Message from the Vice-Chancellor

This Annual Sustainability Report outlines Oxford Brookes’ strong commitment to enhancing its environmental performance and the delivery of our aspirations across all areas of the University’s activities.

We recognise the complexity of our organisation and the social, economic and environmental impact of our operations, as well as our important role as educators. Therefore we strive to deliver and continually improve our performance, using an accredited Environmental Management System and relevant strategies covering all aspects of sustainability.

This includes important work in crucial areas such as our carbon and energy use, the sustainability of our buildings, recycling and waste management, the biodiversity of our campuses and how we support cleaner travel options.

We are also proud to be home to world-leading academics and research centres whose work is having real world impact. From carbon reduction to sustainable vehicle technologies, the advancements and discoveries they are making will further drive the changes urgently needed for future generations around the world.

I am proud to say that our commitment to sustainability will only increase further and will be a key element of the University’s new strategy launching in 2020.

I would like to thank all staff, students and partners of Oxford Brookes for their contributions to our sustainability aspirations this year, and for their help in building towards a sustainable future.

PROFESSOR ALISTAIR FITT, VICE-CHANCELLOR

Leadership and Governance

Oxford Brookes’ commitment to sustainability is reflected in the University’s current strategy, as ‘social responsibility demands that all aspects of our activity should be sustainable’. Oxford Brookes has strategic operational goals for ‘our infrastructure and service provision to be a sector-leading, high quality, sustainable and cost-effective, operating within a culture of continuous improvement’. Sustainability has been identified as a key ‘enabler’ in the emerging 2035 University Strategy and will underpin the strategy in line with student, staff and societal expectations regarding sustainability.

Environmental sustainability at Oxford Brookes is guided by the principles and goals set out in our Environmental Policy. This policy is supported by a series of strategies outlining our key vision, drivers and objectives for each key aspect of environmental sustainability relevant to the University. Aspect specific actions plan measure, report and communicate our performance via assigned, time bound and SMART targets. These strategies, action plans and policies are reviewed at least annually by the Vice-Chancellor’s Group.

Oxford Brookes has an externally certified Environmental Management System (EMS) accredited to ISO 14001:2015. This year, the University extended the scope of our EMS to go beyond our main campus operations and now includes all of Oxford Brookes’ managed halls.

In line with expectations around the wider sustainability agenda and the global climate crisis, and through our role as an educator, Oxford Brookes recognises its responsibility for contributing to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a set of 17 global goals aimed at promoting prosperity while protecting the planet. They understand that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The SDG’s, were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

Oxford Brookes is currently investigating methods of improving engagement with the UN’s SDGs, further enhancing sustainability at Oxford Brookes. We are exploring the establishment of a Sustainability Steering Group to address the wider sustainability performance of the University and alignment with the SDGs. Throughout this report we have highlighted the goals aligning with our sustainability performance.

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals
Energy and Carbon Reduction

Our Vision:
As a University we recognize the significant impacts energy and carbon use have on the global environment. We follow three basic principles of reducing energy demand, increasing efficiency and adopting low carbon energy sources. Oxford Brookes presently has a carbon reduction target of 28% by 2020 and 34% by 2025. We recognize the need to do more in this area, in order for the University to align with the Government’s net zero greenhouse gas emissions policy and the global climate crisis. Our strategy and targets are currently under review for delivery in the autumn of 2020.

Progress and initiatives:
Carbon emissions fell again in 2018/19 and the University has now reduced its emissions by some 30% from our 2005/06 baseline. The University has two main sources for the funding of capital projects: an internal carbon reduction fund of some £250k per year and a Salix revolving green fund. In 2018/19 £400k was invested in LED lighting upgrades at Clive Booth Student Village. Money was brought forward from future years’ internal carbon reduction funding to deliver this scheme as the indoor lighting was at the end of its working life. Salix funding was used to add controls of ventilation units at the Centre for Sport which had previously operated 24/7, and to also undertake heating circulation pump upgrades in a number of buildings in Headington. Extensive work has also been completed to enable our photovoltaic provision to double by 2020.

