# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2017 - 2022







## **CONTEXT AND PURPOSE**



approach to sustainability that connects our corporate and academic activities, grounded in our Education for



We have held 1st class status in the UK universities' sustainability league since it began, gaining a special recognition award in 2013 for our performance. Our work to engage students and staff in sustainability has been recognised by the United Nations, and our leadership of strategic programmes to develop sustainability in the curriculum has been recognised by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Quality Assurance Agency. We host RCE Severn, our Regional Centre of Expertise in sustainability education, part of the international RCEs network co-ordinated by the United Nations University.

This Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 outlines our strategic vision for sustainability at the University and our approach to sustainability as a transformative concept aimed at improving quality of life for people and communities across the globe, whilst protecting the natural systems upon which life depends.

Our strategic priorities are reflected in five key goals, taking account of identified critical success factors, the changing higher education landscape, and increasing engagement with sustainability at the international level, within higher education and in the wider business environment.



- 03 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE
- 04 STRATEGIC VISION
- 05 **DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY**
- 06 STRATEGIC CAPABILITY
- 07 GOAL 1: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
- 08 GOAL 2: STUDENT EXPERIENCE
- 09 GOAL 3: ACADEMIC INNOVATION
- 10 GOAL 4: BUSINESS OPERATIONS
- 11 GOAL 5: ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS
- 12 SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE
- 13 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
- 14 STRATEGY DELIVERY MEASURES
- 15 PROFILE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

FIRST CLASS IN THE UK UNIVERSITIES' SUSTAINABILITY LEAGUE SINCE THE LEAGUE BEGAN

### **D** The two high level Key Performance Indicators for delivery of our Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 are:

- First Class status in the new People & Planet UK HE sustainability league
- Annual sustainability reporting aligned with ISO 14001 accreditation

The strategy is aligned with the University's new Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and its priorities have been shaped in the context of anticipated growth for the University. These goals have considered the opportunities and challenges in our operating context, including the practical impacts that an expanded campus footprint brings, as well as the added value and efficiencies that our sustainability focus offers.

Our priorities recognise the long term benefits we can create from our sustainability work, in extending the quality of our teaching, the impact of our research, and developing transformative capabilities for staff and graduates. They reflect how sustainability contributes to and enriches our internationalisation plans, public engagement programme and initiatives to support the wellbeing of our community.

## **STRATEGIC VISION**

## **DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY**

society and ecology. The concept carries the aim

Our Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 has five goals.

Together they provide an integrated vision for our University where:



1. Leadership and Governance - sustainability informs our organisational direction and culture: Sustainability principles underpin our core purpose as a University, including the experiences of our students, the professional practice of our staff, and the wellbeing of our community.



2. Student Experience - sustainability provides distinctive capabilities for our graduates: Our students develop their future focus, global outlook and the ability to innovate and lead change in support of sustainability, which is increasingly critical for professionals in all sectors.



3. Academic Innovation - sustainability is integral to our learning, teaching and research: Education for Sustainability principles are integrated into our framework of graduate attributes and help to increase the quality and value of our academic practice and scholarship.



4. Business Operations - sustainability is an essential corporate improvement priority: Sustainability is central to our practice as a responsible employer, in tackling negative impacts, creating value and bringing positive benefits to staff, students and communities.



5. Engagement and Partnerships - sustainability adds value to our collaborations at all levels: Sustainability guides our local, national and international relationships, enhancing our role as an anchor institution in our region and a stimulus for innovation in higher education.

Sustainability is ultimately a challenge of learning and change. As a University, our most important contribution to sustainability is through education, by building the capability and confidence of our students to shape the future. Therefore the fundamental aim of this strategy is to create experiences that empower our graduates to innovate and lead change towards sustainable patterns of life and improved prospects for all. Our Education for Sustainability expertise guides our work with students through the formal curriculum, professional development opportunities, life on campus and involvement with local communities.

Sustainability at the University of Gloucestershire is about understanding the wider consequence of our current activities while using learning, imagination and leadership to support societies towards more sustainable futures.

The concept of sustainability is like a prism with different facets. Looking through the sustainability lens requires an interconnected view of the three pillars of sustainability financial, social and environmental - known as the 'triple bottom line'.

Our shared understanding of sustainability is based on internationally agreed principles of learning and change for sustainability, providing a working definition adaptable to different areas of professional and academic practice.

THE GLOBAL GOALS



Our sustainability programme supports the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by UN Member States in Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It reflects the commitment behind the Global Goals to make further advances on social progress, economic growth and environmental protection, balancing the three pillars of sustainable development.



