



Edge Hill  
University

# **Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS)**

*2021 to 2025*

# Foreword

As Chair of Edge Hill University's *Health, Safety and Environment Committee*, an important part of my role is to ensure that the University operates responsibly with respect to the environmental impact of our actions. We continue to work hard to minimise our impact on the Environment and seek to have a positive influence in areas of sustainability within the community of which we are a part. An important aspect of Sustainable Development is to ensure that future generations have an environment within which they can meet their needs as required. As such as an educational establishment, we are well placed to influence "hearts and minds" to strengthen the resolve of this and future generations to act in a sustainable manner.

The University can proudly point to previous successes, be it the green technologies we have built into the development of our campus, such as community heating and sustainable urban drainage, or improvements to the syllabus of our taught degree programmes to include content related to the UN sustainability goals.

This strategy is aligned with the *University 2021 strategic plan*, and the commitments made within the *Institutional Health, Safety and Environment Policy*. It will play a central role in driving continuous improvement in the way environmental sustainability is managed here, ultimately leading to enhanced performance in the key areas set out in the strategy.

The University is committed to enhancing and demonstrating its commitment to the core goals set out in this document.

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources)**

Steve Igoe



# Contents

<b>Context and purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals	<b>5</b>
Sustainable campus development	<b>6</b>
Campus development timeline	<b>7</b>
<b>Theme 1: Leadership and governance</b>	<b>9</b>
Leadership and governance	<b>11</b>
Governance structure	<b>12</b>
<b>Theme 2: Estates and operations</b>	<b>13</b>
Estates	<b>15</b>
Operations	<b>16</b>
Travel and transport	<b>18</b>
<b>Theme 3: Learning and teaching</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Theme 4: Partnership and engagement</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Continual improvement</b>	<b>23</b>



## Context and purpose

Edge Hill University is committed to enhancing environmentally sustainable practice, recognising and acting on our responsibilities as a leading university.

Sustainability is one of the strategic aims of the *EHU Strategic Plan* commits, with a clear commitment to invest in the campus environment to recruit and retain students and to work towards carbon neutrality.

Our *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* supports the *EHU Strategic Plan* and has 4 key themes: Leadership and Governance, Estates and Operations, Learning and Teaching and Partnership and Engagement. It has been developed in conjunction with the *EHU Strategic Plan* and sets out the parameters to which the University manages environmental sustainability across key strategic themes.

The Themes have been identified through consideration of the commitments in the University's Strategic Plan and to reflect best practice within the sector as identified within the *Association of University Directors of Estates* (AUDE) and *Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges* (EAUC) *Sustainability Score Card* (SSC), and used to measure performance in the higher education sector.

## Defining 'sustainability'

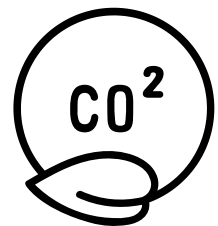
The term sustainability is becoming widely adopted when referring to the environment and the use of resources without negative future impact, prompting us to consider the links between society, economy and the environment.

Sustainable development refers to a balance between improving quality of life for communities across the globe, whilst protecting the natural systems that support life.

## Supporting documents

In support of this strategy, the following documents will be developed to provide important detail:

- Waste Management Strategy
- Carbon Management Plan
- Water Efficiency Audit and Plan
- Procurement Policy
- Travel Plan



<b>Leadership and governance</b>	Staff Engagement and Human Resources Health and wellbeing Risk Leadership
<b>Estates and operations</b>	Biodiversity Water resource efficiency Waste Construction and renovation Travel and transport
<b>Learning and teaching</b>	Student engagement Learning and teaching Research
<b>Partnership and engagement</b>	Procurement and supplier Food and drink Community and public

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Our strategy aims to incorporate the *United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* where possible, perpetuating change at a multitude of levels within EHU. SDGs have been integrated at each level of governance with the EHU overarching Strategic Plan, supporting continual development in line with the UN Goals.



Continual improvement within each theme of the ESS is driven by a set of actions within the *Sustainability Action Plan (SAP)* with each action linked to a corresponding UN Goal. The University's *SustainNET* group has created an [SDG map](#) of academic staff's sustainability expertise and interests. This resource will help develop a more collaborative SDG-framed approach on each of the four ESS Strategic Themes.

