



WE WILL BECOME A UNIVERSITY WHERE SUSTAINABILITY IS TRULY EMBEDDED THROUGH KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT, COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION. EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR STAFF AND STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY – IT WILL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR OPERATIONS AND WILL BRING ABOUT POSITIVE, SUSTAINABLE CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE.

# SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

The University of Leeds has a clear responsibility to have a positive impact on society, something we take very seriously. This means making our economic, social, environmental, and cultural responsibilities a priority alongside our commitment to education and research excellence.

Our aim is to become a university with a reputation for outstanding performance on sustainability; a university that challenges the status quo and is renowned for its open, welcoming environment.

Our approach to sustainability is integrated with our approach to student education, research and innovation and highly professional support services.

This strategy is not an end in itself; it is just the beginning of the next phase of promoting sustainability at the University. We will constantly challenge ourselves to be bold, ambitious and action-oriented. That's why we have set out a six-year action plan to support the future development of the University.

As Vice-Chancellor I will ensure that sustainability remains a central consideration in our decision-making as we strive to be the best we can be.

There are over forty thousand people at the University of Leeds and every one of us has a part to play in building a sustainable future.



**Alan Langlands**  
Vice Chancellor, University of Leeds

## WHAT WILL THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS LOOK LIKE IN 2050?

This strategy considers the work we have to do until 2020, but we're already thinking far beyond that date to what a sustainable University of Leeds will look like in 2050...



- Our campus is a test bed for new ideas and an exemplar of sustainable design
- All our students know and understand sustainability
- We have an open, accessible campus that is interconnected with the city
- We're a zero carbon, zero waste institution
- Sharing space, equipment, skills and knowledge across the institution is the norm
- Our supply chain is sustainable and we continuously strive for further improvement and innovation
- Our research addresses the grand challenges of sustainability and is accessible to all
- All staff have the capacity and knowledge to make sustainable decisions, and this is the norm
- We're an equitable and open employer that creates opportunities across the spectrum of our activities
- We're an inspiration in the city and our campus and culture are used as a blueprint for other organisations to follow
- Challenging the status quo and making a real difference are the norm

2050

### What's in this strategy?

Our sustainability strategy has four overarching principles: Working collaboratively; Embedding sustainability; Sharing our skills, spaces, knowledge and values; and Challenging ourselves and others.

Under these, the strategy is structured under four themes – Embedding sustainability through collaboration; Building knowledge and capacity; Being a positive partner in society; and Making the most of resources.

All have a set of commitments to achieve and example indicators to measure and illustrate our progress.

Alongside this strategy, we are also publishing our Sustainability Action Plan, which provides the detail of the specific activities and goals we are working to achieve.

# WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS?

We started this sustainability strategy by asking all our staff and students, 'what makes a sustainable university?' What is it that makes us sustainable? What can we do? What should we do? And, critically, why is it important to the University?

And the answer? Sustainability at the University of Leeds isn't about half-promises; it's at the core of who we are and what we do. It shapes and drives everything that happens here – what we teach, what we learn, what we buy, what we use, what we share, how we travel. It's about ambition and belief in ourselves. It's about working collaboratively within the University, with our partners, and with wider society.

There was a resounding belief that we should be bold and ambitious. We are truly committed to achieving the goal of embedding sustainability across the whole University, making it an integral part of our operations and what makes us stand out from the crowd.



This is a strategy of real action, which will lead to positive change. Some of our commitments are well underway, others will require University-wide change. But it's ambitious for a reason. We want to create new ideas, approaches and ways of working that benefit the world around us, rather than just conserve it.

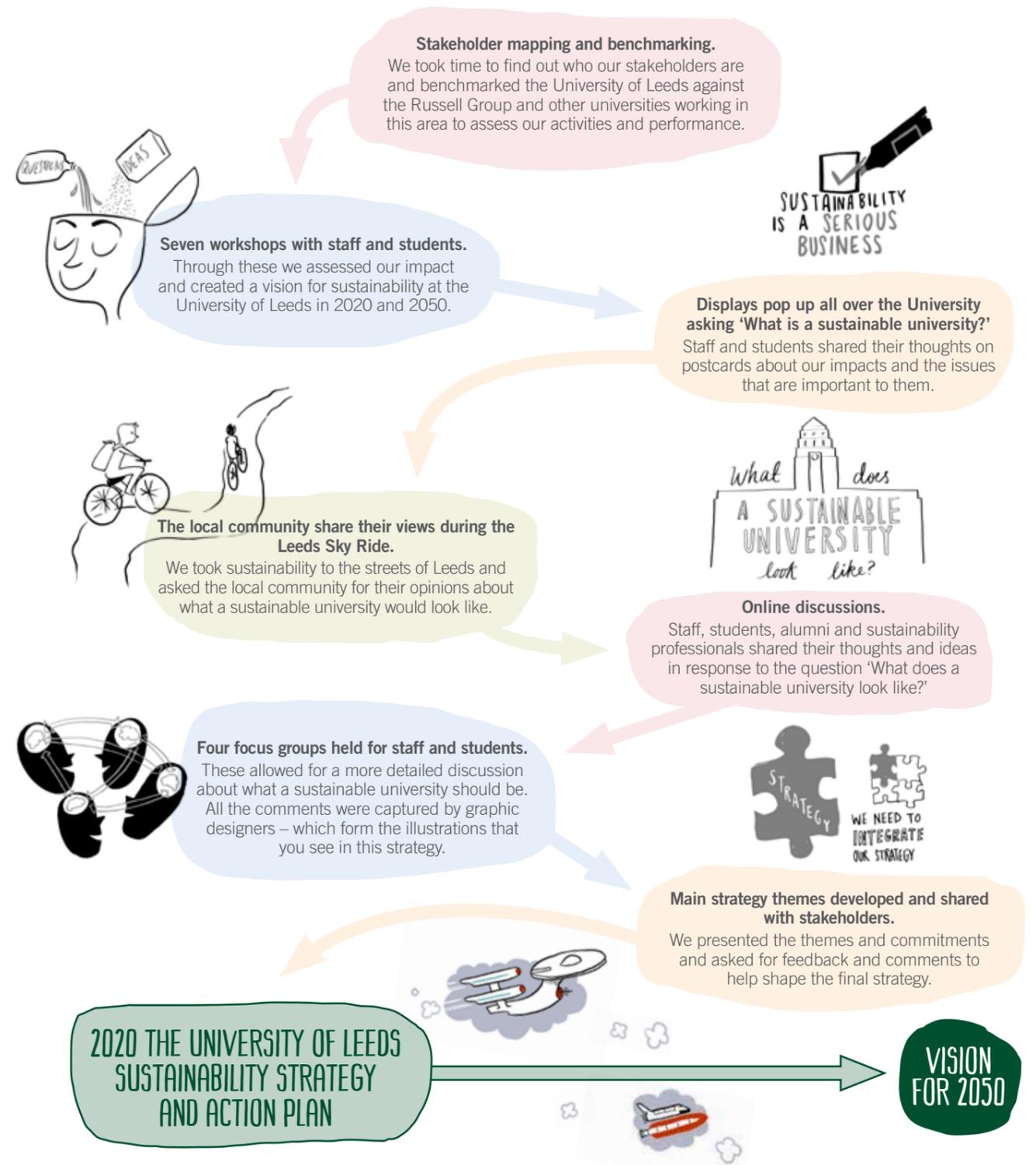
We are already a strong community and it's going to take each and every one of us to achieve our sustainability goals. Together our staff and students number over 40,000, so we have the critical mass to bring about real change. By sharing our skills, spaces, knowledge and values we can transform the University of Leeds into a model for others to follow; the blueprint for how sustainability can, and should, be embedded right across a university.

