Environmental Sustainability Policy 2025/26

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
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 our **Carbon Management Strategy 2020-2030**.	7, 11, 13
Waste & Resource Management	Support circular economy principles. Reduce the volume of waste we produce and maximise recovery and recycling of waste, as supported by our **Waste Management Policy** and **Single Use Plastics Policy**. Northumbria operate a 'No Landfill Policy'. All of our residual waste is diverted from landfill and sent for recovery via energy-from-waste.	12
Water Management	Minimise our use of water, as supported by the **Sustainable Water Policy**.	6
Travel	Minimise the environmental impact of organisational travel and commuter travel, as supported by our **Sustainable Travel Management Plan**.	11
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University as set out in our **Biodiversity Action Plan**.	11, 15
Careers	Northumbria's Graduate Futures Team supports our students to achieve their ambitions and make the most of their experiences, develop skills and manage their future. Our Careers Policy describes our approach to working with partners that aim to recruit our students	8, 17
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 Procurement Policy** and **Sustainable Food Policy**.	1, 8, 12, 16
Community Involvement	To increase community engagement in campus sustainability projects. Supported by our **Sustainability Engagement Plan**.	11, 17
Ethical Investment	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 **Treasury Management and Ethical Investment Policy** supports our Carbon Management Strategy 2020- 2030 (pg9).	1, 3, 8, 13, 16

Ethical Banking	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 **Treasury Management and Ethical Investment Policy** (pg10).	1, 3, 8, 13, 16
Sustainable Buildings	Minimise the environmental impacts of our buildings – from design to occupation, supported by our **Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and 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, campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	All
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. It is reviewed on an annual basis and reported on via the Sustainability Annual Report published on the University website.

Approved by:

Professor John Woodward – Pro Vice Chancellor (International)

Date: June 2025
Review due: June 2026

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
Environmental Management System	Continual improvement of the EMS.	Environmental Management System certification.	Maintain ISO14001:2015 certification.	2025/26
Energy and Carbon	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions.	Scope 1, 2 and 3* emissions (including Organisational/Business Travel).	80% reduction from 2014/15	2030
			Net Zero carbon	2040
			Maximum annual emissions of 7823 CO$_2$e (Based on 9% reduction per year from 2018/19)	2025/26
		Minimum DEC rating for campus buildings.	D	2030
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 2018/19	2030
			Tonnage does not exceed 1303 tonnes. (Based on 1.5% reduction per year from 2018/19).	2025/26
		Total waste sent for reuse, composting, anaerobic digestion or recycling (%).	65%	2030
			42%	2025/26
		Waste tonnage and recycling rates from redevelopment works onsite at the University.	Determine baseline	2025/26
Water Management	Minimise the volume of water we use.	Total mains water consumption (m3).	10% reduction from 2018/19	2030
			Volume does not exceed 160,717m3. (Based on 1% reduction per year from 2018/19)	2025/26
Travel	Minimise the environmental impact of organisational travel	Emissions from Organisational/Business Travel	To meet future emissions targets, flights must remain	2030

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
	and the travel undertaken by staff, students and visitors to and from the University.		at least 50% lower than pre COVID levels.	
			Business travel emissions in 2021/22 were 840 tCO$_2$. Target 5% reduction for 2025/26.	2025/26
		Single Occupancy vehicle rate for commuter travel.	City Campus: Staff 24%, Students 7% Coach Lane Campus: Staff 59%, Students 29%	2025/26
		Emissions from commuter travel (average CO$_2$e per head).	30% reduction from 2019/20	2030
		Hold two major cycling events in conjunction with Cycling UK.	Evens to be held in October 25 and June 26.	2025/26
		Emissions from student start and end of term travel.	Establish methodology to determine baseline for 2025/2026	2025/26
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	2025/26
		Hedgehog Friendly Campus certification.	Maintain Gold certification	2025/26
Procurement	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.	2025/26
		Actions within the Sustainable Food Policy.	Attain Soil Association Food for Life accreditation for food outlets.	2025/26
Emissions & Discharges		Scope 1, 2 and 3* emissions (including Organisational Travel).	Report Scope 1,2 & 3* emissions with Annual	2030

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water.		Carbon Management Report.	
			See 'Energy & Carbon' targets.	2025/26
		Completion rates of new 'Pollution Prevention & Spill Response' spill training course.	85%	2025/26
		Pollution incidents.	0	2025/26
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.	Significant increase from 2024/25 (Research and Teaching for the SDGs Group purpose).	2025/26
		Number of students who complete Sustainability Ambassadors Programme – Bronze Level	20 students	2025/26
Research & Living Lab	Undertake research that directly supports the UN SDGs. Utilise the Living Lab approach to bring together our research, teaching, campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	United Nations Academic Impact membership.	Maintain membership.	2025/26
		Map research output against SDGs.	All research output.	2025/26
Construction & Refurbishment	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 **Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and Guidelines:** • Towards Zero Carbon Buildings • Smart Buildings • Living Labs • Enhancing Biodiversity and Wellbeing	Individual targets for each Key Theme are included within **Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and Guidelines.**	2025/26

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
		• Maximise the use of recycled products. • Climate Change Adaptation		
Community Involvement	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 a schedule of activities with the local community and other stakeholders, to discuss and deliver improvements in sustainability at the University and beyond.	2025/26

Notes:

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