Edge Hill University

SustainNET

About ▾

Webinar Series ▾

Events ▾

Expertise & Interests ▾

Research ▾

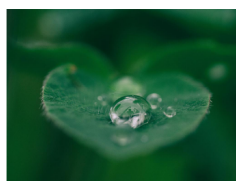
Education for Sustainable Development ▾

Partners

Latest News

Gallery

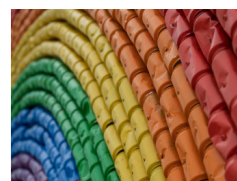
### Expertise & Interests



Biology, Biosciences & Geography



Business, Economy & Energy



Creative Arts & Culture

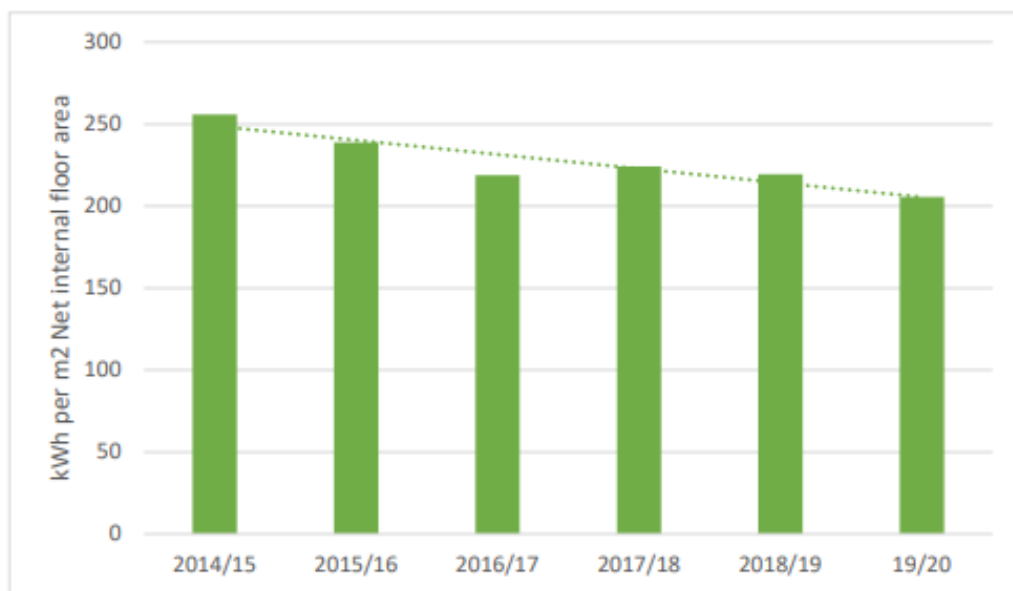


## Sustainable campus development

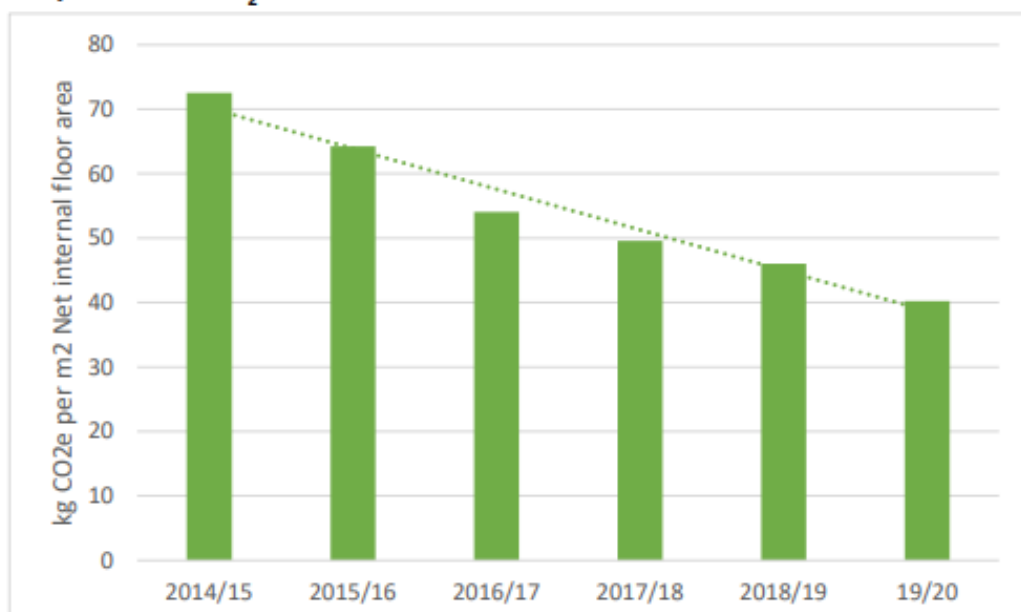
The continued development of the University campus is critical to providing an environment where students can thrive, and long-term recruitment and retention of students can be sustained.

