1. WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is a relatively new term, which first appeared in English dictionaries in the 1970s. It is derived from the Latin verb 'sustinere', which means to 'maintain', 'hold' or 'endure'. On the one hand, sustainability focuses on the idea that humanity has to live within the environmental means and that there are limits to economic growth. On the other hand, sustainability has a social dimension, which is encapsulated in the notion of human health and well-being.

Over the past few decades international reports have attempted to set an agenda for sustainability which meets the needs of the times. The focus on sustainable development which was famously set out in the Brandt Report (1987) has been replaced by new conceptualisations which capture the increasingly salient need for action to avoid ecological overshoot, whilst maintaining a social foundation.

Global Goals, Economics and Social Foundation

Recent agreement by all 195 nations to a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets has set out a plan for the future. The SDGs provide a series of lenses through which to explore the many interconnected facets of sustainability, and whilst somewhat segregated and instrumental, they are simple and intuitively appealing. However, in the context of higher education, it is important to raise a critical awareness of the goals, whilst supporting the achievement of applicable targets.


SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) presents a particular issue, since economic growth links to GDP, which is presented as one of the key reasons why the world is finding it so difficult to change.

This is an argument made most powerfully by Kate Raworth, author of Doughnut Economics (2017). By redrawing the core concepts of the SDGs, as a doughnut of social and planetary boundaries Raworth

provides a simple visualisation of the dual conditions that underpin collective human well-being. The aim is to bring humanity into the "safe and just space between the outer and inner rings of the doughnut through a regenerative and distributive economy.

It is easy to see how the social foundation, derived from the SDGs, should be balanced by the ecological ceiling comprised of the 9 core planetary boundaries. The model is perhaps best summarised by the following quote, which provides a more contemporary definition of sustainability:

"Meeting the needs of all within the means of the planet." Raworth (2017)
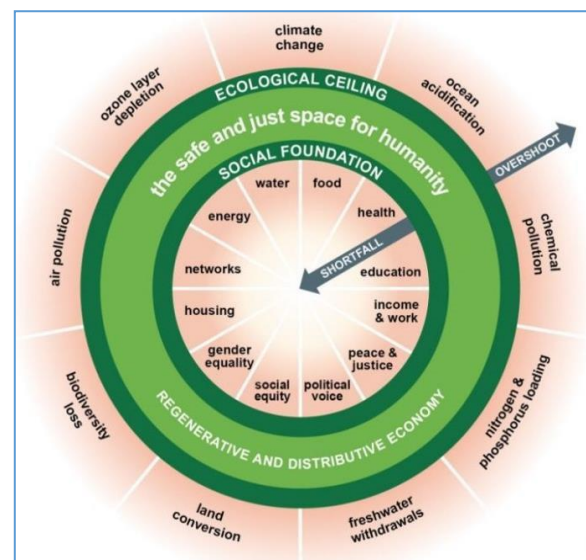
2. WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY RELEVANT TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

Sustainability is one of the central challenges facing a world, that is already experiencing unprecedented levels of biodiversity loss, natural resource depletion, extreme weather events caused by human induced climate change, and relentless population growth, in addition to on-going inequity and injustice. Universities are in a key positon to develop a principled response to current issues and to support the development of a hopeful future in uncertain times. The University strategic framework places sustainability at its heart through its mission and values and as a cross cutting theme. This Framework for Sustainability sets out a whole-of-institution response and shows how we can connect to the environment, to each other and to ourselves at a range of scales from the local to the global.

3. WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2014?

Since the approval of the University Strategic Framework in 2014, the context for higher education in the UK, and for CCCU specifically, has changed dramatically. Sector marketisation, BREXIT uncertainty, and declining intake of young students, combined with our response to regional needs for engineering and medical graduates, has resulted in widespread institutional review and change. Consequently, the University Strategic Framework has been refreshed and extended for a further 2 years, which has provided an opportunity for this Framework for Sustainability to undergo a similar process.

Achievements 2015-2019

- Whole Earth? exhibition in Canterbury, Medway, Broadstairs and University of Kerala (2015-16)
- Organised an international Sustainability in HE Conference in partnership with Plymouth University (2016)
- Delivered a 5-year report on the highly successful *Futures Initiative* (2016)
- Initiated the Student Green Office (SGO) to provide peer to peer engagement on sustainability (2014-15)
- Developed strong 'Green Impact' and 'Responsible Futures' partnerships with the Students' Union (2016-17)
- Promoting the UN SDGs through a variety of forums and media, internally and externally (2016-19)
- Established the Sustainability Research Network to further sustainability related research (2016-19)
- Developed active collaborative partnerships with The Bay Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust, Canterbury Brewers, Canterbury SDG Forum, SHE conference Series, Harmony Project, Springer World Sustainability Series
- Established an Arts and Humanities conference as part of the Springer Wold Sustainability Series (2017)
- Established a principle of academic partnerships for sustainability with several academic programmes (2013)
- National & international Green Gown Awards for 'Continuous Improvement: Institutional change' (2018)
- Research active and widely published, including academic journals, book chapters, and Leadership in HE
- Delivered a heritage linked 'Beer, Bread & Honey' project build community and sense of place (2015-18)
- Funded more than 100 *Futures Initiative* projects that have enhanced staff knowledge, skills, experience and expertise for sustainability, and influenced curriculum change (2011-18)
- 47 staff nominated for Golden Apple Sustainability Award (2018)

4. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY STATEMENT

Our University

As a large organisation with strong links to the public and private sector we have a broad sphere of influence. As such, we have the potential to generate significant positive impacts on the fabric of society locally and more widely. We can do this by recognising our responsibility to prepare and equip our students and staff to tackle the urgent societal and environmental challenges that lie ahead, as well as by maintaining our commitment to minimise our ecological footprint.

Our commitment

The University's commitment to sustainability is expressed directly through one of its core values; 'preparing individuals to contribute to a just and sustainable future'. The University is also a signatory to the SDG Accord www.sdgaccord.org/, which commits us to embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our education, research, leadership, operations, administration and engagement activities.

Our vision

Our vision for sustainability is that every student has the opportunity to learn about sustainability in the context of their chosen discipline and field of work. Ensuring integration of the social, environmental and economic dimensions across the formal and informal curriculum requires cross-disciplinary integration and systems thinking. Our understanding of sustainability is drawn from the QAA ESD Guidance (2014) that identifies six component areas; global citizenship, environmental stewardship, social justice, ethics, wellbeing and futures thinking. In line with our commitment to the SDG Accord, we aspire that these should be embedded in the culture, practices and physical environment of the University. Whilst this is a long-term process it is important to recognise the increasing urgency of responding to these challenges.

Our approach

We recognise the contribution that the whole university community can bring to ensuring sustainability becomes intrinsic to our culture and ethos. We will work towards its integration throughout existing structures and processes whilst facilitating individual responses. Leadership is provided through the Sustainability Department, and many other individuals within Faculties, Schools, Departments and the Students' Union, whose work is overseen by the Sustainability Strategic Management Group (SSMG), reporting to the Senior Management Team. A key focus for sustainability is to enhance graduate attributes that improve employability, student experiences, and partnerships with the Students' Union and the local community.

Our distinctive approach is underpinned by:

- context sensitivity to heritage and Church Foundation
- collaborative partnerships across sectors and boundaries
- critical and creative ethos that challenges bias
- understanding of the multidimensional nature of the University

Our responsibilities

Senior Managers, Heads of Schools, Departments and Centres are responsible for ensuring their teams work within the context of this Policy, and with assistance from the Sustainability team, support the delivery of the Framework for Sustainability through Faculty, School and Department Business Plan priorities. Whilst the Senior Management Team accepts the main responsibility for implementation of the Framework, individual students and staff have a very important role in co-operating with those

responsible for its delivery. Individuals are expected to operate in a manner that contributes to the totality of this commitment, and within the scope of their role.

Our reputation

We have established a reputation for leadership in sustainability, having published an academic monograph though Bloomsbury Academic on 'Leadership for Sustainability in HE', and will continue to actively contribute to sector and corporate good practice, nationally and internationally.

National and international recognition through the Green Gown awards, for Continual improvement: Institutional change, has validated our whole institutional approach. We will continue to provide leadership across the sector through publications, conference presentations and hosting a wide variety of events in collaboration.

Internationally recognised reporting frameworks will be used as a reference to ensure transparency of sustainability reporting, which: is inclusive of stakeholder view; is within the wider context of sustainability; reflects the significance of organisational impact; and provides a complete assessment of the organisation's performance.

In recognition of the strategic importance of sustainability, two additional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for sustainability have been proposed in addition to that agreed in 2015,

1. Maintain a recognised international standard for environmental management (ISO14001)

2. Uphold the University's commitment to the SDG Accord by embedding the SDGs and reporting annually to the UN HPF

3. Monitor the University's carbon reduction targets to 2030 from 2019/20 onwards (once new targets have been set)

Our resources

The University is committed to the ongoing operation of the Sustainability Department, which is resourced with an annual budget that includes 4.1 FTE established posts, and a non-pay budget to support sustainability related projects, subscriptions and disbursements; along with the employment of students to lead the Student Green Office. In addition, there are full-time staff employed within the Estates & Facilities Department with responsibility for energy & water, waste management, environmental auditing, and travel. Changes to the annual budget are reported through the annual sustainability report.

Our governance and reporting

The University will manage and enhance sustainability through business planning, annual and periodic review, quality management and through the Academic Board and its sub-committees. These will be supported by an ISO14001 accredited Environmental Management System (EMS), QAA Education for Sustainability (ESD) Guidance and a Sustainability Maturity Assessment (SMA) methodology.

Progress towards the aims and objectives stated herein are reported biannually to the Senior Management Team, and annually to the Governing Body. Annual and interim reports are made publically available through the University website. As part of our commitment to the SDG Accord we will report annually on our contribution to the SDGs.

