

#SustainableLSE



Our Sustainability Strategic Plan

Foreword

As the world responds to a profoundly damaging global pandemic, we cannot forget the immense climate crisis and grave threats to the environment that face us. They require urgent action, and now more than ever is the time to work together to shape a pathway to recovery and development that is sustainable, resilient, just and inclusive. We must chart and invest in a sustainable future.

LSE's strengths as an international and interdisciplinary institution give us an opportunity, and a duty, to lead on and engage with the major challenges of today and work to **shape the world** for the better. As a social science school, we have an essential contribution to make to global analysis and debates on how to tackle the complex climate and ecological challenges that we face.

Creating a Sustainable LSE is one of the key commitments of LSE's 2030 strategy. We have developed this plan in collaboration with the diverse LSE community as a framework for action, to help us leverage our resources and influence for powerful impact on this critical agenda.

Success in advancing environmental sustainability will be based on deepening understanding of a range of economic, social, political, cultural and behavioural factors, requiring contributions from LSE's varied perspectives and disciplines. Our School community has been vocal in its desire for comprehensive action. In this time of crisis we must continue to build a Sustainable LSE through innovation, collaboration and partnership. Join us on this important journey.



Minouche Shafik - Director, LSE

A plan shaped by our LSE community

Our plan was shaped in close collaboration with the LSE community, through a participatory and inclusive consultation process. We invited all students, staff, alumni and friends of LSE to join the discussion and make contributions. 



7

Events and workshops



327

Staff & students attending



668

Respondents to online survey

Thank you to all the staff and students who contributed, including



And more...



Creating a sustainable LSE

Six key areas of focus for LSE to maximise our impact in shaping a sustainable world



Education

Embedding sustainability across our teaching and learning experiences



Research

Shaping the global sustainability debate through our research



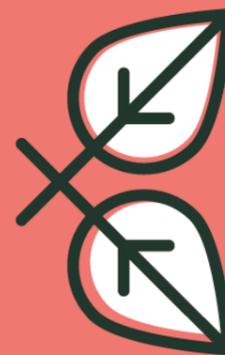
Engagement & Leadership

Deepening public discussion on sustainability across the world



Investment

Making sustainability a key part of our investment decisions



Collaboration

Working in partnerships within LSE and externally



Our School

Becoming net-zero carbon and reducing our environmental impacts

Education

Embedding sustainability across our teaching and learning experiences



In line with **LSE 2030 Priority 1: Educate for Impact**, we will equip LSE graduates with the knowledge, understanding, critical thinking and skills needed to become citizens and leaders, empowering them to address the future challenges of society and make a positive impact in the world.

Build on our existing offer

We will strengthen and promote existing courses and learning pathways which can provide students with a fuller understanding of the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability.

Connect across disciplines

We will embed environmental sustainability into the LSE curriculum, promoting interdisciplinary activities and solutions.

Foster collaboration

We will create new collaborations among key stakeholders within and beyond the School, with a particular emphasis on working in partnership with students and LSESU to respond to and promote the sustainability agenda.

Examples of supporting initiatives

For students

- Identify and promote areas of the curriculum which include the relation between the subject and environmental sustainability, highlighting these clearly to students, for instance using green tags.
- Enhance opportunities for all students to engage with sustainability themes and develop a range of sustainability-related skills (e.g. through LSE100, LSE Groups, LSE Life, LSE Careers, LSE Generate, LSE Student Futures).
- Consolidate and promote information about informal curriculum learning and associated funding (e.g. through LSE Student Futures, LSE Change Makers, Living Labs - Sustainability Projects Fund, LSE Careers, LSE Volunteers) to encourage ease of access and take-up.
- Create opportunities for students to connect with employers and alumni to explore new and emerging career pathways.
- Empower students to showcase publicly their sustainability-related learning and perspectives, whether these have been acquired through the formal curriculum or through wider developmental opportunities (e.g. LSE 2030 Showcase portfolio initiative / LSE Houghton St Press).

