



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Priestley International
Centre for Climate



Climate Plan Annual Progress Review

November 2022

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Acknowledgements



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This includes those individuals who submitted responses to the public consultation; members of the Climate Plan delivery team who prepared the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report and provided additional information during the review process; and communication and engagement colleagues who supported preparation for the review process, development of this report and communication about the process.

We would particularly like to thank Ann Allen (Director of Campus Innovation and Development), James Dixon-Gough (Head of Net Zero) and Will Reed (Senior Project Manager leading net zero delivery for their openness in engaging with us throughout the development and delivery of this review process.

Foreword

In 2019 the University of Leeds took a bold step towards tackling the climate crisis with the publication of its seven Climate Principles to address the crisis, including setting an ambitious 2030 target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions under its direct control. A collaborative effort by professional service staff, academics and students transformed these principles into a deliverable Climate Plan, which was set out in 2021 and made real by the University's commitment to invest £174 million.

As an institution with world leading research and teaching on the climate agenda, research and learning are important elements of the Climate Plan. With the Climate Plan Research Partnership Committee and public consultation, we are pioneering an alternative to typical corporate emission reduction plans. We aim to set an example for the higher education sector, to learn-by-doing and share this learning with the wider world.

The responses submitted to the public consultation have been invaluable in aiding the work of our review – thank you to all who took the time to respond. I would also like to thank all those involved in the delivery of the Climate Plan for their openness in answering questions and the University leadership for supporting public scrutiny. I am also grateful to the committee and Priestley Centre support staff who went above and beyond to deliver a timely review.

The University is one year into delivery of its Climate Plan. I hope our review supports the delivery team in realising its ambition and is the catalyst for institution wide engagement to envision the end point of what will be the biggest transformation in our history.

Piers Forster

Chair, Climate Plan Research Partnership Committee



*“With the Climate Plan Research Partnership Committee and public consultation, we are **pioneering** an alternative to typical corporate emission reduction plans.”*

The Climate Plan Research Partnership Committee



Professor Piers Forster, Chair

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Professor David Glew

David Glew is Director of the Leeds Sustainability Institute and Head of Energy Efficiency and Policy at Leeds Beckett University.



Professor Sarah Irwin

Sarah Irwin is Professor of Sociology in the School of Sociology and Social Policy. Her recent work focuses on lay perceptions of climate change, and public engagement.



Professor Chris Rayner

Chris Rayner is Professor of Organic Chemistry in the School of Chemistry, Founder Director of C-Capture Ltd, and Co-Founder of Keracol Ltd. He has considerable expertise in the commercial deployment of new technologies, and the associated opportunities and challenges.



Dr Clare Richardson-Barlow

Clare Richardson-Barlow is Lecturer in Asia-Pacific Studies, in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies. Her work focuses on justice in climate and energy transitions, both internationally and within the UK.



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Karl Ropkins is Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for Transport Studies. He is currently working on air quality, emissions measurement and clean vehicle technology evaluation.

The Secretariat



Dr Shona Smith

Shona Smith is the Research and Innovation Development Manager in the Priestley International Centre for Climate. She co-leads the Net Zero Universities work stream of the UK Universities Climate Network and has been awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC).



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Executive summary



The ambition of the Climate Plan is commendable. This ambition isn't just expressed in the decarbonisation of the University's operations, it is also present in the delivery of more systemic change and the support for climate action across our city, sector, country, and planet. There are also clear elements within the Climate Plan that befit our position as a leading teaching and research University.

An impressive amount has been achieved by the Climate Plan delivery team in its first year.

Employing staff; setting up governance structures with executive responsibilities; initiating spend of the committed investment; populating working groups; and engaging with both academics and students. The team are enthusiastic, committed, open to new ideas, and realistic about the challenges ahead. They are supported by University leadership and understand the complexities and structures of decision-making processes across the University.

It is appropriate that delivery of the commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2030 has been the focus for the past year and this focus continues: it will account for most of the investment going forward. The largest contributor to the direct emissions reduction is the planned deployment of University owned or purchased offsite renewables. When delivered, this will be sector-leading and provide additional capacity to support city-level and national targets.

Other areas have also progressed, including the development of strategies for reorientation of research and teaching and delivering a sustainable curriculum, the introduction of a process for engagement of the community in developing a sustainable travel policy and recruitment of staff to support the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission to deliver regional climate action. Fossil-fuel orientated research income has significantly reduced over the last three years and a public investment strategy is in place. The continuation of these efforts can have even greater impact with improved coordination and stronger communication and engagement. This will also help to mitigate any associated reputational risk.

The need for leverage

The University is making the biggest investment in its history.

With meaningful engagement, coordination and support in key areas, it can leverage this spend to build a stronger community, enhance the student experience, grow its research reputation and deliver positive change both on our doorstep and around the world. This will also help de-risk the investment, bring in teaching and research income, and speed up the delivery of net zero. We acknowledge that alongside these benefits there is a huge amount of complexity to navigate. Change this significant is challenging, and progress will not be linear.

Our biggest impact in tackling the climate crisis should be beyond our own operations and in the wider world. Therefore the University should accelerate projects within the Climate Plan delivery that support boarder climate, sustainability and community impacts which align with our core mission.

The Climate Plan delivery should be viewed by the University community as a living process that is regularly considered, updated and reviewed without the expectation of linear progress along a predetermined trajectory. Some approaches and investments will not deliver expected results. Adopting a culture which values a learn-while-doing and fail-fast approach will allow 'failures' to be an opportunity for development. Learning should be openly and transparently communicated alongside the reasons behind decisions to support community engagement and inform sector-wide ambition.

Cross-cutting priorities

There is clear recognition of the importance of both communication and engagement and delivering a just transition in the Climate Plan delivery programme.

To deliver on this recognition, there is a critical need to develop a communication and engagement strategy and a just transition framework over the next year. These need to be live and reflective strategies that align with the values of the University and its role as a leading research and education institution making a difference both in our city and internationally. These efforts should not be siloed, but should cut across the Climate Principles and connect to existing faculty and service structures. These aspects can be enablers of wider institutional aims aligned with the University's strategy and an opportunity for learning that can de-risk delivery.

Openness and honesty with the wider University community will be valued and will foster engagement and support for the Climate Plan. It is clear from reviewing the Annual Progress Report and speaking to people who were involved in its development, that the Climate Plan delivery programme was developed through an open process of dialogue and engagement with staff and students. However, our institutional memory is short, and recognition of this has been lost somewhere along the way. To develop a sense of ownership from the whole University community, the Climate Plan and its delivery should be integrated into our institutional story.

Emphasis should be on engaging with the broader University community, using the full range of expertise available and helping people to feel part of the process. This should engage the student, research, teaching, professional services, support, and alumni communities, and should include all faculties and services. It is important to ensure this is not centred solely on established climate and sustainability researchers, as strengthening links and understanding across the whole University community is vital.

There should be regular opportunities outside of the annual review process for the University community to engage and provide feedback on specific elements of the delivery programme particularly on 'thorny issues' such as offsetting and sustainable travel.

Building a just transition framework will allow us to consider the University's approach to climate and energy justice. The current focus is largely centred on the physicality of a just transition. This should be broadened to:

1. acknowledge and respect the needs of those impacted by the University's energy decisions (recognitional justice);
2. consider the equitable and fair distribution of benefits and burdens among the University's communities (distributive justice);
3. fairly and competently incorporate marginalised perspectives and communities in decision-making processes (procedural justice);
4. acknowledge the work the University is doing to restore and redress previous climate, energy, and environmental harm (restorative justice).

Together this helps to pinpoint where prevention and response is required for an effective climate and energy transition. Further development of the University's approach to a just transition would benefit from a specific task force, deeper expert engagement drawing upon University expertise, and better inclusion of University stakeholders across a variety of communities.

Further development of the Climate Plan delivery programme should prioritise a just transition to make it a consistent thread throughout the University approach.

Agile and responsive governance

Governance needs to be nimble, with clear responsibilities for designing and delivering programmes and outcomes.

Moving to a mode of action-orientated delivery through targeted task and finish groups or task forces might prove useful here. Processes for engagement, including how business cases feed into the Climate Plan delivery programme and where issues of justice and inclusion can be considered, need to be clear. Connections to existing governance structures are needed to maintain points of contact and engagement at all levels. Effective integration of the Climate Plan into University systems and processes at the faculty, school and service level is needed to ensure that Climate Plan delivery is part of planning and communication across the University.

A reflection on institutional decision-making should be embedded across the Climate Plan delivery programme and go beyond having a social value assessment to consider how decisions are made in practice. Key points to consider in this process include: short-term versus long-term priorities; who signs off on decisions (regarding issue areas and level of financing); spheres of influence (who is affected?); and differences and agreements over risks and opportunities for different stakeholders.

Clearly outlining – and communicating – decision-making processes and where responsibility lies for different areas (and for different levels of finance) would improve transparency. Time should be taken for reflection on opportunities to streamline processes and look for opportunities to invite input from actors across the University. Treating decision-making as an iterative and reflexive process provides space to acknowledge where outcomes have had positive (and negative) unexpected outcomes. This would also address concerns raised in the consultation process regarding engagement with, and transparency of, the implementation of the Climate Plan.

As the Climate Plan moves more substantively into the implementation phase, the finances associated with major aspects of the delivery programme need to be clearly set out and presented to ensure transparency. Overspends and underspends should be explained, and there should be some reconciliation between planned and actual expenditure. This should link back to the overall transition plan and milestones. We expect the Climate Plan to go over budget, so a ceiling on committed investment would harm delivery.

Aligning with the University's core purposes

Research and innovation, education and knowledge exchange are the University's core purposes, and it is in delivering these that the University can have the most impact in the world.

Further integrating the University's Climate Plan delivery with the research and development of new solutions to climate challenges, providing education and training to equip people with the expertise and skills to deliver a just and resilient net zero transition, and openly sharing our learning will have far reaching impact beyond the boundaries of the University.

The University is a leader in many aspects of research, and should capitalise on this. Engagement with University expertise should be ongoing and focused on need. For example, when considering delivery choices for 2030 and 2050 targets, the thinking needs to continually evolve as the barriers to deployment become clearer, new opportunities arise, and new strategies and technologies are developed. Future opportunities may be developed in Leeds and a supportive environment to help develop, trial, and deploy new technologies and solutions should be fostered within the University.

Commendable progress has been made on the sustainable curriculum, but this urgently needs to deliver real changes to the student experience. An ambitious timeline to deliver curriculum changes to embed climate within student specialisms and provide opportunities and resource to enable relevant placements, projects and involvement in living laboratories. It is also critical to train and upskill all staff to support them to understand their role in delivering the Climate Plan.

There are significant opportunities to engage with other educational institutions across the city through the lens of climate solutions, and to work in partnership on green skills and careers. This is a role that could be delivered through the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and Priestley Centre for Climate Futures.

Critical to all elements of the Climate Plan delivery is the open sharing of learnings, be they successes or failures, to support wider sector ambitions and aid others in their transitions.

Specific near-term opportunities

Major near-term opportunities exist in the following areas which require coordinating and resourcing:

- A lot is being asked of a relatively small delivery team. Coordinating efforts to engage effectively across the University will require growing this team and adding resource into existing academic, teaching and delivery structures. These could be coordinated by the Priestley Centre for Climate Futures, and each school and service could appoint a Climate Plan Champion to lead initiatives and engagement activities.
- Development of a public data-rich monitoring framework for emissions, interventions and activity details, with benchmarking, will benefit communication and engagement, student and staff research projects and help foster bottom-up ideas. It will also act as an exemplar and support sector-wide learning.
- The current plan includes timed activities that could be brought forward to maximise their impact, for example investing in offsite renewables, retrofitting buildings and offsetting in the form of community-driven projects can all occur sooner than planned. Attempting these activities earlier will make the Climate Plan more visible, protecting against delays and complications that may be more problematic if left to the end of the programme.
- Working in partnerships offers the potential to develop ambitious demonstrators as learning opportunities. Existing Living Labs, such as Gair Wood, need to be supported to deliver learning, research and community benefits. There are new opportunities such as partnering with Leeds Beckett University, business and city partners for a major retrofitting living laboratory. The £16m investment (from external partners) in Salford's Energy House 2.0 is an example of what could be achieved. If resourced properly with partners, these can showcase action at the University and within the city, support student and staff research projects, and develop understanding that benefits national net zero policies.
- Looking at travel and how we use the University estate post-COVID restrictions are key opportunities for wide engagement over the next year. There is considerable academic expertise on energy demand, building use and transport within the University that can be harnessed. We should be working closely with partners to create citywide benefits (such as bike lanes), that increase health and wellbeing. University-wide positions could be developed on commuting travel, as well as international staff and student travel.
- There is potential to harness the offset allocation creatively, e.g. direct support to retrofit local community homes, student accommodation, woodland restoration and carbon removals, both in Leeds and countries where students travel. Deciding on approaches here should be a key early area for engagement with the University community.
- The Climate Principles and Climate Plan were formed from wide engagement. This past and ongoing story needs telling to develop a sense of ownership from the whole University community.

We hope that this review proves to be valuable, and we look forward to playing our part in the delivery of the Climate Plan.

We are learning from this first annual review process and will endeavour to increase the breadth, diversity and usefulness of stakeholder engagement in future years. It is important that our review remains in the public domain and is demonstrably independent, but it also needs to be helpful to the delivery team. We welcome feedback in this regard. Importantly, we do not see the end of this annual review process as the end of our engagement with the Climate Plan and we extend an open offer to the Climate Principles Programme Board and Climate Plan delivery team to further explain and support the development of actions based on the recommendations contained within this report.

Review in detail

Approach taken

The University committed to an annual review of Climate Plan delivery progress led by the Priestley Centre and drawing on the expertise of the University community.

