

## Environmental Sustainability Vision, Policy and Strategy

**Sponsor:**

**Author:**

Environmental Sustainability  
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### 1. Vision

- 1.1 Durham University is one of the world's best universities. We are committed to producing world-leading and world-changing research, including much that directly addresses issues of environmental sustainability. Through our academic departments and colleges, we provide our students with an education that is challenging and transformative, to ensure that they can enrich society through their employment and their role as global citizens.
- 1.2 The overarching goal of the University Strategy 2017-2027 is to secure academic success and world-leading position on a sustainable basis. As part of the requirement to be sustainable, we are committed to making Durham University one of the most environmentally sustainable universities in the UK. To achieve this goal will require the active commitment of every member of the University community.
- 1.3 We are already doing well by providing environmental policies and procedures, promoting awareness with the Greenspace Icons, and enabling behavioral change, actively reducing our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and working with the academic and student environmental champions. But there is so much more we could do: we will introduce more environmental sustainability into the research agenda, the teaching curriculum and the Durham Award scheme; improve governance regarding environmental compliance; reduce our waste, energy and water consumption proportionally against our growth in staff and student numbers; better monitor and improve on the biodiversity of our estate; reduce both local and national emissions and pollutants from our travel; creating a smart, sustainable approach to the University strategy and Estates masterplan.

### 2. Policy Framework

- 2.1 Durham University enjoys a high-quality environment and is committed to maintaining, and wherever possible, improving the quality of this environment, both for the people who live and work in the University and for the wider community. This commitment is reflected in policies which seek to make it one of the most environmentally sustainable universities in the UK. We will do this by:
  - 2.1.1 Analysing the University's environmental footprint and initiating the changes necessary for us to achieve an outstanding environmental performance.
  - 2.1.2 Ensuring all members of the University community are fully aware of their environmental impacts, personal and collective, and encouraging them all to develop a sustainable approach to their work and lifestyle.

- 2.1.3 Making the most of our excellence in research and education to achieve environmental sustainability.
- 2.1.4 Taking full advantage of the University's environmental sustainability expertise through local, national, and international partnerships.
- 2.1.5 Embedding environmental sustainability within our University three strategic goals of world-leading and world-changing research: delivering challenging and enabling research and education and providing an environmentally relevant wider student experience.

### 3. Priorities

- 3.1.1 **Compliance** – in all aspects of our environmental impacts, especially carbon emissions.
- 3.1.2 **Communication** – engaging the University community, students, staff and with the wider community on sustainability, environmental awareness, through the Greenspace Movement.
- 3.1.3 **Challenge** – all major projects, whether new build or refurbishment to demand the highest possible standards.
- 3.1.4 **Sustainability Action Plan** – promoting and delivering best practice.
- 3.1.5 **Governance** – providing accountability and management through our formal groups and teams.

### 4. About Greenspace

- 4.1 In order to bring all of our environmental initiatives and activities together, the name and concept of '**Greenspace**' was devised a decade ago. The University's Energy and Sustainability Team and the ESSPG deliver Greenspace, which communicates all of the University's Environmental Policies, Plans and Procedures. We coordinate environmental initiatives across the University with the help of our Environment Champions, Student Representatives and Steering Groups.
- 4.2 Greenspace communications center on a group of icons which represent sections of our Environmental Sustainability Strategy. There are nine icons in total, including the overall Greenspace icon. These are: Biodiversity, Energy, Fairtrade, Low Carbon Technologies, Procurement, Travel, Waste and Water.



Greenspace



Biodiversity



Energy



Fairtrade



Low Carbon  
Technologies



Procurement



Travel



Waste



Water

## 5. Commitment

5.1 Durham University's aims to be world-leading in research and engagement, education, and the wider student experience. It aims to provide Durham students with an unrivalled environment in which they will develop qualities of *inter alia* teamwork, leadership, and a strong sense of social citizenship. Our policy framework shows how our environmental sustainability vision aligns with the University strategy. In this context, we are committed to:

- 5.1.1 Promoting environmental awareness within the University community;
- 5.1.2 Continuous improvement of the environmental management system to improve environmental performance;
- 5.1.3 Establishing indicators and targets for sustainability and monitoring performance;
- 5.1.4 Reducing our carbon emissions through the implementation of our Carbon Management Plan;
- 5.1.5 Minimising our water consumption and waste production whilst increasing recycling and reuse within the University;
- 5.1.6 Protecting the environment and preventing pollution;
- 5.1.7 Fulfilling our compliance obligations;
- 5.1.8 Achieving the targets set out in the Integrated Sustainable Travel Plan;
- 5.1.9 Promoting and enhancing our sustainable purchasing policy;
- 5.1.10 Embedding environmental sustainability in research, teaching and informal education;
- 5.1.11 Enhancing the health of ecosystems and maintaining, or increasing, the diversity and abundance of native species across the University estate;
- 5.1.12 Achieving the highest possible environmental standards for all new builds and significant refurbishments;

- 5.1.13 Demonstrating institutional practices that promote environmental sustainability;
- 5.1.14 Addressing environmental sustainability in every major strategic plan;
- 5.1.15 Working with our local communities and other partners to help the region become more sustainable;
- 5.1.16 Providing the resources for the above to be achieved; and,
- 5.1.17 Policies and supporting documents will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the EMS Management Review conducted by the ESSPG.

## 6. Plans, Policies and Procedures

- 6.1 Durham University is committed to reducing its environmental impact, and improving the local environment, both for the people who live and work in the University, and for the wider community. This commitment is reflected in plans, policies and procedures which may be found at: [durham.ac.uk/greenspace/policies/](http://durham.ac.uk/greenspace/policies/)
- 6.2 Sustainability Action Plan approved by UEC in July 2021 which is aligned to EAUC Climate Action Toolkit and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 6.3 Sustainability Indicators have been created to monitor progress towards our targets and actions aligned to the SDGs and other key commitments, legislation, and regulations.



Professor Stuart Corbridge  
Vice-Chancellor and Warden

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## 7. Version Control and Review Dates

Date	Version and Changes	Authorised by:
May 2020	2 – Governance Structure Updated	Jane Robson, David Harper
March 2021	Commitments	ESSPG
December 2021	Last reviewed	ESSPG
July 2022	Update to Governance Structure	ESSPG
July 2023	Re-approved	University Executive Committee

## Environmental Sustainability Governance Structure

