**Sustainability Policy**

The University of Birmingham adopts the long-established Brundtland Commission’s (1987) definition of Sustainability namely … “*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*.” and we are aligned with the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (2015). This means we strive to balance the economic, environmental and social impacts of decisions, to maximise our positive contributions, especially through pioneering research, innovative teaching, and learning and to minimise the negative impacts of how we operate.

The University of Birmingham comprises approximately 39,000 students and 9,000 staff on our Edgbaston, Selly Oak and Dubai campuses, together with facilities in Stratford, Coniston and Coventry. Our 2030 Strategic Framework sets out the University’s Sustainability strategy, as one of the six key pillars for focus, for how we will be more sustainable and mindful of global and local impacts. The Framework has three goals around sustainability:

1. **Embedding the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals**

There are global challenges facing humanity and our environment that we recognise require collaboration, through a concerted and coordinated effort to address. We will contribute to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals through our learning, teaching, research and operations to tackle the global challenges. As a global thought-leader, we are well placed to contribute to sustainable solutions of real-world problems and benefit from our innovation in research in the operation of our campuses.

1. **Our Research, Education, and Knowledge Transfer**

At the University of Birmingham, we continue to increase global and local awareness and understanding of high standards of sustainable behaviours: protecting the environment and society by producing and promoting research and teaching on sustainability.

1. **Our Operational Focus**

Our activities and actions impact on the economy, environment, and society at a local, national and global level. We are focused on the behaviour and actions of our students and staff, and engagement with our local communities. The key areas for addressing are:

* **Net Zero Carbon (NZC):** We have set NZC by 2035 for scopes 1+2 and NZC by 2045 for scopes 1, 2+3
* **Energy use:** Continue to encourage energy efficient practices and investment in our estate to reduce carbon emissions and change to lower carbon alternatives
* **Pollution Prevention:** Ensuringappropriate controls are in place to prevent pollution to air, land and water, including emissions and discharges
* **Waste and material resources:** Continueto prevent and reduce waste generated and increase the reuse of resources prior to recycling or disposal
* **Water:** Manage and reduce water consumption through water efficient practices and technologies
* **Transport:** Minimise the impact of business travel and commuting by staff and students, and by encouraging use of more sustainable forms of transport, active travel, vehicle sharing, public transport and use of video conferencing
* **Buildings:** Take a lifecycle approach in the design, construction, refurbishment and operations of our buildings to sustainable principles. Including, Net Zero Carbon, NZC, optimising space utilisation and maximising health and wellbeing
* **Nature and biodiversity:** Protecting and improving natural habitats to enhance wildlife and biodiversity on our campuses, together with supporting wider initiatives
* **Procurement:** Encouraging systems thinking and applying the principles of circular economy by embedding sustainable, ethical and lifecycle considerations into purchasing decisions
* **Community:** Ensure this policy is communicated to our community and promote more sustainable behaviours; working with local and international networks and supporting volunteering
* **Wellbeing:** Continue to promote and encourage the wellbeing of our staff and students
* **Adapting for climate change:** Ensure the adaptation of the campuses to meet the challenges of climate change, mindful of the increasing regularity of extreme heatwaves, floods and droughts

**4) Reporting & Governance**

We have developed a strong governance model for Sustainability to ensure the Strategic Framework is implemented. To track our progress, we work to objectives and targets to ensure continual improvement, legal compliance and best practice. Our performance is monitored, communicated, and made publicly [available online](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/social-responsibility/index.aspx).

This Policy, together with its associated objectives and targets will be reviewed annually by the Sustainability Steering Group, with progress reported bi-annually to Sustainability Oversight Board and onwards to the University Executive Board.



**Signed**: **Date:** 2nd June 2023

Professor Adam Tickell, Vice Chancellor