As part of this process, a Climate Plan Research Partnership Committee was established. The main aim of our committee is to provide expert advice that supports delivery of the Climate Plan, lead the process for annual review and help support engagement from the broader University of Leeds community.

An open recruitment process was undertaken in September 2022 and targeted five broad areas of expertise required within the committee: behaviour change and just transitions; finance and responsible investment; technology and innovation; institutional decision-making; adaptation and resilience. Through this process, seven committee members were recruited from seven schools across five faculties, with an invited external member from Leeds Beckett University.

The [Climate Plan Annual Progress Report](#), published by the Climate Plan delivery team on 26 October 2022, outlines progress one year into delivery. A two week public consultation coordinated by the Priestley Centre garnered a total of 20 responses, spanning several faculties and services of the University and from individuals across a range of career stages, from students, support staff, and academic staff.

A meeting was held on 21 and 22 November 2022 during which the committee reviewed the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report, the consultation feedback (see Appendix I and II) and interviewed members of the Climate Plan delivery team. We also reviewed documents provided on request by the delivery team. We used a strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis approach to reflect on progress. This review also includes reflections and recommendations on the organisation and presentation of the report, and the process of the review.

The recommendations made in this report reflect the full body of information and consultation feedback reviewed by the committee.



This report has been organised as follows:

It begins with summary recommendations for the cross-cutting areas of communication and engagement and delivering a just transition. This is followed by a review of progress on resilient net zero transition, sustainable travel, research and innovation, education, net zero city partnerships and investment. The report concludes with lessons learnt and recommendations for subsequent reviews. Appendix I provides a summary of the consultation feedback and Appendix II is the non-confidential, anonymised feedback from consultation responses.

Cross-cutting priorities: Communication and engagement and just transition

The Annual Progress Report shows a commitment to communication and engagement and delivering a just transition.

These elements are crucial to the design and delivery of the Climate Plan, ensuring it belongs to all staff and students and demonstrating good practice. However, it is clear from the consultation responses and other conversations that many staff and students are not aware of Climate Plan progress and are not fully engaged. Therefore, engagement activities urgently need scaling up in a University-wide nature. Effective communication and engagement will require significant resource with clear ownership and transparent lines of responsibility.

Highlighting and documenting the development of the Climate Plan is important for building a sense of community ownership. Students and staff coming to Leeds in 2025 will have had no opportunity to input to the Climate Plan, and it is important that they know how the University has arrived at the current point in the delivery process of the Climate Plan and how they can get involved. This reflective timeline, and story, are essential for the Climate Plan to become ‘our’ Climate Plan as opposed to ‘the University’s’ Climate Plan.

Ongoing and open opportunities for meaningful engagement might include: town hall style events about the climate crisis and the University Climate Plan; regular calls for evidence and opportunities to provide feedback to ensure the breadth of University expertise and experience is mobilised; and mainstreaming University-wide representation including involvement of staff and student unions and other groups across the University community. Communications between the University and its partners in the UK and internationally are also key, including greater collaboration with external stakeholders with scope for running events to engage, showcase work and bring in new expertise.

A dedicated communication and engagement strategy should detail activities undertaken to date under the Climate Plan and must make it clear how and when people can contribute to the Climate Plan. This includes explaining how students, staff and the wider community can engage both in contributing their views as well as accessing and using net zero data in their research and teaching.

This could build from successful University-wide engagement undertaken around the United Nations annual climate negotiations (COPs) coordinated by the Priestley Centre. COP task forces have brought together academics and professional services staff from across campus to deliver significant programmes of activity to increase and diversify engagement with the United Nations climate negotiations. Critically, implementation of bespoke communication and engagement strategies drew on a cross-service and faculty group of communication and marketing professionals to support effective internal and external engagement. This level of cross-campus coordination and support will ensure effective delivery of communication and engagement for the Climate Plan.

We welcome the commitment to delivering a just transition and recommend that a task force is established to review and assess the role of social justice in effective design and delivery of the Climate Plan.

This should begin by defining what a just transition means for the University of Leeds. A University of Leeds just transition framework should be developed, including:

1. a reflection on who will be impacted;
2. how benefits will be distributed across the community;
3. how people’s voices will be included; and
4. how actions will account for previous impacts.

There is significant expertise across the University that should be used to support the development of this framework, and it will be important to ensure our partners, particularly in those countries most impacted by climate change, are consulted.



We make the following recommendations:

- Assign clear ownership and leads for communication and engagement and just transition with adequate resources to develop and deliver a communication and engagement strategy for the Climate Plan and a University of Leeds just transition framework. The development and delivery of activities for communication and engagement, and a just transition, should be supported by task forces of cross-faculty and service academics and professional staff.
- Establish regular (e.g. monthly) engagement opportunities and be pro-active in engaging diverse University groupings. For example, staff with responsibilities within the Climate Plan delivery programme could run MP-style surgery sessions. There should also be regular opportunities outside of the annual review process for the University community to provide feedback on specific elements of the delivery programme, particularly on 'thorny issues' such as offsetting and sustainable travel.
- Develop a physical presence as a touch point with the Climate Plan on campus and in the city, possibly supported by an annual climate week aligned with the UN General Assembly or United Nations climate negotiation meetings (COPs).
- Schools and services should establish Climate Plan Champions to cascade information, develop and run initiatives and engage with existing University structures.
- Mainstream the assessment of the impact of net zero, just transition and engagement opportunities throughout institutional decision-making. For example, all business cases related to the Climate Plan should include consideration of how the case addresses a just transition and communication and engagement, and how it will support the other principles.
- Establish a mechanism that enables the broader community to put forward ideas for potential funding under the Climate Plan to support its delivery and Living Labs.
- Engage with the Global Development team and academic experts to scope a process to consult and engage the University's international partners, particularly those in the Global South, on the University's Climate Plan delivery programme and to input into the development of a University of Leeds just transition framework.

Governance & institutional decision-making

The scale of governance implemented to date illustrates commitment from a range of actors within the Climate Plan delivery programme and wider University community.

A notable strength is the oversight of each Climate Principle led by members of the University's Executive team. This structure provides a basis from which to develop genuine cross-campus ownership of the Climate Plan and collaboration across faculties, schools, services and with students.

In reviewing the information provided in the Annual Progress Report, and through additional documentation and conversations as part of the review process, we felt the current governance structures would benefit from simplification to increase the agility required to act quickly on time-critical elements of the delivery programme. The governance of the Climate Plan would benefit from being orientated around tasks and/or actions. Highly focused task force-style groups could be utilised to rapidly grasp challenges and opportunities and granted the power to implement changes. More traditional maintenance groups could then manage long-term sustainability of actions.

It is critical that that the entire University community can easily access information on who is making decisions, what communities and people are involved in decision-making and delivery of the programme, and how they can contribute.

The consultation feedback and wider conversations highlight the need to develop opportunities for the University community to suggest new ideas and provide regular feedback (not just as part of annual review process) including reflecting on outcomes and incorporating these reflections into future decisions in the Climate Plan delivery programme.

We learnt through this review process that the creation of business plans to draw down on the investment committed to the Climate Plan are the main mechanism by which the delivery programme receives approval and funding. Transparency on how these are assessed and progressed would be of value, and the process should include assessment of impacts on cross-cutting priorities (i.e., just transition, communication and engagement and partnerships). Additionally, there would be significant value in considering the involvement of wider city stakeholders and other partners in the development of the business plans for the Climate Plan delivery programme.

We also noted that the core delivery team requires additional resources to enable them to take time for regular reflection and broader engagement with the University community, wider city and partners throughout the year. It is important that some of this resource sits within the wider research, teaching and student bodies.

We are pleased that there is an ongoing review of the Climate Plan governance structure being undertaken by the Transformation Office and we make the following recommendations to further support this process:

- Orientate the Climate Plan governance around tasks and/or actions using highly focused task force-style groups followed by more traditional maintenance groups to manage long-term sustainability of actions.
- Provide an online (and interactive) version of organograms describing the Climate Plan governance to support communication and transparency. Points of contact between the Climate Plan governance, the wider decision-making structures of the University and the University community need to be clearly identified.
- Develop opportunities for the University community to suggest new ideas and provide regular feedback.
- Consider the opportunity for bottom-up business case development that supports delivery and wider engagement. Examples of how the business case process works should be provided from existing projects (e.g., woodlands or retrofit) as guides that staff, students and the wider community can follow.

Delivering a resilient net zero transition

Net zero is one of the overarching and more developed principles presented in the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report.

This section reviews progress on net zero by 2030, zero direct emissions by 2050, climate resilience, and emissions reporting because we view these components as interlinked. This is also recognised in the delivery programme, as all of these areas of activity fall within the remit of the Net Zero Delivery Working Group.

We were pleased that significant activity has been scoped and initiated in relation to the net zero by 2030 principle, including setting up working groups which are facilitating effective decisions and investments. After interviewing the net zero delivery team, we also found that there had been much more student and staff engagement than was visible in the Annual Progress Report. We are pleased that a risk assessment of climate resilience is currently underway as part of the delivery programme.

As a critical and complex component of the Climate Plan, implementation of the University's commitments with respect to emissions reductions and building resilience should be viewed as a learning process and hence should be positively framed without shying away from lessons learnt.

In order to appreciate the extent of work done in the past year, and the technical nature of information provided in the Annual Progress Report, a more data-rich format and ongoing open access to emissions data and indicators would be helpful.

A lot has been achieved, and the University is making sector-leading progress.



In reviewing the information provided in the Annual Progress Report and through additional documentation and conversations as part of the review process, we make the following recommendations:

- Accelerate some aspects of the net zero delivery programme e.g. cross-campus LED deployment, investment in offsite renewables, additional solar panels on campus building roofs and considering deploying offsetting through local community projects (insetting¹). This earlier adoption would not only ensure earlier emissions and cost savings but also allow learning about the process that could be shared with other organisations, leading to broader impact.
- Explore options for partnerships with Leeds City Council, Leeds Beckett University and other partners for early adoption of offsite renewables. Working in partnership to allow early investment in offsite renewables has the potential to generate a revenue stream for the University in advance of them being used to supply the campus with energy.
- Engage the broad University community in discussions about the role of offsetting within our net zero delivery plan. As part of the consideration for offsetting, consider investing in opportunities with value for the local community e.g. retrofitting local housing stock in the form of insets.
- Expand the development and delivery of Living Labs to support the delivery of net zero both on campus and within the city. This is a critical opportunity to draw on the expertise and enthusiasm of the University community and to engage partners, to develop teaching and research projects, and to utilise and publicise open data for wider learning. Engagement needs to draw on the broad range of experts working in research that can contribute to net zero (e.g. hydrogen, energy storage, electric vehicles and photovoltaics), either by 2030 or on a longer time frame. The Gair Wood inseting project needs ongoing support to fulfil its delivery and learning potential and we recommend a retrofitting project on University owned Victorian terraced houses, partnering with experts at Leeds Beckett University to inform national delivery programmes.
- Set up indicators for emissions reduction progress that can be tracked interactively online. This would ensure transparency and help to illustrate where the biggest emissions challenges are. Making these data available online would enable the wider community to suggest improvements on indicators, foster engagement and enable data use in student and academic projects and for wider learning.
- Provide access to data on where the existing emissions come from and how this changes over time which could be presented alongside the planned emissions reductions by intervention (Fig. 1 from the Annual Progress Report). This would increase understanding of the biggest challenges and opportunities on the University's pathway to net zero emissions.
- Ensure assessment of climate risk and plans for strengthening resilience consider climate impacts and resilience beyond our campus borders and the implications for delivering University business as an international institution with international partners and operations.



¹ Insetting by an organisation is the investment in interventions to reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions within their value chain which create benefits for nature and local communities. Similarly to offsetting, rigorous standards need to be applied in order to ensure that insetting interventions drive down emissions for the long-term, respond to local needs and maximise co-benefits, whilst ensuring that care is taken with respect to accounting for associated carbon credits to avoid double counting.

Sustainable travel

Progress to date on sustainable travel demonstrates a commitment to include different groups in the development of the institutional sustainable travel policy.

This is one of the key opportunities for broad engagement across the University community and with partners across the city and more widely.

For the University vehicle fleet, the transition from petrol and diesel to alternative fuels has already begun. It would aid communication and engagement to have information regarding the technologies and their relative benefits accessible to the University community and clearly signposted. University of Leeds academics are already involved in similar work across the wider region to increase engagement regarding fleet retrofit and upgrade through collaboration with Leeds City Council and city bus service providers. Their work highlights the need to consider health and air quality, impact on less able groups, infrastructure and fleet maintenance and recyclability, connections to remote working and campus use.

There is also scope for significantly greater ambition. Some changes can be affected more rapidly, for example, tighter pre-travel approval for business flights could be rapidly rolled out. Speeding up the business travel consultation process and making it more of an open and ongoing engagement strategy for wider learning would be helpful. Commuting travel should also be part of the wider engagement strategy with diverse groups.

Additionally, reducing travel emissions dovetails with the objectives and partnerships of supporting a net zero city.

Our approaches need to move beyond addressing barriers, towards modal shift and the University needs to more sufficiently understand the nature of travel decisions, drawing upon existing evidence and University expertise.

There are opportunities to work with Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority around bus services, integrated travel options and improving active travel commutes. The latter might include, for example, improving and maintaining cycle lanes, significantly increasing availability of e-bikes to trial, incentivising cycling and walking and switching away from car dependence, examining flexible working across staff groups to reduce congestion, such as travelling outside rush hour. It would also be valuable to better understand if and how broader access issues link to the travel policy, including progress on digital technology, remote conferencing etc.

