

10-YEAR Plan 2021-30

*AN ACTION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT AT LANCASTER UNIVERSITY*

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

green
Lancaster

Lancaster
University 

OVERVIEW

Green Lancaster provides education and engagement experiences for the Sustainable Development Era.

We aim to reach out to all members of the University community with the opportunity to engage with the most critical debates of modern times via the provision of practical, multi-dimensional learning experiences on campus and beyond.

As a successful collaborative initiative of Lancaster University and Lancaster University Students' Union, established in 2009, this plan sets out our action plan for the decade ahead to 2030.

CONTEXT

Landmark reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018)[1] and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, 2019) [2] have defined the urgency of the Climate Emergency and Ecological Emergency agendas respectively. It is the responsibility of communities at all scales to come together and respond with the big transformations towards systemic sustainable development, delivered at all scales. The common future of the living systems of Planet Earth is at stake.

Lancaster University's Climate Emergency Declaration (November 2020) represents the accord of our global Lancaster University community to this unifying call to action. The Green Lancaster 10-Year Plan to 2030 outlines the potential for embedding the Education for Sustainable Development agenda across the whole institution via upscaling existing initiatives and developing new, pioneering collaborations that contribute to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

[1] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018, Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C, <<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>>.

[2] Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2019, Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, <<https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>>



PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

The decade to 2030 has been identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as one for critical delivery of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda. The most recent report ‘Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap, #ESDfor2030’ (UNESCO, 2020), identifies Education for Sustainable Development as a key enabler for all other SDG’s and sets out priority actions for the development of ‘action-orientated, innovative pedagogy to enable learners to develop knowledge and awareness and take action to transform society into a more sustainable one’.

As an initiative built around the principals of Education for Sustainable Development, Green Lancaster will embed the strategy and mechanisms as set out by UNESCO’s #ESDfor2030 agenda into our action plan for the decade ahead. Therefore the priority action areas for Green Lancaster mirror the five Action Areas as outlined in #ESD for 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) define the overall approach we will take to our work as an education and engagement initiative built around collaborative projects. However, our project clusters or thematic groups outlined later in this plan identify the wide ranging agendas that our work will contribute towards across the Sustainable Development Goals spectrum.

The Green Lancaster partnership has significant existing expertise of delivery within the ESD agenda. Our place-focussed programmes have developed organically over the course of the decade to 2020 in response a unique combination of the characteristics of our geographical location and the priorities of our community of staff and students. The #ESDfor2030 priority action areas provide the ideal framework for the consolidation and further development of our projects in the decade ahead.

The table on the following page sets out how the #ESDfor 2030 priority action areas relate to the strategic direction of Green Lancaster...

#ESD FOR 2030 PRIORITY ACTION AREAS



ADVANCING POLICY

Green Lancaster will engage in the ESD policy debate at a local, national and global level, working within our strategic networks and follow current best practice in the delivery of our educational and engagement solutions across our project thematic groups.

TRANSFORMING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

#ESDfor2030 calls for learning environments where learners ‘learn what the live and live what they learn’. Our flagship ECOHub site has long embodied this principal, however the next decade will complete the transformation of this site into a multi-dimensional sustainability learning facility.



BUILDING CAPACITY OF EDUCATORS

#ESDfor2030 promotes the development of educators who are empowered and equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that are required for the big transformation. We see all of our members as educators from our student leaders to volunteers. We will deliver capacity and skills development work that integrates the transformative agenda of the SDG’s.

EMPOWERING AND MOBILISING YOUTH

Securing youth representation in the decision making processes of institutions to ensure the next generation can genuinely contribute to shaping the transformational agenda. With the students’ union as a core member of the Green Lancaster partnership, we will ensure that our campaigns and projects provide an accessible platform for the full diversity of the Lancaster community to develop skills, values and attitudes for sustainable development.



ACCELERATING LOCAL LEVEL ACTIONS

Engaging with civic, community and business across the Lancaster campus, City, Region and ‘Global Lancaster’ community to provide multi-dimensional learning opportunities with real-life ‘learning laboratory’ type activities at the core of our outreach programmes.

PROJECT THEMATIC GROUPS

The Green Lancaster project thematic groups aim to create recognisable and consistent branding for activity clusters within specific sustainable development themes. Each thematic group contributes to one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and these are identified within the following pages. The plan for the decade ahead envisages the consolidation of existing flagship projects which have a high level of familiarity among our community. Projecting forward and with careful attention to scaling activity in a sustainable manner, the plan looks to expand on the existing project offer, particularly in the second half of the decade, to unlock new projects, particularly in the sustainable mobility and transport thematic group. These new initiatives are intended to expand the range of SDG's that Green Lancaster projects contribute to, whilst being designed based on the unique characteristics of our community and with their priorities driving their development.



