

Valuing Nature Action Plan

The Valuing Nature Action Plan has been developed as part of the [University's Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#) to address how we work with and alongside nature to address the climate and ecological emergencies.

We want our estate to be memorable and distinctive with a strong sense of place, contributing to the health and wellbeing of staff, students, visitors and the surrounding local community.

This includes opportunities for wildlife, including pollinators, birds and hedgehogs to flourish and aims to promote the development of an estate that embraces nature and provides high quality biodiverse green spaces. We understand the clear connection between the natural environment and the wellbeing of our staff and students and that is why we believe valuing nature is about valuing our community as well as wildlife.

Objective

Our campus is an environment where people and wildlife thrive together.

Link to SDGS



Nature Positive Universities Pledge

In December 2022, our University was announced as a founding member of a new alliance at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15). Manchester is one of 117 universities from 44 countries to make a pledge to start a journey towards [becoming nature positive](#). The Nature Positive Universities Alliance, set up by the University of Oxford and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), will help to advance efforts to halt, prevent and reverse nature loss through addressing their own individual impacts and restoring ecosystems harmed by their activities.

The pledge includes four key elements: Carrying out baseline biodiversity assessments; setting specific, time limited and measurable targets for nature; taking bold action to reduce biodiversity impacts, protect and restore species and ecosystems, while influencing others to do the same; and transparent annual reporting.

1. INSTITUTION WIDE

Biodiversity commitments and targets will be embedded into current and future institution-wide strategies and actions, including the Infrastructure Strategy and major construction projects.

ES Strategy Commitments

Work with our academics, staff and students to develop biodiversity priorities to enhance wildlife and public spaces on campus.
Calculate a baseline and set a target to provide a measurable improvement in biodiversity by 2030.
Increase the quality and quantity of existing green space, achieving a 10% increase in urban green space by 2028, from 2018 levels.
Integrate biodiversity themes into the new Infrastructure Strategy, with nature and green spaces an integral part of planning.

Targets/metrics

Increase quantity of green space by 10% by 2028, from 2018 baseline.
Increase quality of green space by 30% based on Defra's biodiversity metric by 2028, from 2022 baseline
Achieve at least 20% BNG on all major construction and refurbishment projects

Actions

No.	Action	Completion date	Responsibility/Lead Team
1.1	Work with Nature Action Group to develop and publish the 'Valuing Nature Action Plan'.	Autumn 2024	ES Team
1.3	Develop a biodiversity metrics dashboard with a selection of agreed additional quality and quantity metrics	Autumn 2024	ES Team

1.4	Ensure biodiversity commitments are incorporated into the new Infrastructure Strategy, with nature and green spaces an integral part of planning	By 2026	ES Team
1.5	Integrate key biodiversity targets into major construction projects	Ongoing	ES Team
1.6	Quantify the biodiversity impacts across all university activities beyond the campus	By 2026	ES Team
1.7	Report on progress as part of the Nature Positive Universities pledge	Annually (November)	ES Team

2. NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Actions should be taken to improve the quality of the University's nature and environment directly, including enhancing the habitat condition of grassland, woodland, pond, and wildlife habitat quality, and reducing pollution.

ES Strategy Commitments

Identify opportunities to increase green, cooling and absorbent spaces as an adaptation response to climate change.
Eliminate the use of peat-based compost by 2023.
Continually seek to reduce the use of synthetic chemical herbicides on campus.
Zero reportable pollution incidents to air, land and water across the University estate.

Targets/metrics

Enhance the habitat condition of existing areas of grassland to achieve 'good condition' by 2028.	Grassland
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Enhance the habitat condition of existing areas of woodland to achieve 'moderate condition' by 2028	Woodland
Enhance the habitat condition of existing pond to achieve 'moderate condition' by 2028	Pond
Create at least one new pond by 2028	
Increase number of new bug, bat, and bird boxes by 20% by 2028	Wildlife
Achieve a Bronze Accreditation at Hedgehog Friendly Campus awards by 2028	
Reduce the use of pesticides on campus by 10% year on year	Pollution
Zero reportable pollution incidents to air, land and water across the University estate by 2028	

Actions

No.	Action	Completion date	Responsibility/Lead Team
2.1	Systematic review of all amenity grassland to identify areas for more wildflower planting/species-rich grassland	By 2028	ES Team
2.2	Review mowing regimes, piloting less intensive management and differential mowing regimes to improve the quality of amenity grass that is used for leisure to meet 'good' condition	By 2028	Landscape Team
2.3	Integrate biodiversity commitments into tree policy and management plan to enhance the condition of woodland and trees through careful management and replacement, so as to enhance the habitat condition of existing areas of woodland to achieve 'moderate' condition	By 2028	Martin Blake & Tree Safety Management Group

