



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2031

We are projects that make headlines,
and people that make history

WE ARE THE ORIGINAL REDBRICK



Contents

Foreword 02

Introduction 02

Our progress so far 03

Governance 04

Strategic alignment

- **Research 05**
- **Education and student experience 07**
- **Sustainable campus and operations 09**

Measures of success 11





Vice Chancellor's Foreword

At the University of Liverpool, we place a more sustainable planet at the heart of our values and our vision for the future. This Sustainability Strategy recognises the great potential we have to make a difference and sets out our commitment to doing so.

Recognising both the global value of our academic role and our local impact as a large organisation, our vision is to drive forward environmental and social equity through our education, research, and operations, making a positive impact within and beyond our boundaries.

Research will be at the forefront of our efforts as we increasingly direct our expertise towards addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Through our teaching, we will support our diverse, talented community of students to build their understanding of sustainability and harness their potential as future changemakers. And, in addition to supporting our city region to meet its net zero commitments, within our physical and organisational boundaries we will place a focus on our sustainability and the transition to net zero.

Professor Tim Jones
Vice Chancellor



Introduction from the Chief Financial Officer

We published our first Sustainability Strategy in 2021, coinciding with a pledge to put the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of all our activities. Steady progress towards the aims set out in that strategy has been made in the intervening years, including the launch of our Climate Plan and inclusion of sustainability as a cross-cutting theme in our strategic framework, Liverpool 2031.

It is encouraging that our progress has been demonstrated through year-on-year improvements in sustainability league tables, which we use to benchmark our performance across the higher education sector.

We are especially proud of our position in the 2024 QS Sustainability Rankings, which rose 100 places from the previous year, placing us 50th out of 1,403 institutions globally.

This is a long-term commitment and there is much to do, as is clear from the breadth and depth of our commitments in this strategy.

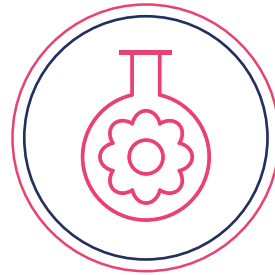
Thank you to the staff, students and others who have contributed to the considerable progress made to date – I look forward to the whole University community working together to achieve much more in the years ahead.

Nicola Davies
Chief Financial Officer

Our progress so far



Published a **Climate Plan** in November 2022



86% of labs have achieved a LEAF award, 36 are silver and **7 gold**



43% reduction in waste sent for incineration with energy recovery from our baseline



Sustainability reported as a **strategic risk** from March 2024



Became a signatory to the **UKRI Concordat** for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice



1st in the world for SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals in the THE Impact Rankings 2022



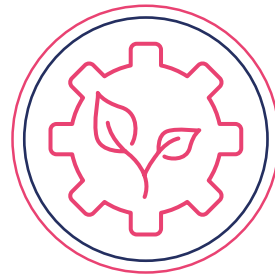
2:1 class in the People & Planet league since 2021



50th out of 1,403 institutions globally in the QS Sustainability Rankings in 2024



Shortlisted in the **2024 Green Gown** Awards



Maintained our UKAS accredited **ISO 14001 Environmental Management System**



Launched a **new staff training module** for sustainability in 2023



Funded **10 sustainability projects**

Governance

We are committed to transparency and will hold ourselves to account for the delivery of the commitments set out in this document through a new Sustainability Committee, which reports to the University's Senior Leadership Team. You can find out more about the governance arrangements for the Sustainability Strategy by visiting our [governance webpages](#).

Our progress will be publicly reported through the University's annual Financial Statements, and in our annual Sustainable Development Goals report. Environmental data will continue to be reported through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and our progress towards net zero will be reported using the sector specific Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework.

Sustainability is part of the University's annual audit cycle, and findings are reported to University Council as part of our assurance processes.

The Sustainability Team will play a crucial role in coordinating and reporting on key activities, but it is everyone's responsibility within the University community to embrace and drive forward our shared commitments in-line with the University's values.



AMBITIOUS

We dream big and make things happen.

We have the confidence to make bold decisions to achieve success.



COLLABORATIVE

Together, we achieve more.

We create impact through partnerships, releasing the power of collective expertise and shared endeavour.



INCLUSIVE

Shaped by diversity, powered by difference.

We champion a culture in which all are valued and supported to thrive.



INNOVATIVE

Original thinking with an independent spirit.

We create, reimagine and break new ground.



RESPONSIBLE

A focus on doing the right thing.

We create positive change that improves lives.

Strategic alignment: Research

Our interdisciplinary research will create global impact in addressing the greatest challenges facing today's society.



The University of Liverpool aims to create a fairer, better world through the global reach of its research.

Our location within one of the world's most famous maritime cities, combined with a history of innovation that spans life-changing discoveries and partnerships, means that we are well-placed to tackle global challenges affecting our city region, as well as further from home.

