



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

The University of Aberdeen has, as part of its Aberdeen 2040 strategy, established 'Sustainable' as one of four strategic themes alongside 'Inclusive', 'Interdisciplinary' and 'International'.

As part of that strategy, the University is committed to constant improvement in its environmental performance as part of its wider commitment to sustainability, the delivery of net zero before 2040, and to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

We recognise that in pursuing our educational and research objectives, there is a need to protect our immediate environment. We will do so by exercising proper control over all our activities, promoting the sustainable use of resources, discouraging wasteful practices, preventing pollution, and working towards the campus improvements necessary to achieve net zero before 2040.

We will encourage awareness of environmental responsibility among our staff and students, while promoting environmental best practice in the management of all our activities.

Our commitments, targets and actions are detailed below:

Energy, Emissions and Discharges	
<p><i>Commitments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to promote energy efficiency across the University campus; to minimise greenhouse gas emissions arising from our activities; to prevent pollution and manage discharges. <p><i>Context:</i></p> <p>International and national targets have been set for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from energy use in the long and medium term. These targets are set out as part of the context for our Net Zero Strategy and inform our short-term target setting.</p>	<p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the emissions reduction targets established in our Net Zero Strategy including the elimination of Scope 1 & 2 emissions from energy use. • Before 2040 have achieved the full decarbonisation of our campus heating and use electricity exclusively from renewable sources. • Increase the use of energy efficiency technologies to reduce energy consumption. • Raise staff awareness of the need to reduce energy consumption. • Heat occupied areas to a maximum of 20°C in the heating season. • Investigate the installation of energy efficiency, renewable and low-carbon technologies on and off site. • Implement monitoring and targeting projects with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions arising from energy use. <p><i>Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place a Net Zero Strategy that articulates the targets and pathways necessary to deliver the Aberdeen 2040 commitment to achieve net zero before 2040. • Report annually on emissions reduction performance via the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties reporting scheme. • Adopt best practice in the field of environmental protection, adhere to all relevant codes of practice, and pro-actively manage greenhouse gas emissions that have an impact on the environment.

Water	
<p>Commitments: to reduce water consumption arising from campus operations, promote water conservation and encourage measures that minimise wastage; to provide free plumbed-in water supplies to reduce the demand for bottled water; to eliminate the use of bottled water in catering operations.</p> <p>Context: Fresh water is a valuable resource. The infrastructure required to treat, deliver and ultimately dispose of the fresh water we use is complex. Reducing water consumption is part of a rounded approach to resource efficiency.</p>	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce water consumption year-on-year. • Embed measures to reduce water use in all new and refurbishment projects. • Adhere to all local and national regulation regarding the use and disposal of water. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in technologies to reduce water consumption and to recycle water e.g. rain water harvesting. • Report annually on water usage and reuse as part of PBCCD framework • Improve leak identification through effective water metering. • Install plumbed in water supplies across our campuses to reduce (or eliminate) the consumption of bottled water and contribute to a reduction in single-use plastic containers.

Sustainable Buildings (New Build, Refurbishment & Extension)	
<p>Commitments: to ensure that new build, extension and refurbishment projects reflect the institutional commitment to minimising environmental impacts and the delivery of net zero commitments; to embed high standards of energy and water efficiency and sustainable design in all capital projects.</p> <p>Context: Our built environment is among the most important areas in which to embed commitments to sustainability. By ensuring that our built environment supports sustainable development and net zero, we set the campus context within which all sustainability issues can be considered.</p>	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New build projects will achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' and will target a minimum EPC rating of 'A'. • Refurbishment projects will aim to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good', and project specific targets will be set to improve the EPC ratings of the buildings, aiming for a minimum rating of 'C' where possible. • Set project specific targets to match (or exceed) WRAP's guidelines for the total value of materials used that derive from recycled and reused content in the products and materials selected. • Develop in-house modelling to assess energy performance and plan future energy efficiency measures. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint BREEAM assessors to all Design Teams. • Embed consideration of 'life-cycle' costs, including energy and emissions, throughout the project. • Embed sustainability criteria on all project risk registers and report consistently on sustainability performance to all project boards. • Identify low-carbon performance, water reduction and energy efficiency as a priority in all construction projects. • Investigate, and incorporate where appropriate, renewable energy technologies in capital projects. • Investigate adoption of the Net Zero Public Sector Buildings Standards or an equivalent verification framework.

