Environmental Sustainability Policy

Northumbria University employs over 2,500 staff and provides higher education to approximately 29,000 students.

Our University Strategy commits to enhancing our reputation for sustainability and to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through our research, teaching, campus and operations. We are a signatory of the SDG Accord and the United Nations Academic Impact in recognition of the positive impact we can make. Many the SDGs directly relate to environmental challenges such as Climate Action, Responsible Consumption, Sustainable Cities and Life on Land, however all SDGs are impacted by environmental impacts due to their interconnected nature.

The University recognises that its activities and wider influence impact upon the environment, but, through our policies and Environmental Management System, we wish to minimise these impacts and to grow and develop in a sustainable manner. We recognise the urgency associated with environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, and our carbon management planning is addressing the feasibility of achieving zero carbon by 2040.

In addition to this Policy, the SDGs are supported by a number of additional Northumbria University Policies and Reports including:
- Equality & Diversity – supporting SDGs including Gender Equality and Reduced Inequalities
- Access & Participation Plan – supporting SDGs including Quality Education and Reduced Inequalities

Commitments

We are committed to:
- supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals through our research, educational activity, campus and operations;
- the protection of the environment, including the prevention of pollution;

- meeting, and where possible exceeding, all relevant legislation, industry standards and other environmental requirements to which the University subscribes;
- demonstrating continual improvement of the Environmental Management System (EMS) in order to enhance environmental performance.

The development of our Environmental Management System (EMS) provides a framework for achieving our environmental commitments. The scope of the EMS is defined as:

Services and operations in the provision of higher education, research and training including administration, and support services.

In order to help inform and measure environmental performance, we have developed objectives and key performance indicators, supported by our **Environmental Objectives and Actions Plan**. These are mapped to the UN SDGs.

Area	Aim	SDG
Environmental Management System	Continual improvement of the Environmental Management System.	11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Energy & Carbon	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, as supported by the **Carbon Management Plan**.	7, 11, 13
Waste & Resource Management	Support circular economy principles. Reduce the volume of waste we produce and maximise recovery and recycling of waste.	12
Water Management	Minimise our use of water.	6
Travel	Minimise the environmental impact of business travel and commuter travel, as supported by the **Sustainable Travel Management Plan**.	11
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University as outlined in the **Biodiversity Action Plan**.	11, 15
Procurement	Minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, environmental, economic and social impacts of the goods and services we buy, as supported by our **Sustainable Food Policy**.	1, 8, 12, 16
Ethical Investment	To responsibly manage direct investments as outlined in our **Ethical Investment Declaration**.	1, 3, 8, 13, 16
Sustainable Buildings	Minimise the environmental impacts of our buildings – from design to occupation, supported by our **Sustainable Construction Guidelines**.	11
Emissions & Discharges	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water.	11, 14, 15
Education for Sustainable Development	Raise awareness of sustainability among staff, students and the communities in which we work, and develop their skills and knowledge to support sustainability.	4
Research & Living Lab	Undertake research that directly supports the Sustainable Development Goals. Utilise a Living Lab approach to bring together our research, teaching,	All

	campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	
Climate Change Resilience	To be resilient to risks from weather and climate change.	13
Reputation for sustainability	To enhance the University's reputation for sustainability.	4

KPIs relating to these commitments are listed below.

Our Sustainability Policy is overseen by the University Sustainability Management Group and approved by the University Executive. It is reviewed on an annual basis and reported on via the Sustainability Annual Report published on the University website.

Approved on behalf of the University Executive:

Signed: **October 2020**

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
Environmental Management System	Continual improvement of the EMS.	Environmental Management System certification.	Maintain ISO14001:2015 certification.	2021
Energy and Carbon	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions.	Scope 1 and 2 emissions.	70% reduction from 2005/6	2030
			5% reduction from 2018/19	2021
		Scope 3 emissions.	5% reduction from 2018/19	2021
		Minimum DEC rating.	D	2025
		Carbon emissions from IT use.	Determine baseline	2021
Waste and Resource Management	Support circular economy principles. Reduce the volume of waste we produce and maximise recovery and recycling of waste.	Total waste produced (tonnes)	15% reduction from 2015/16	2030
			2% reduction from 2018/19	2021
		Total waste sent for reuse, composting, anaerobic digestion or recycling (%).	65%	2030
			41%	2021
		Non-hazardous waste sent to landfill (%) (excluding third party contractors)	0%	2021
		Waste tonnage and recycling rates from contractors onsite at the University	Determine baseline	2021
Water Management	Minimise the volume of water we use.	Total mains water consumption (m3).	40% reduction from 2015/16	2030
			2% reduction from 2018/19	2021
Travel	Minimise the environmental impact of business travel and the travel undertaken by staff, students and visitors to and from the University.	Emissions from Business Travel (CO2e).	20% reduction from 2015/16	2030
			5% reduction from 2018/19	2021
		Single Occupancy vehicle rate for commuter travel.	City Campus: Staff 24%, Students 7% Coach Lane Campus: Staff 59%, Students 29%	2022
		Emissions from commuter travel (average CO2e per head).	3% reduction from 2019/20	2022
		Emissions from student start and end of term travel.	Improve methodology to determine baseline	2022

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University.	Metres of space considered medium or high value for biodiversity (m^2).	2% increase in moderate / high value from 2017/18	2021
		Hedgehog friendly campus certification.	Silver	2021
Procurement	To minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, environmental, economic and social impacts of the goods and services we buy.	Flexible Framework.	Level 2	Dec 2021
		Sustainability considerations within category management plans.	To be included within the top five priority categories	2021
		Food for Life certification.	Bronze	2021
Sustainable Buildings	To minimise the environmental impacts of our buildings – from design to occupation.	Average DEC rating	C	2021
		SKA Rating of refurbishment projects.	All projects in 2020-21 to achieve a SKA rating.	2021
Emissions & Discharges	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water.	Scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions.	70% reduction from 2015/16	2030
			5% reduction from 2018/19	2021
		Number of significant spills.	0	2021
Education for Sustainable Development	To raise awareness of sustainability among staff, students and the communities in which we work, and develop their skills and knowledge to support sustainable development.	Number of programmes embedding learning about one or more SDGs.	Determine baseline.	2021
		Number of modules embedding learning about one or more SDGs	3% increase from 2019/20	2021
		Sustainability Ambassadors Programme	Launch the new programme	2021
Research & Living Lab	Undertake research that directly supports the UN SDGs.	United Nations Academic Impact membership.	Maintain membership.	2021
	Utilise the Living Lab approach to bring together our research, teaching, campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	Develop reporting to capture the multiple ways through which our research supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to identify any scope for improvement.	Develop and implement reporting.	2021
Climate Change Resilience	To be resilient to risks from weather and climate change.	Production of Climate Resilience Plan and integration with the Estate Masterplan.	1	Dec 2020

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
Reputation for sustainability	To enhance the University's reputation for sustainability.	People and Planet University League	Top 10	2023
		THE Impact League.	Top 50	2023
		Student rating for institutional commitment to sustainability.	70%	2023

Notes:
- Targets based on annual changes are benchmarked against 2018/19 rather than 2019/20 due to the impact of Covid-19 in 2019/20 which would make comparisons unrepresentative e.g. business travel could not occur for several months within 2019/20.
- The date listed under the 'Deadline' refers to the academic year ending with the date listed, unless otherwise stated i.e. '2021' indicates that the target should be achieved in the academic year ending July 2021.