Then we look beyond the University of Leeds, and the part we play as both local neighbours and global citizens. We don't exist in a bubble; everything we do impacts the world around us. And we want to make more of a positive impact; to change the way that Leeds, the UK and the world responds to sustainability challenges. Whether that's working with local residents, sharing our skills or leading research into Antarctica's ice losses, we want to play a role in creating a vibrant, sustainable society.

**Through knowledge, engagement, collaboration and innovation we will be the pioneers of ideas, the creators of sustainable solutions, the architects of possibility.**

# THE STORY SO FAR...

Creating this strategy has involved a wide-ranging development process with staff, students and wider stakeholders. It's people who will make the strategy a success, so it's critical to involve them at every step...



# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

## OUR VISION

We will become a university where sustainability is truly embedded through knowledge, engagement, collaboration and innovation. Each and every one of our staff and students will understand the principles of sustainability – it will be an integral part of our operations and will bring about positive, sustainable change for the future.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY  
EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY  
SHARING OUR SKILLS, SPACES, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES  
CHALLENGING OURSELVES AND OTHERS

### 1 Embedding sustainability through collaboration

#### Commitments

- We will embed sustainability across the whole University.
- We will create and support proactive collaborative networks.
- We will develop robust management systems.
- We will establish governance and accountability structures that drive sustainability and place it at the heart of our institution.



### 2 Building knowledge and capacity

#### Commitments

- We will work across University departments to build capacity and share best practice on sustainable change.
- We will equip all our staff with sustainability skills.
- We will develop external links to enhance knowledge and capacity.
- We will support and promote research that examines the issues relating to sustainability.
- We will integrate sustainability into learning programmes and ensure all our students understand the importance of sustainability.



### 3 Being a positive partner in society

#### Commitments

- We will build external engagement to further develop internal and external capacity and knowledge, and influence wider policies.
- We will lead by example, share best practice, learn from others and ensure our research is accessible.
- We will take our responsibility to society seriously, as an employer, good neighbour and in creating opportunities.
- We will support our students to be responsible citizens and an active part of society, both locally and globally.
- We will create a welcoming, culturally and environmentally vibrant campus.



### 4 Making the most of resources

#### Commitments

- We will reduce our consumption of goods and services.
- We will embed sustainability into the procurement process.
- We will reduce the amount of waste we produce.
- We will enhance biodiversity on campus.
- We will use water efficiently and reduce, reuse and recycle where possible.
- We will become a low carbon university, through energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions.
- We will foster a staff and student body where sustainable travel is the norm.



## ACTION PLAN

## GOVERNANCE & MONITORING

FEEDBACK & REVIEW

FOUR THEMES

# EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION

Sustainability is going to be at the heart of the University of Leeds. It's not going to be a 'buzzword', or something we just talk about; it's going to be something that influences every decision we make and every action we take, each and every day. And it's not just because it's the 'right thing to do' – embedding sustainability across our institution will make the University a better, more supportive, place to work.

But what does that mean? It means management systems, governance, plans and policies. But most of all it means working together to make sustainability a reality. Our Schools, Faculties, Services and individuals need to work as one, think about the bigger picture and, through collaboration, make a substantial contribution to our wider sustainability agenda.



## Commitments

### ① We will embed sustainability across the whole University.

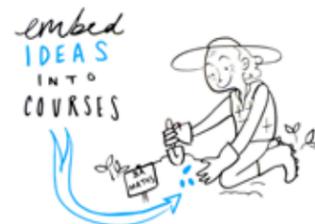
Everywhere you turn, you will see sustainability in action at the University of Leeds. It'll become the norm, the usual way of working. And it'll happen through everyone working together for a sustainable future in a collaborative environment.

Put simply, we're committing to putting sustainability at the heart of the University. And we'll do this by focussing on a whole range of projects – from developing the Green Impact Scheme and strengthening our sustainable procurement guidelines to reviewing our governance, reporting and feedback structures and developing the Living Lab concept.

We will lead by example, constantly review our progress and actively promote sustainability at every opportunity. Of course, we know that achieving this won't be easy. But through projects, processes, initiatives, education, best practice and word of mouth, it really can become a reality.