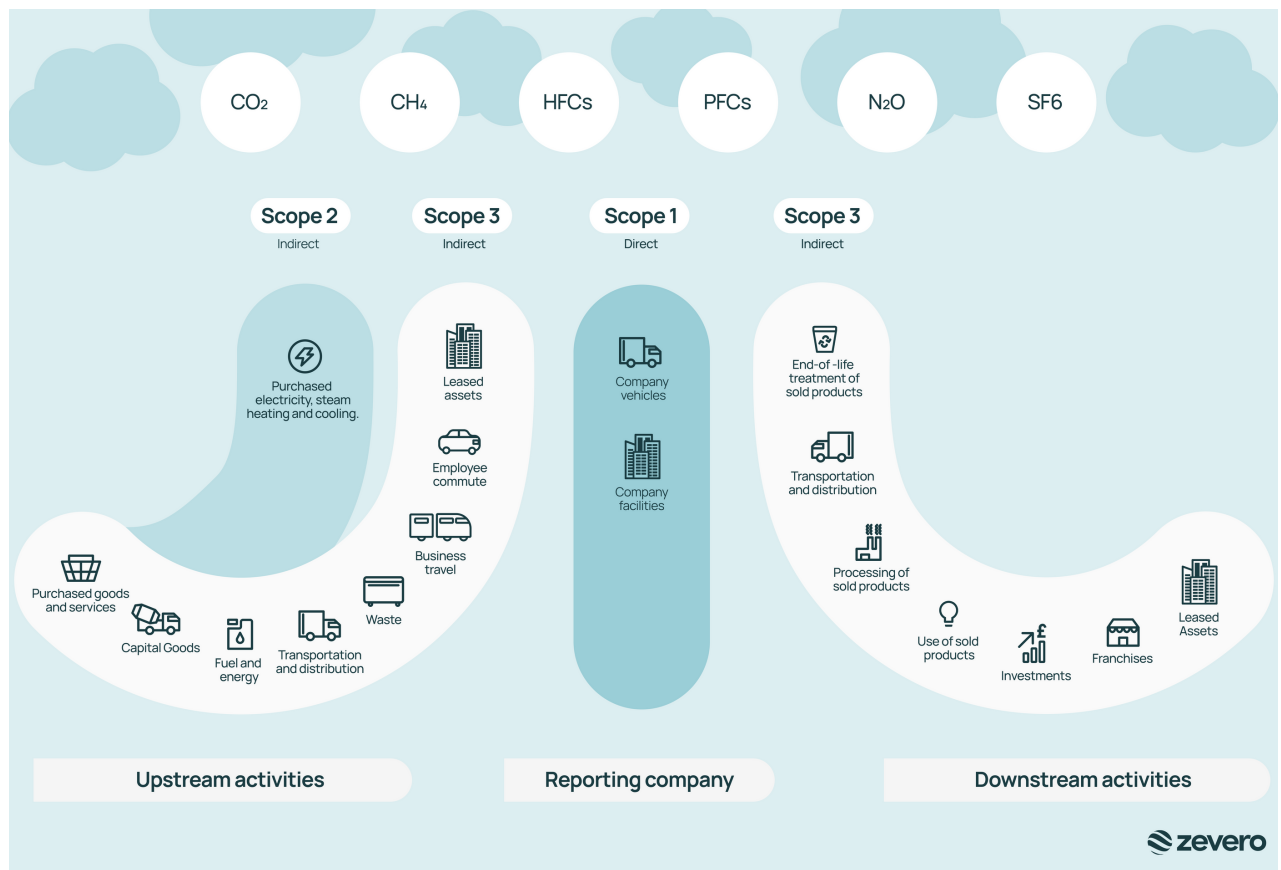
Over the last 10 to 15 years there are several examples of how the campus has developed great facilities whilst incorporating sustainable design to ensure that the environmental impacts of the campus are minimised. The sustainable campus development timeline summarises some of the key initiatives that have been integrated into campus development in recent years.

