



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Sustainability Strategy

2026

v1 01/03/2023

leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Sustainability at LBU

Vision:

At Leeds Beckett University we are committed to embracing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) across all our work. We recognise the impact we have and the changes we must make as an organisation, and the influence we have as a leader in our community and educator of the leaders of the future

Part of our work must look inwards and reflect the changes we must make within the University to increase our positive impact, inspiring our students, colleagues, and partners to take action to reduce our collective impact on the planet. But we will also look outwards, and deliver a positive influence on society improving social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability.

We have signed up to the UN SDG accord, developed this ambitious Sustainability Strategy, and we are investing in greening our campuses and courses to ensure Leeds Beckett University is playing its part in tackling the climate emergency.

Declaration of a Climate Emergency:

Leeds Beckett University joins the Government, Universities UK, Leeds City Council, and many partners in declaring a climate emergency, and we commit to tackling climate change, and ensuring sustainable development is central to our university purpose and operations.

Our Sustainability Principles:

- We play our part in tackling climate change by developing and delivering a Net Zero commitment for scope 1 and 2 and tackling our Scope 3 emissions
- Sustainability is incorporated and embed into our strategies, policies, and practices
- We systematically embed education for sustainable development, and the Sustainable Development Goals in our education
- Our research and knowledge exchange is informed by principles and practice of sustainability, and we promote research aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals
- We enhance our collective understanding of sustainability through a commitment to training and development
- We celebrate and reward work which contributes to our success in sustainability
- We lead engagement and influence local partners, suppliers, and communities to progress sustainable initiatives and towards delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Our facilities and activities provide societal benefit to local communities, and our investments and expenditure are made responsibly and with sustainability-led decision making
- We are data-led in understanding, monitoring, and openly reporting our progress

Key Performance Indicators:

To progress and hold ourselves to account we have set two objectives in our University Strategy relating to sustainability.

- 1. Carbon Net-Zero (Scope 1 and 2) by 2035, and to invest in understanding Scope 3 to define future targets**
- 2. Achieve Silver in AUDE's Sustainability Leadership Scorecard by 2026, through integrating and aligning sustainability principles into core business**

The Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS) has been used as our framework to understand, assess, and report on the integration of sustainability across the university. The scorecard was used to identify our 10 University principles to orientate our work across all areas of the university towards sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals. This supports our vision for sustainability being part of core, day-to-day work and inherent in local decision making across the University.

A 'living' Strategic Plan

Our vision for sustainability at Leeds Beckett University focusses on the integration of sustainability and sustainable practice through the University. The staging and implementation of this strategy will naturally need to flex and respond to the many changes and pressures across the University (and sector), and to ensure its partnership with the delivery of the wider University Strategy (2026).

Therefore, this strategy outlines the high-level vision, long term goals, gaps and opportunities identified through an extensive review period and critical analysis against our chosen framework (Sustainable Leadership Scorecard), upon which annual plans will be recommended to the University Executive Team for the mobilisation and implementation of the strategy. This will also enable us to take a more dynamic and co-produced approach harmonising our strategic ambitions with the interests and expertise of our university community.

Governance

The Sustainability Advisory Group will review the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard quarterly to provide regular monitoring of improvements against our ambitions, and we will annually review progress on achieving Net Zero. These will align with our internal reporting and advising routes – reporting quarterly to the University Executive Team, and annually to the Finance, Staffing and Resource Committee to outline progress, recommend subsequent programmes of work, and receive appropriate direction and accountability.

Our Environmental Management System, externally accredited to ISO 14001, will be expanded to cover all areas required to meet the commitments in this strategy, and to enable a programme of continuous improvement.

