



UNIVERSITY<sub>OF</sub>  
WINCHESTER

# **ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY**

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| <b>Summary:</b><br><br>The Environment Strategy commits the University to reducing its environmental impact and embedding sustainability at every level of the institution.<br><br>The Environment Strategy is produced in line with the requirements of all University Policies and Strategies including the Equality and Diversity Policy, Sustainability Policy, Biodiversity Action Plan, Travel Plan, Carbon Management Plan, Waste Policy, Catering Policy and Ethical Investment Policy. |  |

# 1. Introduction

**As a University, we hold people, the planet and all living things in the highest regard.**

We seek to make the protection and enhancement of the environment integral to all that we do, for the people who live, work and study here and for the wider community. Our Environment Strategy commits us to reducing our environmental impact and embedding sustainability at every level of the institution and in all areas of the curriculum.

## Strategy statement

**The University will implement Sustainable Development Goals within all its operations and curriculum.**

# 2. Scope

This Environment Strategy applies to all aspects of the University of Winchester's operations, teaching and community engagement. It covers the management of estates and facilities, procurement, transport, waste, energy, and biodiversity. The strategy also extends to staff, students, and collaborative partners, ensuring that sustainability principles are embedded across governance, curriculum, and external relationships.

# 3. Objectives

## Emissions and discharges

**We will reduce our carbon dioxide emissions per square metre by 55% absolute below 2006/7 levels by 2030, and by 65% relative to floor area by 2025/26.**

We will reduce the emissions and carbon footprint of the University through better management of its material resources.

We will adopt cost effective sustainable construction principles to all new build and refurbished buildings, minimising lifecycle environmental impact.

We will invest in electric vehicle technology and replace the University's fleet of vehicles with low/zero carbon alternatives at the end of their lifecycle.

We will raise awareness of the University's work to reduce its carbon footprint through student and staff engagement initiatives such as Campus Blackout and other energy reduction campaigns.

We will inspire low carbon living amongst our students and staff through awareness-raising campaigns.

We will manage parking, traffic flow and speed on campus to reduce emissions and damage to soft landscaping from vehicles.

We will minimise noise pollution by monitoring high output areas and adopting considerate construction

management and impacts on neighbours.

We will manage waste to reduce odours and overspill.

We will effectively manage and maintain chemicals, fuels, maintenance products and mechanical plant to limit discharge of fumes and odours.

We will work with Local Authorities on air quality issues within the city.

## Energy

**We will reduce our energy consumption per square metre of space in line with the University's Carbon Management Plan by 65% relative to floor area by 2025/26.**

We will continue to only purchase electricity generated from zero carbon tariffs as minimum, 100% renewable where markets allow sources, and purchase mains gas generated from 100% renewable sources as contracts are renewed.

We will switch all University Managed Houses to a tariff that supplies 100% electricity from zero carbon/ renewable sources.

We will develop opportunities to generate renewable energies on the University's campuses.

Energy efficiency measures will complement our Carbon Management Plan including:

- improving energy efficiency in buildings and work practices
- taking advantage of opportunities to improve the environmental performance of existing buildings as part of refurbishment and maintenance programmes
- incorporating environmentally sensitive designs into both new and refurbished buildings complying with relevant standards and good practice
- investigating implementing a system whereby students pay for energy on demand rather than bills being included within rent, either individually or per flat
- promoting energy awareness amongst staff and students, encouraging and enabling good environmental practice in their work and study
- identifying and implementing energy saving measures and practice energy efficiency throughout all premises, plant and equipment where it is cost effective to do so
- continuing to improve measurement, reporting and analysis of energy performance

## Water

**We will use water efficiently and develop ways to reduce, reuse and recycle water where possible.**

We will reduce water consumption per square metre of space by at least 40% below 2006/7 levels by 2025/26 through a range of cost effective measures including:

- taking advantage of opportunities to reduce water consumption of existing buildings as part of refurbishment and maintenance programmes
- eradicating leaks

- water harvesting and use of grey water
- installing additional water butts for external grounds use where feasible
- seeking added value to our water contract through additional water reduction initiatives from our water supplier
- undertaking awareness raising initiatives with students and staff

## Transport

### **We will make sustainable travel the norm.**

We will continue to improve our sustainable transport offer, including through ring fencing car parking income to subsidise sustainable transport initiatives, including Winchester Park & Ride Service and cycling, and through provision of discounts on public transport.

We will continue to maintain and upgrade University car parks.