2.4	Develop planting schemes and species lists, including their principles, that can inform future changes/developments	By 2025	Nature Action Group
2.5	Identify and improve the condition of existing ponds	By 2028	Pond Managers
2.6	Identify opportunities for new ponds and create at least one new pond	By 2028	ES Team
2.7	Engage ecologists to review current bird and bat boxes and identify opportunities for new box installation	By 2026	ES Team
2.8	Install new bug boxes	By 2028	Landscape Team / Projects Team
2.9	Install small log and brush piles within grassland and woodland areas on site	By 2028	Landscape Team / Projects Team
2.10	Investigate and identify opportunities to develop a Hedgehog Friendly Campus Scheme	By 2026	ES Team & <u>British Hedgehog Preservation Society</u>
2.11	Switch to peat-free compost for use in campus landscapes	Jan 2023	Landscape Team
2.12	Set up a monitoring process to check all compost purchased is peat-free	By 2025	ES Team
2.13	Work with the supply chain to encourage plants sold/supplied are grown in peat-free materials	By 2028	Landscape Team / ES Team
2.14	Set up a data collection process to monitor the use of pesticides and share annually.	Annually	Landscape Team
2.15	Review application of herbicides, how and when they are applied. Investigate and trial alternative weed management methods. Communicate results.	By 2028	Landscape Team

2.16	Monitor pollution incident reports and take action where appropriate to prevent incidents.	Ongoing	Health and Safety Team
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3. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Opportunities will be maximised to integrate teaching, learning, and research with our estate’s biodiversity.

ES Strategy Commitments

Maximise opportunities to integrate learning and teaching with our estate’s biodiversity.

Targets/metrics

Develop at least 3 real-world challenges each year for students to solve through the Living Lab.
At least 3 practical student biodiversity projects take place on campus each year.

Actions

No.	Action	Completion date	Responsibility/Lead Team
3.1	Compile and publish data and resources relating to campus biodiversity, well-being and resilience to climate change.	By 2024	ES Team
3.2	Identify existing teaching and learning relating to the natural environment and develop approaches to connect with estate and existing data and resources	By 2024	ES Team & Academic Lead for Teaching

3.3	Publish at least three real-world challenges each year for students to solve through the Living Lab	Annually	ES Team
3.4	Investigate linking biodiversity monitoring to teaching courses, including species presence and species abundance (iNaturalists)	By 2025	ES Team & Faculty ES Leads

4. PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES, AND ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities will be provided for our staff and students to engage with nature biodiversity and increase the quality of life. We will be working together with external partners, including local bodies, to seek more opportunities, whilst also engaging local people with biodiversity.

ES Strategy Commitments

Continue our work with academics to measure wellbeing outcomes and improve the staff and student wellbeing scores associated with campus green space by 25% by 2028 from a 2018/19 baseline.
Provide opportunities for our staff, students and external partners to engage with sustainability and take meaningful action, personally and professionally.
Develop and agree strategic partnerships to engage our communities to support proven natural solutions to capture carbon, restore the natural world and enhance environmental sustainability

Targets/metrics

Improve staff and student wellbeing scores associated with campus green space by 25% by 2028, from 2018 levels.
Recruit at least 3 Nature Positive Student Ambassadors per year
Organise at least 10 environmental events per year
Publish an average of 4 different posts on nature per month on social media
Develop and agree at least one strategic partnership by 2026

Actions

No.	Action	Completion date	Responsibility/Lead Team
4.1	Conduct staff and student wellbeing survey with Dr Kelly Watson every 2 years to gather data and compare with 2018/19 baseline information. Report on results and identify any further actions required.	Autumn 2024, 2026, 2028	ES Team
4.2	Contribute to the draft of the Comms and Engagement Strategy and ensure nature biodiversity commitments are incorporated to increase awareness and connect people with practical conservation work.	By 2024	ES Team
4.3	Recruit at least 3 Nature Positive Student Ambassadors per year. Explore incorporating Nature Positive Student Ambassadors into the step-up and lead Student Sustainability Champions programme.	Annually	ES Team
4.4	Organise at least 10 environmental events per year and publish an average of 4 posts on nature per month on social media. Develop metrics to measure engagement on-campus and online.	Annually	ES Team
4.5	Identify options for involvement including the development of biodiverse spaces, edible landscapes/allotment	By 2025	ES Faculty Leads, Cultural Institutions
4.6	Identify, develop and agree strategic partnerships to engage our communities in natural solutions to restore nature and capture carbon.	By 2025	ES Team