Focussing on the physics and chemistry that will transform the future of energy, The Stephenson Institute for Renewable Energy commands £18m of active research funding that is helping governments and businesses across the world work towards reducing their carbon emissions. Combining our proven research strengths in the physical sciences with our strengths in AI and robotics, our unique infrastructure in the Materials Innovation Factory, and strategic industry partnerships such as our long-term agreement with Unilever, our research frontier on Materials Discovery is providing game-changing solutions aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Elsewhere in our Faculty of Science and Engineering, the Liverpool Institute for Sustainable Coasts and Oceans is key to addressing the twin global challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and our new Centre for Doctoral Training in Maritime Net Zero Energy Solutions is delivering 52 highly-trained researchers to address four vital net zero challenges currently facing the North West, the UK and beyond.

Our Faculty of Health and Life Sciences is at the forefront of health and climate research, having mapped vector-borne diseases in relation to climate change with the aim to protect society from some of the negative impacts of global warming. The Global Health Research Group Clean Air Africa conducts impactful research to inform policy and practice that raises awareness of household air pollution and its health impacts in communities reliant on solid fuels and kerosene for household energy. And, we are proud of our partnership with the Institute of Cancer Research to quantify the carbon footprint of clinical trials, which has resulted in the first publicly available method and guidance to carbon footprint a clinical trial that can be used to inform lower carbon trial design.

Our world-leading research surrounding human rights law from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is leveraging the shared vision of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the newly launched Heritage Institute is key to establishing a better understanding of the past in order to create a more prosperous, fairer, and healthier world for everyone. Meanwhile the Hesletine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place brings together academic expertise with policymakers and practitioners to support the development of sustainable and inclusive city regions.

Strategic alignment: **Research**

Our commitments

Develop new solutions through our interdisciplinary research and partnerships which accelerate the progress of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We will do this by:

- Establishing a new Interdisciplinary Centre for Sustainability Research
- Developing net zero solutions through our Materials Discovery Frontier: Harnessing Digital Materials Design for Net Zero Solutions
- Contributing new solutions through our existing research centres and projects.



Develop collaborative global partnerships to create knowledge and impact that make a positive difference to communities globally.

We will do this by:

- Using our networks to tackle shared global challenges
- Leveraging our existing strategic partnerships and initiatives to create outputs aligned with the SDGs
- Harnessing opportunities to develop new global partnerships aligned to the SDGs.

Conduct our research in a way that supports both social and environmental equity.

We will do this by:

- Acting at an institutional level, and collectively across the sector, to achieve the six priority areas of the UKRI Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice
- Rolling out the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) across all labs and workshops
- Exploring opportunities to reduce the impact of carbon intensive research activities, such as energy-intensive computing and servers, and clinical trials
- Ensuring that data, guidance, and support, are openly available to staff, enabling them to meet external environmental obligations and maximise opportunities for funding.



Strategic alignment: Education and student experience

**Our students will be empowered
as global citizens to make a
difference in a changing world.**

The University of Liverpool aims to develop environmentally and equipped with the skills, knowledge, and values required to make a difference in both their personal and professional lives.

With over 30,000 students on campus and almost 3,000 studying our online programmes, we are uniquely placed to influence the future generation when it comes to sustainable thinking and behaviours. These students go on to join our network of 270,000 alumni across 180 countries, taking what they learn with us into their local communities and in turn influencing change across the globe.

In partnership with our Guild of Students, we aim to integrate sustainability into every aspect of student life from their education to extra-curricular activities, and their time living in our student accommodation. Acknowledging the growing awareness and concern amongst students, we will also support them to navigate complex sustainability issues in a way that promotes hope for the future.



Strategic alignment: Education and student experience

Our commitments

Sustainability will be woven into the curriculum and wider student experience, connecting each discipline to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and enabling every student to gain relevant attributes, skills and knowledge.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is embedded within all our taught programmes
- Exploring opportunities to develop new programmes dedicated to addressing the green skills gap
- Building opportunities to learn about the SDGs into all aspects of student life on campus.

Create a curriculum for all which is sustainable and inclusive in its content and delivery.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that our curriculum supports us as a university in delivering our commitments to the SDGs
- Exploring a diverse range of perspectives, knowledge and pedagogies within teaching.

Empower our students to be engaged citizens within Liverpool, in their wider communities and beyond.

We will do this by:

- Providing more opportunities for our students to volunteer with local organisations, businesses and charities
- Facilitating opportunities for students to engage with potential employers in the field of sustainable development, through careers fairs, living labs and grand challenges
- Providing students with an understanding of social and environmental contexts in local and global settings so that they have the mechanisms to tackle sustainability issues faced across the world
- Harnessing the work of the Sir Peter Rigby Centre for Enterprise to ensure students can explore enterprise through a sustainability lens.