For staff

- Provide educators with the tools, resources and skills needed to embed sustainability across disciplines (Eden Centre, Eden Digital, Library, Atlas programme, EAUC resources, webinars).
- Support proactively the creation of new multidisciplinary courses, as part of wider School curriculum development.
- Showcase and reward innovative teaching and learning practices (e.g. Annual Celebration of Sustainability, Education Forum on sustainability, Sustainability and Social Sciences Symposium, LSE Festival Events, Green Leaf Research Showcase).
- Utilise current student surveys by adding selective questions on sustainability to inform future provision.

Research

Shaping the global sustainability debate through our research



LSE academics conduct world-leading research on environmental and social issues, shaping public policy and debate through evidence-based research. We will work strategically to bring together the School-wide research community on environmental sustainability issues, and to enhancing and leveraging the impact of our contribution to the public debate.

Take a strategic approach

We will reaffirm the contribution social sciences can make to the global sustainability debate, and to focus and strengthen our efforts and resources on impactful sustainability research.

Create supportive mechanisms

We will implement structural change and create funding incentives to advance the sustainability agenda.

Foster collaboration

We will foster stronger internal cross-disciplinary collaboration within LSE to leverage and extend our external partnerships.

Examples of supporting initiatives

- Identify opportunities where LSE research can contribute to global debates on sustainability (e.g. on changing environmental behaviours, effective environmental policies, and green growth/building-back better).
- Support research which actively engages policy makers, stakeholders and society in the co-production of knowledge and research on sustainability.
- Make sustainability a key strategic area for philanthropic support at LSE.
- Strengthen the Grantham Research Institute's role as a School-wide vehicle for collaborative research and impact on environmental sustainability.
- Ring fence funding to support sustainability research and cross collaboration.
- Create opportunities for cross-disciplinary knowledge and expertise sharing (e.g. brown bag lunch sessions, research seminar) and undergraduate engagement (e.g. undergraduate edited sustainability journal).
- Promote LSE-wide initiatives for research collaboration (e.g. conferences, training modules) on environmental sustainability across departments and centres.
- Encourage online research activities, to reduce research-related travel (e.g. online seminars and PhD vivas).
- Leverage our existing external partnerships (e.g. CIVICA Alliance, Global Public Policy Network, Global Alliance of Universities on Climate) and develop new partnerships to step up LSE's contribution to global sustainability research and debate.

Engagement & Leadership



Deepening public discussion on sustainability across the world

We will play a leading role in shaping the global discussion of ideas on sustainability and the challenges it raises. We will engage with public, private and non-governmental organisation actors to promote understanding and informed decision-making about sustainability around the world.

Build a sustainable world

We will apply our research, knowledge, and skills from across the social sciences to promote action on sustainability and foster sustainable prosperity, well-being, poverty reduction and environmental justice around the world, engaging with national and international decision makers and all sections of society.

Lead by example

We will lead by example across the full range of our activities, consistent with our ambition of being the social science institution with the greatest global impact.

Collaborate at national and international level

We will continue to build and contribute to national and international networks and alliances to promote dialogue and action on sustainability.

Examples of supporting initiatives

- Inform and engage with UK and international decision-making about climate change, including COP26 and the transition to net-zero emissions.
- Advise and input into international decision-making about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including through our affiliation to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- Staff and students to engage directly on sustainability issues both within the higher education sector and more widely helping to shape public policy.
- Play a leading role in local, national and international networks, such as the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC), and the Global Alliance of Universities on Climate.
- Promote discussion and debate about sustainability, including through our public events programme, website and media relations.
- Work with our local community, including other universities and businesses, to promote sustainable practices and policies.
- Educate and train new generations of leaders on sustainability.

Investment

Making sustainability a key part of our investment decisions



We will increasingly focus on the investment incentives open to the School to ensure the transition to a low carbon economy, making environmental sustainability one of the top aims of our Socially Responsible Investment policy.