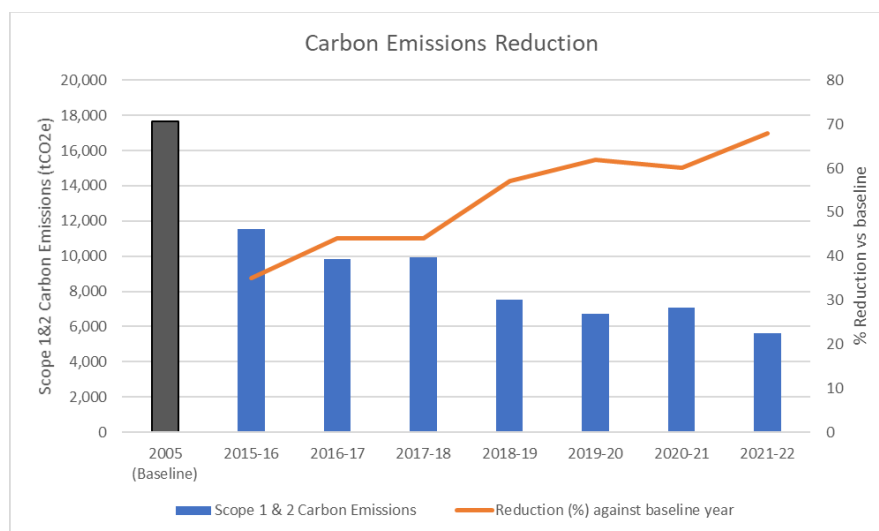
Our Commitment to Delivering Net Zero

Key Performance Indicator: Net zero by 2035 for scope 1 and 2 emissions and setting a baseline for our Scope 3 emission

There is no doubt that the earth's climate is changing, and that human activity has accelerated this change. As one of the top 5 employers in the city of Leeds and as a large university with an annual spend of £5 million on utilities and £90 million on our supply chain, we have a responsibility to lead the way in eliminating carbon emissions from our activities and to work with others to eliminate their emissions.

In 2011 we published our first Carbon Management Strategy and used our scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions (primarily our gas and electricity consumption) for 2005 as our baseline year to set targets against. In 2016 we published our second Carbon Management Strategy; Figure 1 shows our progress over the last 7 years.

Figure 1. Carbon Emissions (Scope 1 and 2) since 2005 baseline assessment



Of our scope 1 & 2 emissions, gas accounts for 41%, electricity 59% and university vehicles 0.02%. All the electricity we purchase is from renewable sources, but as we account for and report emissions attributable to the distribution network and infrastructure this provides a limit to the progress made to date. Though our new Energy Strategy, we will evaluate the most appropriate ways of using, procuring, and reporting to truly reflect the progress we have made, and commit to making by 2035.

The focus of our efforts will be on decarbonising our heating systems, moving away from the current reliance on gas. A detailed Decarbonisation Plan will set out, on a building-by-building basis, how we will achieve this and will fully integrate with, and compliment, the Estate Masterplan and Maintenance Improvement Plan (MIP). Electricity is currently much more expensive than gas, so to mitigate the cost of moving to a more electrified energy strategy, we will continue our efforts to reduce the amount of energy we consume (through energy efficiency and energy-saving measures), control when we consume it (through storage and load-spreading) and generate more of it where we can (through on-site renewable generation such as solar, ground-source, air-source)

To achieve net-zero on our remaining Scope 1 & 2 emissions, we will develop an Energy Strategy and a detailed, costed Decarbonisation Plan for the estate that will focus on the following areas of work:

- 1) Energy efficiency measures to reduce consumption at source as far as is reasonably possible
- 2) Eliminating the use of fossil fuels to heat our buildings and hot water
- 3) Avoiding electricity grid-related carbon emissions
- 4) Increase the level of onsite renewable energy generation
- 5) Identify opportunities for energy storage to smooth out the peaks in demand and improve energy security

Our goal will be the complete elimination of carbon emissions, but we recognise that this may not be feasible. For those emissions that cannot be eliminated we will offset them through an accredited carbon off-setting scheme.

Based on an initial analysis our annual scope 3 emissions are estimated to be around 24,000 tCO₂e. We now need to understand if this is an accurate figure and fully explore the opportunities that are available to reduce emissions associated with our business travel, waste disposal and supply chain.

To do this we will:

- Work with the Procurement Team to fully analyse our Scope 3 emissions across our supply chain across all industry sectors and establish a benchmark year to set targets against
- Identify suppliers who understand their emissions, work with them to reduce emissions associated with their products or services and refine our understanding of our Scope 3 emissions
- Identify products or services that are more socially or environmentally sustainable
- Identify suppliers willing to change products and services to reduce Scope 3 emissions and improve social and environmental performance.
- Identify opportunities to reduce our business-travel, and/or its associated carbon emissions.
- Actively work to reduce waste through the adoption of the waste hierarchy of Prevention, Re-use, Recycling, Recovery, Disposal.