## STRATEGIC CAPABILITY

the past decade, to an integrative, mature approach area. Our sustainability programme is distinctive a futures-oriented and transformative approach to education.

Our initial achievements were supported by our first institutional sustainability strategy, Promising Futures 2009-2015, and our Strategic Plan 2012-2017.

To enhance our performance for 2017-2022, we have refreshed our sustainability governance arrangements, developed our approach to reporting and established a formal alignment with our Academic Development Unit. This positions our competences and resources to maximise collaboration and ensures we have the strategic capability to pursue our vision for the next phase of sustainability at the University.

As an early pioneer, the University continues to advance on sustainability in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive sector context. With rising global participation in higher education bringing new pressures on the system, universities are highly focused on the quality and relevance of the learning experiences they provide.

This strategy takes account of our previous sustainability achievements and overall strategic direction, alongside the influences in our operating environment that guide our future sustainability ambitions:

### **•** Within the higher education sector

- Rising student involvement in sustainability, both internationally through initiatives • such as the World Student Community for Sustainable Development, and in the UK from the National Union of Students, who act at sector and international levels to promote change for sustainability.
- **Increasing sector engagement with sustainability**, with all higher education institutions now included in the UK sector's new public sustainability ranking led by People and Planet and visibly increasing their formal commitments, strategic development, as well as efforts to advance sustainability through education and research.

#### **D** Beyond the higher education sector

- **Prominent global activity on sustainability**, with adoption of Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris COP 21 Agreement, and for the HE sector, the UN Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability and UN Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.
- **Ownership of the business benefits of sustainability**, with organisations across sectors increasingly alert to risks and opportunities linked to sustainability, in managing costs and compliances, mapping benefits, creating value and optimising investments, whilst adding to overall strategic coherence.



**GOAL 1: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE** - SUSTAINABILITY INFORMS OUR ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTION AND CULTURE

Sustainability principles underpin our core purpose as a University, including the experiences of our students, the professional practice of our staff, and the wellbeing of our community.



sustainability commitment informs our institutional identity strategy supports the integration of sustainability principles

Success in this theme helps to enhance the University's profile and reputation, supporting the distinctiveness of our leading practice and gaining recognition for our innovation

This work supports the achievement of the core goals of the University's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and is closely aligned with the People and Culture strategy, contributing



## Key achievements to date include:

1st class and top 10 position 2007-2015 in the UK People & Planet league

1st English HE institution to gain ISO 14001 environmental management system accreditation in 2005

Establishment of sustainability governance and Sustainable Development Committee





## **Strategic Ambitions for 2022**

## **Corporate Alignment:**

sustainability is clearly integrated into the University's mission, identity and values, aligned to our Strategic Plan 2017-2022, public profile and corporate communications.

## **Sustainability Reporting:**

achievements are communicated to stakeholders via annual sustainability reporting, using agreed impact indicators and underpinned by ISO 14001: 2015 accreditation.

## Mapping Benefits:

sustainability criteria and benefits inform our corporate decisionmaking, based on the identification of risks and value gained from our sustainability programme.

### We will measure our performance in this area against two core institutional indicators:

- First Class status in the new People & Planet UK HE sustainability league
- Annual sustainability reporting aligned with ISO 14001 accreditation

#### To support institutional development we will use two additional evidence points:

- Achieve and maintain BSi ISO 14001: 2015 environmental management standard
- Maintain positive annual stakeholder • feedback on our sustainability programme

#### Capacity development priorities to support delivery on this theme include:

- Greater integration of sustainability into recruitment and professional development processes
- Embedding lifecycle costing and sustainability risks/benefits into corporate planning methods
- Development of reward and recognition mechanisms for staff and students in sustainability

Sustainability was an explicit institutional priority in our Strategic Plan 2012-2017

Global recognition plus 2 Green Gown Awards for institutional development in sustainability



## **GOAL 2: STUDENT EXPERIENCE** - SUSTAINABILITY PROVIDES DISTINCTIVE CAPABILITIES FOR **OUR GRADUATES**

Our students develop their future focus. global outlook and the ability to innovate and lead change in support of sustainability, which is increasingly critical for professionals in all sectors.



## Strategic Ambitions for 2022

#### • Professional Experiences: students have personalised opportunities to gain professional

experience in sustainability within and outside the University, guided by experts, mentors and alumni.

- **Experiencing Sustainability:** students can develop their sustainability thinking and actions through the everyday experience of university life, linked to their personal and professional interests.
- **Student Empowerment:** student influence and involvement in sustainability happens through the 'co-creation' of learning and enterprise experiences, as well as formal representation and feedback.