## Indicators

Relevant action plans and standards are implemented and audited. Clear and simple guidelines are available for staff and students. Relevant policies are reviewed and aligned.



“SIMPLY GETTING TOGETHER, SPARKING CONVERSATION AND DEBATING THE ISSUES AROUND SUSTAINABILITY CAN LEAD TO CHANGE.”

### ② We will create and support proactive collaborative networks.

Getting together, sparking conversation and debating the issues around sustainability can lead to positive change. We already know that our staff and students enjoy doing just this, so we're going to create, support and coordinate these networks. They will be places where people can share ideas and best practice, work together on projects and experiments, and generally foster a sense of community and collaboration.

And it's not just talk. These networks will also translate ideas into practical action. Whether it's sharing equipment and spaces through the Sustainable Labs Group or working with the network of Sustainability Architects, it's about making a real difference through what we do, not just what we say.

Supportive and action-orientated networks is developed. There is a sense of working together created rather than 'us and them'. Collaborative working across Services and Faculties ensures common understanding of aspirations and responsibilities.



### ③ We will develop robust management systems.

A critical first step in embedding sustainable practices across the University is the need for simple and consistent management systems. This includes an accredited environmental management system as well as clear and accountable internal management processes, underpinned by standards for procurement and construction. We already have lots of plans and objectives in place, but we need an official system to enable us to measure, track and provide evidence of our work. This will help in our applications for funding and research grants, as well as allowing us to see how the University interacts and impacts on the wider world. To improve efficiency further, we will work with other processes within the University to avoid any unnecessary bureaucracy and complication.

Accredited and auditable system for environmental management (ISO14001) is developed. Internal standards are part of a systematic process that includes auditing – in the first instance this involves procurement and construction.

### ④ We will establish governance and accountability structures that drive sustainability and place it at the heart of our institution.

Sustainability is going to be a core part of the University of Leeds. As such it demands a clear and robust system to ensure responsibility and accountability in terms of delivering this strategy. It's all about making sure we continue to make progress, to share knowledge and best practice, and have staff and student involvement at every step. As part of this, we will ensure that our governance structures link up throughout the University and provide reporting both externally and to the highest level of the University.

Strong internal reporting and accountability is evident. An externally verified annual report is produced. A full policy review has been completed. A clear and concise governance and reporting structure is in place.



# BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY

Knowledge: it's an integral part of what makes a university tick. We will ensure our staff and students not only understand sustainability, but also have the capacity to act sustainably through employability, working with communities and creating a vibrant campus environment.

The University of Leeds will become a 'Living Lab'. A place where ideas thrive and are shared, where research makes a real impact to the world around us, and everyone is given the knowledge and skills to be more sustainable. We will also develop and foster external partnerships allowing us to learn from, and share learning with, the local community, education sector and wider global society.

## Commitments

### ① We will work across University departments to build capacity and share best practice for sustainable change.

We're going to create the spaces, places, knowledge and culture of sustainability right across the University of Leeds. It's about building our own knowledge and capacity to be more sustainable... which in turn makes us more able to support those, both internally and externally, to do the same.

We're already doing great things. We're going to gather these success stories and innovations, share them to inspire and support further activity, and facilitate knowledge and capacity building across the University and beyond.

This can't happen if we work in isolation. We're committed to making sure there are no barriers to building capacity and sharing knowledge. For starters, we're going to work with Services to develop systems that make collaboration more straightforward, celebrate our achievements and create an interactive space on the sustainability website.

### ② We will equip all our staff with sustainability skills.

It is critical that our staff are armed with the knowledge and skills needed to bring about real sustainable change. We are aiming to lead the way and inspire our external stakeholders and wider education sector; to do this, we first need to inspire our internal audience through formal training, informal skills development sessions, online courses and staff development.

## Indicators

A sustainability community exists that links together the various networks. The sustainability website provides information to all stakeholders. Communication of best practices and project outcomes is common practice.

The staff and student forum is a vibrant space for sharing ideas.



All staff understand what sustainability is and how this relates to their role. Opportunities for staff to get involved in sustainability are further developed. Those in leadership positions are confident in what sustainability means and how they can play a role.

## "SUSTAINABILITY IS PART OF BEING A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR DISCIPLINE."

### ③ We will develop external links to enhance knowledge and capacity.

As a university, enhancing knowledge and capacity in every sense is our core responsibility. Through our research and education we create this knowledge and capacity, and it's this that we can take out to the wider world – everyone from local community groups to global research councils. But we don't profess to know everything, and sustainability can only truly happen through collaboration. That's why we will also use our links to enhance our own knowledge and expertise from others in the field.

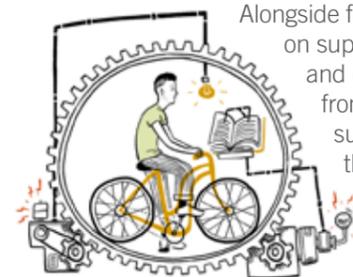
We also have the ideal bank of knowledge and skills in our employees and will use this experience to offer apprenticeships, support trainees and help to broaden the skills of the local community.

### ④ We will support and promote research that examines the issues relating to sustainability.

The University of Leeds is a research-intensive university. We strive to promote research and learning that makes an impact on global challenges and is truly inter-disciplinary. Our focus is on six key areas: health, water, food, energy, culture and cities. Through these we can examine sustainability from a number of perspectives including low carbon solutions, transport, ecology, cultural values, climate change and hydrology. This strategy and related work will support these key research themes, as well as a wide range of other research activities that link with sustainability.

### ⑤ We will integrate sustainability into student learning and experience to ensure all our students understand the importance of sustainability.

Sustainability is part of being a student at the University of Leeds, no matter what your discipline. It's that simple. And as sustainability becomes an increasingly core part of the University, it makes sense to ensure that the concepts, issues and innovations relating to it are integrated into all our learning programmes. After all, sustainability is cross-disciplinary, perfectly slotting into the majority of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and opening up a rich seam of research possibilities.