**Total Energy (kWh) Per m<sup>2</sup> Net Internal Floor Area**



**Scope 1 and 2 CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Per m<sup>2</sup> Net Internal Floor Area**





Through the life of this strategy, with objectives driven by the sustainability action plan, the University will continue to implement initiatives to reduce the environmental impact of the estate the approach will focus on two key areas: using the building management systems (BMS) the estate is running as efficiently as possible; and where new developments are built, ensuring that sustainability is an important factor in the design and end use of the buildings. This approach is central to the aim of achieving carbon neutrality.

### Campus development timeline

On the next page we have detailed a timeline depicting key campus developments since 2007. In addition to this, we have continuously developed the below measures.



LED lighting & sensor upgrades

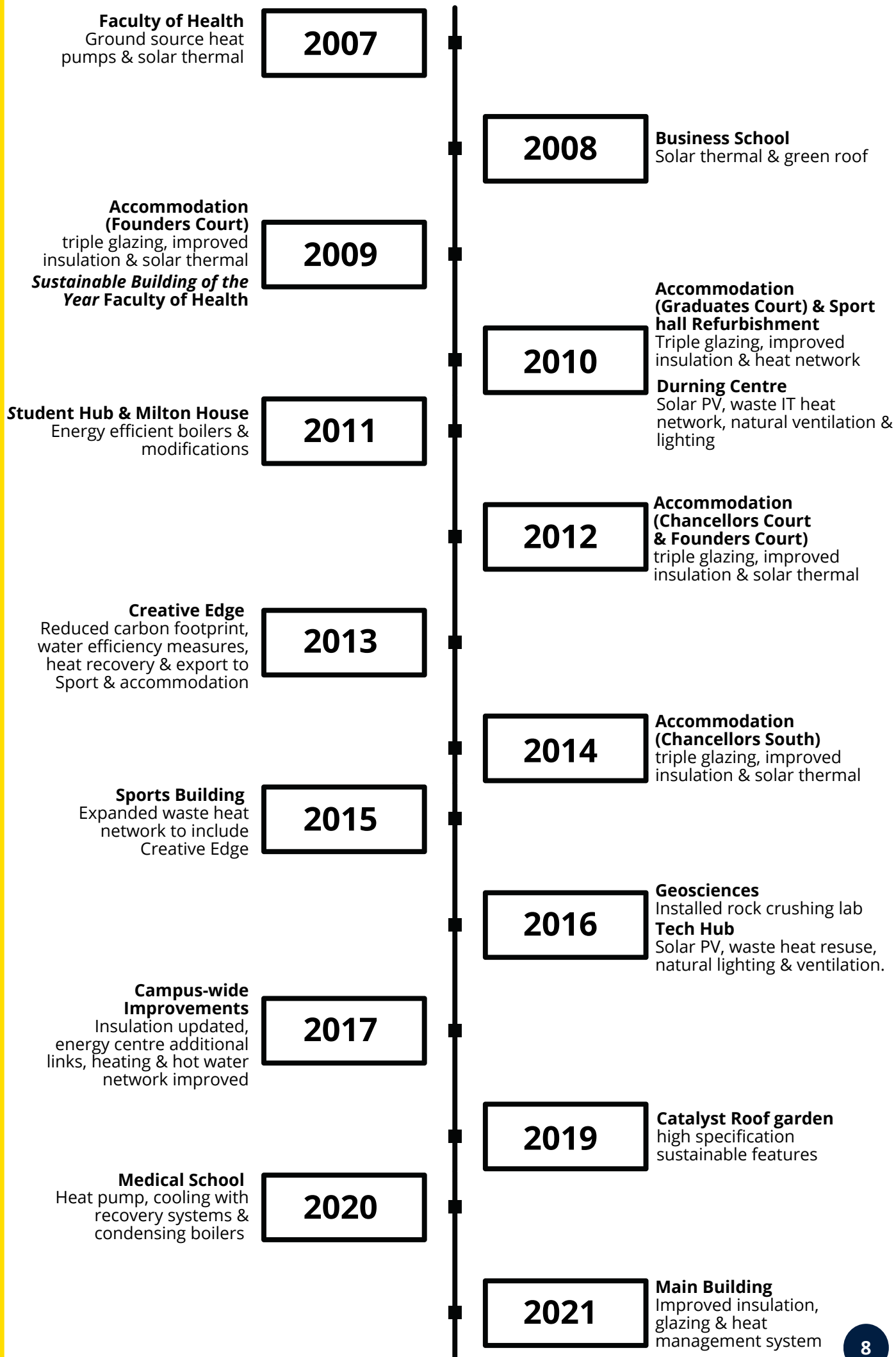


Native habitat creation with trees, meadows, logs & rewilding



Water collection & storage network developed across Ormskirk campus







## **Strategic Theme 1:**

### **Leadership and governance**

**Leadership | Risk | Staff engagement and human resources | Health and wellbeing**

Sustainability informs our organisational direction & culture. Edge Hill University has an active, visible leadership with a commitment to Environmental Sustainability.

Setting clear direction with accountability for health and safety across areas of responsibility. Ensuring that staff and managers have the appropriate skills, knowledge and abilities to undertake their duties. Success in this theme helps to enhance the University's profile and reputation, supporting the distinctiveness of our educational offer as well as our organisational effectiveness. We achieve this through transparent governance, by modelling leading practice and gaining recognition for our innovation in sustainability.

This theme looks at strands pertinent to staffing, empowering each member of the EHU community to help promote the sustainable agenda. Each strand delves into the objectives that provide staff the tools to be able to support, create and develop environmental campaigns. Change must start from our core principles as a University with each staff member having the ability to be an agent for change.

In order to achieve this the University has in place:



A **5-year ESS** that sets the direction of the University's approach to the management of ESS



