

The University of Manchester Environmental Sustainability Team:

Our progress in 2024-2025 and our priorities for 2025-2026

In October 2024 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 2025-2026.

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 2024/25	What we achieved
We will contribute to the development of the University's next strategy, Manchester 2035, to ensure environmental sustainability is embedded.	We engaged with over 100 staff and students through in person and online sessions to discuss environmental sustainability and our aims for 2035. Julia participated in a townhall with Prof Duncan Ivison, Prof Carly McLachlan and Prof Mike Shaver to discuss our commitment to sustainability and integration with Manchester 2035. A follow-up podcast was recorded to answer colleagues' questions.
We will contribute to the development of the Infrastructure Strategy ensuring environmental sustainability is a key guiding principle.	Enabling work has been undertaken including a heat decarbonisation study and green infrastructure guidelines and principles. We have engaged with the Interim Director of Estates Infrastructure and await further instruction.
We will continue to reduce the University's direct ("Scope 1&2") footprint, focusing on a corporate power purchase agreement (cPPA), energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation	Estates & Facilities have finalised the cPPA and from the 1 September 2025 we started to purchase energy from the 'new to earth' solar farm. It is expected to cover around 65% of the University's electricity demand and reduce carbon emissions by 12,000 tonnes per year. The lighting project at Carys Bannister has been completed and expected to provide annual carbon savings of 10 tonnes. Progress on major capital projects continues to advance. At the Rutherford building, works on site are progressing with fit-out, external envelope and roof repairs, with completion estimated for Q1 2026. Once complete, the project is expected to deliver annual carbon savings of 26 tonnes. The zero-carbon retrofit of the Zochonis Building is also underway, with enabling works

	now 100% complete. Project completion is projected for Q3 2026, with anticipated annual carbon savings of 220 tonnes. The North Campus Energy Centre incorporates high-temperature heat pump technology to decarbonise retained buildings such as John Garside and George Begg simultaneously, with the flexibility to expand to the Masdar Building in future. Stage 4 of the project has been completed, with overall completion expected by Q2 2027 and annual carbon savings of 520 tonnes.
We will seek external verification on our Scope 1&2 data and publish	We've had an independent third party verification of our direct (Scope 1) and indirect (Scope 2 and selected Scope 3) greenhouse gas emissions, as detailed in our carbon footprint calculation for the period 1 August, 2023 to 31 July, 2024.
We will agree Scope 3 priorities, develop a five-year roadmap for reducing our Scope 3 footprint and publish it.	We undertook a Scope 3 materiality assessment, including interviews with key staff and a survey open to all staff and students. Combining these insights with our carbon data enabled us to identify and prioritise the top 10 Scope 3 categories.
We will publish our first external-facing sustainability report.	Whilst we did not publish a specifically designed, external-facing report we continue to publish our publicly available annual reviews on progress .
We will complete the new "Guide to Sustainable Construction & Refurbishment" and sustainability construction tracker	We developed a draft Guide on Sustainable Construction for the University and the new Environmental Sustainability Tracker, designed to monitor the performance and impact of construction activities across the University. An interactive workshop was led by academics to explore how we can better embed these new resources into projects.
We will set up baseline of embodied carbon of our major projects and feed this back to our scope 3 emissions calculations	This is work in progress as we continue to gather more data by requesting embodied carbon calculations of our construction projects.
We will introduce initiatives with the aim to expand materials and equipment reuse internally and externally	Our Hospitality Team launched the Bee Cup scheme, which saved over 63,000 single-use coffee cups and lids. More than 80 tonnes of furniture were reused via the Furniture Store, alongside 2 tonnes of lab equipment rehomed or donated through the UniGreen Scheme and the LabGoods4Reuse initiative, initiated by FBMH. The end of term 'Give It Don't Bin It' scheme diverted some of the 200 tonnes of

