

University of Kent Sustainable Food Action Plan 2022

The University of Kent recognises its responsibility to carry out its procurement activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and the considerable influence we have in using our buying power to encourage healthy and sustainable food production and consumption.

The current procurement landscape has become increasingly difficult with price rises and Brexit and Covid supply disruptions. Hospitality also continues to face business uncertainties due to changes in Covid restrictions that impact our operations heavily. However, the Sustainable Food Steering Group is committed to continual sustainable improvements in our offerings and operations.

With this in mind, and in support of the University's Sustainability Strategy "Strategy for Climate Action and the SDGs," the Sustainable Food Steering Group has put together this action plan to simplify our approach to delivering sustainable food at Kent despite the challenging backdrop. We recognise that we must continue to in our mission to reduce our Scope 3 carbon emissions, waste outputs and develop our role in communicating and educating on sustainable food.

The Sustainable Food Steering Group (SFSG) has put together 5 priority areas for 2022 that were collated from operational staff across the outlets and staff and student feedback and engagement events held over the last two years.

Priority objectives for 2022

1: Reducing our scope 3 emissions by reducing our meat consumption.

To achieve this, we will:

- Increase the plant-based option available in our outlets
- Reduce the amount of red meat (from ruminants) on our menus
- Find creative and attractive ways to adapt certain meat-based menu items to increase the amount of plant-based ingredients used within, providing options for lower carbon meals for those who still wish to consume meat

2: Ensure that sustainability is the core feature of our new tender for suppliers this year and work with local supplier to improve our scope 3 emissions.

To achieve this, we will:

- Embed robust sustainability criteria in our tender documents including zero tolerance to modern slavery in the food supply chain
- Work with local suppliers to improve the flexibility and sustainability of our fresh produce
- Include fresh produce from the Kent Community Oasis Garden into our menus

3: Continue to manage food waste in our outlets and increase food segregation across campus.

To achieve this, we will:

- Seek reductions in our food waste in our outlets through affective menu design
- Continue to segregate our food waste in outlets for anaerobic digestion
- Trial food segregation in campus accommodation
- Develop on site research of effective on campus composting/anaerobic digestion in collaboration with academics on site and the Kent Community Oasis Garden
- Support students to minimise food waste in accommodation with engaging educational resources

4: Use the Gulbenkian as a showcase of sustainable food and test bed for new ideas to reduce our impact.

To achieve this, we will:

- Restart the Gulbenkian sustainability working group
- Continue to showcase produce from across Kent in our menu and develop our relationships with local suppliers promoting them in our coms and through events
- Test out new menu options, plastic free packaging ideas and innovative solutions to reducing our impact within the outlet that can be rolled out to others if successful

5: Increase our point-of-sale communication about sustainability in our outlets.

To achieve this, we will:

- Improve the information on our menus about the sustainability of our dishes
- Promote key sustainability messages in our outlets utilising screens/table talkers/ and point of sale opportunities
- Run events and promotions that promote sustainability including cooking demonstrations from our chefs, supplier showcases, feedback forums etc.

Commercial Services, including Kent Hospitality, Kent Sport and the Gulbenkian, have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy within the services delivered, alongside the Estates Department and Sustainability Team.

All activities will be monitored by the Sustainable Food Steering Group and a report on progress will be published online at the end of the year. Periodic updates will be provided through the Environmental Management System to the Sustainability Steering Group.

The SFSG is made up of staff from Commercial Services, the Estates Department, Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability, Kent Union and staff and student representatives. Terms of Reference for this group can be obtained from sustainability@kent.ac.uk. The SFSG will actively seek to engage with all stakeholders and customers in the continued development of our sustainable food activities.