Clear and visible leadership



An **Institutional Health, Safety and Environment Policy** that is communicated across the campus



An **Institutional Health, Safety and Environment Committee**, with key stakeholders in attendance, meeting quarterly and with minutes publicised

To support this, the **Institution's Health, Safety & Environment Policy** commits:

*"To deliver and maximise performance improvements within safety & environmental management through creating the conditions for sustainable development."*

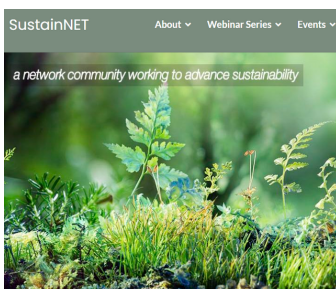
## Leadership and governance

Our transparent structure helps inform sustainable development & improve communication to each part of our community.

### Strategic ambitions

- ✓ Greater representation from staff and students within the sustainability framework
- ✓ Improved cohesion between policies, reports and strategies within the sustainability framework.
- ✓ Incorporate sustainability into risk management systems throughout each level of EHU, including audits from Sustainable Champions.
- ✓ Increase further training opportunities for staff and students in sustainable living and recognise sustainability training within contracts e.g. Carbon Literacy training to improve awareness of individuals carbon footprint.
- ✓ Improve incentives for staff to benefit for sustainable living, including the use of outdoor spaces and healthy eating.

### Strategic achievements



SustainNET was formed in February 2020 as a network community of staff and students passionate about sustainability.

Part of the *Institute of Social Responsibility*, it works with sustainability leads across the University to advance this important agenda. As detailed in this document, it is providing support and leadership in many aspects of the four ESS Strategic Themes, and it's membership is open to anyone.

## Measures of success



Incorporating sustainability into the health and wellbeing programme



Staff knowledge on sustainability and auditing on environmental impact within each departmental area



Nominees for the Sustainable Champions network

## Governance structure

### **Institutional Health, Safety & Environment Committee**

The *Institutional Health & Safety & Environment Committee* (IHS&E) is responsible for ratifying the ESS and reviewing activity against the Strategy's objectives. Progress is reported to the *Board of Governors* via the annual environmental sustainability report.