#### We will measure our performance in this area using these indicators:

- Delivery of professional sustainability opportunities aligned with Your Future Plan
- Students achieving awards and professional recognition for sustainability activities

#### Capacity development priorities to support delivery on this theme include:

- Directly supporting 'co-creation' activities to . increase student influence and engagement in learning
- Expansion of institutional initiatives to support students in social enterprise and sustainability practice
- Supporting students to develop research . activities and applied learning projects in sustainability
- Developing external collaborations across the sector to support student sustainability initiatives



## **GOAL 3: ACADEMIC INNOVATION -**SUSTAINABILITY IS INTEGRAL TO OUR LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Education for Sustainability principles are integrated into our framework of graduate attributes and help to increase the quality and value of our academic practice and scholarship.



## Key achievements to date include:

Students' Union Greener Gloucestershire initiative funded with £290K from the NUS

Sustainability Internships Programme involving partnerships with local host organisations

Pioneering student-led social enterprises such as the Cheltenham Chilli Company

Future Professionals training workshops and practical sustainability experiences on campus Students' Union gained Gold 'Green Impact' status with the NUS for their sustainability practice

## Key achievements to date include:

Good practice commendation for our Education for Sustainability work in the 2015 QAA review

Capacity and new practice developed through our Learning for Sustainable Futures scheme

Income generation of £595K for curriculum development projects in Education for Sustainability

## **Strategic Ambitions for 2022**

## **Quality Enhancement:**

Education for Sustainability guides our teaching practices and is integrated into learning gain, internationalisation, teaching excellence and student satisfaction initiatives.

## **Innovative Scholarship:**

adoption of sustainability extends the University's academic profile, scholarly outputs and impact, across Academic Schools, international partnerships and research priority areas.

## **Graduate Development:**

sustainability informs student learning, research and professional development, aligned with the University's graduate attributes framework and employability goals.

#### We will measure our performance in this area using these indicators:

- Delivery and impact of the new LIFT: Learning Innovation for Tomorrow initiative
- Cumulative integration of sustainability principles across Academic Schools' portfolios

#### Capacity development priorities to support delivery on this theme include:

- Provision of academic staff training in Education for Sustainability via our PGCAP programme
- Development of pedagogical support to connect sustainability and internationalisation agendas
- Creation of online academic staff . development resources and tools in Education for Sustainability
- Extension of peer support mechanisms to build staff research outputs and profiles on sustainability

Led sector curriculum change initiative in sustainability funded by HEFCE and working with the QAA

Integration within our Learning and Teaching Strategy and Academic Strategy



## **GOAL 4: BUSINESS OPERATIONS -**SUSTAINABILITY IS AN ESSENTIAL **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY**

Sustainability is central to our practice as a responsible employer, in tackling negative impacts, creating value and bringing positive benefits to staff, students and communities.



Our core operations and infrastructure benefit from this strategy focuses on continuous improvement and delivers on corporate responsibility, to enhance our performance and resilience as an organization.

Success in this theme provides business benefits and helps to future-proof the University's operations, taking account with our Estates team and support to our professional and academic departments.

4 of our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 in relation to professional practice and partnerships.

## Strategic Ambitions for 2022

## **Operational Gains:**

sustainability performance underpins our core operations, minimising our footprint and corporate risks, whilst increasing positive impacts and financial value to the institution.

### **Cultural Change:**

staff and students can engage in sustainability practice to support their professional development and the University's sustainability performance, achieving recognition for their work.

**Business Partnerships:** sustainability collaboration extends through our procurement activities and civic partnerships, to address sustainability priorities with our stakeholders for mutual benefit.

#### We will measure our performance in this area using these indicators:

- Continuous improvement targets for key areas of corporate operations
- . Development of new institutional Carbon Management Plan linked to Estates Strategy

#### Capacity development priorities to support delivery on this theme include:

- Policy development in operations areas • and implementation of action plans on procurement and travel
- Development of new strategic plans to address sustainability impacts in technology and IT
- Extension of staff engagement activities, . guidance and tools to support sustainability
- Alignment of operations initiatives with local . and regional collaboration on sustainability



## **GOAL 5: ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS** SUSTAINABILITY ADDS VALUE TO OUR **COLLABORATIONS AT ALL LEVELS**

Sustainability guides our local, national and international relationships, enhancing our role as an anchor institution in our region and a stimulus for innovation in the higher education sector.