PROJECT THEMATIC GROUPS

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, REWILDING, REGENERATIVE LAND MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Consisting of the the ECO-family of projects; ECOHub, ECOWoods, ECOWild.

Contributing to SDG Goals:

- 2 (Zero Hunger),
- 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing),
- 13 (Climate Action), 1
- 4 (Life Below Water), 1
- 5 (Life On Land).



RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Scaling-up the Flagship #DontDitchIt project to achieve a year-round Circular Economy centre at Lancaster University.

Contributing to SDG Goals:

- 1 (No Poverty),
- 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)



SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Developing a new set of landmark projects based on a range existing smaller scale sustainable transport initiatives.

Contributing to SDG Goals:

- 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing),
- 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure),
- 11 (Sustainable Cities & Communities)



ENERGY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Developing new connections with the University's carbon reduction and renewable energy projects to facilitate and promote energy efficiency within buildings.

Contributing to SDG Goals:

- 7 (Affordable & Clean Energy),
- 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure),
- 11 (Sustainable Cities & Communities)



ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, REWILDING, REGENERATIVE LAND MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The **ECOHub** was established in its current location on Alexandra Park during winter 2012-13. Throughout the course of the last 9 years, the site has been incrementally developed with student ideas setting the agenda and a combination of external funding (National Union of Students) and internal funding

(Lancaster University Facilities) has supported these ideas to create a thriving, 0.5 hectare space for organic food production and indoor/outdoor social and education activities.

The further development of the **ECOHub** will be prioritised in the early part of the delivery of the 10-Year plan, such that the site and in particular Brandrigg Barn becomes the permanent base for Green Lancaster. A site and building upgrade is required to achieve this vision and a specific project team within the University will need to oversee this development to ensure it meets both current and future needs and embodies UNESCO's definition of a transformative learning environment with the heritage features of Brandrigg Barn complimenting cutting-edge, zero-carbon design.

The site development will enable existing food growing activity at the **ECOHub** to be scaled to new levels of production and processing, with student innovation and enterprise at the core. Project generated income will, over time, contribute significantly towards an entirely circular economy in terms of site operations.

The **ECOHub** has enabled the development of two related projects in this thematic group; **ECOWoods** and **ECOWild**. The Forest of the Future initiative developed from 2018 onwards has a significant student volunteer aspect to woodland management and conservation across the campus estate, Hazelrigg and Forrest Hills, the **ECOWoods** project will encompass all of this activity via a year-round programme of activity with a dedicated lead. **ECOWild** is a project platform for biodiversity monitoring on campus and off-campus experience-based learning opportunities delivered in partnership with statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations working on projects tackling the Ecological Emergency.



RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The **#DontDitchIt** initiative is one of the longest-running and most widely recognised initiatives of Green Lancaster. This household goods upcycling project has grown from working with a handful of local charities in summer 2010, redistributing 4 tonnes of goods, to supporting a network of over 50 local, regional and national charities with over 42 tonnes of donations in 2019. Over 11 years, a total of 310 tonnes of household items have been diverted up the hierarchy of waste towards the very top - being re-used, and as locally as possible. #DontDitchIt is the ideal circular economy programme.

The project currently operates seasonally (focussed on summer departures and autumn arrivals) between approximately May and October. A recent innovation, further contributing to the circular nature of the project, is the Household Items ECOShop; significant volumes of household goods have been re-sold to new arriving students at the start of the academic year. This has already generated significant financial return, with up to £2,500 project generated income each year. However, there is scope to go much further with this, for instance through the supply of #DontDitchIt upcycled ‘arrivals packs’.

Initial developments in the 10-Year Plan will focus on consolidating existing delivery via dedicated project resource and working towards a year-round presence for the #DontDitchIt project. With a significant reduction in parking demand following the Covid-19 pandemic, the #DontDitchIt container base on Alexandra Park will develop into a sorting and storage facility for year-round operations. Further down the line, the project will work as hard as possible towards the elimination of material waste and recycling on campus via targeted campaigns and projects that embed circular practices (for example an expanded provision of household equipment within the accommodation, monitored by a smart inventory system).



SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Green Lancaster has supported sustainable local mobility since the early days via reconditioned bike sales (often at the beginning of the academic year) and the provision of Dr Bike weekly maintenance drop-in sessions in Alexandra Square. Many hundreds of low-cost bikes and essential safety accessories have provided students and staff with a healthier, cheaper and greener travel option, particularly beneficial to those who travel to Lancaster for shorter periods with limited personal possessions.