### **Dedicated Resource for the Management of Environmental Sustainability**

The Operational Risk and Environment team within Facilities Management, and specifically the Sustainability Manager within this service area has the responsibility for the day to day management of the University's arrangements with respect to environmental sustainability and proposing the ESS with its associated annual plans.

### **University Sustainability Group**

A cross-*University Sustainability Group* is being created to share knowledge, experience and understanding of sustainability. The group will seek to widen and promote the good practices, improvements the University achieves and to consult on the next ESS. The environmental sustainability group consists of a representative from departments involved with sustainable projects. The group meets quarterly to review ambitions within the ESS and determine whether further action is required to meet targets within the SAP.

### **Sustainability Champions**

Staff members who are interested in helping to actively reduce the overall environmental impacts of Edge Hill University. The Champions contribute ideas, suggestions and initiatives for improving environmental performance to the *Environmental Sustainability Group* representatives. The champions meet quarterly.

### **Students' Union**

Members of the Students' Union will be represented at all levels of the sustainability governance structure. Working closely with the Sustainability Manager and Operational Risk and Environment Manager they will help direct and support all appropriate actions, policies and reviews.

In addition to the above, each University faculty has a dedicated *Health, Safety & Environment Committee* which meets regularly throughout the academic year.



## **Strategic Theme 2:**

### **Estates and operations**

**Biodiversity | Water | Resource efficiency | Waste | Construction and renovation**

The main sources of environmental impact arise from both the built environment and the operational activity of staff and students. It is important that we recognise these impacts and ensure that measures are put into place to ensure that we minimise our environmental aspects and impacts.

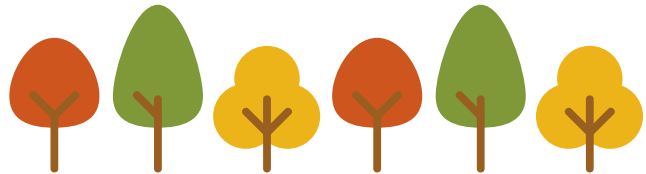
Success in this theme provides business benefits and helps to future-proof the University's operations, taking into account the implications of our Estate's development priorities for biodiversity and water. We achieve this through close collaboration with our Estates team and by supporting our professional and academic departments.

Environmental and sustainability performance is something that all staff and students can and do influence every day, and we encourage all members of the University to explore how they can contribute to meeting our environmental targets.



## Strategic achievements

Campus development has been carefully designed with sustainability at its core. There are multiple features that promote the native species of flora and fauna across the 160-acre green campus. Awarded green flag status for the 9th consecutive year, the University continues to strive to promote the integration of nature at every possibility.



Developing projects such as the 100 trees for endangered species, has helped increase biodiversity and native habitats in an area of campus that has been developed from a bare agricultural landscape.



## Carbon and environmental management plans

With the University's strategic plan aiming for a carbon neutrality, a large focus for this theme will be to identify sufficient baseline data sets to create a *Carbon Management Plan* (CMP) that will incorporate an analysis of the primary carbon contributors.

Further environmental plans, linked the CMP, are being updated and created for biodiversity, water efficiency and waste to help mitigate any negative impact.

## Estates

We ensure that we develop with the landscape and not against it.

### Strategic ambitions

- ✓ Protect and increase current levels of biodiversity on campus, developing native habitats further
- ✓ Increase engagement with outdoor spaces such as The Sanctuary campus allotment and the Trim Trail
- ✓ Increase awareness of water usage across campus using a variety of engaging initiatives and improve transparency of water usage data for students and staff by installing automatic monitoring.

### Strategic achievements

Sustainable Urban Drainage has been integrated throughout campus, with carefully planned natural filtration beds planted to improve water quality and support thriving ecosystems. Water is also recycled on campus through the installation of grey water tanks that capture rainfall from sports fields and other parts of campus.

This has helped reduce the risk of flooding by increasing the lag time between rainfall and peak discharge to local systems, while reducing our carbon footprint by reusing grey water where appropriate.



### Measures of success

- ✓ Incorporating sustainability into the health and wellbeing programme
- ✓ Staff knowledge on sustainability and auditing on environmental impact within each departmental area
- ✓ Nominees for the Sustainable Champions network

## Operations

Sustainability is an essential improvement priority underpinning all operations. Our campus already has excellent infrastructure to reduce energy usage and promote waste recycling. The climate emergency demands that we target our largest producers of greenhouse gases to make the necessary progress on reducing our absolute emissions and reaching net-zero as quickly as possible.





