



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



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# Finalist's case study

## Aston University

### Leadership

Vice-Chancellor - Julia King,  
The Baroness Brown of Cambridge

### About the project

#### Summary

Within and away from Aston University I have been an instigator, leader and supporter of embedding sustainability into numerous areas of business, teaching, research and the way people live their lives. From being a member Committee on Climate Change, leading the King Review (for the Chancellor of the Exchequer) in 2008, on vehicle and fuel technologies, as a non-executive director of the Green Investment Bank and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, as the UK's Low Carbon Business Ambassador, and supporting numerous initiatives at Aston University I have helped drive the message that Climate Change is happening, but we still have time to keep the global temperature rise this century to around 2 degrees and its impacts can be reduced significantly.



#### Profile

- Higher Education
- 7875 FTE teaching students; 199 FTE Research students
- 1400 FTE staff
- Urban

### The individual

#### Away from Aston University

I am deputy chair of the Committee on Climate Change, and the transport specialist on the Committee. I was appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in March 2007 to lead the 'King Review' to examine the vehicle and fuel technologies that, over the next 25 years, could help to reduce carbon emissions from road transport. In November 2010 I was appointed by the Prime Minister as the UK's Low Carbon Business Ambassador. I serve as a non-executive director of the Green Investment Bank and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult. I am also a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Decarbonising Energy.

I have helped Birmingham City Council develop its green strategy as a member of the Green Commission, and my work has been recognised by a 'West Midlands Green Leader' by Sustainability West Midlands. My work in decarbonising transport has been recognised by a Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP) Low Carbon Champions Award: 'Outstanding Individual in Promoting Low Carbon Transport' in 2014.

Over the past 10 years I have given over 200 presentations in the UK and overseas on decarbonising the economy, low carbon transport, and mitigating climate change to audiences as diverse as large investment fund managers in Taiwan, to student and academic staff trades unions in Manchester.



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## At Aston University

On my appointment as the VC at Aston University, I set an internal stretch carbon emissions target for scopes 1 and 2 of 53% by 2020/21 compared to the sectors 43% average; one of the highest targets in the HE sector.

I supported the University Sustainable Aston Working Group's request to create an Environmental and Sustainability Manager position at Aston, which over time led to the creation of the Sustainability Team and the appointment of an Energy Manager.

In 2010 I led the introduction of the university sustainability strategy including the requirement that all our new buildings would be to BREEAM Excellent Standard.

In 2013 I supported the creation of Go Green Leaders who would be senior level staff to support the Go Green Champions within their department.

In 2014 I invited Keith Clarke to join us as Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professor of Sustainable Design to lead on a three year project to help embed Sustainability into the curriculum for all students, including the creation of Carbon Week. Carbon Week is an ambitious 5-day programme to bring climate change awareness and low-carbon design thinking to all 3,000 of our Year 2 students across all the academic Schools. We were the first university in the world to embed climate change teaching for all students with such an interdisciplinary approach. The first Carbon Week helped give students the essential skills to work in a carbon constrained world. The next Carbon Week, now called the Carbon Journey, will run in October this year, with Birmingham City University joining us.

Over the 10 years as VC I regularly supported many internal sustainability awareness events including giving presentations on climate change during our annual Go Green Week, attending Go Green Champion Award lunches as well as partaking in the occasional Fairtrade Wine tasting evenings.

## Impacts and Benefits

- Our 2014/15 emissions are 30% less than our 2005/06 base year by supporting energy efficiency improvements and projects carried out by the Estates and Capital Development.
- Large emission reductions through the introduction of a 3MW CHP energy center in 2008, which is being connected to the wider Birmingham District Heating Scheme. This will provide low carbon heat to third parties around Birmingham.
- Development of Carbon Week – described above
- The redevelopment of our campus to provide a greener space to Birmingham City Centre, now planted with fruit trees to provide free fruit to students, staff and visitors
- Reduction of driving to work and increased cycling and use of public transport
- The development of the UK's leading bioenergy/waste to energy research centre, EBRI, in our School of Engineering

## Further information

For more information please contact [environment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:environment@aston.ac.uk)