The University of Manchester Environmental Sustainability Team:

Our progress in 2023-2024 and our priorities for 2024-2025

In October 2023 we published our priorities for the forthcoming academic year. These are listed below, alongside a brief description of what we achieved on each topic.

Underneath the table you'll find our new priorities for 2024-2025.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on what we achieved (and didn't achieve) and our to-do list for this academic year. Please send any comments to es@manchester.ac.uk

Julia Durkan, Head of Environmental Sustainability

Our commitments for 2023/24	What we achieved
We will continue to reduce the University's direct ("Scope 1&2") footprint, focusing on energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation	Estates and Facilities have completed three zero carbon buildings: Booth Street East and two residential blocks, Dalton Ellis Ewings and Graham. Booth Street East, the first building heated solely by air source heat pumps, has cut emissions by 75%. A £2.2m grant from the Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) was secured for the Zochonis building, supporting extensive fabric upgrades and the elimination of fossil fuels. Energy efficiency projects included optimizing existing systems in AV Hill and Michael Smith, and planning full lighting upgrades for Carys Bannister and Arthur Lewis, with surveys already completed.
We will do all we can to ensure our Power Purchase Agreement is ready to go live in 2024.	We have signed our Corporate Power Purchase Agreement and the new solar farm is currently under construction. It is expected to go live in the second quarter of 2025.
We will estimate our Scope 3 footprint for 2022/23 and publish it.	We have calculated our Scope 3 footprint for 2022/23 and now have two sets of data for comparison.
We will develop a three-year plan for reducing our Scope 3 footprint and publish it.	We have designed a methodology to prioritise 36 Scope 3 sub-categories based on carbon impact, change feasibility, and engagement potential, along with a survey to involve stakeholders in this materiality study.

We will continue to closely manage how we are using our resources, and to drive efficiencies and embed whole life cycle considerations into decision making and operations.	We have committed to reducing our water consumption by 15% by 2028, using 2022 as the baseline. This will be achieved primarily by detecting, monitoring, and repairing leaks, and replacing inefficient water equipment. We introduced food waste collection in all staff kitchens, leading to a 91% increase in recycling, with 77 tonnes collected in 2023/24, up from 40.3 tonnes in 2022/23. In September 2024 we launched The Bee Cup, a new reusable cup scheme aimed at reducing single use. Within one month we already had 10,000 users download the app.
We will develop an appealing new "identity" for environmental sustainability at the University which can be used in all future engagement activities with staff and students.	We have developed our environmental sustainability narrative and tone of voice. We are now working on developing a unique identifier and visual guidance.
We will develop a communications plan and increase the number of events we stage.	We successfully delivered our biggest engagement event of the year; Sustainability Action Month which saw over 2,000 interactions. We have developed a monthly engagement campaign calendar, and set up the Sustainability Squad, a cross functional group of dedicated staff members working to drive and co-ordinate engagement events and communications across campus.
We will continue to submit data to Race to Zero, Nature Positive Universities, the Green League and the Impact Rankings to enable scrutiny of our work.	We have completed all this reporting and more. Details can be found here.
We will consider how best to continue the work begun with our 50,000 Actions platform, updating and/or replacing the platform if necessary.	We have switched 50,000 actions platform off and undertaken a review of third party digital engagement solutions currently available on the market. We have shortlisted our top three and are currently receiving formal proposals for evaluation. We have revamped and launched our Student Sustainability Champions programme engaging 35 students who have hosted 14 events over the year.

