



Worcester College Environmental Sustainability Policy

The Worcester College Environmental Policy was first approved by Governing Body in October 2011.

This Environmental Sustainability Policy now supersedes that policy.

Approved by Governing Body on 14th June 2023.

Introduction

Worcester College, at its heart, is a diverse and inclusive community of learning, a centre of excellence in teaching and research that was established for the benefit of the public. The College has had an Environmental Policy in place since 2011, in which it stated its commitments to the principles of sustainability, mitigation of climate change, and environmental preservation.

This updated Environmental Sustainability Policy restates those commitments and identifies seven specific areas where we are taking action to embed sustainability into the way we live and work. Our aim is to foster a community that takes personal and shared responsibility for looking after our natural resources, reducing waste and cutting harmful emissions. Through this, we will deliver progressively improved and measurable outcomes for the environment.

The policy applies to our students and staff, and extends to our visitors, contractors and colleagues who undertake work with or in the name of Worcester College. The policy should not unduly burden the College, either financially or in terms of management input.

Policy Statement

Environmental sustainability represents a global challenge. An unstable climate, increasing carbon emissions and accelerating biodiversity loss require urgent action at all levels of society. The scale of the challenge demands an ambitious response from Worcester College, which must be reflected in our teaching and research, as well as in the way we live and work.

We recognise that our activities have both direct and indirect environmental impacts, and understand the role we must play in addressing sustainability challenges. We are committed to acting in ethical and sustainable ways to greatly improve our environmental performance, reduce our emissions and manage our natural estate.

Sustainability will be at the heart of what we do and what we stand for, and we shall hold ourselves to account by setting clear targets and putting systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of our policies and impacts of our actions. We will meet this commitment by constantly striving to reduce carbon emissions, improve biodiversity and limit environmental impacts generated by our activities.

Principles

The Environmental Sustainability Policy sets out five key principles which shall underpin our strategy to deliver actions with impact for an environmentally sustainable future.

These principles are:

1. **Effective governance** – We shall embed environmental sustainability into College governance and ensure that we apply environmental principles to our policies and decisions. This will be achieved in part through the nomination of a Sustainability Fellow and establishment of a Sustainability Committee with student and staff representation.
2. **Transparency** – We shall be open to scrutiny, and commit to monitoring and reporting regularly on our targets and progress towards environmental objectives.
3. **Collaboration** – We shall work together within the College community and in co-operation with our partners and stakeholders to achieve our ambitions. We will strive to engage and empower all staff and students in our efforts to improve long-term environmental sustainability for the College, the local community, and the wider world.
4. **Target-driven and evidence-based** – We will gather evidence and apply our research and knowledge to set realistic and achievable targets for positive environmental outcomes. We will endeavour to set targets at least in line with the University of Oxford’s commitments, and aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035.
5. **Action-oriented and education-focused** – We shall recognise that educational purpose is at the College’s core. We will be responsive to the latest evidence as we work to embed sustainability into College life and deliver a strategy that takes meaningful action for improved environmental performance.

Environmental Sustainability Areas of Commitment

As we work to promote excellence in teaching, learning and research, we must also extend these benefits for the public good. The Environmental Sustainability Policy identifies seven priority areas of commitment, in which we will advance progress to improve environmental outcomes for everyone. These commitments will be expanded in the College’s annual Sustainability Strategy, where we will aim to set clear and achievable targets, with regular monitoring to review progress.

In this Policy, the College makes the following commitments:

1. **Biodiversity** – to recognise the impacts of biodiversity loss on College grounds, in College operations or across our supply chain, and seek to identify, avoid, and reduce such impacts.
2. **Energy** – to reduce our overall energy consumption, increase on-site or locally-generated power, pursue low carbon energy options, and improve energy efficiency across all buildings and operations.
3. **Food** – to reduce the carbon emissions and waste associated with our food and drink services.
4. **Investments and Procurement** – to recognise the climate impacts in our investments or supply chain, and to incorporate sustainability principles into our procurement processes and policies.
5. **Travel** – to reduce carbon emissions arising from College members’ work commutes and business travel.
6. **Waste** – to prevent, reduce, recycle or reuse waste across all College operations.
7. **Water** – to eliminate water waste and reduce the quantity of mains water used in College buildings, gardens and facilities.

Responsibilities

All members of the College community should be aware of this policy and take both individual and shared responsibility for each of the policy areas in which they have some control.

Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- The Governing Body of the College has overall responsibility for the approval and effective operation of the Environmental Sustainability Policy.
- The Sustainability Fellow has delegated authority to provide leadership, advice and coordination in the delivery of this policy.
- The Sustainability Committee, made up of students and staff, takes responsibility for the promotion, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy, including its application to the development and delivery of a Sustainability Strategy.
- All College Committees are responsible for complying with this policy in their duties and functions.
- All those with managerial, purchasing or procurement responsibilities have a duty to take action under this policy, as identified in the Sustainability Strategy.

Policy Promotion and Review

In order to fulfil the promise of these commitments, the College will:

- **Promote** the Environmental Sustainability Policy on its website and ensure it is incorporated into Handbooks, inductions and regular briefings that provide guidance on its implementation for all College members.
- **Consult and communicate** regularly with College members to help develop strategies, set targets, influence behaviours and assess impacts that will demonstrate meaningful progress on reducing our climate impacts.
- **Publish** the results of monitoring, audit and assessment exercises to inform the regular review of targets and achievements under this policy.

This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It should be considered in conjunction with the College's Sustainability Strategy.