is a positive idea, however suggests that this should be arranged for the 5th June, World Environmental day. PQ is concerned that the group needs to be realistic and not get too carried away in case the University does not make any noticeable progress by June.

GE looks to the future and suggests that a long term objective of the group should be the organisation of an Aston Environmental day to coincide with World Environmental day. He is aware that there might not be enough time to arrange it for this year, but RM states that he would like to look at what could be done and get the purchasing department involved. LJ has agreed that she will bring this up at her meeting with procurement. RM reminds the group to include the Science Park in all events.

4.2 Initial Environmental Review

The Environmental Review is important to establish a baseline. LJ states that The Carbon Trust Energy report which was conducted 2006/7 shows that the University has good procedures in place for monitoring gas, electricity and water. LJ

However, monitoring University waste is less clear, as all the data is only in estimated values. LJ hopes to change this when the waste contract is up for renewal. The same applies for recycling.

In terms of travel, LJ confirms that the company Atkins conducted a survey amongst staff and students in 2006 to look at the way they travelled to the University. The survey received 800 responses and therefore has the potential to form a fair baseline. The University hopes to increase the number of people cycling to work by using the Atkins survey and working alongside the bike-users group to make the journey to Aston more accessible for cyclists.

LJ informs the group that the Estates department does not lack the surveys and information to form a baseline, but just an overall report which brings all the information together. PH asks if LJ would be able to write a report on the University's current status and create an overall baseline. LJ agrees.

5. Short Term Initiatives

5.1 Teaching and Learning Workshop

RC is unavailable to report back on the progress of the workshop, however PH reports on his behalf. The date for the workshop has been confirmed for the 13th March. Speakers are still needed from each school. PH is going to email the schools to encourage a response. PQ agrees to be the speaker for SLSS.

PH/RC

5.2 Campus Development Seminar

The group suggests that the seminar should take place on World Environmental day, 5th June, so that it links in with the pledge and equally raises awareness of sustainability through new developments in Estates. The group also agrees that the seminar will help give the credibility needed to alter people's behaviour.

GE/LJ

5.3 Sustainability Research Seminar

JB reports that a meeting of the Sustainability Research group has been arranged for 30th January 2007. The group will hopefully be able to share common areas of research so that boundaries between the schools can be broken down.

JB

5.4 5 Quick Fixes

RM asks the group for 5 quick fixes which the University can publicise straight away to show that it is dedicated to the Environmental policy.

RM
GE/LJ

- 1) GE has target to decrease the University energy use by 3% this financial year.
- 2) Move towards using ONLY recycled paper in the University- LJ suggests that the procurement office look at ways to implement this. ISA and procurement should also perhaps meet.
- 3) Carbon Footprint monitors- GE hopes that in 2-3 weeks time metres which issue carbon readings for the Main Building will be put up in the University foyer with readings being presented on the screens in the main entrance. The readings will help to get people to ask the question of what a carbon footprint is and hopefully prompt them to make changes in their behaviour, but for full impact, information about sustainability must be displayed next to the carbon metres.
- 4) To reduce the amount of waste going into landfill - LJ and GE are going to investigate the current waste disposal contract and its renewal date. LJ also suggests that Estates look at the removal of individual rubbish bins and replace them with recycling units, but this will first involve an examining the practicalities.
- 5) Travel Plans- the University is almost in a position to publicise the Travel Action Plan. This will highlight a big commitment to improve travel to and from the University. Estates are hoping to invest a great deal in facilities for cyclists. Car sharing must also be considered. LJ states that a car sharing database must be developed.

The reduction of water usage in the University is also a potential quick fix, however the group decides that longer term plans should be put in place.

6. Sustainability in the University Strategy

RM informs the group that the Environmental Policy has received strong positive feedback from the Executive team and has their complete support. One of the six objectives in the University strategy relates to the infrastructure of the University and RM aim is to try and make sure that the University conducts any new developments in a sustainable way. However, RM also suggests that the University must strive to be ahead by challenging the norm. He hopes to do this with the help of the group. PH takes this last point further and asks RM how he considers the group to fit in with the strategy. RM wants the group to help influence the behaviour of others and to offer encouragement to bring about changes.

RM

The group discusses the impact of cost on the decision making of sustainable improvements. SC states that real commitment to the Environmental Policy is shown when sustainability improvements come before economic costs. RM agrees and states that the group is not to be burdened by formal mechanisms of accountability and budget limitations. RM suggests that the group can get involved with the Brain Centre whilst the design can still be influenced by change and also to look at ways to bring sustainability into the main building. Every year the Main building will undergo some form of refurbishment and the University will be able to show its commitment to sustainability by developing a long term plan of how to tackle the environmental impact of an old structure.

7. The Way Forward?

7.1 Engaging with the University

SC reports back on the ABS awayday where staff were asked how they could improve the University's environmental performance? The results of the day were circulated in a report on 15th January 2008. SC states that there are a lot of productive ideas contained in the report, but that the group needs to help pick out the ones which they consider to be the most successful and look at its feasibility. SC and LJ arrange a meeting to discuss possible actions and the way forward.

SC/BN/LJ

RM is also looking at ways of engaging with areas of his team. ISA are looking at initiatives for paperless meetings.

RM

7.2 Web pages

PH has designed a structure for the Aston Sustainable Working Group webpage. He asks the group if they consider it to be a sensible model to take things forward. The group agrees PH is going to begin liaising with ISA about this.

PH

8. Any other Business

LJ is going to look up how the University gets membership for the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges.

LJ

ES has ordered a copy of the book 'Degrees that Matter', Ann Rappaport and Sarah Hammond Creighton. It is now available to borrow from the Vice Chancellor's office.

The VC has allocated the Group a £500 budget towards its running costs.
ES to manage.

9. Next Meeting

A Wednesday in March - Date and time to be confirmed.