Our Commitment to Integrating Sustainability across the University

Key Performance Indicator: Silver in AUDEs Sustainability Leadership Scorecard by July 2026

Using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard enables us to understand, measure and report on the integration of sustainability across the full breadth of university activities, it also allows us to set targets under four main domains:

1. Leadership and Governance
2. Estates and Operations
3. Partnership and Engagement
4. Learning, Teaching and Research.

We currently achieve diverse scores across the range of measures, demonstrating our variable performance, but resulting in an overall bronze status. Through a detailed gap analysis of the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, we have identified key priorities against each of the four domains through which we will achieve the KPI of Silver.

1. Leadership and Governance

There are three priority areas within Leadership and Governance which we will strengthen through this strategy, led by the Sustainability Advisory Group:

Risk Management - with a focus on setting institutional policies and strategies for responsible investment and undertaking climate change impact assessments to understand the potential impact of our university activities and how these may be mitigated

Climate Change adaptation – further to our work to understand and mitigate climate change through our own operations, we will identify ways to mitigate any harmful impact of climate change more widely on our university and local communities

Resource Efficiency – we will continue our drive to reduce water consumption and work with suppliers to procure sustainable food and drink. We will also increase our recycling rate in non-residential buildings from 70% to 80% by implementing a dedicated food waste collection and composting contract.

2. Estates and Operations

Building on the core activities to address Scope 1 and 2 emissions through our estate, we will focus on understanding and tackling our Scope 3 emissions.

Travel and Transport is already ranked as Gold in AUDE's Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, but this will be enhanced further, building on the March 2022 travel and transport survey results we will:

- Support the implementation of agreed ways of working whilst promoting sustainable forms of transport
- Share travel and transport data with Leeds City Council and the Leeds Anchors network to influence and support changes to the road network that will benefit sustainable travel options and increase mobility between modes of travel.
- Assess carbon emissions associated with all travel and transport relating to our activities and develop clear action plan which reduced Scope 3 emissions.

Longer term this will inform our approaches to staff travel, and how academic purpose is balanced with sustainability-led decision making.

3. Partnership and Engagement

Engaging staff, students and our local community in projects which have positive social, economic, and environmental impact on campus, the surrounding residential areas, and the Leeds City Region as a whole. This will be delivered through a series of key priority areas:

Establishing Communities of Practice to support an environment of sharing best practice, drawing on multiple perspectives to increase the scale, complexity, and impact of what we can achieve. Sharing best practices from our expertise, using our estate as a community asset, and through the suppliers, companies, and contractors we work with

Student Engagement, both the Learning & Teaching and Research & Knowledge Exchange sub-groups will identify opportunities for our student communities to contribute to sustainability projects, including projects based around using our estate as a 'living laboratory,' and importantly, evaluating whether positive behaviours and attitudes develop through these changes.

Student engagement will be accomplished both directly and through the Students' Union, working in partnership on joint endeavours, listening to what is important to our students, and evaluating positive changes in sustainable behaviours through the impact of our education

Staff Engagement is a key strand of activity that the sub-groups will embrace, and will focus on engagement through developing opportunities, sharing good practice, improving visibility and awareness of excellence, and delivering training and development.

Visibility of the excellent work that is being undertaken on sustainability, ensuring this is shared, celebrated and that we create opportunities for colleagues to learn more, be inspired, and become engaged in sustainability work.

Beckett Big Sustainability Conversation will align with our strong University Anchor values, and Anchor Strategy, through which we will enhance sustainable development by placing our university at the heart of our communities, and using our expertise, resources, and facilities to improve society. To establish this, 2022/23 will focus on the Beckett Big Sustainability Conversation, a year-long focus on understanding, sharing, and inspiring individual and collective action across our university community, and partners across the Leeds City Region.

A campus for the community, will ensure that the fantastic campus we benefit from is used even further as a community asset, particularly around embedding sustainable development. We aspire to increase the number of colleagues engaged in developing green space and biodiversity, increase partnerships working across the Leeds public sector estate to maximise the use of facilities, and embed a social value strategy (with targets) for new construction and renovation projects.