Since 2015, LSE has developed a [Socially Responsible Investment policy](#) which applies to the £200m of endowment funds originating from grants or donations and the long-term investment of retained surpluses (School endowments). The endowments are invested across circa 15 managers. The School is committed to working to improve the Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) behaviours of its fund managers. 

Make an impact

We will incentivise changes in corporate behaviour by selecting fund managers who actively engage with the companies they invest in, encouraging transitions to low carbon business models.

Communicate our approach

We will actively communicate our approach in an open and transparent manner.

Cooperate with others

We will leverage and extend our external partnerships, using our influence to advocate for positive change.

Examples of supporting initiatives

- Increase the emphasis of our Socially Responsible Investment policy towards managers who embed climate change in their company selection using for example the LSE's Grantham Research Institute led Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) due diligence process or other comparable research.
- Strengthen our negative screening filters to limit our exposure to the most polluting fossil fuels alongside the production of tobacco and indiscriminate weapons.
- Consider switching to newly formed index tracking indices employing TPI diligence disciplines (e.g. Russell FTSE TPI Transition Index).
- Make further materials available on our website which explain our approach to responsible investment.
- Make our fund managers' responsible investment evaluation process more public, strengthening its impact.
- Work with student representatives on the LSE's Investment sub-committee to create materials that illustrate most effectively our School's responsible investment policies.
- Form a closer relationship with the Grantham Research Institute for LSE to support the implementation of the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) disciplines and ratings across the investment sector.
- Share our responsible investment practices with other universities.
- Support through our annual disclosures the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI).

Our School



Becoming net-zero carbon and reducing our environmental impacts

We want to lead by example when it comes to addressing our own environmental footprint. We are working to reduce our carbon emissions and environmental impacts, aiming to achieve net-zero emissions and impacts for LSE's direct operations.

Become net-zero carbon

We will adopt a challenging carbon reduction pathway and reach net-zero emissions across all of our activities as soon as possible and no later than 2050.

Work towards a 'Zero Impacts' campus

We will strive to be a hub of environmental good practice in the higher education sector, actively minimising all the environmental impacts of our estate and operations.

Build a sustainable LSE collaboratively

We will progress the sustainability agenda in close collaboration with the LSE community, and other institutions in the higher education sector and beyond.

Examples of supporting initiatives

- Set new challenging carbon reduction targets based on climate science.
- As an interim measure, fund carbon reduction projects to mitigate the emissions we cannot immediately reduce.
- Continue investing in energy efficiency measures, to make our existing building stock as efficient as possible.
- Conduct sustainability impact assessments as part of LSE's decision-making process.
- Offer opportunities for staff and students to get further involved (e.g. Green Impact, Reduce the Juice, Sustainable Projects Funds).
- Actively benchmark our performance against peers.
- Our approaches to Technology and Procurement will embrace sustainability principles.
- Promote the work of the Sustainability team and provide clear ways for others to engage and support:
 - Make information and data on our environmental work and performance openly available.
 - Host interactive sustainability events on a regular basis open to all staff and students.
 - Strengthen collaborations with student bodies including the Student Union and student societies.



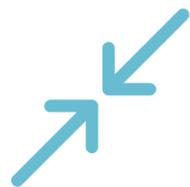
To reach net-zero emissions no later than 2050, we will adopt a systematic approach to carbon management:



Measure

LSE has been measuring its carbon emissions since 2005, using the internationally recognised methodologies and official UK Government carbon conversion factors. Accurately quantifying our carbon footprint [↗](#) including the emissions linked to our supply chain (Scope 3) is an ongoing project:

- Conduct an external verification of our carbon footprint for assurance purposes.
- Continue to increase the accuracy of our carbon accounting, in particular for Scope 3 emissions.