Alongside formal learning, this commitment also focuses on supporting students in developing, understanding and communicating the skills that they have – from volunteering, internships and becoming sustainability auditors to getting out and trying their hand at beekeeping.

Positive engagement is promoted with the organisation to create initiatives that have mutual benefit for all. Improved sustainability knowledge in our supply chain. Projects that enhance sustainability are established with Leeds City Region and other external partners. The University of Leeds plays an active role in public and policy

Living Lab concept is in place and visible across campus. Research activity is understood and communicated regularly. A simple process is in place to share research activity and identify collaboration and support.

All students are aware of and understand what sustainability is. All students have the opportunity to study and be involved in sustainability. Students understand how their experiences translate into skills.



## A sustainable university

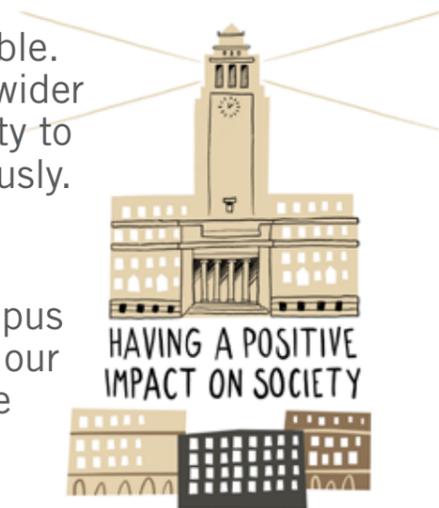
This illustration represents the feedback from our consultations with staff, students and stakeholders when asked 'what does a sustainable university look like?'



# BEING A POSITIVE PARTNER IN SOCIETY

The University of Leeds does not exist in a bubble. We are part of the local Leeds community, the wider UK and global society. We take our responsibility to make a difference far beyond our campus seriously. And we can.

By actively becoming a positive partner we can take our ethos of sustainability beyond the campus to the wider world. We can also make sure that our campus is a welcoming place to be. Somewhere that the local community and visitors to Leeds can visit, explore and get involved with.



## Commitments

## Indicators

- 1 We will build external engagement to further develop internal and external capacity and knowledge, and influence wider policies.**

Partnerships, working together, public engagement – we work hard to develop the right relationships to help us develop and deliver sustainable solutions and activities. Talking to the right people, at the right time, about the right things is the start of real change; having the networks and contacts to inspire that change is our ultimate aim.

And we're going to do this at every level – from influencing policy at the highest levels and strengthening our partnerships with Leeds City Council to ensure we have a voice on issues and activities across the city, to getting local schools onto our campus to learn from what we're doing.

- 2 We will lead by example, share best practice, learn from others and ensure our research is accessible.**

From the local community living in and around Leeds, to fellow academics around the world, we're going to make sure that our research and activities are relevant and inspiring to the people who matter. This means learning from, and engaging with, our stakeholders to determine what others want and need to know, in turn influencing the research we undertake.

We're going to walk the walk and talk the talk. When we discover something, no matter how large or small, we're going to share with the world. Through this we can strengthen our reputation in the field of sustainability, as well as promoting positive impacts far beyond our campus.

Partnerships to enhance social, environmental and economic wellbeing are being developed. Third sector organisations are being supported to develop knowledge and capacity. We have open and two-way discussions with key stakeholders in Leeds City Region.

We are a leader in sustainability. We work with staff and students to support impact and engagement work relating to sustainability outside the University. We share experience with a wide range of stakeholders.

**"IF WE HAD DOORS, WE WOULD OPEN THEM WIDE AND WELCOME EACH AND EVERY PERSON TO EXPLORE OUR CAMPUS."**

- 3 We will take our responsibility to society seriously, as an employer, good neighbour and in creating opportunities.**

With over 40,000 staff and students and covering 90 acres, the University of Leeds is a major part of the local community. Our size and activities mean we really can make an impact – the people we employ, those we train, our supply chain, contractors, partners and so on can all be made aware of sustainability and help to take the message out to the streets. We will also engage with all of these stakeholders to create mutual understanding, support equality and inclusion at the University, and fulfil our social responsibilities.

- 4 We will support our students to be responsible citizens and an active part of society, both locally and globally.**

Students come to the University of Leeds to learn. However, while they're here we encourage them to think beyond their studies and become responsible citizens. We want our students to be part of Leeds in the greatest sense – from taking part in events and exploring the city to being responsible neighbours and volunteering for local organisations, it's about getting out and getting involved.

This responsibility also extends beyond the local area. We encourage our students and alumni to play their part as global citizens, to volunteer around the world, and to think about the role they can play in sustainability long after they've left their student life behind.

- 5 We will create a welcoming, culturally and environmentally vibrant campus.**

If we had doors, we would open them wide and welcome each and every person to explore our campus. Instead, we're going to make our corner of Leeds a place where people want to visit, walk through, come to events and just generally explore. The University of Leeds will be accessible and friendly, a place to enhance knowledge, experience sustainability in action, and an integrated part of the city experience.



We work with others in the city to create positive, socially sound opportunities. Sustainability will be a core part of our contracts. Staff will be remunerated in a fair manner.

Students are aware of their impact on the local community and of the opportunities that exist to play a positive part in the community during their time at Leeds and in wider society as alumni. Project and volunteering opportunities link to wider society.

Community engagement has increased – including inviting schools onto campus to explore and learn from our facilities. Community access and engagement are a core element of campus development. Sustainability is one of the reasons why visitors are attracted to Leeds. We are an inspiration to young people.



# MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES



Here we're talking about the efficient management of resources and working within a circular economy framework. We're also going to think bigger than the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' concept. Through the sustainable procurement standard, biodiversity, renewable technologies, active travel, intelligent use and reuse of resources, recycling and reducing waste, we can start to close the loop and do more – and better – with less.

By doing this we can make the University of Leeds a vibrant, welcoming space where the environment enhances everything that happens, both on and off the campus.

