

## Environmental Sustainability Policy 2024/25

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.

In addition to this Policy, the SDGs are supported by 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.**

The following policies and plans set out our commitment to supporting the UN Sustainability Goals:

Area	Aim	SDG
<b>Environmental Management System</b>	Continual improvement of the Environmental Management System.	11, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>Energy &amp; Carbon</b>	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, as supported by our <a href="#">Carbon Management Strategy 2020-2030</a> .	7, 11, 13
<b>Waste &amp; Resource Management</b>	Support circular economy principles. Reduce the volume of waste we produce and maximise recovery and recycling of waste, as supported by our <a href="#">Waste Management Policy</a> and <a href="#">Single Use Plastics Policy</a> . Northumbria operate a 'No Landfill Policy'. All of our residual waste is diverted from landfill and sent for recovery via energy-from-waste.	12
<b>Water Management</b>	Minimise our use of water, as supported by the <a href="#">Sustainable Water Policy</a> .	6
<b>Travel</b>	Minimise the environmental impact of business and commuter travel, as supported by our <a href="#">Travel Plan Strategy</a> .	11
<b>Careers</b>	Northumbria's <a href="#">Graduate Futures Team</a> supports our students to achieve their ambitions and make the most of their experiences, develop skills and manage their future. Our <a href="#">Careers Policy</a> describes our approach to working with partners that aim to recruit our students.	8, 17
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University as set out in our <a href="#">Biodiversity Action Plan 2024</a> .	11, 15
<b>Procurement</b>	Minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, environmental, economic and social impacts of the	1, 8, 12, 16



	goods and services we buy, as supported by our <a href="#">Sustainable Procurement Policy</a> and <a href="#">Sustainable Food Policy</a> .	
<b>Community Involvement</b>	To increase community engagement in campus sustainability projects. Supported by our <a href="#">Sustainability Engagement Plan</a> .	11, 17
<b>Ethical Investment</b>	<p>The University acknowledges the climate emergency as a significant challenge for society and future students. Consequently, the University aims to align with the Paris Agreement on climate change. Northumbria's <a href="#">Ethical Investment Declaration</a> makes provision for an annual carbon reduction budget in support of our Carbon Management Strategy 2020-2030.</p> <p>The Declaration excludes direct investment in fossil fuel companies, and includes our commitment to invest in the use and development of renewable energy, low carbon energy or renewable energy projects on campus. Investment choices will align with the University's overall Strategy, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powering an Inclusive Economy</li> <li>• Creating New Knowledge</li> <li>• Driving Social Mobility</li> </ul>	1, 3, 8, 13, 16
<b>Ethical Banking</b>	<p>The University acknowledges the importance of aligning its banking relationships with its broader social responsibilities. The University's approach to Ethical Banking is set out in <a href="#">Treasury Management and Ethical Investment Policy</a>, and includes the following principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria.</li> </ol>	1, 3, 8, 13, 16
<b>Sustainable Buildings</b>	Minimise the environmental impacts of our buildings – from design to occupation, supported by our <a href="#">Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and Guidelines</a> .	11
<b>Emissions &amp; Discharges</b>	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water.	11, 14, 15
<b>Education for Sustainable Development</b>	Raise awareness of sustainability among staff, students and the communities in which we work, and develop their skills and knowledge to support sustainability.	4
<b>Research &amp; Living Lab</b>	Undertake research that directly supports the Sustainable Development Goals. Utilise a Living Lab approach to bring together our research, teaching, campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	All

<b>Climate Change Resilience</b>	To be resilient to risks from weather and climate change.	13
<b>Reputation for sustainability</b>	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: Professor George Marston, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Projects)**

**Date: June 2024**

**Review due: June 2025**



Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline	
<b>Energy and Carbon</b>	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions.	Scope 1, 2 and 3* emissions (including Organisational/Business Travel). Scope 3 reduction targets are included within our Carbon Management Strategy 2020-2030.	80% reduction from 2014/15	2030	
			Net Zero carbon	2040	
			Maximum annual emissions of 10,523 TCO <sub>2</sub> e (Based on 9% reduction per year from 2014/15)	2024/25	
			Minimum DEC rating for campus buildings.	D	2030
<b>Waste and Resource Management</b>	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 2018/19	2030	
			Tonnage does not exceed 1303 tonnes. (Based on 1.5% reduction per year from 2018/19 baseline).	2024/25	
			Total waste sent for reuse, composting, anaerobic digestion or recycling (%)	65%	2030
			42%	2024/25	
<b>Water Management</b>	Minimise the volume of water we use.	Total mains water consumption (m3).	10% reduction from 2018/19	2030	
			Volume does not exceed 157,503m3. (Based on 1% reduction per year from 2018/19)	2024/25	
<b>Travel and Transport</b>	Minimise the environmental impact of organisational travel and the travel undertaken by staff, students and visitors to and from the University.	Emissions from Organisational/Business Travel	Reducing business travel emissions: to meet future emissions targets.	2030	
			Business travel emissions in 2023/24 were 2483 tCO <sub>2</sub> . Target 5% reduction for 2024/25.	2024/25	



Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
		Emissions from commuter travel (average CO <sub>2</sub> e per head).	30% reduction from 2019/20	2030
		Emissions from student start and end of term travel.	Establish methodology to determine baseline for 2024/25.	2024/25
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University.	Metres of space considered medium or high value for biodiversity (m <sup>2</sup> ).	2% increase in moderate / high value from our 2023 baseline (baseline measured in accordance with UK Habitat Classification survey methodology (UKHAB)).	2024/25
<b>Procurement</b>	To minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, environmental, economic and social impacts of the goods and services we buy.	Report emissions arising from procurement activities in Annual Carbon Management Report.	Use NEUPC HESCET Tool to report 100% of Scope 3 emissions deriving from items and services procured.	2024/25
		Actions within the Sustainable Food Policy.	Attain Sustainable Restaurants Association Food Made Good accreditation for 100% of non-franchised food outlets.	2024/25
<b>Emissions &amp; Discharges</b>	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water	Completion rates of 'Pollution Prevention & Spill Response' spill training course.	85%	2024/25
		Pollution incidents.	0	2024/25
<b>Education for Sustainable Development</b>	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.	Increase from 2023/24 (Research and Teaching for the SDGs Group purpose).	2024/25
		Number of students who complete Sustainability Ambassadors Programme – Bronze Level	25 students	2024/25



Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
<b>Construction &amp; Refurbishment</b>	Ensure that all construction and refurbishment projects work towards reducing our negative impacts, and where possible enhance the environment.	KPIs relating to Key Themes are included within <b>Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Guidelines</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Towards Zero Carbon Buildings</li><li>• Smart Buildings</li><li>• Living Labs</li><li>• Enhancing Biodiversity and Wellbeing</li><li>• Reducing waste</li><li>• Climate Change Adaptation</li></ul>	Individual targets for each Key Theme are included within <b>Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Guidelines</b> .	2024/25
<b>Community Involvement</b>	To learn from and contribute to sustainable practices within the communities of which we are a part.	Increase community engagement in campus sustainability projects. Supported by the Sustainability Engagement Plan.	10% increase in hosting and participation in activities with the local community, to discuss and deliver improvements in sustainability at the University and beyond.	2024/25

**Notes:**

- \*Scope 3 emissions include: organisational travel, waste, water supply, wastewater treatment and electricity transmission losses.