Waste Management

Our Vision:
To embed a culture of sustainable waste management throughout the organisation, by delivering the principles of the waste hierarchy and integrating these principles into every aspect of the University’s processes and operations.

Progress against targets:
We achieved a 57% recycling rate in 2018/19, against a new target of 75% by the end of 2025.
We achieved a 94% recycling rate of construction waste, against our 90% target.
We achieved 0.7% of waste to landfill, against our target of <2% to landfill.

Prevention & reduction initiatives:
- Discounts are given to all hot drinks if you bring a re-usable cup and “Refill” water points are now offered across all our catering outlets. Re-usable crockery is available for eat-in meals in all catered halls while the majority of our catering outlets and catering hospitality now delivers sustainable crockery as standard.
- Paperless assignment submissions are now standard across the University.
- Double-sided printing is the default setting for all printers.
- The Oxford Food Bank collects leftover food from halls as part of our end of year campaign.
- We extended our work in the last year for our End of Year campaign by increasing our British Heart Foundation banks across sites and improving awareness of this initiative. This resulted in over £48k in donations and delivering life-saving preventative CPR training to students.
- We continued to deliver an online “Environment Forum” for reusing physical assets within the university.
- Old academic books were donated to Better World Books.
- Abandoned bikes are upcycled and reused by Bicester Green and the Bike Doctor.
- All our recoverable old pallets are collected by RAW, a local social enterprise, where they are upcycled to make furniture or resold for re-use.
We have designed a new programme to engage students in our University-managed managed Halls of Residence to improve recycling rates, educate and implement positive behaviour change in 2020.

Recycling & Energy recovery
- All our general waste is taken to a local incinerator, creating energy from waste.
- We achieved only 0.7% of waste being disposed to landfill.
- All our segregated food waste is diverted to anaerobic digestion, creating energy and fertiliser from waste.
- We achieved 100% recovery rate for bulky wood waste.
- We installed new electronic waste collection banks across all our halls of residence sites.
- We created a new segregated waste stream for the recycling of disposable cups.

Final destination for University waste streams in 2018/19

46% Recycled
42% Incineration
11% Anaerobic digestion
<1% Landfill

Total waste to landfill per academic year

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Our Vision:
To achieve a culture of efficient water use and management across our estate

Progress and initiatives:
- It is now compulsory to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and water efficient technologies in all new buildings / refurbishments, as part of the University’s Sustainable Design Guidelines.
- Rooftop rainwater harvesting systems collected more than 3000 m\(^3\) of water for use in toilet flushing and irrigation.
- 100% of water meters are logged and alarmed, which has helped identify several water leaks.

Total water use has increased each year since 2013/14. We recognise we need to improve in this aspect, thus have set ourselves SMART targets and are actively benchmarking against the sector. A successful initiative has been the installation of accurate loggers across our sites enabling us to track use, detect leaks and report much more accurately than we have done in previous years. As is often the case with ageing infrastructure, the fixing of a leak leads to additional problems within the network and it is recognised that this is an ongoing challenge. A major aim for this coming year is to track and fix leaks more efficiently.
**Biodiversity**

Our Vision:
To preserve and enhance biodiversity across the University estate.

The University has introduced a rewilding project at its Harcourt Hill campus: the grassland meadow by Westminster Hall has been allowed to grow with the aim of increasing biodiversity. Rewilding projects are a great benefit to local wildlife and create a unique opportunity to experience more of the natural world. There is now compelling evidence to show that contact with nature and the outdoors improves physical health and mental wellbeing. We have surveyed the site and will continue to monitor fauna and flora to understand how best to increase biodiversity in this area.

Across all of our sites the Grounds Team manage habitats to preserve biodiversity where possible. This includes measures such as leaving a two metre ‘wild boundary’ along grassland areas, hedgerow management to avoid nesting periods and log and leaf piles left in the woodland areas. We have surveyed the site and will continue to monitor fauna and flora to understand how best to increase biodiversity in this area.

