



CIVIC LEADERS AND PARTNERS

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

WE WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY THROUGH A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LOW TRANSPORT EMISSIONS

We will achieve this objective through four key areas of activity. Firstly, introducing new sustainable procurement principles to apply to all future contracts. Secondly by promoting active and sustainable commuting. Thirdly by developing better business travel. And fourthly by further increasing our community impact through enhanced outreach, volunteering and partnership activity. Our key commitments in this area are summarised below and explained in more detail in the remainder of this section.

KEY COMMITMENTS: CIVIC LEADERS AND PARTNERS

- Launch a new Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework to help select the suppliers that more closely share our sustainability values by June 2021
- Assess the quality of our sustainable practices against the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Standard by August 2022 and consider what (if any) action is required to make any desired improvements by August 2023 (subject to a feasibility review)
- Investigate the feasibility of applying for Living Wage Accreditation by August 2023
- Set annual active and sustainable commuting targets from August 2022 and implement our active and sustainable travel plans in full by August 2025
- Reduce the emissions made by car journeys by introducing: more progressive parking charges (subject to equality analysis); ride sharing; and a possible lower cost ultra-low emission vehicle leasing scheme for staff by August 2023
- Make all of the University's vehicle fleet ultralow emissions by August 2025
- Introduce a new sustainable business travel policy by December 2022
- Ensure our contracted Travel Management Company works with us in a manner that provides the optimal balance between value for money and sustainable travel, consistent with our sustainable business travel policy by December 2022
- Review our video conferencing options and work with staff and students to set annual targets for reduction in business travel emissions from August 2023
- Promote an increase in volunteering among staff and students – including introducing a new staff volunteering allowance from August 2021
- Identify opportunities to help make our employees' homes more sustainable by August 2024
- Be active partners in various community sustainability partnerships.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN



We already have a well-established approach to sustainable procurement through our **Supplier Code of Conduct and Purchasing Policy**. These policies set out minimum ethical, social, and environmental standards and behaviours expected of suppliers. However, with our supply chain accounting for over 60% of the emissions that we need to reduce to be net zero by 2035, we want to go even further.

That is why we are launching **a new Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework** in summer 2021 alongside this strategy. The framework sets out the nine areas of sustainability (three social, three environmental and three economic) that we want the organisations that supply our goods and services to be committed to. These areas are:

- Net zero target and action plan
- Recycling target
- Responsible consumption and production
- Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training for staff and supply chain staff
- Staff access to wellbeing programmes
- Supporting and volunteering in local issues
- Initiatives to reduce inequality in the workplace
- Real living wage accreditation
- Engaging small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) in the supply chain.

The framework will enable us to set out minimum standards in certain areas and **to help select the suppliers that more closely share our sustainability values** in other areas, through a process of proportionate competitive scoring. We will monitor performance against these principles throughout contract lifecycles to ensure our suppliers share our dedication to these aims, and deliver against their promises. In doing so we will avoid creating unnecessary barriers to SMEs and VCSEs.

While we are confident that our new procurement principles will promote social, environmental and economic sustainability, we are keen to **collaborate and learn from others in relation to best sustainable procurement practices**. So, we will use an independent organisation to **assess the quality of our sustainable practices against the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Standard** by August 2022 and consider what (if any) action is required to make any desired improvements by August 2023 (subject to a feasibility review).

We will also **investigate the feasibility of applying for Living Wage Accreditation** by August 2023. This award is provided by the Living Wage Foundation in recognition of employers who voluntarily pay all staff more than the statutory minimum wage; and who are working towards ensuring that their sub-contractors on campus such as catering and maintenance staff employed by third-party organisations are doing the same. So, we will work with these partner organisations to see if we can all pay the Real Living Wage together and say 'no' to poverty in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Finally, we will **continue to be active members of the Responsible Procurement Group**, where non-profit organisations and education institutes share best practice.

ACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUTING



We estimate that commuting to and from campus made up 9% of our carbon footprint in 2018/19. We are addressing this through an **ambitious active and sustainable travel plan** containing three strategic goals:

- promoting active travel
- promoting decarbonised public transport
- reducing fossil fuel dependent car journeys.

We will **promote active travel** by introducing a **new active travel reward app for our students and staff** by August 2021. This will allow us to record the carbon footprint of participating staff and students when they commute to and from campus. It will also allow us to set **challenges and competitions that result in rewards and benefits, such as free coffees**, in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council.

Promoting active travel is important because it will both reduce our emissions and **contribute to our staff and students' health and wellbeing**, which is a key UN Sustainable Development Goal in its own right.

As part of our drive to increase sustainable and active travel, we will **promote an increase in cycling** through measures including: continued provision of a Cycle to Work Scheme, reintroduction of **critical mass cycle trains**, cycle maintenance and safety training, more Brighton Bike Share Scheme bikes, secure cycle storage, e-bike charging points and showers on campus.

We will seek to provide some of these improved cycle facilities alongside better public transport facilities on campus by **commissioning a feasibility study by August 2021 into the creation of a new sustainable travel hub**.

