

Environmental Sustainability Strategic Planning Group

Terms of Reference

The purpose of Durham University is ‘to enrich lives and change the world through the advancement of learning’.

“Our vision is to ensure that Durham University delivers its mission of excellence in education, research and wider student experience in the most sustainable way possible. Alongside major investments in our build environment and our teaching and research activities, we have introduced strong environmental policies and procedures.

We are working to reduce our carbon emissions and to promote increased awareness of environmental issues. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and improving the local environment for our staff, students and wider community.

Sustainability is at the heart of our strategy. We are aiming for Net Zero by 2035 – switching to renewable energy sources, minimising waste and promoting recycling, reuse and sustainable transport; achieving a net biodiversity gain by 2032.”

– *A Sustainable Future*

Achieving these goals will require the active commitment of every member of the University Community. This is the context within which the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Planning Group operates.

The main purposes of Environmental Sustainability Strategic Planning Group are to:

- Deliver on the vision outline in the Universities Sustainability Ambition Statement, to “*ensure that Durham University delivers its mission of excellence in education, research and wider student experience in the most sustainable way possible*” ([Ambition statement \(durham.ac.uk\)](https://www.durham.ac.uk/ambition-statement));
- Take forward the strategic decisions of the University relating to agreed policies within the area of environmental sustainability;
- Working alongside the Energy & Sustainability team, to generate and monitor environmental objectives and targets scored on risk and other external factors;
- Review, on behalf of UEC, the University’s environmental policies, ensuring they are implemented effectively;
- Allow a forum for representatives of high-level student bodies (Students Union, MCR, JCR, GSEG) and senior staff members from each faculty to
- discuss and critic university sustainability goals, targets and objectives and our progress in achieving them;
- Report to the University Executive Committee (UEC) on all strategic matters relating to environmental sustainability.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategic Planning Group is Chaired by Stewart Ross, Chief Operating Officer and will meet termly.

March 2026