## "OUR TARGET IS TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS BY 35% BY 2020"

### ② We will embed sustainability into the procurement process.

Our purchasing policy already states that sustainability issues must be considered when purchasing goods and services. This means taking into account features such as the social standards and working practices behind products and suppliers as well as the energy use, recycled content, whole life costs, ethical labelling (such as Fairtrade and the Rainforest Alliance), and whether the suppliers have their own sustainability policies in place.

Even though we already have a purchasing policy in place, we will continue to work on this commitment by developing further sustainable procurement guidelines and regularly auditing the process.

Work with our suppliers and other buyers to create change. Embed sustainability as a core element of our procurement process. Ethical and social considerations are the norm.

### ③ We will reduce the amount of waste we produce.

Our target is to divert 100% of our general waste away from landfill by 2020. It's an ambitious target... and we've already reached it. So, what next? We obviously have to maintain this achievement, and reducing the amount of waste we produce in the first place will go a long way towards it.

Reuse@Leeds is already helping to find new homes for surplus furniture, equipment and stationery. We're going to scale up this service to the whole University, creating the ultimate online database of all the offers and requests across the campus.

Significant reduction in non-general waste that is not disposed of in a sustainable manner. We send no general waste to landfill.

## Commitments

## Indicators

### ① We will reduce our consumption of goods and services.

We're a large university and the sheer number of staff and students on and around the campus means that we purchase a huge number of goods and services.

But we don't always have to buy 'new' each and every time. The first question in our sustainable procurement processes is always 'do we need it?' Alongside this is the efficient use of resources – that means using what we have wisely, conserving what we can and sharing and reusing wherever possible. And we can achieve this through staff and student training, campaigns to make sure everyone appreciates the importance of resource efficiency, and expanding the Reuse@Leeds system to facilitate equipment sharing across the University.

Increased sharing of equipment, space and services and skills.  
Reduced consumption levels.



### ④ We will enhance biodiversity on campus.

The University of Leeds is an urban campus covering 90 acres of the city centre. Even in this urban setting we can make a real difference in terms of biodiversity. And this can also reap benefits – improved health and wellbeing, education, volunteering opportunities, a reduction in flooding and an enhanced image can all be realised through a thriving natural environment both on campus and in local habitats across our wider estate. Of course, we will continue to develop and grow as a university, but we will always do so in a way that enhances biodiversity.

We're going to ensure that our staff and students are engaged with the environment, implement specific species and habitat action plans and continue to include biodiversity surveying in the curriculum to raise awareness of biodiversity and the need to maintain and enhance it.

We are an exemplar of biodiversity planting in an urban setting. The biodiversity value of the University campus is improved on an annual basis and is used as a hub of education and related research. We are an open and inviting campus for people to explore urban biodiversity.

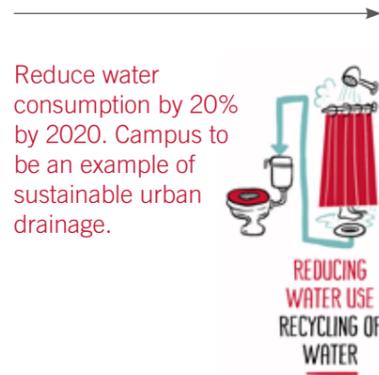


**⑤ We will use water efficiently and develop ways to reduce, reuse and recycle water where possible.**

We use water... and lots of it. In fact, the University of Leeds is the fifth largest water user within Leeds, behind organisations such as Yorkshire Water and the Health Trust. That's why we're taking steps to make our overall water consumption more sustainable.

However, there are some issues that need to be further understood. We will investigate the impact of run-off and how new and existing developments can incorporate measures to help mitigate against it.

We're also proud to have water@Leeds right here on campus. It's the largest interdisciplinary centre for water research in the UK – 150 professionals from across the physical, biological, chemical, social and economic sciences, engineering and the arts work alongside industry to carry out research and development, knowledge transfer and joint innovation. It's not only an impressive research centre, it can also directly support the commitments of this strategy and the actions we need to take.



Reduce water consumption by 20% by 2020. Campus to be an example of sustainable urban drainage.

**⑥ We will become a low carbon university, through energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions.**

First things first: the University of Leeds is world-leading in its research into climate change and energy efficiency. And we're going to put that into good use. Taking account of everything we do, the University of Leeds has a target to reduce total carbon emissions by 35% by 2020 (compared to 2005/06 levels). That includes the emissions from buildings, vehicles, waste and water – the whole range of operations.

Our Carbon Management Plan sets out the need for policies, systems and challenging targets, designed against the background of University-wide commitment to and understanding of a low carbon future. From carbon management systems and BREEAM ratings of 'excellent' for new builds, to energy efficient measures and making sure all staff and students appreciate the principles of sustainability, the University of Leeds will become an exemplar for a low carbon future.



Reduce carbon emissions by 35% by 2020. Low carbon options included in all capital and refurbishment projects.



**⑦ We will foster a staff and student body where sustainable travel is the norm.**

Located on the outskirts of Leeds city centre, we're really easy to get to and get around by public transport, foot, bicycle, scooter... and encouraging these sustainable transport options is at the heart of our travel plans. We will make sure our staff, students and visitors know how to get here in a sustainable way and continue to offer benefits such as travel discounts, cycle to work schemes and friendly staff to help you take that first commute by bike. We will also consult on relevant public transport issues, bringing together all stakeholders to improve city transport. If people have to drive, we encourage car sharing to keep car numbers down and make the best use of those that are here.

Of course, we realise that some business travel is unavoidable. We're going to rethink how this works and ensure that other options such as virtual meetings are available and considered first. There are also plans for our travel fleet including increasing the number of electric vehicles and charging points.



Increased levels of sustainable travel undertaken by staff and students. Operational transport is increasingly sustainable.



**TAKING ACTION**

We're not approaching this strategy from a standing start. Here at the University of Leeds, we already have several sustainability projects well underway and many more planned in the future. First up, we take a look at some of the initiatives already happening across the campus...