Beckettsphere has recently launched as a new behaviour change programme, as part of building a community of best practice around sustainability. This programme encourages colleagues and students to implement projects that progress the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Our objectives and targets provide a flexible framework for understanding the impact of self-directed projects which are pertinent to the interests of an individual, team or community.

Coordinated by a student placement in the sustainability team this brings our university together around a shared goal of sustainable development and will be audited by students every 12 months, used to produce case studies for other teams to follow or evolve. The aim is to share best practice, have meaningful engagement and to celebrate success through an annual awards dinner which will form a key landmark in our academic calendar for our work on sustainability.

As part of BeckettSphere, we will:

- Increase the number of participants each year,
- Provide a budget to support projects, and
- Open the scheme up to local groups such as Friends of Beckett Park and local social enterprises.

4. Learning, Teaching, and Research

Learning and teaching - a dedicated subgroup will guide, support, and develop the University's integrated approach to embedding sustainability in all its programmes and educational approaches and strategies, to promote a broad and inclusive understanding of what 'sustainability' means to the University.

Research and Knowledge Exchange - a dedicated subgroup will focus on matters associated with research and knowledge exchange in sustainability, how to conduct research in a sustainable way and raise the profile of sustainability research across the university using the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard criteria as a framework.

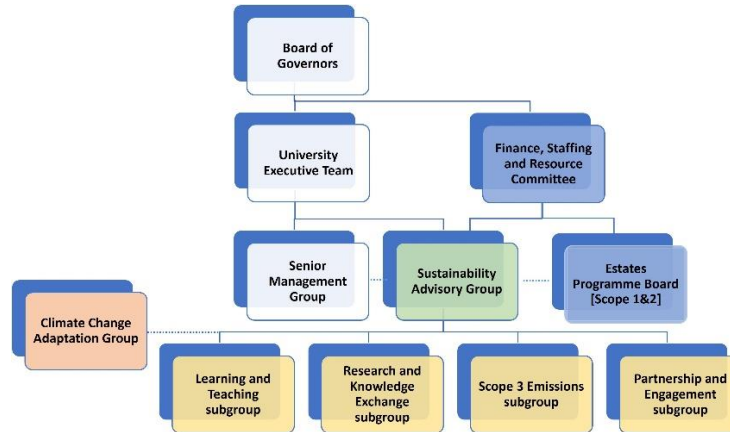
We will also strive to use the university estate, its facilities, and activities as a 'living lab' to promote and facilitate sustainable research activity. This includes:

- Using energy data from our building stock, ranging from the 1700's to the modern day, to identify research opportunities around energy efficiency and building / refurbishment methods that can be applied, at scale, to the building stock of the UK to lower its energy intensity
- To make our buildings available to research students and industry partners so they can evaluate the performance of building design and materials
- Providing research into what makes a 'sense of place' (characteristics that make a place special or unique, or fosters a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging) to be applied to design standards within Leeds Beckett and the construction industry as a whole
- Provide research into the impact heritage has on staff, students, and the local community in terms of wellbeing and sense of belonging
- To understand the value of Biodiversity beyond aesthetics

Delivering our ambitions

Recognising the specific priorities and ambitions in our strategy, delivery will be through individual teams and established structures as far as possible. The Sustainability Advisory Group and newly created sub-groups will complement the existing infrastructure and provide a university-wide focus on complex challenges, changes, and overall oversight and reporting to the University Exec Team and Board of Governors. The infrastructure and alignment with the core themes of the strategy are highlighted in **Figures 2 and 3**, and have been established through the extensive preparatory work which underpins this strategy

Figure 2. Infrastructure to support the delivery of the strategy



Subgroups aligned to ‘learning and teaching’, and ‘research and knowledge exchange’ will ensure a university-wide focus on embedding sustainability across our academic work and processes, and a ‘partnership and engagement’ subgroup will drive forwards our ambitious initiatives, events, and raising the profile of sustainability work across the University. We will establish a ‘Scope 3’ subgroup to help progress our understanding, reporting, and plans to address this alongside our net zero commitment. This reflects that estates-led work progressing Scope 1 and 2 emissions is already well established in the Estates Programme Board, and as part of the Estates Masterplan.

We will also establish a ‘Climate Change Adaptation’ group within the University to support business continuity planning and work to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Figure 3. Alignment of KPIs, core elements, and infrastructure for the strategy delivery