We make the following recommendations:

- Highlight the work that has already been done on the University vehicle fleet, possibly through case studies. Provide more accessible data and consider using Living Lab approaches to demonstrate real-world changes in the fleet composition and technologies, and travel options for staff and students.
- Integrate commuting as a key element of the sustainable travel strategy, and as a focus for University-wide engagement, and additionally linked to net zero city objectives.
- Pursue greater collaboration with Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority to accelerate the transition away from car dependence, towards improved travel infrastructure and significantly increased active travel options and uptake.
- Identify the work the University can do to improve local transport networks and hubs, and alternatives to travel, and improve options for those with more limited choices.
- Lead an engagement process with staff, students and international higher education partners on emissions associated with international student travel because any solutions need to be sector-wide. This could be done through our membership of the International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA) and UK Universities International (UUKi).



Research and innovation

The reorientation of research and teaching for the delivery of the Climate Plan is critical.

The development of Geosolutions Leeds with its clear alignment to national priorities for the energy transition and links to industry and local authorities is an excellent demonstration of the potential for University of Leeds research and innovation to deliver impact on campus, in the city and beyond. Continued investment to support this reorientation and development of Geosolutions Leeds as well as to coordinate it with wider activities will allow it to scale at pace.

The University is a world leader in many aspects of research relevant to the Climate Plan and should capitalise on this. Maximising impact from University of Leeds research and innovation to tackle the climate crisis locally, regionally, nationally and internationally should be prioritised as this is arguably where the University has the most potential to support the delivery of a just and resilient net zero transition on a global scale. Emissions reductions driven by University research and innovation beyond its campus and operations should be taken into consideration as part of our contribution towards decarbonising society (perhaps defined as scope 4 emissions reductions), and this should be alluded to in any progress reporting from a qualitative perspective given the difficulty in quantification.

Discussions have been held to engage our academic experts in the development of the Climate Plan and its delivery programme including on strategies, technology choices and socioeconomic interventions for delivering net zero by 2030. These discussions and plans need to continually evolve as the barriers to deployment become clearer (e.g. energy efficiency measures, consumer choices, availability of adequate renewable electricity, heat pump performance, green or blue hydrogen, energy storage), new opportunities arise, and new approaches and technologies are developed. As a home of leading researchers, our academic community will be aware of these well before others. Indeed, future opportunities may actually be developed at the University, in which case a supportive environment to help develop, trial and deploy new technologies, interventions, tools and policies should be fostered. This review process may also help to identify specific areas which may be required for net zero by 2030 or zero direct emissions by 2050, and help to target internal research efforts, particularly with respect to longer-term commitments given the time taken to scale activities.

Living Labs offer a significant opportunity to support the delivery of the Climate Plan and develop research and innovation opportunities with external partners. We note the progress to date and we are keen to support the expansion of the Living Lab programme which must be appropriately resourced to maximise the potential benefits for the Climate Plan, research and innovation, educational opportunities and impact beyond the University.

We make the following recommendations:

- Identify key areas of socioeconomic and technological need still required to achieve net zero (e.g. energy storage) and enable our experts to devote time and resources to the development and deployment of new solutions.
- Deliver focused workshops for a broad audience on various aspects of technology opportunities within the Climate Plan delivery, e.g. on heat pumps – how they work, and their potential for deployment in the University and by employees. Similarly for key aspects of building insulation or other efficiency measures which can have widespread impact.
- Establish a net zero technology futures group to look at potential developments and consider how they may impact upon the University and over what timeframe (e.g. decarbonisation of long-distance air travel; scale of renewable energy generation; use of efficiency measures; and demand management).
- Draw on the significant expertise within the University academic community to establish a behaviour change task and finish group to explore the opportunities to increase the contribution to the University's pathway to delivering net zero emissions by 2030. Developing this and other similar academic groups to deliver on University needs with the potential to produce publishable outputs will increase academic engagement and ensure open access to learnings.
- Develop campus and city showcases and learning hubs with partners.
- Provide greater clarity with respect to the University's definition of a Living Lab. This should include the commitment to acting as an exemplar and provide access to data for student and research projects etc. The most effective Living Labs will contribute learning beyond our institution to the wider city, nationally and beyond.
- Take advantage of Leeds' unique position in terms of open data provision and ongoing projects and collaborations to support Climate Plan engagement and delivery through, for example, the Leeds Institute for Data Analytics and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission.



Education

The sustainable curriculum programme is well established with clear foci and plans for resourcing delivery activities.

Given the critical role of both research and education in the Climate Plan delivery; it is important that appropriate resources are allocated and that a coordinated approach is taken. Ensuring that the University has the agility and flexibility for timely responses to opportunities in education is essential. We found that existing processes and systems can act as a barrier to the development, deployment and communication of new educational offerings.

There is a need for increased transparency and communication of plans for reorientating research and teaching; and providing a sustainable curriculum. In developing communication and engagement plans, it is important to account for the loss of institutional memory through the turnover of the student body and contractual staff that means they lack the historical context of the Climate Plan development.

It is critical that future communication and engagement activities regarding education support the University community in better understanding the choices that are being made and why.

We make the following recommendations:

- Put forward a clear timeline for change with respect to both reorientation of research and teaching, and sustainable curriculum development.
- Formalise responsibility for course directors to include sustainability and climate in their courses and provide the support, training and resource to enable staff to fulfil this responsibility. We do not recommend a one-size-fits-all course for all students because there is a need for climate challenges and solutions to be embedded within the context of students' specialisms and course accreditation.
- Exploit the significant opportunity for student placements, projects and involvement in Living Labs focused on activities that support Climate Plan delivery as part of the curriculum. Additional resource will be required to engage with teaching staff and students to develop, promote and facilitate delivery of projects.
- Place the University of Leeds as a leading learning anchor institution for the wider city. There are significant opportunities to engage with other educational institutions across the city through the lens of climate solutions and to work in partnership on green skills and careers. This could be facilitated through the Priestley Centre for Climate Futures.
- Train and upskill all staff to support them to understand their role in delivering the Climate Plan. Continued engagement and communication of new policies, processes and opportunities is also required and could be integrated into school and service structures through Climate Plan Champions.

Net zero city partnerships for scaling change

The support within the Climate Plan for the Leeds Climate Commission and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission is commendable and there are opportunities to build on this with partnerships at many levels.

The University should also make more direct links to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and Mayor's office to support regional climate commitments and action. The University can foster core partnerships with other large organisations in the city including hospitals, other universities and Further Education institutions to deliver shared goals for tackling the climate crisis. We recommend considering working with:

- WYCA and Leeds City Council on travel and transport planning (e.g. policies to encourage modal shift, improving active travel and public transport infrastructure, incentivising active travel and bus use).
- WYCA, Leeds City Council, NGOs and business to create a space that showcases and engages the wider community in net zero delivery and our citywide response to the climate crisis.
- Leeds City Council and the third sector in building up effective partnership working for Climate Plan delivery (e.g. student placements, two-way staff secondments, building research and volunteering opportunities).
- Further Education Institutions and schools, for example drawing on parts of the Climate Plan in outreach activities; also examining the scope for enhancing net zero relevant employment skills development in partnership with Leeds College of Building and Leeds City College.
- Suppliers and partners, to leverage and bring forward a low carbon transition across supply chains and explore if it can be enhanced by working with partner anchor institutions including other universities. 'Supply' here should include net zero infrastructure projects including the plan to commission offsite renewables (e.g. exploring scope to link with Leeds City Council and Leeds Beckett University).
- Leeds SMEs who might struggle, due to resource limitations, to incorporate risk into management and decision-making as well as take other steps to becoming resilient, net zero organisations.

We make the following recommendations:

- Make more significant resource available to engage with new opportunities that leverage more ambitious city wide changes and to ensure they draw upon the breadth of relevant expertise within the University community.
- Develop clearer mechanisms for the University community and our partner organisations to apply for funding and support to deliver climate-related projects across the city.
- Develop opportunities to make postgraduate researchers available to businesses, communities, local government and other city actors to input to projects. This could follow the example on the [University of Manchester Living Lab](#) which brokers applied research between students and organisations who need research to affect change for sustainability and climate action.
- Proportion funding for offsets delivered as insets dedicated to Leeds-based projects targeted at areas where the University has impact and influence such as retrofit (social enterprise for retrofitting for private student landlords, low paid staff) and other types of benefits not traditionally viewed as an offset.



Investment

We are pleased that several positive steps have been taken to enable responsible investment.

The fact that since 2019 the University no longer holds shares in any company whose primary business is the extraction of fossil fuel, or which derives significant revenue from such extraction, makes a difference. Many staff and students do not realise this, so it should be made easily accessible and widely communicated.

There remain two areas that are not clear and have been raised in the feedback gathered through the consultation process. One is the Pension Assurance Scheme (PAS), the local pension scheme, and the other is the University Superannuation Scheme (USS). Influencing the PAS and making sure that the scheme does not have holdings in any company whose primary business is the extraction of fossil fuels, or which derives significant revenue from such extraction, would be consistent with the overall investment strategy of the University. It may well be the case that PAS has undertaken divestment, but if this is the case then it needs to be widely communicated to staff and students. In the case of USS, the committee recognises that the University of Leeds is only one employer sponsor. However, the University can take a proactive stance on this and be leading in its advocacy for USS to divest from fossil fuels and extractive industries.

Through the consultation process, we received specific feedback with respect to Barclays providing banking services despite being the biggest funder of fossil fuel extraction among major UK banks. It would be positive for the University to re-evaluate its banking service provision but given the nature of banking and the need for a large global bank, it may be that Barclays is the best choice on a relative basis compared to other similar banks. It is important that there is a clear articulation of why the choice has been made.

We also received feedback that the University should update its policy on Responsible Investments to refuse funding for research from fossil fuel companies. The University needs to give a clear articulation of what its position on this is, and if the position is to consider opportunities on a case-by-case basis, then the University needs to have a well-articulated policy on this.

Given that the Climate Plan has only just started in earnest, the very high-level of reporting is understandable given much of its scoping work. As capital is deployed in future years, it would be valuable for the committee and for the wider community of staff, students and stakeholders to have access to much clearer project-level spend and progress reporting through time.





We make the following recommendations with respect to investment:

- Provide clearer articulation and communication around decision-making, implementation and policies with respect to the investment strategies. This includes details of the Tomorrow's World Investment Strategy, a policy for decision-making on accepting research funding from fossil fuel companies and the choice of banking service. Improving access to this information would support engagement with the Climate Plan delivery and increase the University community's understanding of the rationale behind decisions.
- Influence the Pension Assurance Scheme (PAS) and take a proactive stance and be leading in its advocacy for the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) to divest from fossil fuels and extractive industries.
- Provide access to project-level spend and progress reporting for our committee and the wider community of staff, students and wider stakeholders.

Learning for the future of the review process

We have also discussed how this review process might be improved.


From the public consultation it is clear that we need to allow sufficient time for the consultation as well as improve the diversity of responses across students, professional services staff and key partners. Nevertheless, the annual review process was seen as useful to both respondents and the Climate Plan delivery programme team.

We make the following recommendations:

- The Annual Progress Report produced by the Climate Plan delivery team should:
 - Provide a clear factual appraisal of progress supported by evidence and data.
 - Have elements that speak to both general interest and expert reviewers.
 - Place progress into context to account for institutional memory.
 - Be made available as both a downloadable and online version.
 - Provide evidence of how cross-cutting priorities of a just transition and communications and engagement have been considered for every element of the programme delivery and therefore integrated throughout the Annual Progress Report.
- The Annual Progress Report writing team could run a town hall meeting to introduce the report.
- The review process should be repeated annually.
- A member of professional services should be included on our committee.
- Students should be brought in to engage with and support specific parts of the review process.
- External input is extremely valuable. In addition to the external committee member, it would be of value to invite key external stakeholders (e.g. a Leeds City Council representative) to input into specific parts of the review meeting.
- More time is required to collect responses to the consultation.
- There is a need for both expert input and public consultation. Both types of input need to be solicited, perhaps by using questions targeted to different stakeholders. Alternatively, focus groups for different stakeholder groups could be used to elicit expert input on different elements of the Climate Plan. Climate Plan Champions should be used to aggregate responses to particular questions from schools and services.
- We should not ask respondents to justify why they want to keep responses confidential.
- Our committee should speak to Leeds University Union on how to best engage students in the process.
- Our committee should ask for feedback on the review process from the Climate Principles Board and Delivery Working Group members.

Appendix I

Summary of consultation feedback



Summary of responses to the public consultation.

Section 1: Overview

Following the public consultation on the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report that took place between 26 October and 9 November 2022, this appendix presents a summary of the feedback received. Table 1 presents the questions posed in the consultation.