**The Sustainable Garden: Putting down roots**

Making its home in a once redundant space next to the Roger Stevens Building, the Sustainable Garden at the University of Leeds is a true success story. It's a great example of working together, connecting research through water@leeds, Leeds University Union (LUU) and grounds staff to create a beautiful, relaxing, educational and sustainable space at the heart of the campus.

The garden is a public space for staff, students and the local community, with wildflower areas to enhance biodiversity on campus, organic fruit and vegetables that are available to all and research pods to discover more about sustainable food production, the impact of climate change and alternative growing methods. It contains a number of elements that support and promote local biodiversity and the space has been designed to make the most efficient use of water, including a permeable path made from recycled glass. The garden has also been shortlisted for several local and European awards, and was a winner at the Leeds Architecture Awards.

Weekly gardening sessions and a programme of workshops and events give staff, students and the local community chance to learn more about what's going on, gain new skills and just spend some time in this inspiring environment. It's undoubtedly a popular space, and perfectly demonstrates how imaginative projects can enhance the appearance and use of a space as well as developing new ideas and collaborative ways of working.

**People matter: Celebrating our community**

The University is made up of a collective of amazing and committed people. It's these people that make the University a success – and the sustainability community is a great example of this. Our network of sustainability architects and Green Impact teams work tirelessly to make a difference in the day-to-day working of the University, changing practice, inspiring others and creating a community.

In 2014 we celebrated the achievements of our community at the annual Sustainability Awards, including the awards for being a Sustainability Hero. This was awarded to Caroline Wise in the School of Politics and International Studies for her tireless work recycling office items and furniture during the move from the Social Sciences building and her commitment and input to the sustainability credentials of the refurbished building. The award for Student Leadership was won by Matthew Stent for going above and beyond the remit of his role as Green Impact Project Assistant to bring about real, lasting change for Great Food at Leeds and increase their ability to be more sustainable in the future.

Of course, as a university, students are a huge part of our community. They are indirectly engaging with sustainability through their everyday lives, but also directly through volunteering roles as auditors, completing academic projects and undertaking internships in the Sustainability Service. There's



already a lot of enthusiasm for this, and we're going to develop more formalised systems to enhance this experience further and make sure more students can get involved with sustainability at the University of Leeds.

An exciting recent addition to the sustainability community has been the Sustainable Labs Group, bringing together academics, technicians and operational staff to find ways to work together to create change across our numerous labs. Building on this success, we're also going to focus on developing our sustainability coordinators to reflect the scope and ambition of this strategy – through a revitalised network of Sustainability Architects.

We're an active community with ambitions to do more. Through the staff and students we work alongside we will truly realise our goal: to be the Architects of Possibility.

### Sustainable construction: Building for the future

The construction of new University buildings and the refurbishment of our existing estate have a bearing on our sustainability. The way we construct our buildings not only influences our ability to meet our carbon reduction and other sustainability targets, it also creates the places and spaces where we inspire and create change through education, research and community engagement.

Developed in consultation with the Capital Development Team and key contractors, our sustainable construction policy covers all new building developments and refurbishments with a value over £1.5 million. It covers everything, from energy efficiency, water use, recycling and biodiversity to the environmental impacts of the supply chain and construction materials. The standards in place also help to create usable buildings that are designed to encourage and enable sustainable behaviour.

Sustainable design principles are incorporated into all projects from conception through to construction and operation. Progress is regularly monitored throughout the design and build of new buildings and refurbishments to ensure sustainability is 'built in' at every stage.

### Procurement system: Think before you buy

As a university, we buy and use a lot of products and services. Understanding the sustainability of this is key. But alongside that is the understanding that everything we purchase must first be manufactured, packaged and distributed... and it's the sustainability of this that must also be taken into account.

We've worked closely with the University's Procurement Team to analyse the expenditure, socio-economic risk and our ability to influence change in the things we purchase. That means everything from the energy used, ability to recycle and the distance goods travel to operation costs, disposal costs and the ethical practices of suppliers.

From this analysis, all categories are now coded for low, medium and high risk and a questionnaire helps to determine the sustainability credentials of potential suppliers. This focus on procurement not only allows us to improve in terms of sustainability, it's also a key part of improving the sustainability of our supply chain.

### Creating Sustainable Futures: Linking to the curriculum

The new 'Creating Sustainable Futures' discovery module allows any first or second year undergraduate to take a module in sustainability. It's just one of the ways that we're integrating sustainability into learning programmes to make sure all our students understand the importance of sustainability.

Essentially, it allows students to really get a grip on global and local sustainability challenges, such as the human cost of cheap consumer goods or the impact of climate change. It challenges them to consider what a sustainable future could look like, how we manage the change needed and how we tackle the problems that may arise along the way.

Academics have worked alongside the Sustainability Service to create the content of the module and write the assessments. They've also created a useful set of case studies, highlighting the campus as a Living Lab through examples such as biodiversity, bike use, ethical sourcing, and so on. Critically, the module links to both the University's strategy and this Sustainability Strategy.

Here are a couple of the many exciting projects that will be happening in the future...

### Living Lab: Local learning, global impacts

The Living Lab concept is all about enhancing the value of the estate, student education and innovation by using the campus as the site for teaching, research and discovery. It encapsulates all of the themes in this strategy, creating a campus where collaboration thrives and which has integration at its heart.

The Living Lab supports the core research themes of the University – it's about people, processes and infrastructure, drawing on the social sciences as well as the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In terms of funding, there are dedicated resources and support for a coordinated programme of works, including a funding pot for smaller projects and space for pilot studies.

And there's a whole host of projects already underway including the development of a small-scale anaerobic digester using our own food waste; solitary bee house research right across campus; and the creation of biodiversity maps, which are then used in campus decision-making.

In the long term, we are aiming to take the concept outside the campus, bringing Living Labs to the wider Leeds City Region.