	waste from landfill as students move out at the end of term.
We will develop a “UoM waste reduction & recycling action plan” and “Sustainable lab action plan” with targets, action time frame and responsibility	This is underway, led by our Materials and Resources Management Group made up of PS and academic staff from across the 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 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.	A review of the University’s travel policy and related initiatives is underway, with recommendations to follow.
We will oversee the implementation of the new Travel Plan and supporting initiatives to encourage sustainable commuting.	Following a thorough impact assessment and review, a new 5-year University travel plan was published in February. To support the new travel plan, a range of commuting incentives were introduced to encourage a shift towards more sustainable transport including short-term, one-off trials aimed at car park users, a pilot trialling free bus travel between Manchester Victoria, launch of the electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme and enhanced Cycle to Work scheme.
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. Students in FBMH organised a range of activities from iNaturalist species monitoring to advising on wildflower planting in halls of residences. Our University Living Lab enables students to work on real-world challenges linked to biodiversity.
We will develop planting schemes and species lists, including their principles, that can inform future changes and developments in collaboration with key stakeholders.	Our Nature Action Group have drafted these guidelines and principles which will be published once approved.
We will continue to develop and update our biodiversity metrics dashboard	We have published our baseline biodiversity net gain reports and are in the process of gathering data against our other metrics which will be published shortly.
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.	Survey has been completed, and we will publish results once analysed.

We will oversee and deliver a series of engagement events in line with our monthly engagement campaign calendar	In October 2024, we established the Sustainability Squad, a group of passionate individuals across the University to lead or influence the design and delivery of sustainability engagement initiatives. The group focused on delivering three key events across the year: nature month in April, end of year reuse in June and sustainable travel in October. This focused approach has been successful with increased engagement across campus.
We will evaluate different engagement apps and prepare a plan to launch our preferred option for the next academic year	We appointed an IT company in July 2025 to provide us with a digital engagement platform for all staff and students. This will be launched in Autumn 2025 and has received positive feedback from users during the testing stage.
We will manage the Student Sustainability Champion programme, coordinating training and supporting delivery of events	Our student Sustainability Champions go from strength to strength. This year saw 40 students deliver a range of sustainability related events including upcycling, food waste reduction, digital clean ups, litter picking and clothes swaps. This is a Step Up and Lead accredited programme through Stellify.

Priorities for 2025/26

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

- Review existing ES Strategy and complete a draft refresh ensuring alignment with Manchester 2025.
- Develop an environmental sustainability framework to enable schools and directorates to create their own action plans. Pilot with at least one PS directorate, one cultural institution, and one school.
- Develop 3-5 year energy efficiency plan.
- Explore heat decarbonisation options working closely with colleagues developing the Integrated Infrastructure Plan.
- Draft a 5 year roadmap for reducing Scope 3 emissions with SMART targets for each top 10 priority category.
- Incorporate sustainable construction and refurbishment guidelines within the formal review of Estates EPMs.
- Pilot the construction tracker in at least two on-going projects (one by Feb 2026, second one by Jul 2026), review outcome, listen feedback from ESAs and improve the tracker functionality.
- Publish report identifying priority climate risks to our estate.
- Draft a Waste & Circular Economy Plan for the next three years.
- Develop a LEAF implementation plan to streamline and scale up LEAF certification across all labs.
- Develop biodiversity principles and guidelines and work with colleagues to integrate into Integrated Infrastructure Plan.

- Work towards bronze Hedgehog Friendly Campus accreditation.
- Review ecologist report for habitat improvements on campus and build business cases for implementation.
- Calculate changes in quantity of green space to enable measurement of our KPI.
- Review Travel Policy, aviation target and associated initiatives providing recommendations for improvement.
- Better support faculties with data & bespoke guidance on how to reduce aviation emissions.
- Launch CommuteUoM car share and travel app for staff and students including refresh of staff travel incentives.
- Develop proposals for a centralised EV charging hub.
- Develop vehicle purchasing policy and identify and address barriers to meeting 2030 target.
- Develop and pilot an environmental sustainability essentials training course for staff.
- Launch the No Time to Waste engagement app for staff and students to encourage sustainable behaviours.
- Oversee and deliver a series of engagement events in line with our engagement calendar and develop an events toolkit and library of content including an annual report, a Christmas switch-off campaign, and a celebration event recognising our students and staff who have contributed to the University's sustainability journey over the year.
- Manage the Student Sustainability Champion programme, coordinating training and supporting delivery of events.
- Create a display on campus to visualise the amount of renewable energy that we are generating on our solar farm.