We take the commitment to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle materials very seriously and are committed to applying the principles of the circular economy wherever possible.



Many University spaces are energy-intensive, but there is a lot of progress that can be made in reducing emissions by improving our current building stock and ensuring new buildings are designed to the most rigorous environmental standards.



### Strategic ambitions

-  Identify and implement energy and emission reduction projects and continue to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy, in line with the University's *Carbon Management Plan*.
-  To reduce unnecessary ordering of consumables, packing waste and electronics, encouraging reuse.
-  Ensure minimal environmental impact on new projects by putting it at the forefront of the decision-making process.
-  To further develop in-house standards for heating, ventilation, lighting, mechanical and electrical services, to meet best practice for environmental performance.

## Strategic achievements

We understand the complexities of the operations impact of our waste management system and although difficult to reduce we actively create projects with students, staff and our waste supplier to reduce the University's impact.

This has meant that 0% of waste was sent from landfill in 2019/20 and new waste partnerships has allowed for the greatest number of items being recycled to date. Food waste is also being targeted with new disposal schemes implemented across campus and competitions for those off-campus to get involved. Increasing the separation of food waste and promoting the reduction of food waste helps reduce the environmental impact of our waste services.



## Measures of success

- ✓ Reduction in energy usage per unit area.
- ✓ Increase in percentage of waste recycled.
- ✓ Percentage increase of material reuse and recycled, diverted from landfill.

## Travel and transport

### Commute | Business travel | University journey

Transport connects all elements of sustainability and we prioritise low carbon options.

Our campus already has excellent infrastructure to reduce energy usage and promote waste recycling. The climate emergency demands that we target our largest producers of greenhouse gases to make the necessary progress on reducing our absolute emissions and reaching net-zero as quickly as possible.

#### Strategic ambitions



Reduce percentage of carbon intensive travel methods to and from the University. Review and reinforce long-distance travel policy.



Advocate for environmentally friendly practice as part of the Travel Action Plan (TAP) both prior to enrolment and leading up to university holidays.

#### Strategic achievements

Working with new partners for our Edge Link bus service we have increased the capacity whilst reducing the environmental impact. Developing the bus stop network on campus and promoting our services, we have seen a gradual increase in service uptake. Working with local networks to promote sustainable travel we have also been able to offer free travel days, cycle maintenance sessions and travel loans.

Advocating for an increase in local travel options, several members of staff have provided feedback on train, bus and cycle routes around Ormskirk to help cut down on local emissions. This has helped with the development of a new cycle path between Ormskirk train and bus station, with further plans to review an extension to the University.

#### Measures of success



Annual *EHU Travel Survey* responses and feedback



## **Strategic Theme 3:**

# **Learning and teaching**

### **Student engagement | Learning and teaching | Research**

ESD principles are integrated into our framework for learning, helping to increase the quality & value of our academic practice.




Education for sustainable development (ESD) is the process of 'empowering learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.' (UNESCO, 2019). It is about our responsibility to engage our whole community, staff and students, in sustainable development issues.

Success in this theme is underpinned by our expertise in ESD, using shared pedagogical approaches to inform our academic practice. We achieve this by supporting academic staff to innovate in their teaching and research, underpinned by an established strategic link with our academic quality validation processes. Engaging students using both a pedagogical and extracurricular approach, we reinforce ESD while improving the experience and retention of students.

This work is aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, supporting progress towards the SDGs within the teaching framework and enhancing teaching excellence and research impact in our portfolio.



## Strategic ambitions

-  Increase the interactivity with the sustainable agenda through the alignment of institutional strategies and working with the Students' Union, student societies, volunteering programmes, staff groups or individual sustainability champions.
-  Embedding social responsibility and sustainability within the curriculum, learning, institution systems and processes.
-  To undertake world-leading research that is related to environmental sustainability and to ensure that our operations are informed by this research where possible.



## Strategic achievements

Working with each of the faculties we have increased the prevalence of sustainability across the curriculum.