We will do this alongside a **review of all signage, cycle lanes and pedestrian paths on our campus** to ensure that they are optimised for a substantial increase in sustainable travel by August 2025.

While active travel is great for those who can participate, we recognise that it is not suitable for everyone so we will **work hard with our local strategic partners to improve the sustainability and quality of public transport to and from campus**. This will include lobbying for the further decarbonisation of local bus routes and seeking further discounts if possible for our staff and students to use public transport.

Similarly, a certain percentage of our staff will need to continue to travel by car. However, we want to support lower-carbon car journeys so we will look to **introduce progressive parking charges where cleaner vehicle users pay less – subject to a full equality analysis** by August 2023.

We will also encourage **greater ride sharing and investigate creating a new ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) leasing scheme for staff**, based on salary sacrifice (like our Cycle to Work Scheme), which would make it cheaper to drive an ULEV on account of tax benefits, by January 2022. We will also make all of the University's vehicle fleet ultralow emissions by 2025 by only procuring and leasing new vehicles that are ULEVs.

The above actions will enable us to **set annual targets for increasing active and sustainable travel to and from campus from August 2022 onwards**.

BETTER BUSINESS TRAVEL



As a globally focused university, it is important that we **continue to enable our academics and students to travel to conduct world-leading research** that furthers the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yet research suggests that air travel may account for around 80-95% of universities' business travel emissions, and air travel has one of the highest carbon footprints of any human activity.

That is why we will **publish and promote a new sustainable business travel policy by December 2022** to encourage business travel to be made as mindfully as possible, based on sectoral good practice, such as adopting the **Tyndall Centre travel decision tree** and travel hierarchy.

This will **support staff to make informed and responsible business travel decisions such as using the train rather than plane for domestic journeys** under a certain distance – subject to equality impact analysis.

The policy will also include **good practice guidance on carbon compensation** as appropriate for staff business travel and student fieldtrips.

As with many areas of our carbon accounting, we also want to improve the data on our business travel. We will do this in partnership with a **travel management company by December 2022**. In doing so, we will select a partner for staff (and, in some circumstances, students) through whom to book their business travel, whose **algorithms provide the optimal balance between value for money and sustainable travel**, and which are consistent with our sustainable business travel policy.

We will also ensure that they provide **excellent quality carbon impact data for our net zero reporting** and an attractive and easy to use interface that will **encourage all staff to book their business travel through a central system**.

In addition to making travel more sustainable, we also want to make the decision not to travel to be more appealing in certain circumstances by **reviewing our video conferencing options** and identifying if there is a business case to procure new technology solutions such as those using virtual reality, to give a better remote meeting and conferencing experience.

We will also **engage with our academic community** to understand if there is scope to offer more domestic field trips to students and/or options to compensate emissions incurred through voluntary activities within the areas that they are visiting.

Once we have completed these actions by December 2022 we will **begin to set annual targets for reduction in business travel from August 2023**. We hope that, if appropriate and necessary, these will enable us to achieve the recommended targets of achieving a 30% reduction in business travel by 2030 and a 40% reduction by 2035 as currently assumed within our internal carbon pathway analysis for achieving net zero by 2035.

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY IMPACT



We want to be more than a university. We want to be part of a thriving sustainable city and community within the Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere. To do this we want to have maximum community impact in all that we do.

We already support and encourage our students to volunteer through our Spirit of Sussex Award Scheme. From August 2021 we will increasingly **identify and promote new opportunities for students to volunteer in the community on projects** that support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We will also **better record and showcase the vast amount of community outreach work that our academic staff undertake**, such as the provision of talks, workshops, mentoring and support services and advice.

We will **report on these achievements in our annual sustainability report** that we will publish every autumn (with the first report published in November 2020). In order to do this effectively, we will ask all academic staff to report on how they have contributed to each of the 17 UN SDGs on an annual basis.

Despite many of our staff and students being extremely active in the community we, as an employer, have not previously provided all our staff with a consistent volunteering allowance. We want to change this and **allow all of our staff to be given time out from their day jobs to support good causes in the community**.

That is why we are piloting the **introduction of a new staff volunteering allowance of at least two days per year** (pro rata) for all employees on a contract of 12 months or more from August 2021. The volunteering scheme will be directly aligned with the UN SDGs and the University Sustainability Strategy and will enable us to further maximise our contribution to the community. We will review the success of the scheme in August 2023 with a view to introducing a five-day fixed volunteering entitlement by August 2024.

We will also **continue to support local voluntary, community and social enterprises** (VCSEs) and causes. For example, we have chosen **Surfers Against Sewage** to be our charity of the year for 2021 on account of their excellent work protecting our beaches and oceans.

In addition to these commitments, we will **continue to be active partners in various community partnerships and forums**. For example, our Vice-Chancellor sits on the Greater Brighton Economic Board. This means that as an active member of the Board we have signed up to all 10 of their **environmental pledges for tackling climate change**.

Finally, we know that our staff and students do not stop being sustainability leaders and champions when they leave the campus. That is why we are committed to **identifying a package of opportunities for staff to make their homes more sustainable**, such as energy- and water-saving advice and signposting to low-cost energy-efficiency improvements.