Waste Management	
<p>Commitments: to responsibly dispose of waste in accordance with legislation and University Codes of Practice, particularly the responsible disposal of hazardous waste; to make efficient use of resources; to review opportunities and implement measures to reduce the volume of waste generated; to increase the proportion of that waste which is reused and recycled in accordance with the principles of the waste hierarchy; to embed waste management into corporate policies and processes.</p> <p>Context: Scotland's Zero Waste Plan sets out the Scottish Government's vision for a zero-waste society. This vision describes a Scotland where all waste is seen as a resource; waste is minimised; valuable resources are not disposed of in landfills, and most waste is sorted, leaving only limited amounts to be treated. The plan is designed to exceed the requirements set out in the European Waste Directive.</p>	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure and report on waste disposal by all routes (reuse, recycling, energy-from-waste, and landfill) aiming to improve recycling and reuse rates annually. • 70% recycling by 2025 with a maximum of 5% to landfill (Scottish Government Target) [EU target 70% by 2030]. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an area or specific building(s) that can be used as a test bed for targeted waste reduction and recycling initiatives (e.g. linked to laboratory LEAF accreditation). • Improve recycling facilities on campus and introduce 'recycling on the go' points externally. • Encourage waste reduction and recycling through effective tendering of waste management contracts. • Continue working with laboratory colleagues and others to ensure the responsible disposal of hazardous and clinical waste streams. • Eliminate the use of single-use plastics in campus catering and work to reduce the use of plastics more generally. • Ensure that any disposable items used in campus catering are compostable or biodegradable.

Business Travel, Commuting and Travel Planning	
<p>Commitments: to reduce carbon emissions from commuting and fleet vehicles; to promote a wide range of environmentally and socially responsible transport methods and to encourage users to select the best transport choice for their circumstances; to ensure the best utilisation of University parking resources; to continually improve and promote the range of low carbon transport options available to the University community.</p> <p>Context: Local and national government policy requires travel plans to be implemented by organisations that generate large volumes of commuting and business-related travel. Industry best practice is that these travel plans are in line with the PAS 500 benchmark.</p>	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from business travel by 40% from 2018/19 levels by 2025. • Put in place a Travel Plan that establishes longer-term targets and ambitions for influencing commuting, active travel, and other travel related behaviours. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct biennial travel surveys to monitor business travel and commuting trends in staff and student travel behaviours and report on progress. • Continue to monitor and report e.g. via PBCCD, on business travel and fleet vehicle emissions. • Include business travel in scope as part of institutional net zero target setting. • Report on staff and student commuting as part of our Public Bodies Climate Change Duty Reporting. • Report on student relocation travel as part of our Public Bodies Climate Change Duty reporting.

Staff and Student Engagement	
<p><i>Commitments:</i> to raise awareness of sustainability and environmental issues with University staff, students and other stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Context:</i> Although technical solutions and the careful management of operational practice represent important strands of activity, the need to engage our various communities in these issues is also vital. We will encourage all staff and students to recognise the responsibility they have for using resources as efficiently as possible.</p>	<p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote initiatives and awareness raising measures that support all strands of policy. • Through staff surveys establish a baseline for awareness of institutional sustainability initiatives. <p><i>Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce mechanisms to encourage staff engagement with sustainability issues e.g. School & Directorate Reporting Framework. • Provide appropriate advice and guidance on all aspects of environmental sustainability e.g. supporting work on sustainable laboratories. • Maintain a strong campus presence promoting environmental sustainability. • Work with the AUSA to support its efforts to engage the student body in sustainability issues. • Encourage colleagues to undertake an online training module to raise awareness of these issues.

Monitoring and Reporting	
<p><i>Commitments:</i> to provide University management and other stakeholders with regular and appropriate reporting on environmental performance.</p> <p><i>Context:</i> Alongside the formal reporting mechanism put in place as part of the Public Bodies Climate Change Duty, we intend to improve internal reporting of environmental sustainability issues and raise awareness of performance.</p>	<p><i>Targets:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report annually as part of the Annual Report and Accounts on sustainability performance. • Report annually to the Scottish Government as part of the Public Bodies Climate Change Duty reporting scheme. • Produce annual Sustainable Development Goals reports. <p><i>Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and monitor high-level Key Performance Indicators for environmental sustainability and net zero. • Regular review, through the Sustainable Development Committee, of targets and policy and of reports detailing progress towards those targets.

Metadata			
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Author / Creator	Fraser Lovie for Estates & Facilities		
Owner	Sustainable Development Committee		
Date published / approved	May 2007 (Court)		
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Audience	All		
Related documents	<p>Aberdeen 2040 Strategy; Net Zero Strategy; Sustainability Policy.</p> <p>This policy replaced earlier stand-alone Environmental, Waste, Utilities, Transport and Sustainable Buildings policies in a consolidated document that also covers Emissions & Discharges, Staff & Student Engagement, and Monitoring & Reporting. Biodiversity is now covered by a stand-alone Policy.</p>		
Subject / Description	A statement detailing the University's commitment and associated targets to minimise its impact on the environment and to promote environmental awareness.		
Equality Impact Assessment	An EIA was undertaken for the original SSR Strategy.		
Section	Estates & Facilities (Sustainability)		
Theme	Aberdeen 2040: Sustainable		