### Staff mentoring: Support for third sector organisations

We are committed to making a difference far beyond our campus. As part of this, we're setting up a staff mentoring scheme to support third sector organisations to offer skills and advice and support them to achieve their objectives.

The mentoring programme will focus on supporting the organisation to be more sustainable; for example, developing new organisational structures, financial planning, energy and travel planning and developing volunteering programmes. At the same time as helping out these organisations, the University of Leeds will also benefit from the opportunity to develop individual staff, enhance our capacity, improve and increase external relationships and go towards creating a stronger community.

# KEEPING US ON TRACK

This sustainability strategy is just one step towards embedding sustainability across the whole University. To make sure it remains relevant and ambitious, we have a system of governance and accountability.



Progress will be measured on a continuous basis by the Sustainability Steering Group, which is chaired by a member of the University Executive Group.



We will develop a critical friends group, which will include external members to ensure we keep on track and that we continue to challenge ourselves.



We will regularly monitor our progress against the action plan and publish our annual report, which will be reported to University Council. A summary will also be included in the University's annual report and accounts, and available to a wider external audience. It will include a feedback mechanism and be externally verified.



Sustainability won't just be for specialist groups. It will be discussed at a range of University committees – including Capital Group and VCEG – to ensure we achieve our aim of embedding the issues and ideas into our core decision-making.



The network of sustainability architects will play a big part in spreading the sustainability message far and wide. Regular sessions will be held to both discuss information and processes, and to share knowledge, ideas and best practice.



The remit of sustainability architects will also be reviewed to make sure that all the elements of the sustainability strategy are covered and that there is enough support for all the initiatives to be carried out across the University.

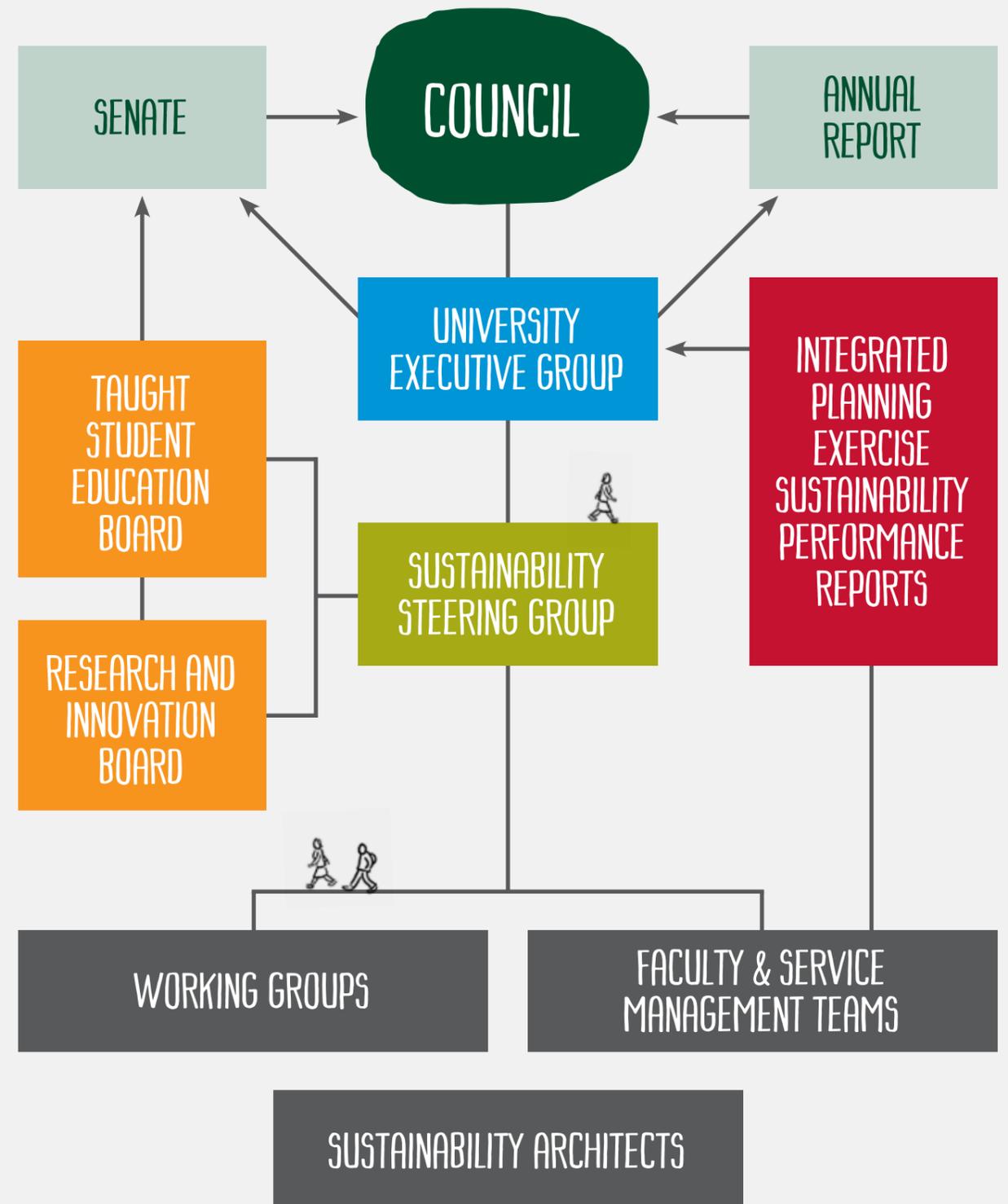


Our students are key to the success of our sustainability strategy. And that's why we'll ensure student representation is included in all key decision-making forums and we will develop a student sustainability architect role.