Public outreach underpins our sustainability programme, reflecting our commitment to creating benefit for the communities we serve, including both local and global partners. The Engagement and Partnerships theme of this strategy adds value to our collaborations and an action focus to our sustainability projects.

Success in this theme brings global and intercultural perspective into our work and empowers our role as an anchor institution in Gloucestershire and the wider region. We achieve this through collaboration at regional, national and international levels, via our RCE Severn partnership platform and links with our Growth Hub.

This work is aligned with the University's Internationalisation Strategy and public engagement programme, supporting Goal external partnerships.

## Key achievements to date include:

1st Carbon Management Plan and initial phase of carbon reduction achievements

Received Soil Association Gold 'Food for Life' status in partnership with University caterers

Promotion of sustainability to staff through induction events and professional support

Developed policies and plans in procurement. construction, travel and biodiversity

Operational performance improvements and initial targets exceeded on waste management

## Key achievements to date include:

Established the RCE Severn network in sustainability education acknowledged by the UNU

Pioneered campuscommunity initiatives that promote food growing and citizen science

Led major European project on professional development in sustainability with £520K EU funding



## Strategic Ambitions for 2022

## **Corporate Alignment:**

collaboration is extended with educational partners regionally, nationally and globally, aligned with wider sustainability agendas and our international academic activities.

## **Applied Projects:**

we contribute to sustainability goals through student-community and academic-industry partnerships, using applied research, professional training and knowledge exchange.

## Sustainability Impact:

civic and community collaboration on sustainability increases with RCE Severn, including new alliances in arenas such as youth, interfaith, wellbeing, justice and social enterprise.

#### We will measure our performance in this area using these indicators:

- Support new learning projects connecting students and community partners
- Delivery of professional exchanges/external partnership development activities in sustainability

### Capacity development priorities to support delivery on this theme include:

- Integration of sustainability with our Internationalisation Strategy to develop intercultural literacy and global partnerships
- Extension of professional skill-share, training and knowledge exchange activities with RCE Severn
- Creation of new incentives and rewards . to support staff and student innovation on sustainability
- Development of business and industry partnership activities on sustainability with Academic Schools

Delivered annual sustainability seminar series engaging staff, students and external stakeholders

International scholarship and sector level influence through key forums and global initiatives

## SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



The Sustainability Team is positioned in the professional services group, line managed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor, who represents Sustainability on the University Executive Committee (UEC).

The team is led by the Director of Sustainability, who is a member of the University Management Group and serves as Chair of the Sustainable Development Committee, reporting to UEC and University Council.

The current Vice Chair of Council represents sustainability in Council decision-making and is also a member of Sustainable Development Committee, to increase connectivity on sustainability governance.

#### BS EN ISO 14001 - Policy Commitments

Through the delivery of its Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022, the University is committed to the implementation and maintenance of an environmental management system and associated policy commitments that:

- i. are appropriate to the purpose and context of the University as an organisation, including the nature, scale and impacts of its activities, products and services.
- ii. provide the framework for setting sustainability objectives in all areas of its core business, taking account of corporate operations and academic activities.
- formalise its commitment to protection of the environment, iii including prevention of pollution: responsible procurement. supply chain management and resource use; climate change mitigation and adaptation; and protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.
- iv. provide assurance that the University is committed to the fulfilment of its compliance obligations with regard to the above priorities.
- v. ensure its commitment to the continual improvement of its environmental management system to progressively enhance its sustainability performance.

This Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 serves as the public document which outlines these commitments and to that end is communicated within the organisation and made available to interested parties.

It is supported by key institutional policies and plans including: Estates Strategy; Procurement Strategy; Carbon Management Plan; Sustainable Catering Policy; Ethical Investment Policy; Waste Management Policy; Sustainable Travel Plan.



## STAGE 1: **External review panel**

#### Chaired by Vice Chair of University Council and composed of:

- 5 sustainability leads at UK/ overseas universities
- National Union of Students representation

### **Evidence considered by the panel:**

- 5 commissioned reports on progress in key areas
- Testimonials provided by 33 staff/ student stakeholders
- Open staff and student invitations to contribute

community

partners

- Academic staff discussions and contributions



by University Executive Committee



>>

**Presentations to** 

**University Council and** 

**University Executive** 



managers

Union team

#### 12



## Stakeholder consultation process:

- Meetings with executive and senior

- Meetings and input from Students'

- Input from Sustainable Development Committee
- Input from RCE Severn community
- Survey and inquiries with student