Oxford Brookes has signed up to the ‘Oxford Swift City’ project and has installed swift boxes at our Headington, Clive Booth, Paul Kent and Crescent Hall sites, giving these magnificent birds more nesting sites in an attempt to halt their declining numbers. Swifts are a fantastic and regular visitor to urban Oxford and their distinctive calls during the summer are a pleasure to many visitors in the city.

A review of our Freedom bee hives was completed, and appropriate relocations were carried out where required. Rare ‘ivy bees’ have been identified at Headington Hill Hall and mowing regimes altered to maintain their habitat. A new bug hotel was installed in the Buckley Building inner quad, and felled tree branches are placed at the base of the tree to create ‘in-situ’ bug hotels.

We recognise the rapid decline in the UK’s native biodiversity and are committed improving this across our managed sites. Please contact us if you wish to be involved in any biodiversity projects at Oxford Brookes.

**Sustainable Food**

Our Vision:
To deliver and promote, in partnership with our catering contractors, a ‘sustainable food offering’, whilst continually striving to enhance the consumer experience. The sustainable food agenda is diverse and impacts globally as well as locally. Our sustainable food strategy recognises these impacts and the role we and our consumers can play in reducing these impacts.

Progress and initiatives:
- In 2018 Oxford Brookes celebrated its 15th anniversary as the first Fairtrade University, with continued accreditation and the delivery of Fairtrade food offerings and events, such as fairs, fashion shows and an inspiring ‘meet the grower’ event.
- Local suppliers made up 23% of our total annual spend, well exceeding our target of 10%.
- 100% of food waste is diverted to anaerobic digestion.
- We delivered at least six seasonal products every day and promoted these at all times.
- The Avo Café is now a dedicated vegan and vegetarian food outlet. We increased the vegetarian offerings across our catering outlets and offered ‘plant based training’ to our in-house chefs.
- A 10% discount is offered at all catering outlets if a re-usable cup is used.
- We installed water refill points across all our catering outlets to reduce plastic use.
- We designed out single use plastic use on our take away cutlery range, removed all plastic bottles from the Avo cafe and replaced the plastic bottle range across our catering outlets where alternatives could be sourced.

Independent certification is a key component of any sustainable catering service, to truly understand changing needs and expectations and ensure we are delivering change. We are proud to have received the accreditations displayed on this page in 2018/19. We are also key signatories and supporters of Oxford Good Food Charter, our city’s statement of vision for a vibrant, healthy and sustainable food system. The Good Food Charter is a platform for future projects, a catalyst for engagement with businesses and the community, and a guide for linking policy to action. Oxford Brookes is actively engaged in knowledge sharing and supporting this platform for change.
Transport

Our Vision:
To have a culture of sustainable travel embedded throughout the University, where everyone is actively involved in reducing their transport emissions and will be advocates for the same level of provision for sustainable travel at their future places of study or work.

Progress and initiatives:
As of 2018/19, the BROOKESbus service has moved nearly 22 million passengers since 2009 – saving an estimated 1.5 million car journeys each year from Oxford’s roads. Nearly 40% of all BROOKESbus journeys in 2018/19 were made by local residents, thus providing sustainable transport options for the wider community.

In 2018, the University purchased six new micro-hybrid buses that reduced CO\textsubscript{2} emissions by 34% compared to a baseline low-emission bus. This technology was the first in the country to be installed on a commercial bus service and was developed by an Oxford Brookes Alumnus, working with Williams Formula 1.

For more information on our travel initiatives please visit our website
www.brookes.ac.uk/social-responsibility/sustainable-operations/sustainable-transport/

Procurement

Our Vision:
To be a leading organisation in the higher education community for sustainable and ethical procurement, in line with our social responsibility framework, environmental and sustainability goals.

