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Sustainability Policy & Engagement Plan

Purpose

York St John University (YSJU) aims to be world leading, and as part of this strategy we are embedding ecological and social justice, including UN Sustainable Development Goals, into our curricula and practice of learning, teaching and campus life wherever possible.

We recognise that the university impacts on all levels of scope and scale and it is up to us to minimise our negative impacts and amplify the exceptional, pushing for environmental excellence wherever possible. To do this means uniting students, staff, and our communities at every site of our university, embodying a whole-university approach.

Review process

Our Sustainability Policy and Sustainable Engagement Strategy is reviewed annually by the Director of Estates Management and Development and then communicated via YSJ Today internally and updated on our public website.

Scope

This Sustainability Policy & Engagement Plan applies to all aspects of York St John University's operations, including but not limited to:

- Academic curricula and teaching methods
- Campus infrastructure and facilities management
- Procurement and supply chain practices
- Waste management and disposal
- Transportation and travel
- Community engagement and outreach
- Biodiversity and environmental conservation efforts

Policy

Through regular target setting and reviewing periods it is our policy to -

- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation and regulation
- Protect the environment, through the minimisation of pollution.
- Have all construction developments focused on sustainable construction principles.
- Reuse and repurpose furniture and other goods wherever possible and dispose of it consciously when not.
- Encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport by students, staff, and visitors.
- Proactively encourage wide participation in environmental activities, encouraging staff, students, and other stakeholders to be part of the University community.

- Increase the biodiversity value of the University's campuses, accommodation sites, and surrounding areas.
- Maintain the University's zero waste to landfill commitment.
- Encourage sustainable procurement through our procurement strategy and practices, and while proactively engaging with our suppliers to encourage sustainability in our supply chain
- Use water efficiently and reduce the volume used at our sites.

Targets

Our sustainability targets for reducing environmental impact have been split into ten categories, with the following University targets for the 2024 to 2030 period:

- Construction & Refurbishment- To achieve Ska Gold certification for the Design Centre refurbishment and extension project (which will be opened in late 2025) through energy saving and sustainable materials, and to pursue the same certification for all future developments of a similar size in line with our Sustainable Construction criteria, which is used to benchmark new project designs.
- Emissions & Discharge – A 70% reduction, from the 2005 baseline, in Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 2025, and an 80% reduction by 2030 through considered procurement, energy efficiency, management of our heating systems, and de-gasification of the University estate.
- Community involvement – A commitment to host at least two sustainability sessions each year, alongside a variety of other events that are informed by our policy. In addition, we are to maintain our Silver National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement Watermark.
- Biodiversity- Inclusion of a new pond and swale for the Design Centre project, and a commitment for future developments with outdoor space to ensure a variety of habitats, prioritising those that are in high need i.e. vernal pools and linking habitats.
- Waste management – A carbon reduction of 80% by 2030 from a baseline year of 2019-20, by promoting reduction and reuse, alongside a concerted effort to reduce waste at the source through careful procurement.
- Travel and Transport – A carbon emission reduction of 20% by 2030 for business travel from a baseline of 2018-19, and a 10% reduction in carbon emissions from a baseline of 2024-25 in staff and student commuting. To be achieved through minimising aviation and promoting low carbon travel.
- Sustainable procurement – Focus on whole life costing techniques to measure environmental and social impacts, achieved by the incorporating of formal commitments to the protection of equality and diversity standards within all supplier contracts, and have every evaluation post 2024 include specific sustainability KPI's.
- Water – Reduce the tonnage of CO₂e of both our water supply and wastewater carbon emissions by 10% to 6.15 and 6.56 respectively by 2030 from the baseline year of 2022-23. Also, transition to 75% of grounds water maintenance on our York campus needs to be from harvested rainwater by 2030.

These targets are based on audits undertaken on the University's Biodiversity, Carbon, Travel and transport, Waste management, and Sustainable procurement activities, targets and policies.

Objectives

YSJ's Engagement Plan for Sustainable Development is in place to support Sustainability as a core aspect of our community, reinforcing our [University for Social Impact Strategy](#) stated aim of meeting 'future challenges by guiding the innovation and energy of our university community'. To do this, all stakeholders need to be participating with this process, to be achieved through the forming of our objectives: Engage, Collaborate, and Support.

Engage – YSJ will involve our community, both on campus and off campus, with sustainability efforts by clearly conveying our goals, how we are approaching challenges, and celebrating our successes on all scales. This will be achieved through partnerships with the student union and other bodies, through our courses, and through information dissemination such as our YSJ today newsletter.

Collaborate – We will foster an environment of collaboration that focuses on bringing disparate groups together through initiatives such as the Living Lab. We recognise that individuals and teams have unique insights that when shared facilitate new opportunities for our community.

Support – Through the allocation of resources YSJ will help foster environmental sustainability projects, by sharing time, specialist knowledge, and money. The Sustainability staff within the Estates team will be available to facilitate the push to engage, collaborate, and will provide continual support for all.

Our Sustainability Sessions facilitate a time and space for conversation and reporting on progress. By holding them throughout the year we democratise the work that the sustainability team does, allowing our community to help shape priorities and input on how budget gets spent. The opening up of these reporting sessions fosters whole university participation and is a mechanism for tracking progress and engagement.