Strategic alignment: Sustainable campus and operations

**Sustainability will underpin
how we operate within and
beyond our organisational
boundaries.**

The University occupies a large and mixed-heritage estate, which presents significant complexities for integrating sustainable practices into our existing assets. Our Estates Strategy has been designed to consider these challenges and will facilitate new mechanisms to embed sustainability into our estate planning and operations. It is underpinned by our Climate Plan, published in 2022, and more recent Biodiversity Plan, which set out our responses to achieving net zero carbon emissions for scope 1 and 2 across all sites where we have operational control, including our halls of residence which are home to 4,407 students each year, as well as the UK requirements for biodiversity net gain across our public realm.

In addition, we are committed to tackling scope 3 carbon emissions, especially those associated with our travel habits, waste, and supply chain.

Leveraging our status as an anchor institution within the city of Liverpool, and in support of our 'Place and Innovation' vision to drive prosperity and wellbeing for the Liverpool City Region, our commitments have been designed to drive social value, building on the figures published in our Economic and Wider Impacts Report 2024 which highlight that we contribute £183million in GVA and support 2440 jobs across the Liverpool City Region.

We will also utilise our influence to drive positive change with external partners across our value chain in line with our Procurement and Ethical Investment Policies.

Through development of these strategic plans and policies we will provide alignment to the cross-cutting 'People and Culture' theme in Liverpool 2031, offering direction for staff, with clear and actionable processes and guidance, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to university values and sustainability goals.



Strategic Alignment: Sustainable campus and operations

Our commitments

Sustainability will be embedded throughout our estate operations, creating sustainable, inclusive and resilient campuses.

We will do this by:

- Driving forward the implementation of our Climate Plan, including our key priority to develop a new Energy Strategy and Net Zero roadmap
- Achieving the success measures set out in our new Biodiversity Plan
- Reducing waste in line with targets set out in our Waste Management Plan
- Monitoring compliance with the University's Environmental Policy, through continuous improvement facilitated by our ISO 14001 Environmental Management System.

Address the environmental impacts of our digital infrastructure and services.

We will do this by:

- Considering the impact of the growing use of AI on energy consumption as part of the wider Energy and Digital Strategies
- Utilising frameworks to mitigate the environmental impact of computation labs
- Identifying opportunities to reduce e-waste associated with our IT Services
- Providing digital sustainability education and skills.

Develop sustainable procurement standards which actively promote local impact and supply chain equity.

We will do this by:

- Promoting principles of circular economy to eliminate unnecessary spending and consumption

- Implementing appropriate policies and frameworks that prioritise sustainability across our procurement activities
- Ensuring the data needed to effectively monitor and report on scope 3 emissions is available, accessible and accurate
- Building social value into our supply chain and contracts.

Create a confident and knowledgeable workforce that is empowered and supported to contribute to sustainability targets.

We will do this by:

- Embedding sustainability within our policies, processes and practices
- Supporting and empowering staff to develop their understanding and confidence in making sustainable decisions
- Ensuring carbon and environmental data are easily accessible to staff
- Developing a programme of sustainability awareness-raising to foster sustainability literacy and comprehension within our workforce.

Driving improved outcomes for our staff and local communities.

We will do this by:

- Using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to guide our policies and decision making
- Mobilising our people, skills and know-how to address inequalities and improve life chances across the Liverpool City Region
- Connecting local businesses with academic expertise and living lab projects.



Measures of success

To realise our vision, it's essential that we know what success looks like. We have identified six ambitious goals that will position us as a sector leader for sustainability, to be achieved by at least 2031 and evidenced by:

1

Maintaining a **global top 100** position in the annual QS Sustainability Rankings.

4

Achieving a transition towards **net zero** in scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2035, and scope 3 by 2050.

2

Six additional interdisciplinary research projects >£1m that are focussed on the UN SDGs.

5

Gold status on the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) for 100% of eligible labs.

3

Embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within 100% of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes.

6

Biodiversity net gain of at least 10% linked to all estate developments.



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Find out more

The commitments set out in this strategy are explained in more detail on our [webpages](#), and additional information can be found in the underpinning Climate Plan and Biodiversity Plan.

You can follow our progress on any of our social media channels:

X [@LivUniSustain](#)

f [/LivUniSustainability](#)

@ [@livunisustainability](#)

in [UoLSustainability](#)

Or speak to a member of the Sustainability Team by emailing: sustainability@liverpool.ac.uk

We are big ideas and bold, independent thinkers.
Individual triumphs and world firsts.
Lively debates and life-changing research.
Flashes of inspiration and hard-earned breakthroughs.

liverpool.ac.uk/sustainability/