Progress and initiatives:
One of our most positive achievements in 2018/19 has been our sign up to the NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool. This enables all of our suppliers to develop a NETpositive sustainability action plan in line with our environmental, sustainability and institutional objectives. The Tool allows us to support all of our suppliers to support commitments to sustainability and provides them with a customised action plan, which can be monitored and measured. We are then able to interrogate the data this process generates to help plan our supplier engagement activities on sustainability, gather evidence of good practice and use the action plan developed to provide a clear and measurable focus for contract management discussions.

Other initiatives we have delivered under our strategy include:
• The revision of standard terms and conditions to ensure the inclusion of clauses to cover anti modern slavery and human trafficking as appropriate.
• Delivered a Supplier Code of Conduct to highlight the University’s position on ethical, social and environmental considerations.

Specific deliverables have included:
• The move to 100% post-consumer recycled paper
• The retender for graduation certificates included the incorporation of minimal packaging and all paper-based products to be FSC accredited
• Faculty uniforms retendered with consideration for modern slavery, and ethical sourcing due to the identification as a high-risk supply chain.
• New catering tender included all objectives and targets as outlined in our Sustainable Food Strategy.
• As a cross sectoral NETpositive tool 837 suppliers have committed to 10,000 actions to improve performance, of these 56% are sustainability focused.
Community Engagement & Social Responsibility

Our Vision:
To establish and strengthen positive relationships with local stakeholders, whilst promoting a range of initiatives which have a positive social or environmental impact.

Progress and initiatives:
Volunteering:
Providing opportunities for students to volunteer is an important element of our community engagement approach and forms part of an enhanced student experience.
- Our volunteer’s hub brings together and promotes volunteering opportunities.
- The University also works with Oxford Hub, a student volunteering body in Oxford.
- The University's staff volunteering policy has been strengthened to ease the process of volunteering for staff. Volunteering opportunities are captured and promoted to staff through a new enhanced website.

Students have made a difference in a wide range of projects via our Student Impact Fund. The initiative provides financial support to students to enable them to fund a project through donations made by alumni. Two recent examples are the development of a wildlife and wellbeing garden at our Swindon Campus and a World Table Tennis Day event.

Partnerships and collaborative working:
- The House Champion Scheme is a joint initiative between Oxford Brookes, Thames Valley Police and Oxford City Council to encourage students to be responsible neighbours and help integration with their community.
- As a responsible neighbour we respond to any concerns raised by members of the local community.
- The University employs a team of Student Community Wardens. Over the last year the University has increased the team to 20 wardens, who will help students settle into their private rented accommodation and assist in resolving any tensions that may arise between residents.
- The University has supported a number of Oxford City Council’s Clean Green Campaigns.
- The University also teamed up with Oxford Direct Services in 2019 to provide interactive and educational games to children at the University’s Science Bazaar, which attracted over 2,000 visitors.

Teaching & Research

Oxford Brookes is a centre of academic excellence, ranking 1st in the UK for research and 2nd for teaching in The Times Higher Education Young University Rankings 2019. This includes vital work on a variety of sustainability-related topics.

The Oxford Brookes Business School is a member of PRME – Principles for Responsible Management Education, PRME offers a United Nation-supported framework to embed sustainability into education, research and operations for Higher Education Institutions.

The Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development contributes to major research council programmes such as Living with Environmental Change, Energy research, Sustainable Urban Environments and Lifelong Health and Wellbeing.

The Centre for Ecology, Environment and Conservation provides cutting edge teaching and research on environmental change, quality of life, biodiversity, ecosystem services and food security. A range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses are available.

The Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice focuses on gender, diversity and inclusion in organisations, the economy and society, its work spans gender issues in the workplace, work-life balance, age discrimination and extending working lives, LGBT and religious considerations, social mobility and human rights.
This report has been compiled by the Environmental Sustainability Team. We welcome your feedback on environmental sustainability at Oxford Brookes. If you have any thoughts or questions please get in touch with us at sustainability@brookes.ac.uk. If you would like more information about our policies, strategies or action plans please visit our sustainability website at www.brookes.ac.uk/sustainability