We will implement measures outlined in the University's Travel Plan by:

- promoting and encouraging environmentally friendly modes of transport to staff and students
- retaining and improving agreements with existing transport providers and seeking new supplier discounts to increase the suite of options available to staff and students
- surveying staff and students every two years on travel habits and attitudes to sustainable travel
- reducing parking capacity and increasing its cost to staff, visitors and students, in line with University Parking Regulations
- decarbonising the University vehicle fleet by implementing a rolling replacement programme of vehicles and switching them to electric or other forms of zero/low carbon power by 2025/26
- increasing the University's electric car fleet to reduce the amount of business use by staff using their private vehicles
- offering interest free green travel loans to staff
- supporting staff to avoid unnecessary business travel and where necessary encourage use of public transport or the University's electric car fleet
- prohibiting domestic air travel unless prior approval is received from a Dean or Director, monitoring departmental international air travel, calculating the costs of offsetting the carbon produced on an annual basis and offsetting unavoidable flights
- increasing the number of charging points for electric vehicles and offering preferential parking for users of these vehicles
- refurbishing and installing new secure covered cycle parking at appropriate locations on campus and providing a monthly bike doctor service to staff and students
- working with Local Authorities to improve external wayfinding and public footpaths to encourage walking for staff and students
- increasing the number of the University's electric cycle fleet for staff and student use

## Waste and recycling

**We will increase recycling rates to 80% of all waste generated on campus by 2025/26.**

We will continue to collect good quality data from Pay-by-Weight data and work collaboratively with other higher education institutions on waste management procurement, seeking innovation through our waste contracts.

We will aim to continue reducing our non-residential waste mass per full time equivalent (FTE) figure, 25.88kg in 2016/17, and remain in the lower quartile of the higher education sector. To do this, we will reduce the amount of waste generated and disposed of by implementing waste minimisation and recycling programmes including:

- making it easy for staff and students to recycle, ensuring there are plenty and convenient recycling points with clear labelling
- introducing a policy to no longer empty under-desk bins in offices, focusing on centralised waste and recycling points
- continuing to collect food waste from University catering, student accommodation and in departmental kitchens
- investigating the feasibility of introducing food waste collection points in communal areas or lecture theatres
- supporting measures to reduce food waste through initiatives and engagement programmes and communicating to staff and students in partnership with our Catering and Housing teams
- remove use of single use plastics in the University's catering outlets and shops through appropriate measures such as reusable coffee cups and water bottle provisions along with installing additional water bottle fillers
- carrying out Single Use Plastics audits on departments across the university and developing individual actions plans for the reduction and removal of unnecessary plastics.
- hosting waste stakeholder workshops with relevant departments including Catering, Campus Services, Housing and the Student Union
- reducing packaging, but where essential, to encourage use of recyclable packaging materials
- improving communication to staff and students on the University's recycling facilities

## Sustainable Buildings

**We will ensure all construction and refurbishment projects are built to the highest environmental standards possible.**

We will select design standards e.g. BREEAM Excellent, with ambitious environmental objectives that align with the University's values.

We will support the objectives of the proposed Sustainable Buildings Policy by:

- ensuring all contractors working at the University comply to its Standard Specification with regards to energy efficiency e.g. use of low energy/LED lighting, lighting controls, efficient plant and controls, water use minimisation measures
- ensuring all contractors submit waste data and Duty of Care information for the projects they are involved in and maximise recycling of waste
- working towards the electrification of all new builds and phasing out the use of gas
- using Display Energy Certificates as a way of monitoring and targeting the environmental performance of small-scale building refurbishments
- utilising environmentally friendly building materials wherever possible, including Forestry Stewardship Council timber, low Volatile Organic Compound paints and recycled materials

## Biodiversity

**We will implement actions within the Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 Update undertaken by Hampshire Wildlife Trust.**

We will continue to enhance biodiversity on campus by:

- minimising chemical use in fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides
- timing estates works so as not to interfere with the bird nesting season (March- August)
- purchasing and using peat-free compost as standard
- developing a green space metric to track the amount of green space across the University's estate to ensure any development on green space is appropriately mitigated and produces a biodiversity net gain
- supporting use of the campus grounds as an educational and wellbeing resource for students, staff and the community at large
- monitoring and maintaining swift nesting locations in University buildings on campus and in the city, including University Managed Housing
- working with Winchester City Council on conservation tasks at Westhill Cemetery to improve the chalk grassland habitat, recruiting staff and student volunteers for tasks
- improving habitat to encourage bird, bat and small mammal nesting opportunities
- improving planting of native flowers and trees
- continuing to participate in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus initiative

## Climate Education and Green Skills

**At the University of Winchester students are supported to understand climate change, sustainability, and develop relevant skills. This work is captured in our [Climate Change Action Plan](#).**

In the context of our commitment to academic freedom and free speech, the University will

strengthen its work around Climate Education and Green Skills by:

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that all courses engage undergraduate students with matters relating to climate change and sustainability, removing any 'cold-spots';
- Developing practice in relation to climate education by maximising the potential of our institutional membership of EUAC (Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges - the Alliance for Sustainable Leadership in Education);
- Running internal staff development sessions to develop practice in relation to climate education;
- Ensuring guidance relating to the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) alerts students and staff to the environmental impact of using AI;
- Supporting students who wish to connect their interests in sustainability with their professional ambitions, for example through the Careers Centre promoting organisations, opportunities and Green Careers Week.