We will continue our work to limit air travel emissions to 50% of pre-pandemic levels, working with colleagues to ensure staff are aware of the changes and how they can contribute while continuing to deliver world class research and teaching. We will monitor and share progress against our target.	We have continued to provide data at faculty and department level publishing information through the aviation Power BI app. There have been 33 submissions to use the top up fund to support more expensive, lower carbon travel. Faculties have been taking action to embed targets and actions into local plans.
We will continue plans to decarbonise our fleet vehicles.	We have gathered telematics data from key fleet vehicles to understand how they are used, where they are parked and distances travelled. A summary report has been produced.
We will work with Estates colleagues to implement electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across campus.	We have worked with Estates and Facilities colleagues to try and establish a way forward with our preferred supplier. Unfortunately, this has not been possible for a variety of reasons. EV charging infrastructure will now be considered as part of the Infrastructure Strategy development.
We will develop and seek approval for an integrated travel plan that aligns car parking management and sustainable travel practices so that both areas complement each other.	We have drafted a new Travel Plan and conducted a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment. Plans are awaiting formal approval.
We will conduct a staff and student travel survey to assist with monitoring and measuring the impact of interventions associated with the travel plan above.	We have completed a staff and student survey to understand commuting behaviours and published the results.
We will develop and seek approval for a valuing nature plan that will set targets and associated actions to enhance campus green space for wildlife and people, working in collaboration with our academics, staff and students.	We have developed a Nature Action Plan which includes a range of actions and targets to improve biodiversity. We have developed a biodiversity metrics dashboard to monitor progress. Our colleagues in the Landscaping Team took part in No Mow May, planted additional wildflower areas and made insect boxes located on campus. The Old Quad was turned from a car park to biodiverse green space and additional planting was provided as part of the Martin Harris works.
We will develop an approach to connect teaching and learning with campus biodiversity data and resources.	Our students took part as Nature Positive Student Ambassadors; we are the only University in the UK to have signed the pledge and have ambassadors. Students in FBMH organised a range of activities from iNaturalist

	species monitoring to advising on wildflower planting in halls of residences.
We will work with our academics to conduct a survey to assess the impacts of campus green space on staff and student wellbeing and monitor how scores are changing over time.	Project was delayed and is now taking place in Autumn 2024.

Priorities for 2024/25

All our actions will contribute to the delivery of our environmental sustainability strategy, Our Sustainable Future.

- We will contribute to the development of the University's next strategy, Manchester 2035, to ensure environmental sustainability is embedded
- We will contribute to the development of the Infrastructure Strategy ensuring environmental sustainability is a key guiding principle
- We will continue to reduce the University's direct ("Scope 1&2") footprint, focusing on energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation
- We will continue to submit data to Race to Zero, Nature Positive Universities, the Green League and the Impact Rankings to enable scrutiny of our work.
- We will seek external verification on our Scope 1&2 data and publish
- We will agree Scope 3 priorities, develop a five-year roadmap for reducing our Scope 3 footprint and publish it.
- We will publish our first external-facing sustainability report
- We will complete the new "Guide to Sustainable Construction & Refurbishment" and sustainability construction tracker
- We will set up a baseline of embodied carbon of our major projects and feed this back to our scope 3 emissions calculations
- We will introduce initiatives with the aim to expand materials and equipment reuse internally and externally
- We will develop a "University waste reduction and recycling action plan" and "Sustainable lab action plan" with targets, action time frame and responsibility
- We will continue our work to limit air travel emissions to 50% of pre-pandemic levels, reviewing the travel policy and top-up fund and identifying and implementing additional measures to support the target.
- We will oversee the implementation of the new Travel Plan and supporting initiatives to encourage sustainable commuting.
- We will develop an approach to connect teaching and learning with campus biodiversity data and resources.
- We will develop planting schemes and species lists, including their principles, that can inform future changes and developments in collaboration with key stakeholders.
- We will continue to develop and update our biodiversity metrics dashboard
- We will work with our academics to conduct a survey to assess the impacts of campus green space on staff and student wellbeing and monitor how scores are changing over time.
- We will oversee and deliver a series of engagement events in line with our monthly engagement campaign calendar

- We will evaluate different engagement apps and prepare a plan to launch our preferred option for the next academic year
- We will manage the Student Sustainability Champion programme, coordinating training and supporting delivery of events