In recent years, much of the work on this agenda has been outsourced to local organisations specialising in reconditioned bikes and local freelance cycle mechanics. This has created sustainable local collaborations that help to support jobs and skills development. In the immediate term, these collaborations will continue at the current level, with a renewed focus on healthy and active travel driven by the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic widely anticipated across society.

In the second half of the decade ahead, this project thematic group presents an area for significant new innovation. The development of an on-campus

‘sustainable mobility hub’ is suggested as a starting point for this innovation to be designed to meet the sustainable transport needs of our community locally, nationally and internationally. The ‘hub’ would provide a workshop and information space for local travel by foot or bike, with short and long term hire of bikes, and maintenance, cycle proficiency and guided walks. Looking further afield, the Covid-19 pandemic has also created a significant hiatus in national and international travel. The ‘hub’ provides an opportunity to build capacity, expertise and support for sustainable global mobility, whether for student field trips, study abroad or business travel.



ENERGY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Lancaster University has made significant progress to 2020 on the agenda of renewable energy infrastructure and energy efficiency. A package of carbon reduction and energy efficiency projects has led to a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions compared with 2006. Infrastructure projects have included the Wind Turbine, Combined Heat and Power unit, Biomass Boiler and efficiency upgrades to the University’s Energy Centre. The Wind Turbine alone provides up to 15% of the University’s electricity supply. The University is developing comprehensive plans to expand renewable energy and energy efficiency projects as part of the target for net-carbon zero in scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 2030. For example, plans for a large-scale solar PV (Photovoltaic) system are being developed.

Green Lancaster engagement projects have connected with this infrastructural work since 2009. The Carbon Competition encouraged energy efficiency within student accommodation with a prize and reward system linked to energy consumption. In recent years the team has collaborated with SOS-UK on the delivery of the Student Switch Off campaign.

Going forward, a campus-specific building energy demand reduction and efficiency project is proposed for development. Through the recruitment of a team of student energy consultants, building energy use and use pattern surveys will be undertaken and fed into the University’s Energy Management system. The Energy consultants will then work with the Energy manager to identify potential efficiency savings and prioritise these based on highest net reduction in consumption. The scheme is intended to enhance student engagement with the existing Energy Lancaster Living Lab and provide significant and specific skills development for students working towards a career in the energy efficiency and consultancy realms.



DEVELOPING CAPACITY AND SKILLS

Throughout all of the identified thematic groups and individual projects, there will be a focus on skills development and capacity building for the individuals and groups of students, staff and wider community that engage with Green Lancaster. As outlined in the Priority Action Areas section, the development of people via an Education for Sustainability approach is central to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda. Green Lancaster has a long track record of iterative project development that evolves in line with the development of our student leaders. To ensure that we are demonstrating a genuine vision for the transformative agenda of ESD, we will continue to provide significant opportunities for paid student staff placements across the project portfolio. These placements will be supported by a limited and specialist full-time Green Lancaster team, with an indicative structure of one full-time team member per project thematic group.

Opportunities for the development of the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that are required for the big transformation will form the basis of our people development programme. The existing Green Lancaster Leadership Development Training programme, a unique ESD experience-based programme in the outdoor environment will evolve to reach the widest possible audience, with a set of unique place-based programmes that can be applied to different community settings.



2030 VISION

By 2030, Green Lancaster will have a significantly expanded reach, locally, nationally and globally as a unique sustainability feature of the Lancaster University experience. We will inspire our student, staff and community members to take action at varying scales, and throughout their career at Lancaster and beyond as is the intended ambition of Education for Sustainable Development. The development of facilities such as the ECOHub to provide outstanding bases for the various projects within the thematic groups will be complete and the results of inspired people working on inspirational projects will be a benchmark for Education for Sustainable Development globally.

Delivery of this vision will have significant outcomes...

...FOR LANCASTER UNIVERSITY:

Global recognition as a leader within the Higher Education sector for inspirational education and engagement for the sustainable development era.

...FOR LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION:

As a member-led organisation representing the priorities of the student community who are increasingly concerned by the impacts of the climate and ecological emergency, Green Lancaster will provide significant opportunity for the development vital sustainability skills for the membership and student leaders alike.

...FOR THE FACILITIES DIVISION:

A campus Estate where the transformational responses to sustainable learning environments are demonstrated via buildings, structures and most importantly regenerative land management where the Estate is a living lab of the sustainable land-use practices that will rejuvenate ecosystem services.

