

Sustainability Policy 2024

Introduction



Professor Simon Guy

"There is very positive work ongoing to meet our goal of addressing scope 3 emissions across the University. We are learning by doing and know that it will take collective endeavour to meet the sustainability challenge"

Lancaster University is a leader in sustainability, taking bold and urgent action to tackle the climate and ecological crises and is seeking to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035.

The University has a clear vision and strategy to embed sustainability in everything it does, from teaching and research to campus operations and partnerships. The University is also committed to supporting the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals and creating positive impact for people and the planet.

We recognise that traditional Facilities-led approaches to sustainability management are no longer appropriate. Like most organisations, we now understand that 80% of our carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions arise because of the individual decisions we make, from how we choose to travel, to how we spend our money.

Published in March 2024 and reported on at the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Group.

Professor Simon Guy - Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global (Digital, International and Sustainability)

Our current position

Our organisational impact however is far greater than just our CO₂ emissions. Like every organisation, through our operations and activities, directly and indirectly emit other greenhouse gases, contributes to biodiversity loss, consumes resources, produces pollution, and wields significant economic power through our procurement, investment and recruitment.

Additionally, the sector and the University now know that organisational sustainability means much more than how our buildings and campuses operate. Social factors such as equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and financial aspects such as banking and investments now receive equal or greater weighting than traditional environmental indicators in league table assessments of sustainability performance.

And of even greater significance is the legacy impact our thousands of students have during their studies and after they graduate; what and how they were taught at university influences graduates' values and awareness of how they can respond to the climate and ecological emergency.



At Lancaster and in most other organisations, sustainability management has traditionally been led by Estates and Facilities colleagues. This approach made sense since sustainability management started by responding to legislation that addressed environmental risks, for example, waste, pollution, and energy efficiency.

Positive Change

Here at Lancaster, we have consistently sought to address and reduce our operational environmental impact. Through the Facilities directorate, we have:

- Reduced carbon emissions from electricity and gas consumption by 45% between 2005 and 2022 through the installation of renewable generation equipment and high-efficiency heating plant.
- We are the first UK university to install a large-scale wind turbine, generating 14% of our annual electricity consumption, making Lancaster University the largest producer of renewable energy in the Higher Education Sector.
- Calculated the full carbon impact of our operations, covering energy consumption, travel and procurement and developed our climate emergency carbon reduction plan to establish a strategy to achieve our net-zero carbon emission targets of 2030 and 2035.
- Improved energy efficiency through refurbishment of our building stock and implementation of energy efficiency projects.

- Developed independent processes with our sector colleagues to calculate our procurement-related carbon emissions.

Facilities will continue working on campus operations and infrastructure to reduce our direct and most visible impacts. However, all staff and students have a role to play in addressing our more significant and indirect impacts, and by doing so, can help the University achieve its target of net zero by 2035. The plan of how we will achieve this is open to consultation and will be captured by the University's Climate Emergency and Sustainability group.

Communication is a key factor in the success of our strategy and engaging with our community will play a crucial role in changing behaviours at an individual level on campus. To support our commitments to the climate and ecological crises, we are developing new ways to engage with stakeholders and improve our communications.



Communication

- A Sustainability intranet page is now live for general communications to staff and to provide a source of current and relevant information about all areas of sustainability at Lancaster University.
 - Emailing sustainability@lancaster.ac.uk gives direct access to the sustainability [team](#), providing the opportunity to facilitate and coordinate effectively. If you have a story you'd like to share, a student project in mind (or a student who would like to work with us), please get in touch.
 - Faculty sustainability groups and the Climate Emergency and Sustainability group. Supporting and working with faculties to develop strategy, plans, resources, and training, all specific to their operational needs.
 - Sustainability Exchange – a termly forum for key stakeholders to discuss sustainability best practices taking place across the University.
 - Procurement – we are sector leaders in sustainable procurement and are working with our suppliers to improve our own, as well as their, sustainability performance. More information can be found on the procurement website [here](#).
 - EAUC membership and resources – Lancaster University is a member of the [EAUC](#), the UK's only sustainability champion for the Higher and Further Education sector. Our membership allows any member of staff or student to access resources, newsletters, communities of practice, training, and insight guides. Please contact sustainability@lancaster.ac.uk to request access.
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Our high-impact areas

Construction and refurbishment

Objectives:

- Implement projects to maximise reuse/refurbishment and repurposing of existing University space during the 23/24 year.
- Calculate the carbon emissions of all major capital projects reported to the Project Executive Committee and improve the accuracy of our carbon calculator for development projects during the 23/24 year.

The University has invested more than £220 million in development projects since 2013 to build a campus that can support world-class teaching and research. Since the University declared a climate emergency in 2020, the capital development programme has been reshaped to focus on being smarter with existing space. The Facilities Division has introduced a new document that specifies a minimum standard of build that meets or exceeds British Standards and industry regulations, to ensure our buildings are future-proofed, inclusive, accessible and sustainable.

This combined approach has had an immediate impact on construction-related carbon emissions.

We currently have planning permission for a solar farm and are in the process of implementing this project. The solar farm will consist of 17,000 individual panels on Lancaster University-owned agricultural land at Forrest Hills, part of the University's conference and events space, just off Bailrigg Campus.