5.   THE FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY

To support the delivery of the top level KPI, a framework for sustainability is provided. It draws on the University Strategic Framework, and interprets its four key themes through the lens of sustainability. Specifically, this brings Staff and Student Experience together in a new first theme and focuses on Our Environment rather than Enabling Services in the last theme.

University Strategic Framework themes	Framework for Sustainability themes
• Student experience	• Student and Staff Experience
• Education	• Education for Sustainable Development
• Research and Enterprise	• Research and Enterprise
• Enabling Services	• Our Environment

The framework aims to provide aspiration and direction for the University, its key underpinning strategies and other cross cutting themes. Each area provides a policy statement, a number of strategic aims and an organisational target. A set of key priority actions are provided and reviewed on an annual basis, which are included in appendix 1. These are intended to support Schools and Departments in the business planning process as well as guiding system and process improvement.

5.1. STUDENT AND STAFF EXPERIENCE

Policy statement:
The University recognises the importance of the interrelationship between student and staff experience, and that a sustainable community is one in which everyone feels able to engage and contribute. Concepts of inclusion, wellbeing and accessibility are central to this principle, as well as developing a sense of belonging, to ensure enhancement of the breadth and depth of community experience.

Aims:
- enhance the level of engagement and participation in sustainability related initiatives
- encourage the development of student initiated and led sustainability-related activity
- foster connections between individuals, communities and their environment
- create spaces to support health & wellbeing, staff and student experience and retention
- support the development of transferable skills that contribute to student employability

Organisational target:
To significantly improve levels of awareness of and engagement with sustainability; establishing appropriate and efficient ways of measuring and evaluating this.

5.2. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy statement:
The University recognises that it has a duty to educate its students for the complex futures they will encounter and to prepare them as sustainability literate, responsible citizens. It sees Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as integral to the distinctive curriculum experience offered at CCCU, providing particular opportunities for developing critical and creative thinking.

Aims:
- foster curriculum innovation such that all students have the opportunity to engage with sustainability related issues relevant to their discipline and chosen field of work
- encourage the enrichment of new and existing formal and informal curriculum with sustainability perspectives.
- influence the development of academic infrastructure with internal and external quality frameworks for sustainability.
- maximise opportunities for student involvement in the development of formal, informal and campus curriculum, and opportunities for academic partnerships
- support the development of research informed and involved teaching for sustainability
- enhance student experience through providing a wide variety of opportunities to engage with sustainability
- Provide examples of excellent practice in sustainability curriculum in support of TEF aspirations

Organisational target:
Schools and Faculties will have developed a response to ESD such that every student has the opportunity to learn about sustainability in the context of their chosen discipline and field of work.

5.3. RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE

Policy statement:
The Strategic Framework for Research and Enterprise (2018-2023) recognises sustainability as a distinctive feature of research at CCCU. It acknowledges the need to engage with global and societal challenges and, through this, to support the development of research literacy in students and to build capacity among staff. The University recognises the wealth of research and enterprise activity with a sustainability focus already being undertaken, both within specific disciplinary areas and through inter-disciplinary collaboration, and is committed to raising its profile and to developing further expertise. The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework, Research Excellence Framework and Knowledge Exchange Framework are additional drivers that support the development of this activity.

Aims:
- Encourage the development of sustainability research within specific disciplinary areas and through inter-disciplinary collaboration.
- Promote the University's reputation for leadership of and excellent practice in sustainability within the HE Sector and develop opportunities for mentoring, coaching and consultancy
- Develop new thinking and practices for sustainability through collaboration locally, nationally and internationally.
- Share research and enterprise expertise in publications, research papers, conferences, and other appropriate forums
- Encourage and seek opportunities for research and enterprise income generation

Organisational Target:
Establish a sustainability Research and Enterprise profile that is recognised across the University and beyond

5.4. OUR ENVIRONMENT

Policy Statement:
The University recognises the important role the built and natural environment has on the wellbeing of its community, and in the achievement of its key strategic aims. It has developed a Master Plan for the next 20 years that takes an integrated approach to the development of a sustainable university estate, and shows how Education for Sustainable Development principles can be applied in practice.

The University also recognises that it has an impact upon the local and global environment and is committed to minimising any negative and enhancing the positive effects that the delivery of its activities have. It is committed to environmental good practice and maintains an externally certified ISO14001 EMS to ensure continual improvement, prevention of pollution and compliance with all appropriate environmental legislation.

Aims:
- Develop the University estate, in a way that maximises educational, research and community benefit and enhances positive environmental impact.
- Develop our campus environments, recognising our sense of place within unique heritage locations.
- Integrate our built and natural environments in ways that embody our values; providing specific examples of our distinctive education and research profile
- Maintain progress in reducing environmental impact, maintaining a focus on reducing our carbon emissions in support of sector and national targets.

Organisational Target:
Ensure the principles and pedagogies of sustainability will be integrated into the development of the built and natural environment