Number	Question
1	Is the progress made through measures to date in line with the University's commitment?
2	Are there other effective measures that the University should consider beyond those outlined in the report?
3	With relevant evidence, please comment on the effectiveness of current measures to meet the University's travel-related emissions target. Are there other evidencable and practical measures that the University can undertake to support development of a sustainable travel policy and travel emissions reduction?
4	With relevant evidence, please comment on the effectiveness of current measures to meet the University's Sustainable Curriculum principle. Are there other evidencable and practical measures that should be considered to advance the progress of this commitment beyond those outlined in the report?
5	Please comment on the effectiveness of current measures on the transition to reorientate research and teaching. Are there other practical measures that should be considered to advance the progress of this commitment beyond those outlined in the report?
6	What is your assessment of the plans underway, and progress made on collaborations between University and the wider city region on climate change? With actionable evidence, are there any other strategies that could be employed by the University to support a resilient net zero transition for the city region?
7	The Climate Pledge, to be launched this year by the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, will see businesses and organisations receiving support to incorporate climate risks into their organisation management and decision-making. What additional support could the University provide to businesses, communities, local government and other city actors to support deliver a resilient net zero city region?
8	An environmental value assessment has been developed and made available to University of Leeds decision-making boards as a means of shaping institutional decision-making. Please comment on the effectiveness of this measure. What other practical and evidencable strategies and/or measures can be employed to ensure the University's climate commitments are considered throughout decision-making processes?
9	Please comment on the effectiveness of the measures taken to enable responsible investment. Are there other investment strategies (investing in or out) that University could undertake to ensure responsible investment?
10	Emissions data reporting follows the GHG Protocol Corporate Standard reported by location and market based on 2021/22 on quarterly basis for scope 1 and 2 and made available to the committee for review. Is there any guidance for how best to present and use these data or supplement it with other data?
11	Are there any insights from the latest emissions data provided in the progress report with respect to the quality of the data themselves or strategies that should be considered in relation to the University's net zero target?
12	With actionable evidence, what strategies and measures can be used to ensure the University's transition to net zero is equitable and just?
13	With actionable evidence, how can equity and justice of the University's net zero transition be accounted for, in particular with respect to the Global South?
14	A number of Living Lab projects have been developed to support knowledge and learning on delivering net zero. How can the University improve the process for identifying and setting up Living Lab projects and reporting progress on existing projects?
15	Academics, researchers and R&I-facing professional staff have been embedded in delivery working groups of the Climate Principles. What other practical mechanisms can be used to ensure delivery of the Climate Plan draws on the University's academic expertise and current research?
16	How can the University further develop the communications plan to support wider engagement of University student and staff, and broader stakeholders with the Climate Plan delivery process?
17	Please provide any feedback you have on the budget commentary provided in the report.
18	Please provide feedback on the most significant current risk themes identified in the Climate Plan progress report. Are there other consolidated areas of risk (risk themes) that have not been considered in this report? (Please provide details on how to mitigate identified risks if possible whilst taking into account the risk themes already presented in the report.)
19	Please submit any other evidence you would like the Climate Plan Research Partnership to consider as part of the review process.
20	Is the progress made through measures to date in line with the University's commitment?

Table 1: Consultation questions from the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report consultation 2022.

The total number of individual responses received was 20 which were all from University staff and students. The majority were senior members of academic staff (professors/associate professors), followed by undergraduate students and lecturers. Figure 1 presents the demography of the consultation respondents with respect to their role/career stage.

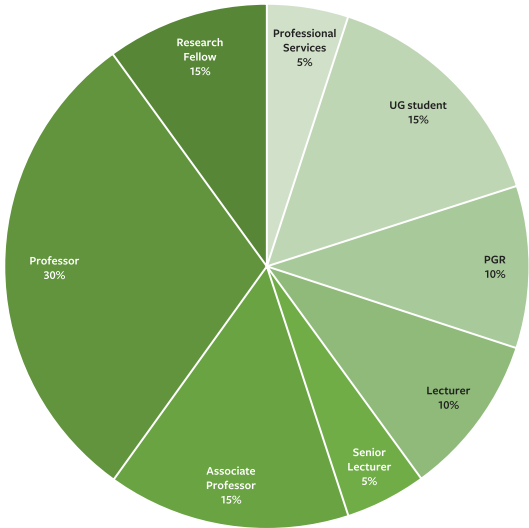


Figure 1: Classification by position of individuals who submitted feedback to the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report consultation 2022.

On average, questions 1, 2 and 15 received the highest number of responses. Overall, there was a fair spread of feedback received for all of the questions, as illustrated in Figure 2.

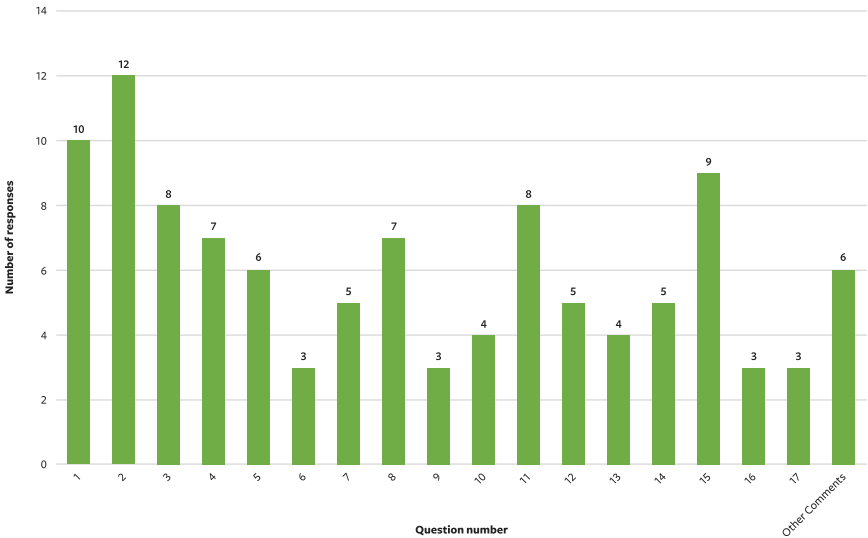


Figure 2: Number of responses per question to the Climate Plan Annual Progress Report consultation 2022.

Section 2: Summary of key themes

In this section, a summary of key themes emerging from the consultation responses is provided.

Climate Plan delivery progress

Transparency

The Climate Plan process is perceived to be less transparent than desired. Barriers highlighted included governance structures and recruitment into delivery working groups along with a lack of clarity with respect to ownership and accountability.

Insufficient data

Some respondents feel that there was a lack of data provided to allow full assessment of the progress on the Climate Plan delivery, and there were several specific suggestions with respect to improving the presentation of data. Others found the Annual Progress Report and consultation process to be overly technical.

Engagement and inclusion

Respondents expressed:

- A need for more inclusion of staff, students, partners and the general public in the delivery of the Climate Plan.
- A desire for more opportunities for engagement including open fora and opportunities for discussion and debate to increase engagement from the University community.
- Support for mandatory training on sustainability and net zero during staff and student inductions.
- The need for engagement of staff and student unions in the Climate Plan delivery programme (and decision-making).
- Development of opportunities to increase student engagement through placements, research projects and employment in delivery of the Climate Plan.
- Access to data for students and staff for research projects.
- Broader, more accessible communications.

Levels of offsetting in the net zero delivery programme

Respondents felt there was a lack of clarity as to what type of offsetting will be used and how offsetting will be approached. There was also a lack of agreement within the responses on the role offsetting should take in the delivery of the University's net zero pathway.

Development of implementation plans

Respondents highlighted various measures that could be considered to deliver the Climate Plan both in terms of social and technical interventions and utilising internal expertise.

Rate of implementation of the planned actions

Respondents highlighted that there was a need to accelerate the delivery of low risk, high gain interventions such as changing to LED lights. Concerns were also raised about the apparent delayed release of funds for the delivery programme.

Collaboration and partnership

Respondents highlighted the opportunity through various partnerships within the University, Leeds City Council and with organisations in the Global South to support effective delivery of the Climate Plan.

More funding required for:

- Student scholarships.
- Paid Living Lab work for students.
- Funding extra travel days for staff attending conferences by slower, more sustainable travel modes.
- Supporting students to undertake placements with climate and sustainability organisations.

Administration of the public consultation

- The publication of the Annual Progress Report as only a web-based version was not ideal for reviewing purposes and respondents requested access to a downloadable version for future reviews.
- Insufficient time for public consultation.
- Format for collecting feedback needs to be improved to be more accessible and inclusive.
- Overly technical consultation questions.

Appendix II

Consultation responses



Anonymised public consultation responses which were not marked as confidential.

Respondent 1

Other comments:

I am sceptical about this and believe the single focus on reduction of carbon dioxide to zero to be a catastrophic error. Simply put we are expected to believe:

- The climate is currently changing in an unusual manner and is projected to change in an increasingly unusual manner
- This is caused by excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere due to human activity
- Reducing human production of carbon dioxide to zero by 2030 will solve this problem
- Reducing the emission of CO₂ to zero is cost effective and will have a net beneficial impact on the world's population
- Reducing farming and travel are a couple of methods proposed to achieve this aim and that the world's population will not be greatly impacted by this
- By all means improve local transport systems and encourage a healthier lifestyle. Such measures are clearly aimed at benefiting the population and not the rather remote concept of "benefiting the Earth".

I, and many others, may well be wrong, but it is surely right to be open in our scepticism and be willing to debate. The solution, in the tradition of the best science, is to have open disagreement and debates so that the truth maybe approached. The current lack of informed debate tells me that this is not science but politics in action.

My fear is that "net zero" is and will be used to shore up powerful interests and introduce unpalatable authoritarian measures as were (and still are in parts of the world) egregiously introduced to achieve net zero covid. Recall, for example, that it was made illegal to sit on a park bench.

Respondent 2

Question 3: A core issue for the generation of sustainability-minded graduates is the lack of paid placement opportunities for students to take industrial year placements in key sectors (particularly with NGOs). The result is that only a small number of students with independent means can afford to take advantage of those placements, although there are often many others who would like to. There are a couple of solutions. First, the university could subsidise placements (perhaps on a shorter term basis than the 9 month industrial placement) for students to facilitate those roles. Second, the university could hire a greater number of industrial placement students itself (thereby keeping that cash in house) to address key issues around sustainability and the Climate Plan. 12-month contracts at living wage for a dedicated group of 10-20 undergraduates could make a big difference, and they can carry that learning over into their 3rd year (including potential dissertation research that could further provide an evidence base for sustainability at the university).

Question 12: As a conservation biologist who wants to see the university improving access to research and teaching in lower income countries, there is a clear argument for the open dissemination of teaching and research outputs based on a geo-pricing structure. Our overseas fees for UG, PGT and PGR are a barrier to our involvement with the solving of global issues. The solution need not be the bringing of large numbers of people to Leeds. Instead, the development of a portfolio of "Save the Planet" programmes that can empower learners to work within their own contexts, taught online (FutureLearn or Coursera), and accredited under our degree system (not necessarily full BSc/MSc, but a lower level certificate with credential bundling that can lead to higher degrees). We have a powerful online platform now, and a massive Digital Education Service. We should be compiling a "Curriculum for Humanity" and making it cheap, rewarding, and impactful. See my response to Question 3 and the sustainability student placement team who could take this as a core project (and iterate through time).

Question 13: The Living Lab projects always sound like a good idea, but they often rely too much on undergraduate students or very small amounts of PhD student time. Academics contribute on a goodwill basis. If the university is serious about delivering on these sorts of projects, there needs to be £10ks available for each project and it needs to pay for PhD students who have just finished (there are lots) or PDRA time to do the work properly.

Respondent 3

- Question 14:** I see a lot of emails about the Climate Plan and have heard about how much work is going in. However, I have not been involved at all so far. I would recommend a grass roots approach using town halls to elicit responses from a range of critical friends. Encourage provocation. Use the new Horizons Institute. Pay for time for those external experts to properly critique. Hold debates that can air the tensions. It feels like the university is increasingly unsure of whether it wants to be more grass roots and free or more corporate. This is a great opportunity for more of the former.
- Question 15:** The university has toyed with open data dashboards for a while, but these have been relatively limited in scope. I would really like to see more use of this kind of technology that could be rolled out for a series of different projects. For the Climate Plan, we can approach near-real-time progress tracking on KPIs (emissions, etc). Tied into the Climate Plan might be environmental and biological recording data from the campus (weather stations, bioacoustic bird monitoring, even citizen science data). Maybe enrolments on sustainability courses? It doesn't have to be *key* performance indicators. Very few people will read reports, and most staff do not read unnecessary emails. However, a data driven approach could be more effective in communicating key points and engaging the community. Talk to research computing about hosting R Shiny web servers (which can also be made open source and shared as another asset with the wider community, including lower income countries).

- Other comments:** The "public consultation" is a sham, or at best it is poorly organised and poorly managed.
- Your "feedback form" is NOT a feedback form, it is a long document with some questions.
- This appears to be designed to avoid getting much feedback.
- I strongly recommend that you adopt a more inclusive and convincing method to elicit feedback, harnessing Leeds University expertise in getting meaningful feedback from students:
- Abbas N, Pickard T, Atwell E, Walker A. 2021. University Student Surveys Using Chatbots: Artificial Intelligence Conversational Agents. HCI International 2021 Learning and Collaboration Technologies Springer, pp. 155-169 <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/171076>
- Abbas N, Whitfield J, Atwell E, Bowman H, Pickard T, Walker A. 2022. Online Chat and Chatbots to Enhance Mature Student Engagement in Higher Education. International Journal of Lifelong Education. <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/185421>
- But I expect you will disregard my feedback.

Respondent 4

- Question 1:** Ask staff more. There have been few (any?) discussions with colleagues about how to deliver this plan and cursory consultation now. This makes it look insincere (how can we take this seriously if the people who have to make the changes have not been asked what is practical?) and lacks innovation (lots of academics from a wide range of disciplines are interested in these issues yet only a very one dimensional view – ie top leadership view – prevails. We know this is unlikely to be effective because its been tried before.
- Question 2:** This is a great! Can we also put in student international carbon as well? How will we mitigate the carbon emissions from the university's massive expansion to SE Asian markets? What about (at least) giving colleagues a set number of additional paid days to travel to conferences by slower more sustainable means than air? Or to even take days off because they are not travelling? What about conferences? Why do we not have a net zero package for organising conferences that has a world class methodology for capturing change and for investing in greener conferencing – how much of the univ annual income depends on international conferences!?
- Question 3:** Also excellent idea but where are the resources for supporting NGOs who we might work with? There needs to be dedicated budgets to follow students into placements that will provide revenue streams for activists who are taking the risks to realise transition. In module assessments for cross faculty modules that interrogate the obstacles to transition would be really helpful but school finance models impede collaboration.
- Other comments:** I hope we can open up these debates in a meaningful way, especially with colleagues delivering teaching and research not directly related to climate change (ie most of us). My main concerns are:
- international recruitment is at the core of the Uni so could we offer more scholarships and fee waivers to bring more students from Yorkshire?
 - there appears to be no strategy on realising net zero conferencing, yet this is an important academic activity and significant source of income for the UoL during vacation times
 - yes to transition orientated teaching – but could we attach funding to students going into the NGO and activist sector? These people provide incredible real world experience for our students because they have already taken the risk of doing something radical. The UoL should recognise and support this.

