

Student Manifesto for a Sustainable University of Sheffield



Executive Summary

Over 150 of our most environmentally engaged students have informed this manifesto through a detailed consultation, which identified these 12 priority actions for the University. We call on the University to incorporate these actions into its Sustainability Strategy.

“This needs to happen, the University needs to practice what it preaches. Being marketed as one of the most ethical and sustainable universities would be a huge draw in coming years.”

“A leading institution should be leading the way in renewable and clean energy sources. We have the expertise in and around campus in our students and academics. USE THIS KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH!”

Students’ strength of feeling on sustainability came through very clearly in this process. It was obvious that respondents had engaged both passionately and thoughtfully with the issues.

To understand students’ views more deeply, as well as our methodology, please read our full report at sheffieldsu.com/sustainability

Governance & Resource

Respondents feel that the University must take responsibility and be accountable, as illustrated at the Ask Your University event and by the ongoing petition for a Sustainability Strategy and Team.

1. Prepare a job description for a Head of Sustainability. Commit to highly prioritise recruiting for this role as soon as the recruitment pause is ended.
2. Set up a robust accountability process for this strategy, with regular opportunities for all students & staff to hold the University to account for any failure to hit sustainability targets.



These next sections align with the 5 UN Global Goals prioritised by the University

Quality Education

Vision: Compulsory, credited Education for Sustainable Development integrated into every course so all students are aware of the relevance of their subject to sustainability.

3. Sign up to NUS Responsible Futures, a flexible framework and accreditation for embedding Education for Sustainable Development.
4. Create a staff / student working group on Education for Sustainable Development.

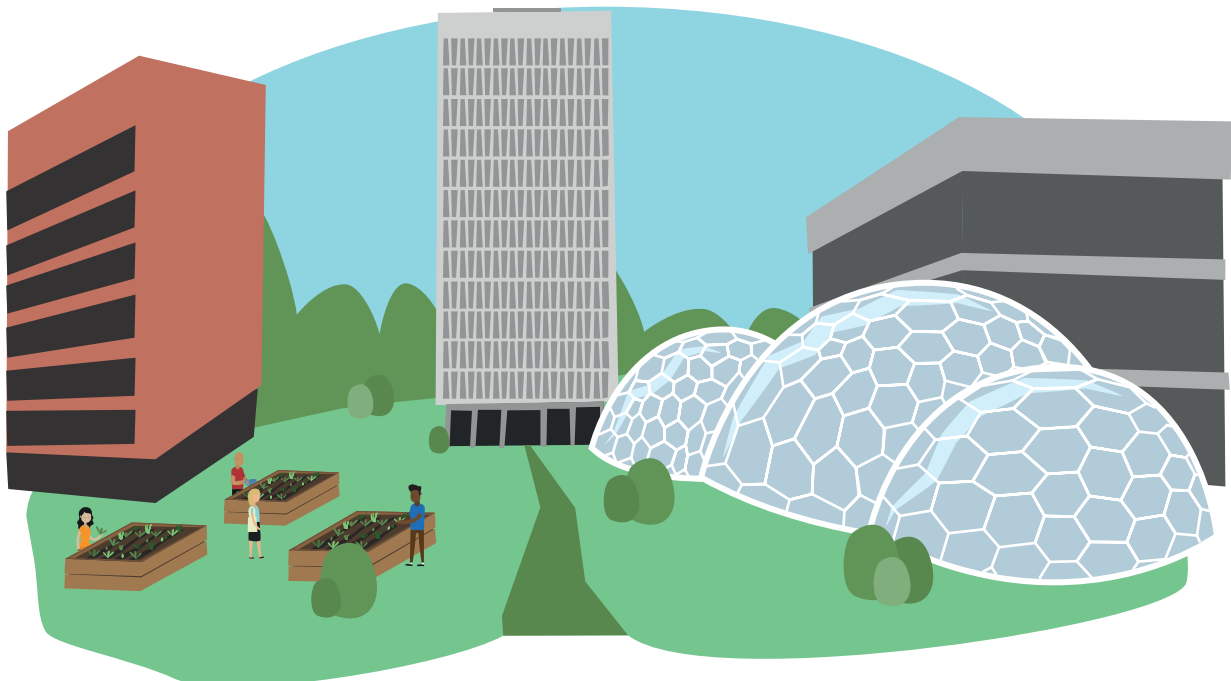


Affordable & Clean Energy

Vision: Zero carbon by 2030, run on renewable energy

5. Set up new task group including academics, responsible for gaining momentum for renewable energy on campus, with a particular focus on solar. Prioritise working with local groups, such as Sheffield Renewables.
6. Cease promotion of fossil fuel companies*, including but not limited to Careers Fairs and advertising.

* Meaning the “Carbon Underground 200”, an annually updated list of the companies most responsible for the unsustainable extraction and burning of coal, oil, gas and tar sands.



Sustainable Cities & Communities

Vision: Strong Council-Community-University communication on sustainability projects. Undertake sustainability outreach into schools.

Responsible Production & Consumption

Vision: All purchases should be local, sustainable and / or ethical, with hard accountability for procurement. Zero Waste in terms of outputs by 2030.

7. Support local sustainable businesses with long-term agreements
8. Remove all still bottled water from University outlets in the Students' Union building. Investigate the balance of impacts for replacing water sales with free water fountains campus-wide.
9. Introduce a 25p charge on disposable coffee cups, and put the money towards an environmental campus fund.
10. Follow Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures advice to develop a sector-leading sustainable food policy. Like the SU, greatly decrease sale of highest climate-impact foods by 2020, especially beef, lamb and air-freighted goods.

Climate Action

Vision: Zero carbon by 2030 with targets in the interim, then become a 'net positive contributor' to the grid.

11. Give full transparency and accountability over the sustainability of new buildings and refurbishments. Always promptly publish environmental impact reports and the sustainability elements of designers' briefs.
12. Go Carbon Neutral / Net Positive by 2030. The science demands this if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change.
 - Rewrite our Energy Strategy and Carbon Management Plan to reflect this new target.
 - Apply this standard to **all** new buildings, including the Social Sciences and Sports buildings.



Further actions

There are a further five suggestions which gained widespread agreement but were ranked as slightly less urgent. These ranged from UEB signing off on the £500,000 Sustainable Campus Fund proposal (made by Bob Rabone and last year's Development Officer Michael Kind) to ensuring all outlets are 'Zero Waste by design'. Qualitative comments prioritised installing solar panels, improving recycling, ethical procurement and accountability.

Read them in the full report at sheffieldsu.com/sustainability



Immediate actions - 2018

Five priority actions for the Delivery Group to enact by the end of 2018 were identified by a student open forum:

- ESD: Form a staff-student working group.
- Energy: Sign off on the Sustainable Campus Fund.
- Cities & Communities: Initiate schools outreach project on sustainability.
- Production & Consumption: Affiliate to Electronics Watch.
- Climate Action: Make funding available for a staff post (e.g. Head of Sustainability) and budget for events, outreach and collaboration.



Broader research by University is necessary

This Manifesto is an important indicator of the views of engaged students. However, we call upon the University to carry out wider reviews of student opinion. It is morally imperative to continually seek and act on the ideas of this generation, who are keenly aware our future is in the balance.

To succeed, the strategy must combine both scientific and social science best practice, including genuine ownership and buy-in by staff and students. Only then will the strategy be truly sector-leading.