An example of this can be seen within the Faculty of Education where lecturers have made strides to incorporate Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) practices, putting themselves forward as leaders of the Forest School and Beach School movement. This has helped ensure that courses at Edge Hill provide students with the latest pedagogy.

SustainNET is playing a critical role in advancing Educational Sustainable Development (ESD) in the University. Forming an ESD Working Group with representation across the campus that will develop a series of new initiatives and actions to more effectively embed ESD in our learning, teaching and curricula at Edge Hill. ESD is one of SustainNET's key areas of work.

## Measures of success

-  Progressively greater student engagement with sustainability campaigns and projects.
-  Measurable response and improvement in the student's perception of skills and knowledge development to help understand sustainable development issues.



## **Strategic Theme 4:**

# **Partnership and engagement**




**Community and public engagement | Procurement and supplier | Food and drink**

Sustainability adds value to our collaborations at all levels.

Public and business outreach underpins our sustainability programme, reflecting our commitment to creating benefit for the communities we serve, including both local and global partners. The partnerships and engagement theme of this strategy adds value to our collaborations, helping put a community focus on our sustainability projects.

Success in this theme brings global and intercultural perspective into our work and empowers our role as an anchor institution in Ormskirk and the wider region. We achieve this through collaboration at regional, national and international levels, via our SustainNET partnership and EAUC platform. Through online membership, staff at EHU can access UK-wide networks for reporting and comparison, helping promote sector-wide progress and community involvement.

### Strategic ambitions

-  Increase staff and student-led engagement activities across the institution and beyond via the Students' Union, student societies, volunteering programmes, staff groups, trade unions or individual sustainability champions.
-  Actively link employer and business engagement with social responsibility, sustainability, employability and the student experience.
-  Develop the institution's Sustainable Procurement Policy and SAP in support of sustainable food and drinks provision, reduced packaging, health options, local suppliers and more.

### Strategic achievements

Following feedback across the University to increase the availability of vegan and vegetarian meals, Edge Hill introduced Roots Kitchen. We promoted sustainable food options that are plant based, seasonal and locally sourced. Working with procurement they have phased out single-use plastic cutlery, introduced compostable containers and increased the amount of companies that are signed up to Net Positive Futures.

SustainNET is developing partnerships with local sustainability-relevant organisations as part of its work to advance the environmental sustainability agenda both on and off campus. SustainNET will continue to collaborate with these organisations in joint projects, promote their work in our local region and develop student engagement links (e.g. volunteering) with them. There are currently around 30 SustainNET Partners.

### Measures of success

-  Developed network of sustainable partners with greater awareness of each partnership.
-  Measurable increase in sustainably procured goods and services i.e. NPF & Environmental feedback.

# Continual improvement

## **Sustainability Action Plan (SAP)**

Our annual plan that sets out clear objectives that Edge Hill University is committed to working towards to improve sustainability at all strategic levels. All objectives in the plan will be linked to one or more of the strategic themes and cross referenced to the UN SDGs to ensure the improvements that are made are clearly aligned to the ESS. Following approval from the *Institutional Health Safety and Environment Committee (IHSEC)*, progress against the objectives are updated quarterly.

## **Monitoring & Measuring Success**

Each member of the Edge Hill community has a vital role in the success of our strategy. Implementation of the Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025 is the responsibility of the University's Operational Risk and Environment Team. The team works collaboratively across the institution and externally to deliver the strategy, supported by established governance and management systems.

## **Environmental Sustainability Report (ESR)**

Compiling progress from key areas of the SAP and ESS into an accessible document, allowing stakeholders to review and adapt in line with strategic aims. Once this report gains approval from IHSEC it is published both internally and externally to showcase environmental aspects and impacts.

# Get involved

With the creation of the new Sustainability Action Plan, we'll be exploring opportunities for staff and students to support projects both internally and externally with the community.


Whilst we create the resource for sustainable engagement, we would encourage you all to interact with local organisations and charities to help support your surrounding environment to promote positive change.

For ideas on volunteering visit either the Edge Hill Careers or SustainNET.

## Find out more

 [sustainability@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@edgehill.ac.uk)

 [@SustainableEHU](https://twitter.com/SustainableEHU)

 [ehu.ac.uk/sustainability](http://ehu.ac.uk/sustainability)



Edge Hill  
University