Respondent 5

- Question 4:** Encouraging lecturers to integrate sustainability, not just a supplementary part of material but a core principle that should be integrated into all field's considerations. For example, business school lecturers should be strongly encouraged to use highly rated ESG companies as main case study examples to explain business functions. This would require consultation with the heads of each school to discuss
- Question 9:** Emissions data reporting follows the GHG Protocol Corporate Standard reported by location and market based on 2021/22 on quarterly basis for scope 1 and 2 and made available to the committee for review. Is there any guidance for how best to present and use these data or supplement it with other data?
- Disclose estimated levels of scope 3 emissions within data to ensure presentation could not be perceived as disregarding their importance or existence.
- Question 12:** Consultation of global partner universities in developing countries to collate opinions on UoL NZ transition. The university has partner universities in almost every continent used for the wide-reaching Study Abroad programme offered by the university. These connections can be utilised to develop a working group to directly understand the perspectives of people from developing nations on the NZ transition.

Study Abroad partner universities:
[For Students](#) | [University of Leeds](#)

Respondent 6

- Question 15:** Informational campaigns to reach and inform students about:
1. The overall plan and guiding principles
 2. Current progress and expected future progress towards NZ e.g., this graph below!!
 3. Explanation of expected hurdles and potential problems that could impact reaching NZ by 2030
 4. Full disclosure of a definition of NZ being used. Scope 3 is widely recognised as the largest part of emissions. Granted, it is the least controllable and hardest to measure and impact. However, students and other stakeholders must have a clear understanding of what the Climate Plan defines as NZ in order to avoid any unintentional greenwashing. ([Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions explained](#) | Normative)
 5. Given point 4, perhaps a detailed plan needs to be published to explain the conditions under which more scope 3 emissions will be included in the UoL carbon footprint calculations for NZ.

NZ is of great interest to students in all fields. I have no doubt that informational campaigns for students about NZ delivery would draw interest. UoL has a great reputation for sustainable values among students and staff. Transparency of actions, goals and progress is essential to avoid unintentional greenwashing accusations that would tarnish the reputation.

- Question 1:** The first question is difficult to answer: the plan is nice, but progress to date seems minimal relative to the size of the challenge. I can see how it is necessary that “feasibility studies” are the first step for most projects, but without seeing their outcome, it is difficult to say if the plans end up looking feasible and meaningful. Judging by the last section of the report moreover, it seems that a fair number of these studies are already outdated given inflation + higher energy costs.

Generally, I am sceptical about offsetting, so additional details on the types of offsets would be appreciated. I also do not see why this should only start so late. If offsetting is part of the plan, why not start now and get some expertise on trustworthy cost-effective options?

- Question 2:** Here, too, it seems the plan is to outsource the actual decision making to an external panel. I appreciate the intricacies, but some general factors will always be true: walking or cycling is always the best option, rail is usually better than cars but electric vehicles can be a good intermediary, international travel should be avoided or done by rail where possible. Additionally, other universities have commissioned similar studies (e.g. Grantham Institute with the Climateworks Foundation; Air travel is studied at the University of British Columbia). So why not anticipate these outcomes somewhat?

To take just some ideas, on the “carrots” side, programmes like ClimatePerks offer payment for ‘travel days’.

More personalised incentives seem possible too. More can be done with “sticks” at fairly short notice: e.g. flights solely for lectures or for brief long-distance trips could be banned, as could flights where a train journey of less than a day is available. For the latter, KeyTravel (or whatever travel provider) should allow users to book international train tickets, as currently it can’t even do a Eurostar. To replace some of these trips, good ICT conference facilities should be available. I do not know in how many departments they are already there, but do know that the conference rooms in Geography are usually empty, so perhaps it would be less about investing in additional infrastructure and more into making digital visits the standard. Managers should also encourage their staff to pick priorities to minimise the “[fear of not flying](#)”.

Question 4: Perhaps too basic, but just a thought: could the university offer placements, fellowships, grants or any other way to have scholars from sustainability institutions visit for a semester or more? If money is the issue, exchanging rather than inviting could be relatively low-cost way to a) have researchers and professors gain expertise in sustainability topics at an external organisations and b) get this same expertise into the research groups for the duration.

Question 5: Urban planning seems entirely absent from this collaboration, though there is a whole institute of transport studies at the University. To name but one example, a bike share programme seem unlikely to succeed if cyclists feel unsafe due to a lack of dedicated infrastructure, so perhaps some of that expertise could be useful to the council too.

Question 8: The university's primary business should not be at shareholder meetings, but for large assets, it may be worth reviewing if proposals towards sustainability could be introduced or supported at such meetings – something like [Follow This](#), but for non-fossil fuel companies.

Question 10: Winter-time emissions are much higher currently, but may decrease with warmer winters. Conversely, hotter summers may require cooling, which, if done naively, would mean air conditioning which is energy intensive. Have any models been made for energy use in different climate scenarios?

Question 11: Adding student union and trade union representatives to decision-making bodies would increase the diversity of voices. These representatives could then be encouraged to do some active outreach on sustainability.

Really though, public consultations should not be a two-week process but an ongoing dialogue, preferably in part democratic. Can some of these plans be voted on? Could there be a process for students and staff to make new proposals to be voted on? Maybe there is a structure, but I do not know it. The Climate Plan as a whole is rather opaque.

Question 12: Given the enormous number of carbon offsets called for in this plan, it seems to me that offset programmes which benefit the Global South could make a significant difference. The “default” in this space seems to be planting trees or preventing deforestation, which can have broader developmental benefits, but often are not well executed. So either buy credits from companies who invest in local communities alongside their tree planting, or look at programmes that do development work with carbon benefits, for example by supplying efficient cook stoves, through waste-to-energy projects, or by providing water filters/ maintaining water boreholes to offset fuel needed for boiling water.

Question 15: Including climate/sustainability as a topic in staff inductions and as a part of the intro week for students too.

Question 17: Adaptation is left out almost entirely (there is only a scoping exercise to identify where additional resilience is needed). This seems like a problem-in-waiting. Some of the required adaptations will no doubt require energy (e.g. extra cooling in labs), while other adaptations may come with mitigation benefits (e.g. green roofs, planting trees to provide shade).

Other comments I'm somewhat shocked that most of the 'climate principles' appear to be in a planning and consultation phase. Surely there is low-hanging fruit for which the implementation could start already while the larger plans are being drawn up.

Respondent 7

Question 1: Progress made is at odds with the University's commitment due to the 1.4% increase in emissions seen in 2021-2022 over 2020-2021 figures. It is clear that work is being done to meet the net zero target, however, it appears the speed of action is limited. Simple actions, such as switching to LED lights bulbs, even given the scale of the University should be completed with a shorter timeframe than 'within two years' if the target of net zero is to be achieved.

It appears that although progress is being made it is slow. The first steps have been taken in the last year to get some initiatives underway, such as feasibility studies, assessments, etc., but these are taking extended periods of time relative to the short term target of net zero by the end of the decade.

Question 2: From personal experience there has been little to no 'proactive engagement' with the student population regarding the development of a sustainable travel plan or suite of actions to tackle emissions from travel.

Although we see a reduction in emissions from the 2018-2019 baseline this is, as stated, a consequence of COVID-19. To ensure a continuation of these year-on-year reductions there must be an approach which involves all students and staff. There is a lack of evidence of any practical or real actions that have been taken given the delay in the Shared Future report. The University must be proactive in getting the 'ball rolling' in terms of sustainable travel.

Question 4: There is movement away from the quoted 'MEng and BEng Petroleum Engineering programme' which is a step in the right direction for reorienting teaching. However, there are still modules within other degree programmes which are oriented towards an unsustainable fossil fuel driven future. For example, BSc Geophysics offers a module in 'Petroleum Reservoir Engineering'. The University must commit to removing all such modules from its degree programmes to effectively reorientate research and teaching to a sustainable future.

Question 5: From discussion with and some involvement with some of the organisations mentioned as receiving support my assessment would be that at current support is superficial and mostly financial. It isn't enough for the University to simply have a narrative of support and to 'throw' money at the issue of collaboration. The University must take a leading role in collaborating with these organisations and supporting them to collaborate with each other. Leeds has lots of amazing climate orientated and sustainability work happening how much of this can feel siloed. The University must work to ensure this work begins to join up and can effective plan for Net Zero City.

Question 6: The University can provide support to SMEs in Leeds which will struggle, due to resource limitations, to incorporate risk into management and decision making as well as take other steps to becoming resilient, net zero organisations. This could include free or discounted consultation, engagement through the student population (i.e. placement years, research modules, placement modules, etc.), and guidance and advice documents.

The University must also connect with other anchor institutions in the city and local government to provide academic and research support or guidance to inform future policies.

Question 8: The University must commit to updating the University of Leeds' Policy on Responsible Investment to include a ban on investment in oil, gas, coal and mining companies, and must refuse all funding from all oil, gas, coal and mining companies.

This must be a University wide policy applying to all Schools. The School of Earth and Environment accepted £11.2 million in funding for research and teaching from fossil fuel companies between 2014-2019, and across other schools these same companies provided £7.3 million from 2016-2020.

The University must also have a clear Ethical Careers Policy to highlight the University's commitment to Responsible Investment, as it must extend to invest in time and resources to providing career opportunities. This will require a ban on oil, gas and mining companies from recruiting through the University, including attending careers fairs, advertising recruitment opportunities or role vacancies on the website, and include the University promoting and actively supporting students to enter ethical career pathways.

Question 11: Listen to the voices of people with less power at this institution. Let the staff and students elect people to key decision making bodies and give the unions a seat at the table.

Engage in genuine dialogue and consultation with staff, through the recognised trade unions and the various staff networks and groups. The trade unions represent staff interests and try to ensure fairness for workers across the institution, which is exactly what is needed to ensure a just transition at this University.

Engage in genuine dialogue and consultation with students, through students' unions and student societies. These groups represent the interest of students and can help ensure student voices are heard.

This engagement must go beyond complicated, jargon driven consultation documents. They must include direct conversation with the student and staff at the institution through workshops, focus groups and information sessions.

The University must also have clear communication about how it is engaging with global climate justice. There must be reference to how the institution is considering its global climate impact and how its actions are affecting people across the globe.

Question 15: The University must commit to engaging with all staff and students on the Climate Plan and being more transparent about the work that is going on. This is not a 'public consultation', and it is only two weeks long. We need a democratic, ongoing process to help people feed into the Climate Plan and buy into the changes needed. The Climate Plan must be more visible to all staff and students. It must be made relevant to people's jobs and they must be given allocated work time to engage with it. We need regular, open, accessible, public events for the University community to come together to discuss and debate key challenges in delivering the Climate Plan, and to celebrate what achievements have been made so far. This will also enable greater collaboration amongst the many people working across the principles, as well as providing an opportunity to invite external stakeholders within the city in to get involved or see what is going on.

We need a proactive approach to engage meeting the workers and students where they are in terms of their jobs and work, and in their interest and knowledge of the climate and ecological emergency. The Climate Plan must be included in all staff inductions, student inductions/introductions and provide training in Carbon Literacy or similar.

Other comments: There is still a very low level of transparency about the on going work within the Climate Plan. This is especially true for the internal structures that have been created, and in the governance and decision making. We do not know who is on the Climate Principles Programme Board or who is heading up each area of ongoing work, for instance.

This consultation process was/is way too short, far too complicated to respond to, and does not meet the requirements of genuine public consultation, which has so far been completely absent from the delivery of the Climate Plan, despite statements such as 'University-wide collaboration between the Sustainability service, professional services, students, and academic colleagues helped shape the ambitious plan'. There has been little to no real engagement or consultation with the student population as well as staff outside of academia.

Only one of the seven climate principles has a broad, high level plan for achieving the principle ([Pathway to net zero emissions](#) for the 'Net Zero by 2030' principle). None of the other six principles have any plans behind them. This needs changing quickly.

Respondent 8

Question 1: The focus on Deliver Better Building Management across the entire estate to reduce energy demand is important yet underdeveloped in the plan. For example, what building temperature does the university mandate in buildings? Often buildings are overheated such that radiators are on full blast and windows are open because rooms are too hot. This is very wasteful. A temperature of 18-19C has been identified to be most healthy temperature for working in. Moreover, a lot of internal corridors between buildings are fully heated yet only used by people moving between locations. Such routeways don't really need to be heated to the same extent as office or lecture rooms. Smart thermostats on radiators could offer potential here for temperatures to varied according to room usage. Another area that could be looked into is using smart plugs which can turn off equipment overnight to reduce consumption of energy while computers, monitors etc are on standby.

Campus greening is one area where I also see huge potential. The university has a lot of concreted over space, especially around the buildings from the 1960s, with potential here to replace with trees or shrubs or grass. This would have emissions benefits, provide shaded areas to reduce summer temperatures and deal with more heatwaves, and reduce run-off from campus. Such space should be mapped so targets can be developed (e.g. replace 10% of concreted/tarmacked space with greenery by 2030). Also potential for some roofs to be turned into green roofs to reduce urban heat island effect and increase green space.

Food is one area the plan doesn't mention too much but is obviously an area where we can have impact, while also catering for diverse dietary needs. For example, focusing on procuring food from local farms, be it meat or vegetables, should be a priority.

Question 2: The university also needs to work closely with the city of Leeds to advocate for improved transport in the city. For example, the bike lane infrastructure has been enhanced in recent years but remains woefully inadequate. Bike lanes start and then suddenly end, and the bike lanes around the train station in particular need improving.