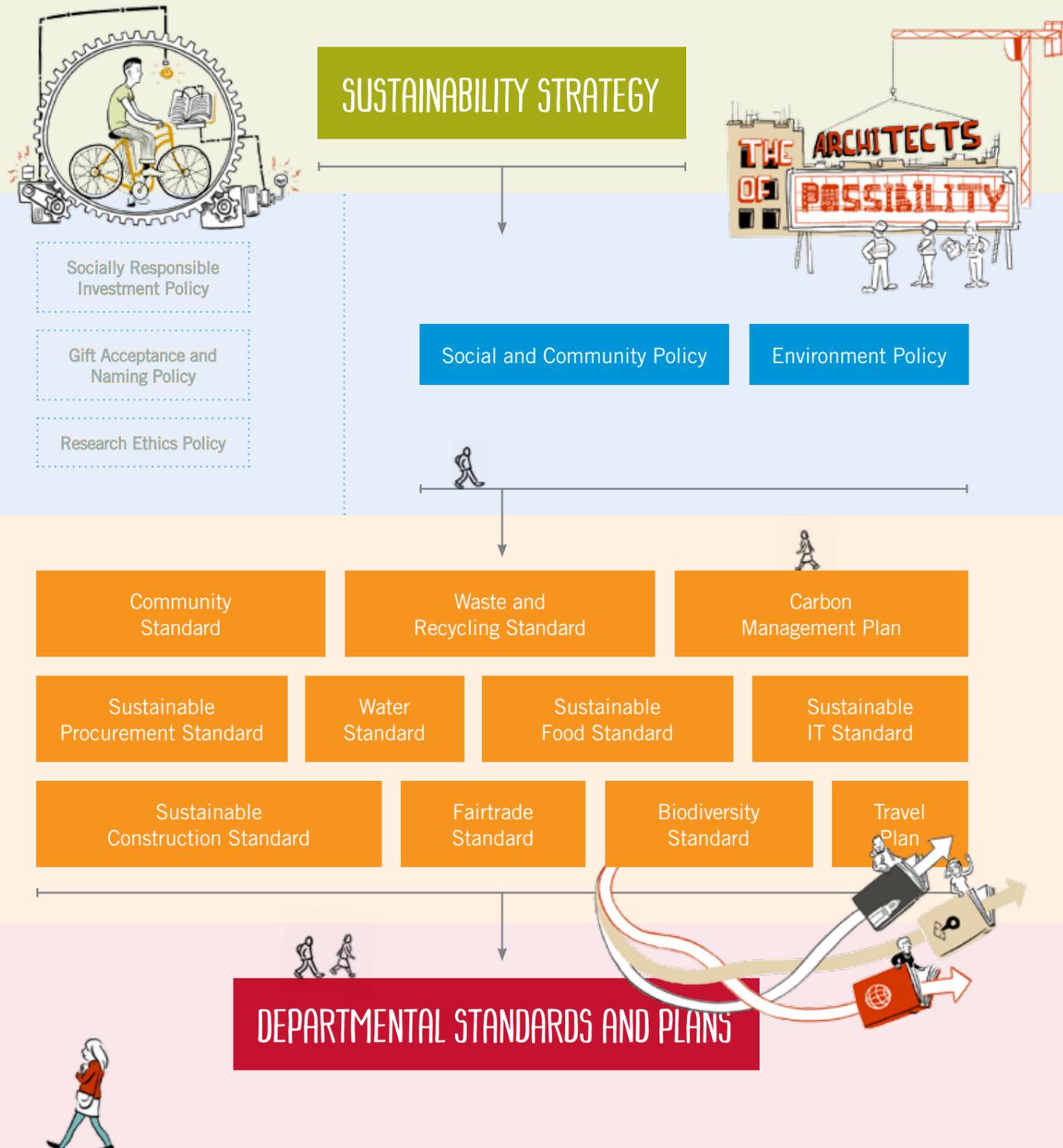
This sustainability strategy has several supporting policies and action plans that both impact and underpin its aims. These will be reviewed periodically, with any changes reported to the Sustainability Steering Group and approved by the Head of Sustainability.

# OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



# UNIVERSITY POLICIES AT A GLANCE

Our sustainability strategy directly impacts upon, and is directly influenced by, a number of other University policies and plans. Here we outline an overview of this hierarchy...



## WE ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF POSSIBILITY

This sustainability strategy sets out our vision and commitments moving towards a sustainable university and a sustainable future.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of our progress to date, played a part in developing this Strategy and contributed to making this vision a reality. It has been a truly inspiring process, and one that has cemented my personal belief in our ability to make sustainability a reality.

Ours is an ambitious strategy, but it has its foundation in practical actions. Here in the University, we're committed to the aims of this Strategy. The Sustainability Service will drive change across the University, as well as helping others to become more sustainable, from facilitating staff and student forums and assistance with departmental standards to supporting student learning programmes and research.

I believe we can achieve our vision of a university where sustainability is embedded through knowledge, engagement, collaboration and innovation. Getting there is going to be challenging, exciting and, most of all, rewarding. We've already made great progress. I look forward to being part of a university community that creates this change.

**Louise Ellis**  
Head of Sustainability, University of Leeds



## THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS

Everything in this sustainability strategy owes much to the input and feedback we have received from our staff, students, local community and stakeholders. For that, we'd like to say 'thank you'.

But it's not the end. We still need you. From forums, talks and volunteer groups to events, research and real action, we can all work together as the architects of possibility to make our vision of a sustainable university a reality.

We want to hear from you. What do you think of our plans?  
What can you do to embed sustainability where you work or study?  
How can you help us achieve our vision?

**Email:** [sustainability@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@leeds.ac.uk)

**Facebook:** [/UoLSustainability](https://www.facebook.com/UoLSustainability)

**Website:** [sustainability.leeds.ac.uk](http://sustainability.leeds.ac.uk)

**Twitter:** [@UoL\\_Sus](https://twitter.com/UoL_Sus)



“THIS STRATEGY IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF; IT IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT PHASE OF PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY. WE WILL CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE OURSELVES TO BE BOLD, AMBITIOUS AND ACTION-ORIENTED. . . . THERE ARE OVER FORTY THOUSAND PEOPLE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS AND EVERY ONE OF US HAS A PART TO PLAY IN BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.”

**Alan Langlands**  
Vice Chancellor, University of Leeds



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