**Proposals considered** 



## STAGE 3: Strategy development

### Strategy development process:

- Benchmarking against leading universities
- Updated student demand and needs assessment
- Analysis of external and sector environment
- Alignment with Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Strategic discussions with Students' Union
- Input from Sustainable Development Committee
- RCE Severn Forum discussion seminar



Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 approved by University Council





will be h targets Ļ impr ŝ đ ОV. within our Leadership and Governance theme and are marked in bold bel will be captured in our Annual Sustainability Report. ance Indicators sit five strategy goals Performa core institutional Key and performance aga ally Our

Goals - Octobric			
- ondorchin	Objectives	success measures - indicator or Evidence	Data/Evidence Source
	1. First Class status in the new People & Planet UK HE sustainability league	First Class award category	People & Planet annual ranking
& Governance	2. Annual sustainability reporting aligned with ISO 14001 accreditation	<ul> <li>Release of UoG Annual Sustainability Report</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report
∃	<ol> <li>Achieve and maintain BSi ISO 14001: 2015 environmental management standard</li> </ol>	BSi certification to ISO 14001: 2015 standard	British Standards Institute
	<ol> <li>Maintain positive annual stakeholder feedback on our sustainability programme</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Over 70% positive rating from students for institutional commitment to sustainability</li> <li>Annual feedback from staff and community/external stakeholders</li> </ul>	NUS annual sustainability survey Annual Sustainability Report
Student Experience	5. Delivery of professional sustainability opportunities aligned with Your Future Plan	<ul> <li>At least 10 students placed with bespoke work experiences in sustainability annually</li> <li>Training and development opportunities in sustainability offered to all students</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report
	<ol> <li>Students achieving awards and professional recognition for sustainability activities</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Number of students achieving Gloucestershire Employability Awards for sustainability activities</li> <li>Record of students' professional achievements in sustainability</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report
Academic	7. Delivery and impact of the new LIFT: Learning Innovation for Tomorrow initiative	<ul> <li>At least 8 new LIFT projects delivered annually across Academic Schools</li> <li>Documented impact of LIFT programme at multiple stakeholder levels</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report LIFT Evaluation Report
₽	<ol> <li>Cumulative integration of sustainability principles across Academic Schools' portfolios</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Record of integration of Education for Sustainability in programme specifications</li> <li>Inclusion in School strategies, research priorities and staff/student projects</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report
Business දිටද් Operations දිටද්	<ol> <li>Continuous improvement targets for key areas of corporate operations</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Progression targets in: carbon, energy, water, waste, travel, procurement, estate development, technology</li> <li>Development of policies and action plans to improve performance in corporate sustainability practice</li> </ul>	Estates Management Record Annual Sustainability Report
}	10. Development and delivery of new Carbon Management Plan aligned with Estates Strategy	<ul> <li>Carbon Management Plan published</li> <li>Performance against annual institutional targets on energy and carbon</li> </ul>	Carbon Management Plan Annual Sustainability Report
Engagement K	11. Support new learning projects connecting students and community partners	<ul> <li>At least 1 new community-facing Education for Sustainability project annually</li> <li>Record of impact for community partners to support their sustainability goals</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report LIFT Evaluation Report
	12. Delivery of professional exchange/external partnership development activities annually	<ul> <li>At least 2 trainings/seminars offered annually to external stakeholders</li> <li>Record of partnership developments linked to our sustainability programme</li> </ul>	Annual Sustainability Report

>>> PROFILE AND ACHIEVEMENTS



1st Class award and Top Ten position in the People and Planet University League for sustainability since it began





Our Quality Assurance Agency 2015 review recognised our good practice in Education for Sustainability.

2 national Green Gown awards for our innovation and performance in sustainability across the University



£850,000 income in 2016/17 for research projects focused on sustainability



GOLD Soil Association catering mark across our campuses with our caterers BaxterStorey 1st English university to gain ISO 14001 with accreditation for both corporate and academic activities across all our campuses





REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACKNOWLEDGED BY



Regional Centre of Expertise in sustainability education acknowledged by the United Nations University since 2008

# £1,405,000

income generated for innovative Education for Sustainability projects, with funders including HEFCE, HEA, UNESCO and the European Commission.



Host to the UK Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges since 2005



UNIVERSITY EDUCATORS

Professional development project with partners in 33 countries funded by EU Further Information www.sustainability.glos.ac.uk e: sustainability@glos.ac.uk > @UniGlosSustain f UniGlosSustainability

Key Contact Dr Alex Ryan Director of Sustainability e: aryan@glos.ac.uk