Concerning business travel, acknowledging some flights are inevitable for research, a focus on taking the shortest route needs to be prioritised. Many search engines now indicate CO₂ emissions for specific flights. Such flights (i.e. direct / shortest route) are often more expensive, conflicting with requirements to take the cheapest flights available.

Question 11: More information is needed here. For example, it is unclear if the Gair Wood initiative has involved local people living near the wood in design and implementation. Moreover, how might actions undertaken by the university have an impact on communities surrounding the university?

Other comments: A focus on climate resilience and adaptation is one oversight in the plan, although it is noted this will be integrated in 2023. Some key areas I would suggest to focus on are:

- How might climate change directly and indirectly affect the university (i.e. infrastructure, buildings, operations), staff, students, and surrounding community.
 - Increasing occurrence of heatwaves is one obvious area
- How can the university reduce these risks and take advantage of new opportunities, while avoiding the potential for maladaptation.
 - E.g. how can we reduce the risks posed by more heatwaves?
- How can the university support broader efforts for resilience building in the city, UK, and global south?

Another area that needs to be considered is the potential for unintended consequences of actions within the climate plan. For example, offsetting needs to be carefully examined as there are many examples (especially in global south but also in the north too) where this involves land expropriation for forestry activities or renewables developments taken with little engagement of local communities.

Respondent 9

- Question 1:** Overall, I think the strategy and progress report is excellent. Lots to be positive and hopeful about! I do worry that the key progress milestones are forecast very far into the future. Some of this is obviously necessary given the ambitious scale of the plans but other features of the strategy could be brought forward quite easily e.g. offsetting. Given the timescales I also worry that there is an issue of accountability and missing targets without any mechanism of redress.
- Question 2:** Increasing budgets for more long-distance rail travel. Incentivise remote/virtual conferences.
- Question 11:** Who can afford to go paperless? Who has the digital technology and infrastructure to capitalise on hybrid teaching?

Respondent 10

- Question 1:** This should be a simple factual question, e.g. how much emissions reduction is the University aiming for in each given year, and how are we doing. The fact this question is part of this consultation shows the ambiguity of the University's committed net zero pathway. All we can do is look at the graph and estimate that from the baseline 2020 emissions of 71,546 tonnes CO₂e we are committed to get down to around 62,000 tonnes CO₂e by September 2022. The full data is not in this annual report. But data for scope 1 and 2 only shows emissions have gone up by 1.4%. So the most likely answer is: absolutely not on track. What other measures should the University consider? I don't know, but moving faster is clearly key!
- Question 2:** Why has it taken 12 months just to commission an organisation to coordinate a panel to discuss a sustainable travel policy? Why don't we just adopt a policy from somewhere like the Tyndall Centre? Why don't we offer more subsidised bikes and e-bikes, and more bike parking facilities. We only have about 6 e-bikes to offer to all staff and students! And how many vehicles are in the University fleet (of which 21 are now electric)?
- Question 3:** We need carbon literacy for all new starters and to be rolled out across all staff and students. An annual sustainability training course, similar to IT security or handling heavy objects training that we all have to do. This has to be made relevant to people's jobs and courses. And we have to go out and meet people where they are, and to give people time and incentives to engage with these topics.
- Question 4:** The MEng and BEng Petroleum Engineering programmes have closed this year (2022/23), does that mean they did not recruit this year? And why was there a three year delay between the decision and the closure, as stated in this report? This is clearly one of the most difficult areas for us to deal with, and it is one that activists like Student Rebellion feel most strongly about. We need to organise discussion groups and public events where we can navigate through these topics together. Clearly we shouldn't sack staff and close courses overnight, but we also need to think carefully about the extent to which we want to help fossil fuel companies to continue trashing the planet.

- Question 5:** I have a conflict of interest here as I work on this climate principle for Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and Leeds Climate Commission. My view on our progress here would be that we are very much focusing on the region, not just the city. And that progress in the city has been stalling for a year or so as our team has been at full stretch focusing on the new regional commission. I think more dedicated resources are needed to ensure that city collaboration across organisations can continue to be encouraged. I also think we need to put a great deal of time and money into engagement efforts to help promote a green transition to individual households and businesses.
- Question 6:** This is being launched by Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission on 15th November at the Yorkshire Climate Summit and again I am working on this directly. Ideas that I would suggest are for students/their courses to be linked in with this Pledge scheme so they can be matched with organisations that want support in resilience, net zero, nature and a just transition. The Yorkshire Circular Lab could be linked in with the Pledge. We also need the University to sign up to the Pledge as soon as possible to demonstrate its leadership in this area, and to provide credibility to the Pledge scheme.
- Question 7:** The commitment says this will inform all major decisions, but the progress suggests this tool has only been “made available” and won’t actually be used by all boards until the end of 2022. Again, this has taken more than three years from agreeing this Climate Principle to actually doing something about it. So, the effectiveness of this measure to date is approximately zero. There is no evidence this has achieved any changes so far.
- Question 8:** The signalled plans to move to a Tomorrow’s World investment strategy sound good, but having been approved by Council in March 2022, this has still not yet been actioned seven months later!
- So, the effectiveness of this change is extremely low. It would also be transparent for the University to state how much money it is investing in this strategy, and whether it is 100% of the money the University invests that is being invested in this way. We also don’t know anything about what a Tomorrow’s World strategy means in practise.

- Question 9:** From a comms perspective, the Climate Plan quarterly updates (and annual update) are very long and are entirely text-based. It would be a good idea to use figures to illustrate the change year on year. And, most importantly, to put this into the context of the net zero pathway, and our (forthcoming) interim targets so we can actually see if we are on track to achieve our aims. Otherwise it looks like hiding bad results, and ignoring the bigger picture and the big challenge we are trying to achieve. Why not ask some students for their help in design the comms around the quarterly updates, so that it looks appealing and understandable to students? And similarly design some alongside staff with little experience in climate, to ensure the messaging works for this audience.
- Question 10:** The strategy should quite clearly be to get to net zero as fast as possible. We can’t be delaying our major cuts in emission until September 2026, which is what our net zero pathway indicates we are planning to do at present
- Question 11:** It is telling that this question does not ask how I would assess progress on this. Because the answer to that would be zero progress. A very obvious way to ensure a just transition would be to give a voice to the people with less power at this institution. To ensure that the institution is democratic, such as by having an elected leader, an elected Council, and elected Senate, and elected UEG. Listening and working alongside the three official trade unions, and seeing value in what they can bring to the table, instead of pushing them aside and ignoring them. Similarly, listening to and working with representatives of students, including from Leeds University Union, the Leeds Uni Climate Coalition and Student Rebellion.
- It would also be worth listening to the many researchers working on a just transition. It is also vital to involve staff from disciplines relating to fossil fuels in these discussions, as many were caught by surprise when the Climate Principles were announced three years ago. We must ensure we have an internal just transition, and the trade unions can be a key facilitator in navigating this difficult challenge.
- Question 12:** It is telling that this question also does not ask how I would assess progress on this. Because the answer to that would again be zero progress. I would suggest looking into Doughnut Economics, and particularly the global social and global ecological lenses for looking at particularly issues and particular policies. Again we have a lot of expertise at this University in this area.

Question 13: Raising the profile of this work across the University can help people understand what's going on and how they could get involved. Including through networking and showcase events. See my general comment in the 'Other comments' section.

Question 14: Again see my general comment in the 'Other comments' section on networking, raising the profile of this work, and showcasing it across the University community. I also believe that the working groups set up so far have been far too restrictive, closed and hidden. We should have working groups that are open invite – how else will you draw people in?

Question 15: This is surely one of the areas requiring the biggest improvement, and an area I feel I am best placed to help with. At present, there seems to be a lack of clear ownership of the Climate Plan, between Hai-Sui Yu, Sustainability and to a lesser degree, Priestley. Therefore, nobody has taken the lead and set out a comprehensive overall comms plan. As someone who has been trying to track and speed up the progress of the 7 Climate Principles over the past three and a quarter years, I can tell you that communication from senior management with staff and students has been extremely poor. In many cases we have simply been ignored when asking for updates on progress. Sustainability, however, have done a good job of engaging with staff and students, but only in a fairly limited scope.

It is clear to me that the most obvious route to successful staff and student engagement is through the strong existing groups on campus – the three recognised trade unions and LUU. Engagement should start during staff and student inductions, and annual trainings through Carbon Literacy or similar can help increase awareness across campus. Importantly, public events will play a big role in showing how serious we are about this. Showcase events and networking can bring the community together and inspire new people to get involved. But leadership events are also vital to demonstrate accountability and a willingness to engage with the many difficult decisions that we are to face up to. We can't shy away from these things, we must come forward and discuss them in a civilised way, together. If we don't, people will take it upon themselves to vocally denigrate the University for ignoring the key issues during this climate and ecological emergency.

Question 16: From my team I can report that although the Climate Plan promised millions of pounds to our project (the climate commissions) when it was published in November 2021, it took until September 2022 to actually access any of that money. That is not exactly appropriate speed of action given we are in a climate emergency. And the money was of course agreed by Council at least a few months before Nov 2021.

The summary at the bottom says “to enable net zero by 2030”. We need to be careful with language around this because we need to achieve net zero as fast as we possibly can. The climate is already in a state of emergency, and the University has the capacity to go faster than many other institutions around the world. We thus have a duty to go fast, and we must therefore invest quickly to lower our emissions quickly. Looking at the figures spent over the last 12 months, it is clear that we are not yet spending fast to reduce emissions fast. This needs to change as soon as possible.

I also note that the climate principles here are in a strange order. I believe Net Zero City is principle number 5. I also find it strange that the decision making and responsible investment principles say they are funded by the Finance Team and by the Secretariat, but there is no figure to say by how much. Similarly with the Curriculum Redefined funding. Yes, we should avoid double counting and saying we're investing more in this when the money is being counted/invested elsewhere, but it would also be good to understand roughly how much money from those other areas is being allocated to these principles. So we can see just how much resource is being invested into achieving all 7 principles.

Question 17: The risk of the cost going up is a fair one, but what is the price the University is willing to pay to get to net zero? Reducing business travel emissions - I don't recall seeing any 'interim travel guidance', so this clearly has not been communicated effectively across the University.

Negative public perception of early years of the plan... There has also been negative public perception of the last three and quarter years of the history of these Climate Principles. The major issue here is a lack of time/space/opportunities to discuss and debate how the University should respond to the climate emergency. If you exclude the University community from decision making, or from even airing their views, you will build negative public perception, as people assume the worst and get annoyed that a few senior leaders are attempting to secretly "own" this problem and tackle it all by themselves.

A few risks missing from this plan...

1. Societal collapse due to climate breakdown results in the University ceasing to operate/exist. To mitigate this, we must take leadership and invest as quickly as possible to get to net zero and absolute zero emissions as quickly as we can.
2. Risk that senior leaders change their priorities and stop investing money and resources into the Climate Principles.
3. Glacial pace of change in University processes slows our response to the climate emergency. E.g. in changing courses, changing investments.
4. Rapid turnover of staff, pushing out of staff, means we lose crucial institutional knowledge and commitment to achieving the 7 Principles.
5. Further breakdown in trust between workers and senior management makes it very hard to gain staff buy-in for this transition. To mitigate this we need to quickly start re-building the bridges that have been burnt over the past couple of years, so we can have civil discussions with senior leadership.

Other comments:

Very strange that you only want feedback on sections 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and no feedback on section 1. In Section 1 it says that the Climate Principles Programme Board has "a broad range of stakeholders across staff and student bodies". Who is on that Programme Board? Why is that not public information? Have the trade unions been invited to sit on that Board, and if not, why not? Does the student's union sit on that board?

For three years the Leeds Uni Climate Coalition of staff and students have been asking for transparency in the processes and governance of the 7 Climate Principles. There is still a shockingly low level of transparency around governance. And a shockingly low level of engagement and willingness to listen to the concerns and ideas of staff and students.

This whole consultation appears to be a request for free advice about how to deliver the Climate Plan more effectively. The questions are very technical, and not really appropriate for a "public consultation" as this was advertised as - "have your say on the Climate Plan"... So, despite doing this consultation, essentially this is not a chance for staff and students to have their say, it is instead a chance for researchers (mainly) to provide expertise to the University. This is not staff and student consultation / engagement with the Climate Plan, as has been promised.

A key delay with achieving the University's climate commitments seems to be that 7 Climate Principles were agreed in July 2019 by Council, but there was a delay on acting upon principles 2-7 because of waiting for a comprehensive net zero pathway (which we now have after 2 years of waiting). But that pathway is only focused on achieving principle 1. So, principles 2-7 were unnecessarily delayed, and none of these other six principles have any comprehensive plans for achieving them.

I would suggest that a key tool for accelerating the delivery of all 7 Climate Principles is to massively increase the opportunities for networking and collaboration on all aspects of the Climate Principles. Right now there are hundreds of people working on them, but many working in silos, to the extent that they would not even know a single name of someone working on a different principle. I say this as someone working on CP5 (I think), a Net Zero City. We should be convening everyone working on each climate principle, say once a month. And everyone working on all climate principles once a quarter. These could be internal lunches and networking afternoons, away days, and they could also be more outward facing showcases where other researchers can come and hear about what's going on and see if they want to get involved, in e.g. a new Living Lab project.

Respondent 11

Question 1: The commitment to off campus renewables is commendable and looks to be ambitious. Towards the end of the action period, offsetting is plays an increasing role. It is not clear exactly what form this offsetting will take. Is it the tree planting on University land that is discussed in the plan or is some external means of offsetting likely to be used? The latter has been shown to be highly unreliable as a means of actually reducing atmospheric CO₂, and if we are, as an organisation going to use offsetting then we should have control over it. It may also be worth considering whether university owned land is best used for further renewable generation rather than offsetting via tree planting. What are the largest savings GHG per hectare?