## Sustainable Procurement

**We will embed sustainability into the procurement process.**

The University will ensure that environmental and ethical responsibility is considered in all purchasing decisions, tenders and contracts, in line with the Procurement Policy published in 2016.

We will work with the Procurement Specialist to ensure procurement decisions seek to ensure that goods and services are procured by:

- questioning whether goods and services are definitely necessary by exploring opportunities of whether the product already exists on campus and is available to use
- not endangering human or environmental health and minimising damage to the environment via obtaining the original resource, resource use, manufacturing methods, pollution, emissions and other waste by-products throughout the life cycle
- running in line with the University's Carbon Management Plan, electrical goods/services should be Energy Saving Trust certification minimum A rated and European Union Energy Star rated. Government Buying Standards and Green Public Procurement recommendations should be sought
- having minimal packaging and where possible, utilising recycled and recyclable packaging and operating/offering a packaging take-back compliance scheme
- prohibiting the use of materials derived from threatened ecosystems, species or environments, and avoiding products and services that cause cruelty to animals
- supporting the principles of fair and ethical trade, and social and ecological labels
- selecting in accordance with whole life costs and benefits
- sourcing from recycled materials
- ensuring products are durable, recyclable, repairable, refillable or re-usable as appropriate



- sourcing from suppliers who can demonstrate sound sustainable practices throughout their own supply chain
- sourcing locally and where this isn't possible ensuring sustainable modes of transport are used

## Ethical Investment

**We will commit to environmental sustainability through the implementation of our ethical investment policy.**

The use of positive ethical criteria in assessing companies is firmly incorporated within the University's Ethical Investment Policy through a process of constructive engagement with business using our ethical assessment criteria for:

- Responsible employment practices
- Best corporate governance practice
- Conscientiousness with regard to human and animal rights
- Sustainable environmental practice
- Sensitivity towards the communities in which business operates

Where required for major construction projects, we will only obtain external funding from ethical sources.

We will continue to support People & Planet's Fossil Free Declaration and our full divestment commitment for no investments in fossil fuels and receive no research funding from the fossil fuel industry.

We will continue to engage on a revision of our investment portfolio to ensure funds are fully divested.

We will remain accredited by the Living Wage Foundation as a Living Wage employer.

We will continue to seek further ethical investment opportunities.

We will continue to review treasury management as funds on long term deposits mature for reinvestment.

## Community

**We will continue and build upon external engagement to further develop internal and external capacity and knowledge, and influence wider policies.**

We will continue to work with the local community to improve initiatives in environmental sustainability.

We will support opportunities to work collaboratively with the local community to enhance provision of student learning and volunteering off campus relating to environmental and social sustainability.

We will continue to support Winchester Action on Climate Change and encourage participation in environmentally sustainable behaviour and activities amongst staff and students.

We will continue to enhance the reputation of the University within the local community, business and the Higher Education sector, which in turn will lead to greater opportunities for collaboration and improved student attraction and retention.

## Good Management

**We will continue to integrate environmental principles into the University's operational procedures and promote best practice at every level.**

As the University moves towards Integrated Reporting, we will ensure environmental performance targets and metrics are monitored and presented appropriately.

We will continue to hold quarterly Sustainability Committee meetings, with representation from faculties and key areas within the University including professional services, trade unions and the Students Union.

We will ensure all new starters are inducted into environmental practices and are aware of environmental initiatives.

We will review environmental management procedures on a regular basis.

We will implement a University wide Environmental Management System.

We will achieve compliance with all appropriate legislation.

We will assess the feasibility of devolving energy and other utility budgets to professional services and faculties to enhance accountability and incentivise energy efficiency.

We will publish, promote and regularly review this Environment Strategy, including through the annual Environment Strategy Report.

## Measuring performance

We will monitor the effect of the Environment Strategy and related policies through the annual environmental objectives and the Estates Management Statistics (EMS) submitted as part of the annual HESA return.

We will publish an annual Environment Strategy Report to update on progress, which will be communicated to all internal and external stakeholders.

We will strive to improve our position in the annual People & Planet University League, aiming for a top 20 placing in the University League.

We will align with the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard, being adopted by Estates and Facilities Services.

We welcome feedback from staff, students and other stakeholders to allow us to continually improve our environmental performance and support others to embrace sustainability, both on campus and outside the University.