The University is set to virtually eliminate the use of gas for heating on its Bailrigg campus through the creation of a new 'Low Carbon Energy Centre' following more than £21 million of funding from the Government's Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF). The Centre will use air source heat pumps, thermal storage and electrical infrastructure to create an innovative heat network providing 45 GWh of low carbon heat, which will be sufficient to provide heating and hot water for nearly the entire campus.



Infrastructure development

Community engagement

Objectives:

- Run 3 x Sustainability Knowledge Exchange meetings throughout 2024 to update staff and students on best practices and updates from the sustainability team.
- Run the Wind Turbine Community Benefit Fund for 23/24 year – donate £20,000 this year to local sustainable projects

The wider University also organises events and projects that students, staff and the local community can join in with. One example of this is the ReStore Lancaster shop on campus. The shop is a partnership between the University and St John's Hospice and is both a charity shop with donated items for sale, alongside selling affordable and eco-friendly products to the campus community.

We also run Sustainability Knowledge Exchange meetings every term on campus which showcases examples of sustainable best practices and updates from the University sustainability team.

For 2023/24 year, Campus in the City is returning for the first time since before the COVID pandemic. During Spring 2024, Campus in the City is a community three-day festival running at various locations across Lancaster city centre, bringing together exciting sustainable and educational activities from University academics for local families and the community.

Biodiversity

Objectives:

- Achieve Green Flag Award accreditation for 23/24 year
- Work with students to track mammal sightings on campus for 23/24 year

Bailrigg Campus sits within a parkland landscape covering 62 acres, which is equivalent to more than 47 football pitches. The estate contains a diverse mix of habitats including woodland, grasslands, and waterbodies. To manage these important ecological assets the grounds team uses several environmental techniques to support the different habitats, wildlife, and ecosystems.

The University's strategy for protecting and enhancing the landscape aims to ensure that negatively impacted areas of campus, through activities such as constructing new buildings, it mitigates those impacts by either developing new environments or enhancing existing habitats elsewhere on the estate to the benefit of both the wildlife and campus users.



The allotment on campus next to the ECOHub where plants, flowers and produce is grown.

Waste management

Objectives:

- Reduce annual residual waste to landfill per head to an annual target value of 32kg/head by the end of 2024.
- Achieve 70% of waste diverted from landfills by the end of 2024.

Lancaster University's Waste & Recycling Strategy was adopted in 2011. The projects and actions implemented as elements of the Waste Strategy have resulted in significant improvements in recycling rates and major reductions in carbon emissions associated with recycling and waste disposal.

We work closely with Lancaster City Council and Cumbria Waste to ensure the minimum amount of waste goes to landfill, and the maximum amount is recycled or reused. All waste collections on campus are done using electric trucks to reduce carbon emissions.

Travel and transport

Objectives:

- Produce a new and updated version of the LU Travel Plan for the 2022-27 period and the annual travel action plan for the year 23/24.
- Produce and obtain approval for the revised Stagecoach partnership Agreement.

The University encourages sustainable transport choices for everybody; and continually aims to reduce the negative impacts of travel such as congestion, carbon emissions and air pollution. We now have over 1500 dedicated bicycle parking spaces, across 80 locations on campus plus an improved Lancaster University Bus Station that was redeveloped in summer 2023.

The new travel decision tree and travel guidance aims to support the carbon reduction target concerning air travel at Lancaster University, specifically for academics and staff travelling on business on behalf of the University. A carbon data dashboard will be available to departments giving access to real-time information based on past trips within their areas.



Free student bike racks on campus.

Sustainable procurement

Objectives:

- 75% of high-value suppliers (those with an expenditure of £50,000 or more a year) to be on contract by the end of 2024. This means they are signed up to enhanced Sustainability criteria, i.e. Modern Slavery Policies, Environmental policies, etc.
- We aim to have all our 'key' suppliers managed by a Procurement Manager and required to:

Share their Carbon Data, to create/share a Carbon Reduction Plan or Carbon Management Plan

To create a Sustainability Action Plan

Facilities suppliers are asked to report on the number of staff employed locally.

The University has a Procurement Strategy which provides a framework for expenditure and is consistent with its environmental and social aims. This Sustainable Procurement Guidance is consistent with the Procurement Strategy and based on the best practices, standards and training provided by HEPA (The Higher Education Procurement Association), CIPS (The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply) and CCS Crown Commercial Services, (responsible for central government procurement).

Sustainable procurement processes should address the following key aims:

- Minimise demand for resources, for example, by reducing overall purchasing of new items and using resource-efficient products;
- Minimise the negative impacts of goods, services and works, for example, by making 'greener' product choices and reducing the impact of any waste produced;
- Ensure that fair contract prices and terms are applied, for example, by mandating ethical employment standards for all suppliers;
- Provide opportunities for small and medium businesses, particularly those operating in the local area.

All members of the Procurement Team have undertaken Sustainable Procurement training and are well-placed to support staff when establishing ongoing contracts and purchasing specific one-off requirements.

Contact Us

For further information, please email sustainability@lancaster.ac.uk