We should agree that all future University buildings should be net zero from point of design – highly insulated, low carbon materials, electric heating etc. Costs should not be an excuse.

Question 2: I think it would be worthwhile for the University to carry out a large scale survey of staff to investigate what influences their travel decisions, particularly for commuting to campus. There is a lot of hearsay evidence on social media that points to severe levels of frustration around the reliability and frequency of public transport options both by rail and by bus. For a large employer like the University, gathering such evidence on barriers to low carbon, public or active travel may be of use for regional government in terms of informing their plans for improving the connectivity of the region through public transport, cycling and charger installations. I suspect we have a lot of staff driving to campus because their public transport options are simply too unreliable. For cyclists, installing showers is one thing, but improving safety through increasing protected cycle lanes on routes to campus may have a much greater impact.

Let's at least set concrete goals on the University fleet of vehicles. All to be electric in 5 years?

In terms of reducing business travel we might also consider reducing required travel to Leeds by ensuring all meetings and conferences are offered in hybrid form and providing the facilities to achieve this.

Question 3: There is insufficient detail in the plan to be able to comment on how effective these plans are. We need to do more than just make students "climate aware". Different programmes surely will need to make different plans depending on the programme of study. It is pretty easy in engineering because we offer courses on renewable energies, climate impacts, energy policy as part of our energy specific or related programmes at both undergraduate and taught post graduate level. However, there must also be scope to include modules in many other programmes outside of science and engineering which could relate to climate finance, climate and energy justice, risk management, governance and climate change, climate adaption etc. We need to see more details. More staff need to be involved in these discussions and decisions across faculty boundaries.

We also need to be aware of curriculum requirements when considering staff appointments and succession plans. There is very little point in increasing climate change relevant modules within the curriculum if we don't have staff to teach them.

Question 4: I agree that we should be aiming to move research away from the fossil fuel sector, but I believe that there are some seriously grey areas to consider here. Should be ban companies from interacting in terms of research if they have fossil fuel links even if they also have renewable energy business plans? So many companies cut across multiple areas of energy supply and utilisation. We might need a more nuanced approach here.

Question 5: As a member of staff that has had several collaborative projects with Leeds City Council on the low carbon potential of the city and on air quality I feel like I do not know now how current discussions are taking place or about who is invited to attend them. This perhaps suggests that we do not have as wide a cohort of staff involved in these discussions as we could/should have. There are many staff outside of Earth and Environment working on low carbon strategies and engineering solutions. How can we involve more of these people?

We also need to note that air quality improvements should be a goal of any climate action plans for the University and City Region. We need to look for win-win solutions that improve both carbon emissions and local air pollution.

- Question 7:** How can we comment on the effectiveness of this measure if we haven't seen it? Have I missed something? Should I have had access to the assessment and read it before compiling this response? As far as I know I could not find a link which is perhaps indicative of the top down nature of decision making at Leeds.
- Question 8:** I suspect that our USS pensions are the place where most investment is placed in fossil fuel funded companies. I would like to know the University's strategy for encouraging USS to divest from climate intensive finance.
- Question 10:** The data could have been better presented – by comparing different sector contributions as part of a total in a single graph on a monthly basis. Agricultural emissions are a concern for me. They seem to comprise a substantial part of the total. Why the University is running an energy intensive factory farm as part of its business and research operation is baffling for me. This leads to impacts in terms of animal rights, GHG emissions and ammonia emissions that impact on air quality. I find it quite shocking. The seasonal presentation of the data suggests that lighting and heating are major contributors. It is clear that the decarbonisation of heating should be a primary goal and it is good to see heat pumps under discussion. Perhaps if sections of the University are part of a wider hot water network, other technologies could play a role in the future. For example what is the scope to linking the University with the hot water pipe network from the Energy from Waste Plant (the PIPES network)? Could we set up our own district heating system?
- Question 11:** It is pretty clear that domestic emissions make a major contribution to GHG throughout most developed countries. In the UK many households, including University staff, are facing a crisis in terms of the costs of domestic energy consumption. The University has not offered inflation matching pay increases for many years, further contributing to the financial difficulties of some staff in terms of meeting domestic energy costs. So, perhaps as part of the just transition process, the University should work with households of University staff by offering grants to reduce domestic energy consumption, e.g. through retrofitting of insulation, electrification of heating and other energy saving measures. Respondents could become part of a living lab on reducing domestic CO₂ emissions and energy costs, through establishing sensor networks monitoring temperatures and energy consumption patterns. Let's do more than pay lip service to the term "just transition" and help low income household of University employees transition to low carbon domestic systems. Such households could then become exemplars for the roll out of strategies across the city region.

- Question 14:** It isn't clear to me how invitations to these working groups are sent/received. In general I consider Leeds to be a rather top down institution so I imagine it to be via faculty Deans or research managers? The invitation process needs to be widened in some way and needs to include support staff as well as academics. Also, I imagine that contributing to these working groups and any resulting actions is time consuming, so perhaps some kind of short term funded secondments could be used to compensate. Engagement via the relevant unions would also be useful.
- Question 15:** I wish I had some concrete suggestions here but I suspect that time availability is a key issue in terms of level of engagement. Perhaps if the University could find some way of compensating for time spent it might improve levels of engagement. Staff and students for example, could elect representatives to sit on decision making boards, and those representatives could be given a work load allocation for the role. Perhaps communicating plans and outputs via presentations at School staff meetings would help to reach a wider audience. Involvement of the Unions might also be useful since they represent the interests of staff and have wide reach. There must also be key student societies that could elect representatives to facilitate feedback from their members. I must say this the current opportunity for engagement (through answering these questions) feels very rushed at what is the busiest time of year. I have tried my best to read the materials and respond but it does not feel like enough time was available. We need more of an ongoing process that operates democratically and takes into consideration the other pressures on staff and student time
- Question 16:** It seems as though not much money has been spent so far which might be an indication of the low level of action achieved. Also there seems to be no transparency about how this money has been spent and what has resulted in terms of GHG emission reductions. A lot more information is needed here to make any judgement about proposals!

Respondent 12

Question 2: Unfortunately the push for electric vehicles is being seen here too, many people simply look at the direct emissions from vehicles without considering the environmental impact of creating EVs. Furthermore, with the electricity used to power these vehicles mainly coming from non-renewable sources emissions are not globally reduced – just because you can't see the emissions does not mean they aren't there.

Sources:

theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-life-cycle-GHG_ICCT-Briefing_09022018_vF.pdf

www.bbc.com/future/article/20150402-the-worst-place-on-earth

We have the ideal method of low-cost carbon free travel already: bicycles. Although now term has started, spaces on bike racks are few and far between. Installing more bike racks is a simple and low cost solution. A better solution further would be working in tandem with Leeds council to install bike lanes around the city and student areas but I appreciate this is more costly and much higher effort.

Source: just walk past bike racks on a Monday morning

Question 3: The answers given here are full of jargon without any actual evidence given. Sentences such as: 'We have scoped a number of mini projects...' what projects? Be specific. Often statements such as 'embedding sustainability' are used without any definition to what that will involve. In some courses such as chemistry then embedding sustainability is possible through the use of greener chemicals and solvents in undergrad teaching labs but embedding sustainability into less practical based degrees will be significantly harder.

Question 6: There is a large network of PGRs at the university with a lot of knowledge from reading numerous research papers, attending conferences and general exposure to the field and area of interest. Make these PGRs available to businesses, communities, local government and other city actors for opinions/ consultancy.

Question 7: When making environmental decisions it is paramount to consider the lifecycle analysis of decisions/purchases. A good example is the plastic vs. paper bag decision. While plastic bags aren't biodegradable, the water, energy and pollution emitted in creating one bag is far higher for paper than plastic. Use this example when considering if decisions are truly green especially with energy generation e.g. per MWh, wind turbines have the highest material usage – and cement production is the biggest carbon emitter after oil/gas.

Source (other sources not hard to find):

www.smithers.com/Services/market-reports/packaging/flexible-packaging-to-2024

www.freeingenergy.com/math/wind-turbine-weight-pound-mwh-gwh-m148

Respondent 13

Question 11: The easiest and best

Question 15: Generally I do not think this plan is feasible because of the lack of engagement by the people who are going to have to implement it. The plan has been put together with minimum input for most staff and students at the University. This is problematic because the people who have drawn up the plan are likely to be here for relatively short periods of time and are unlikely to be able to see the policy through. This means it will fall to other people who have not been involved in the creation of the policy and so it is very unlikely that it will be carried out.

If the University wants to have more engagement, then senior management needs to engage in discussion with the whole of the University. It does seem bizarre that the main organisation representing the academic staff in the University, UCU, has not been involved, and gives the impression that the University is only talking to people who Senior management think will do what Senior Management want them to do.

This is also a question of how much time is given (two weeks for a consultation is very brief).

But this is also a question of resources. How much time are people expected to give to implementing the proposals? As far as I can see this has not been addressed at all.

Other comments: Can I first say that I think the period of consultation is inadequate? This gives the impression of the senior management within the University seeking to minimize comments from the University as a whole.

Respondent 14

Other comments: I took a look at the emerging report, as you suggested. Overall, it seems that the effort has had many good consequences in raising awareness and changing some behavior on campus. It seems to me that there are good initiatives along numerous lines, including those you highlight. I would note that the document's organization as a 'web-based reading experience' is terrible, in my view. I couldn't really find 'principle 5' etc. I suggest the report be made available as a downloadable report – with the limited time I have available, I want to be able to choose what parts of an overall report I'll focus on, rather than having to wade through what a web-designer thinks I should be fed sequentially.

That said, and acknowledging that I may have missed something, I have reactions at two levels.

The first regards the effort as a whole. We are discussing, in our sessions on regional recovery/resilience, the need to 'join up' initiatives and planning across locality lines and jurisdictions/types of institutions. This report seems to be 'sui generis' – it's a reflection on what a group of very committed people have come up with, thinking from the basis of what decisions the University can make. What I would hope to see is evidence that there has been consultation with, say, Leeds City Council or the Combined Authority on the investments being undertaken. Perhaps these are all synced up across the region; but if this hasn't been thought of, it would be important to seek out the experts and responsible officials on the LCC/WYCA side to be sure we are on the same investment page, so to speak.

Respondent 15

Other comments:

My second, reaction regards some of the community-facing initiatives mentioned in this report. What stood out, as an example, are the initiatives by Leeds Living Lab, in the Sustainability arena. I don't have any clear idea on how these efforts intersect with community partners we have been working with in Leeds ACTS and in Leeds City Council. My sense is that they are appreciated, and relatively independent of what community-based organizations are aiming to do. I don't think that is a bad thing, as we don't have a mechanism for coordinating what students do with what the community's needs are except on a volunteer basis. We'd have to switch to a more committed model of faculty/academic involvement as part of the learning process – say, by setting up academically-linked field placements that entail academic credit and that are monitored by faculty who are community engaged. This is the kind of thing that Paul Chatterton and Sarah Gonzalez aim at, and it could be the focus of a deeper effort. However, this would require coordination from the top.

The Climate Plan effort is running along different tracks. So far now, the efforts listed seem worthy. To ask more of this sort of effort, the locus of activity on the campus would have to move from the non-academic hub at Sustainability to an academic hub/home, such as an academic urban-studies programme that had a serious academic placement programme in place for students from across different majors/faculties. Until this is done, Sustainability is playing a vital role.

- Question 1:**
- Content is limited to climate change issues, while wider sustainability issues are largely absent including (at least) the following absent issues:
 - limiting rainfall run-off from UoL hard surfaces in the sewage system (storm-sewage overflows) and too-quick drainage into the river systems of rainfall on the hard surface that are part of UoL properties;
 - using energy-usage considerations as quantification (ie/eg kWh) instead of (only) CO₂ emissions;
 - amount of sewage UoL is producing is not stated, including measures to treat and use it locally as source of fertiliser (see recent BBC article on local separation of wet and solid sewage and its fast treatments in biological reactors to compost matters and mostly kill off pathogens; that is the future).
 - The overall commitment is quantified in a rather limited manner, including that a background comparison with current energy usage (also split between normal usage and special research usage in kWh) has not been made. Tables with future annual energy usage, year-by-year, and foreseen energy savings by various measures, foreseen increases due to electric vehicles, or foreseen delivery of energy due to use of solar panels etc. are missing.
 - Figure one is exclusively reported in terms of CO₂-emission while that is less relevant with respect to energy usage; it is impossible to judge solar panel projection and off-site renewables given the complete lack of details.
 - For example, “We have completed detailed surveys into the feasibility of installing photovoltaic solar panels on four buildings across the University campus and hope to start installations by the end of 2022.”
 - I have no idea what that means, since the amount of kWh produced on the four buildings, also placed in context to the total area that can be used at UoL for solar panels, or the total kWh electricity usage of UoL split over normal usage and research-equipment usage, is absent. How much solar energy can be used directly when there is sunshine, how much will need to be stored in batteries (are batteries and their at the moment limited capacity and controllability been considered); no information provided. Are sand-batteries considered on campus, to store heat by excess solar panel power during peak sunshine, both for factual usage and for research purposes? So, the information given in that statement is too vague. Having visited the University of Reading recently, UoL seems far behind on solar panel usage and investment.

Question 2: Sorry the information is too vague. I generally use a bicycle to cycle in 9 miles or take the train to go to work when I am not feeling well. The issue of conference visits is difficult since I usually fly; the train at present is often too expensive or time-consuming for EU conferences.