Reduce

Since 2015 we have invested £4.5million in energy efficiency projects across campus. We reduced the carbon emissions linked to our energy use (Scope 1 and 2) by 38% since 2005. In addition to our net-zero carbon targets, we will continue to follow a challenging carbon reduction pathway:

- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest, and by 2030 for our direct energy use (Scope 1 and 2).
- Set new absolute carbon reduction targets and a new carbon management plan for the School.
- Adopt a systematic approach to carbon management, based on a hierarchy of options and prioritising reductions.
- Commission any new construction projects for our campus & residences to be net-zero carbon and meet the highest energy efficiency standards. Invest in further measures to bring our estate to highest energy efficiency standards.



Mitigate

In our sustainability consultation, 86% of the LSE community supported for LSE to take action to mitigate the impacts of the carbon emissions it cannot avoid yet, including using carbon offsets. Thus we will:

- Continue to source 100% of the electricity we buy from renewable sources (e.g. solar and wind).
- As an interim measure, fund carbon reduction projects to mitigate the emissions we cannot immediately reduce.
- In the longer term, transition to carbon sequestration methods in line with UK government aims for net-zero carbon.

Our School



Work towards a 'Zero Impacts' campus

We take a systematic approach to continuously improve our environmental performance, using systems externally certified to international standards (ISO 14001/ISO 50 001). We thrive to apply environmental best practice across all our key impacts:

-  **Energy** - Operate a highly energy efficient estate and adopt renewable energy sources. 
-  **Waste & Resources** - Reduce waste and adopt circular economy principles of resources management. 
-  **Water** - Reduce our water consumption on campus and in Halls of Residence. 
-  **Built environment** - Adopt the highest environmental standards in our construction and refurbishment projects. 
-  **Travel** - Reduce emissions associated with commuting and business travel. 
-  **Catering** - Deliver a sustainable catering service which promotes low-carbon food choices. 
-  **Pollution & Air quality** - Engage with partners to minimise pollution and improve air quality. 
-  **Biodiversity** - Enhance biodiversity on the LSE estate by protecting and connecting habitats. 
-  **Procurement** - Make sustainability a key consideration of our purchasing decisions and supplier relationships. 

Examples of new initiatives

Reducing single-use plastic

Informed by behaviour change science, we will introduce stronger incentives to increase the uptake of reusable alternatives to catering disposable items. This includes strengthening the use of internal charges for disposable coffee cups.

Promote low carbon food choices

Since 2018 the number of meat dishes served by LSE has reduced by 38%. To further encourage plant-based choices we will actively communicate the carbon impact of different food types in our catering outlets and promote plant-based alternatives.

Greening our technology

Our technology infrastructure and services strategy will embed sustainability principles in order to support the School's carbon reduction targets and wider environmental objectives.

Responsible procurement

We want to influence our suppliers to become more sustainable and work with them to reduce our emissions. Using a risk-based approach, sustainability will be part of our award criteria in our selection of suppliers – from banking services to stationery.

Thank you to our senior sponsors



Education



Professor Dilly Fung
LSE Pro-Director for Education

“LSE will embed sustainability across our teaching and learning experiences.”



Research



Professor Simon Hix
LSE Pro-Director for Research

“LSE will shape the global sustainability debate through our research.”



Engagement & Leadership



Professor Nicholas Stern
Chair, Grantham Research Institute on Climate and the Environment at LSE

“LSE will deepen public discussion on sustainability across the world.”



Investment



Mike Ferguson
Chief Finance Officer

“LSE will make sustainability a key part of our investment decisions.”



Collaboration



Professor Julia Black
Strategic Director of Innovation

“LSE will work in partnerships within LSE and externally.”



Our School



Andrew Young
Chief Operating Officer

“LSE will reach net-zero carbon and reduce its direct environmental impacts.”

Acknowledgements

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- Lena Karlin, Jane Powell and Helene Moran at Shift Insight.
- Tim Forsyth, Emma Fieldhouse, Katie Rees, Anne Power.
- And the list goes on...

Join the conversation...



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