Question 3: I am missing the planned usage of data on the sustainability measures (including solar panels, emission reduction, electricity usage reduction, treatment of sewage (and its local usage), reduction, slow-down and storage of rainwater run-off) in undergraduate, graduate and staff research projects. E.g. the scope of optimisation of solar-panel-battery and appliances' usage is enormous and is not mentioned, which optimisation needs to be led by data gathering and improvement iterations on the research frontier. Gathering and finding relevant data is always difficult so having ongoing and incoming data from UoL available is a valuable, reliable and controllable source; it is absent in the current planning.

Only involving a coordinator from SEE is too limited, since energy, sewage, rainfall run-off issues and resolutions go far beyond the expertise of SEE. CO₂ emissions are not the only relevant tell-tale.

Question 4: See above Q3-answer and widen the scope to sustainability measures across the board.

Question 5: Please promote open debate and safeguard academic freedom with room to agree-to-disagree. My research group has de facto been threatened with disciplinary action and has been and is subjected to investigations because we have reported and report inconsistencies in public flood-mitigation plans (first directly and in a non-public way, and ultimately in public reports, scientific articles and a 2021 REF impact case study); flood-mitigation plans that included (weak and inappropriately stated) measures against the impact of climate change on flooding. Openness and willingness to scrutiny as laid out in the various CoCs should be a matter of principle, while that is probably not the case (within UoL and beyond).

Question 7: Please ensure participation of various disciplines in the decision-making, from social aspects to more rigorous quantification aspects as all aspects will be required.

Question 8: The table on investment is so limited that I cannot judge matters or comment.

Question 9: Please widen the scope from reporting only emissions data to reporting a varied range of sustainability data, including energy usage or reduction (in kWh and against the totals used), rainfall and sewage run-off/storage and treatment (same, I guess volumes and [peak] rates); i.e. more varied data and units should be considered, also for analysis, usage and optimisation in student and staff research projects.

Question 10: Please make the variety of data gathered available for use within student and staff research projects. Automatic release of data?

There is no quantification of the Gairwood tree-planting aspect. Tree planting is well known to have very limited effects even if large areas are planted with trees. That is not to say that Gairwood should not happen but reflection on its limited effects is warranted. It is not the first time that tree planting is heralded (by some people at UoL and in LCC) but honest reporting of its limited effects has been lacking and ignored. I like trees so please plant them but that does not mean that I am blinded by their limited carbon-binding effects given and within the entire emission balance [such a quantification and comparison are lacking anyway]. Where is the quantification?

Question 13: Please involve and use LIFD (Leeds Institute for Fluid Dynamics) for any including more advanced quantifications. Directors: Profs Steve Tobias and Cath Noakes.

Question 14: Already answered above: make data-driven student and staff research projects and involve LIFD.

Question 15: Already answered: the current level of quantification given is insufficient; see above answers.

Question 16: A single number is meaningless; what does 174M mean; how much is required? How is it proportioned and how is it spent across the years? How does it compare with investments at other universities (say per staff/student as a percentage), etc?

Respondent 16

Other comments:

The report is rather narrowly focussed on climate change while the wider and related issues of sustainable living are largely absent, i.e. in terms of reducing and changing energy usage, reducing rainwater run-off from campus and avoiding mixing of rainwater in the sewage system, dealing with sewage created on campus, etc. For example, recently newly build squares and buildings do not seem to have been accommodated with sustainable run-off and storage in wadis, green boxes to slow down water, etc. while dealing with increased more intense rainfall (and local flooding) due to climate change is an aspect of climate change.

Part 2 Re: “We have completed detailed surveys into the feasibility of installing photovoltaic solar panels on four buildings across the University campus and hope to start installations by the end of 2022.”

- Missing quantification, in terms of kWh, in terms of kWh we use, relative to other universities (e.g. Reading).
- Missing information are the kind of panel set-ups; delivery to grid, own usage, battery usage to increase use of locally generated solar power (current state of the art fairly poor), on-site sand battery to store excess solar power, grid-outage independence, etc., etc?
- Missing use of solar panel data, battery data, usage of data in student and staff research projects by the various researchers.
- I.e. statements all a bit vague.

On communication and engagement: “We are further developing the communications plan to support wider staff and student engagement, and a Student Sustainability Architect is being recruited to lead on net zero engagement with the student population.

We will invite staff and students to join the Panel on Sustainable Travel Policy and engage with this progress report both online and in person. We are also collaborating with colleagues to incorporate the Climate Plan in communications around COP27 and Campus Live.”

- That is somewhat passive and vague.
- Use data from measures (solar panels, batteries, etc.) in student projects, also because it is often very difficult to get actual and meaningful data. Having on-site data, evolving and growing in time is a big plus.

Question 1:

The plan admits delays due to various circumstances and some delays seem well justified e.g. with respect to exploration of geothermal heat options. But it seems the University is not considering all options. For instance, “photovoltaic solar panels on four buildings across the University campus” seems extremely unambitious, why only on four building, certainly this can be expanded? There are meanwhile so many options for generating solar energy, not just through solar panels on roofs, but also on walls and “smartflowers”, i.e. solar panels arranged as a flower that turn following the sun trajectory. Similarly, dual-use agrivoltaics¹ could be installed on the University’s farm as a proof of concept to promote dual-use solutions for agriculture and green energy generation. The University should aim to be a role model, pushing innovation, for instance trialling new technologies (e.g. vertical-axes wind turbines on site), not only to reduce its emissions but also to promote research and solutions for the climate crisis.

With respect to scope 3 chain emissions. The clearest pathway to achieve sustainability here is to reduce the overall consumption, this means for instance to focus more on repair and upcycle. Purchasing IT hardware and other equipment, where components can be easily replaced or repaired should be a priority, to avoid waste and emissions. In terms of food, we do not need more accurate estimates here, research is clear on what food is most sustainable. While plant-based dietary options are now available on campus, they are not the default, but they should be. Also, what happens with food waste, do we have on site (or on University’s farm) compost facilities?

Finally, in the same way as the government has been avoiding this topic, the University too seems to be reluctant to talk about behavioural change (and more widely normative/ cultural change, i.e. what does a 1.5°C compatible academic lifestyle look like?). For instance, in the context of demand reduction only efficiency measures are discussed, but they can be easily undone through rebound effects if they are not backed up by behavioural changes. The recent report² by the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee makes quite explicit that the UK government is ignoring this dimension at its own peril. The same is true for the University’s climate plan.

Question 2: The measures suggested seem to be extremely vague at this stage (e.g. with respect to business travel) and are lacking ambition and urgency (e.g. delayed consultation process). Some measures could be implemented very quickly, for instance, where there are train alternatives (e.g. within the UK, to Paris, Brussels, etc.), journeys by train should be the default and flights the exception. To other destinations within Europe, trains (e.g. night trains) should be actively promoted and encouraged (e.g. suggested as alternatives in the booking process through Key Travel) and the longer travelling times (usually used for work anyway) should be acknowledged as working time. Oversea flights should be avoided where possible and there needs to be a procedure in place where staff are required to provide a justification or why their flight is necessary and why alternatives (e.g. remote participation at a conference) are not viable. It's not clear to me what the University's plan is with respect to reducing emissions resulting from travels by international students.

With respect to commuting the University could for instance establish its own electric bus shuttle, particularly for areas, where no direct bus connections to the University exist. Alternatively, the University could collaborate with First Bus and the Leeds City Council to expand bus services to the University (from other city districts other than Headingley and City Centre), this would be also of benefit the wider population of Leeds. Driving should be explicitly discouraged.

Generally, the behavioural change component mentioned above, is quite important in this context. It is said that guidance for staff and students has been published. Where is this published? How has this been promoted? Is it integrated within the Key Travel booking system? Just providing somewhere some guidance is the least effective route for behavioural change.

Question 3: Carbon Literacy³ training should be part of the induction for both staff and students and then regularly for existing staff (like fire safety training)!

Question 7: Too little details provided on the assessment tool! Generally, the University should review all its contractors with respect to their credible climate plans and should not renew contracts with partners, who do not have such and are unwilling to establish these. Any new contracts should be only established with providers, that have credible climate plans/net zero transition plans, aligned with University's goals. The University should see itself as a driver for wider change.

Question 8: The University should also lobby for the USS to divest from fossil fuels and other ecological damaging/socially unjust investment.

Question 11: There is some mentioning of just transition, but no mentioning at all of a commitment to climate justice, which goes beyond just transition. This is a serious flaw of the plan and misses an opportunity to establish the University also as a norm entrepreneur, who promotes climate justice as a fundamental principle in our response to the climate crisis and as an overarching motivation (why) for the various measures. Leadership means being explicit about the why, about the purpose, and it seems to me that this is not provided with the rather managerial plan. Staff and students will get onboard with the measures only if they understand why all this and so much more is so important.

Question 12: Green technologies should be prioritised that do not substantially harm ecological systems (e.g. through polluting extraction of rare earths). Establish contacts in the Global South and contract Global South partners (e.g. Global Change Institute, www.wits.ac.za/gci) to review the University's climate plan from a climate justice perspective. Make the review public to ensure accountability.

Respondent 17

- Question 14:** Establish a map of relevant expertise and invite specific colleagues to work on specific aspects when required. Review constantly.
- Question 15:** Establish a University Climate Assembly (potentially accompanied by an online deliberation tool such as LiquidFeedback) consisting of staff and students. Consultation should not be restricted to two weeks and to technical details, it needs to be an ongoing, process and dialogue that accompanies the plan as it takes shape and is constantly revised.
- Other comments:** The University should act as a norm entrepreneur, which means promoting the de-normalisation of practices and businesses that endanger Earth's life support systems. In practical terms this would mean not accepting income from these businesses (e.g. fossil fuel industry), not inviting them to events (e.g. job fairs).

Question 1: Progress is being made, however, a lot of the specified actions involve the making of plans and targets, and reporting on progress towards targets, and consulting on all of this, all of which slows down the actual actions being taken, as it takes resources, especially staff time. This was a main finding of my PhD thesis on 'Local Authority Responses to Climate Change' back in 1997-2002 (<https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/83022/1/2003cassphd.pdf>). Many of the material measures which are soon to be implemented are straightforward and should be expedited. LED lightbulbs are a bare minimum and should have been done by now. More solar is surely possible than what is planned? Catering could be switched immediately to vegetarian/vegan, or the proportion of catering increased at least. Parking could be reduced along with standard Travel Plan measures. Only reducing the viability of high carbon options along with incentivising low carbon will likely achieve absolute reductions, as 'behaviour change' based on 'smarter choices' (i.e. do minimum information provision) has clearly failed.

Geothermal sounds great, and should be pursued if it is viable. Insulation can go ahead without waiting for this.

Question 2: ITS provides expertise in radical emissions reduction options, focussing on active travel, public transport, and electrification of ICE private vehicles as a fall-back/last resort. There are decades of research into what works to decarbonise commutes, which are obviously the most important focus of the University as an employer. However, commutes and how people accomplish them are tied into all the other things they have to do (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967070X1530041X>) – and policies based on time flexibility for people using low carbon modes, and reducing 'core hours' of the institution, might help with these. E-bikes should be available through bike-to-work schemes, public transport subsidy should be maintained. "Incentivising reduced travel emissions" should be concrete – travel expenses for cyclists?

In terms of flights, these should be replaced by train travel wherever possible – and this means allowing extra time for staff to travel to events abroad. Long-haul could be subject to only partial coverage by University expenses, leaving individuals to pay the difference. The Research Councils should be pressurised to remove insistence on international travel and meetings.

Respondent 18

Question 5: The University should support Council climate plans and look into the results of Citizens Panels/Juries, local and national. The University should official support campaigning against extension of Leeds/Bradford airport, as research shows that increasing systems of provision drives increases in flights:

https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/journal_contribution/Air_travel_and_urbanity_The_role_of_migration_social_networks_airport_accessibility_and_rebound_/14754153

Question 2: The oversight panel meetings for the shared future citizens jury process have been postponed and cancelled with no explanation. We need firm assurances that the process will not be cancelled entirely and if it does go ahead, that funding is provided for those who take part.

Question 3: There is no mention in the update of a timescale for embedding sustainability into the curriculum. Currently the Climate Plan makes no mention of decolonising the curriculum, which is integral to challenging accepted norms in academia that continue to allow the oppression of indigenous peoples around the world, who are the most knowledgeable stewards of their ecosystems. For example, challenging ‘fortress conservation’ practices which demonise indigenous people in the name of conservation, justifying evictions that then make way for ‘protected areas’ that still allow hunting by rich Westerners.

The recommendations outlined by Esta-Rose Nyeko-Lacek (LITE Student Research Experience Placement Holder 2021) on “Reading Lists, Decolonization and Student Success” should be implemented this year at the very least.

https://teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2021/10/Decolonising-Reading-List-Placement-Report_Sep-2021.pdf

Question 4: There is currently no public framework or path to action on the University’s website to make this a reality. The University must publicly commit to cutting ties with all fossil fuel and mining companies; including funding received from them, investment in them and their careers opportunities that the University advertises. Birkbeck University has already committed to the careers aspect, please see:

Question 8: A transparent framework is needed to see which companies the University is next planning to divest from – ie: banks that invest a large proportion of their profits in fossil fuels. Barclays is currently the main banking provider for the University, despite being the largest funder of fossil fuel infrastructure in Europe – will there be an update to see if that has changed this year to a more ethical provider like Triodos?

Question 15: Currently the consultation process is severely lacking. There was a very small window given for this one. Having to email it back is an extra barrier to feedback.

Irrespective of this. Given the existential, emergency nature of the climate and ecological crises and how much at this University and in wider society must change to truly face it, we need weekly in-person, open forums with senior management responsible for delivering the climate plan, as well as heads of schools. Senior management alone cannot tackle everything that needs to be done, it needs to be a collaborative effort.

This is also crucial to allow people to be part of the process so that any measures actioned are inclusive of the most marginalised at the University.



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