



POLICY

Document Title	Environment and Sustainability Policy
Version	Version 3.1
Consulted with	Executive Team
Signature of Principal / Chief Executive Officer	
Signature of Lead Executive Team Member	
Approved by	Finance and Resources Committee Board of the Corporation
Date approved	14 October 2025
Effective date	15 October 2025
Date of next review	August 2028
Lead responsibility	Head of Estates and Facilities

1. Vision for Sustainability

At Derwentside College, our vision is to lead by example in creating a sustainable future for our learners, staff, and wider community. Rooted in our values of lifelong learning and local impact, we are committed to embedding sustainability into every aspect of college life—from our curriculum and campus operations to our partnerships and community engagement.

We aspire to be recognised as a regional leader in environmental stewardship, empowering our learners and staff to become champions of change. By fostering a culture of responsibility, innovation, and collaboration, we aim to contribute meaningfully to the transition toward a greener, more resilient County Durham and beyond.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to define Derwentside College's strategic objectives and scope in relation to environmental sustainability. It sets out our commitment to integrating sustainable practices across all areas of college life, including operations, curriculum, estates, and community engagement.
- 2.2. As part of the UK Further Education sector, Derwentside College recognises its responsibility to contribute to national sustainability goals. The UK government has set ambitious targets to position FE colleges as key drivers of climate action, waste reduction, and biodiversity conservation. In response, we are committed to:
 - Achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
 - Reducing operational energy consumption and increasing the use of renewable energy sources.
 - Cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2025 compared to 1990 levels.
 - Developing and maintaining a Climate Action Plan and progress tracker to monitor and report on sustainability performance.
 - Embedding sustainable development into our operations and the lives of our learners, staff, and the wider community.
 - Appointing a dedicated sustainability lead to drive and coordinate our environmental initiatives.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1. Derwentside College is committed to placing sustainability at the heart of everything we do—from our teaching and learning to our estate management and community partnerships. We recognise the vital role that further education plays in shaping a greener, more resilient future for our region and beyond.
- 3.2. As a college rooted in lifelong learning and community impact, we see sustainability not just as an environmental obligation, but as a core responsibility. We aim to equip our learners with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable society.
- 3.3. Our approach is aligned with national priorities, including the UK's net-zero 2050 target, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, occupational standards for FE teaching, the UK Climate Change Act 2008, the Environment Act 2021, and relevant climate action plans.
- 3.4. By reducing our carbon footprint, improving resource efficiency, and embedding sustainability into our curriculum and operations, we empower our learners and staff to become agents of positive change. Derwentside College plays a key role in supporting regional and national

sustainability efforts, fostering innovation, and preparing learners for careers in the green economy.

3.5. Through collaboration with industry partners, community organisations, and continuous improvement in our environmental performance, we are committed to making a measurable and lasting contribution to a more sustainable future.

3.6. Through this Environment and Sustainability Policy, Derwentside College will:

- Adopt recognised good practice across all areas of operation.
- Comply with all applicable environmental legislation and standards.
- Regularly review sustainability targets against appropriate benchmarks.
- Provide opportunities for learners to engage with sustainability through curriculum and enrichment activities.
- Promote sustainable travel options for staff, learners, and partners.
- Conserve material resources and reduce environmental impact.
- Prioritise procurement from local or near-local suppliers wherever possible.
- Implement effective waste management procedures to reduce landfill and increase recycling.
- Monitor and improve energy consumption based on historical performance.
- Apply sustainable construction principles in all new builds and refurbishments.
- Communicate the Sustainability Policy clearly to all learners and staff.
- Raise awareness of sustainability among learners, staff, visitors, and stakeholders.
- Share progress on sustainability initiatives with the college community.
- Work collaboratively with external partners and the wider community to support shared sustainability goals.

4. Principles and Commitments

4.1. Derwentside College is committed to delivering meaningful and measurable progress in environmental sustainability. Our principles are rooted in continuous improvement, legal compliance, and community engagement. Through this policy, the College will:

Strategic Planning and Governance

- Develop, approve, and maintain a comprehensive Climate Action Plan.
- Complete baseline data studies to understand our current environmental position.
- Monitor and report progress against sustainability targets to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- Review and continuously improve the Environment and Sustainability Policy.
- Seek accreditation and recognition through relevant environmental award schemes.

Legal Compliance and Best Practice

- Comply with all applicable environmental legislation and adopt recognised best practices.
- Utilise government initiatives, support, and training to help achieve sustainability goals.

Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency

- Reduce energy consumption through efficiency measures and increased use of renewable energy sources.
- Implement carbon reduction strategies to support net-zero targets.
- Build resilience to climate change through proactive planning and adaptation.

Waste Management and Resource Conservation

- Minimise waste generation and increase recycling rates.
- Achieve targets of reducing landfill waste to less than 5% and increasing recycling to at least 70%.
- Develop a phased action plan to eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042.
- Promote conservation of material resources to reduce environmental impact.

Sustainable Procurement and Travel

- Prioritise sustainable procurement of goods and services, with a focus on local suppliers where possible.
- Promote the use of sustainable travel methods among staff, learners, and partners.

Curriculum and Engagement

- Integrate sustainability into curriculum design and teaching practices.
- Provide learners with opportunities to explore sustainability through enrichment activities.
- Promote sustainability awareness and engagement among learners, staff, contractors, and stakeholders.
- Encourage staff and learner sustainability ambassadors to lead by example.

Biodiversity and Community Collaboration

- Support biodiversity and protect natural habitats across the College estate.
- Collaborate with local authorities, businesses, and environmental organisations.
- Engage in sector-specific sustainability and knowledge-sharing initiatives.
- Work actively with external partners and the wider community to support shared sustainability goals.

5. Scope

- 5.1. This Environment and Sustainability Policy applies to all operations, facilities, staff, learners and stakeholders of Derwentside College, and outlines the commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable development. The policy supports national and regional sustainability goals, complies with all relevant legislation, and contributes to the wider objectives of the UK Government's climate and sustainability targets.

6. Relevant Legislation / Regulation

- 6.1. This policy complies with the following legislation and regulations:
- UK Climate Change Act 2008
 - Environment Act 2021
 - Education (Environment and Sustainable Citizenship) Act 2021
 - Waste Regulations 2011
 - ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems

7. Related documents

- 7.1. The following documents are related to this policy;
- Estates Strategy

- Climate Action Plan
- Corporate Social Responsibility Statement

8. Accountability

8.1. Accountability for the implementation, oversight, and continual improvement of this environmental and sustainability policy lies with the Head of Estates and Facilities and Vice Principal Finance and Resources.

- The Head of Estates and Facilities is responsible for the operational delivery of sustainability objectives across the college. This role includes leading internal initiatives, ensuring compliance with relevant environmental legislation, and embedding sustainable practices into the day-to-day operations of the institution.
- The Vice Principal Finance and Resources provides strategic oversight and governance, ensuring that the policy priorities are embedded into the college financial planning, risk management and long-term investment decisions.

9. Equality & Diversity

9.1. The College has paid due regard to equality considerations during the preparation and implementation of this Policy and Procedure.

10. Review

10.1. This document will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if required.

10.2. The Head of Estates and Facilities will undertake this review, considering the outcomes of the monitoring process, legislative changes and developments in good practice.

11. Document Identification

Category [select ONE only]	☐ Programmes/courses ☐ Partnerships ☒ Finance ☐ Quality ☐ Governance ☐ Health and safety ☐ Facilities ☐ Computer Services ☐ MIS ☐ Admissions ☐ Teaching and learning ☐ Personnel
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Audience [select ALL that apply]	☒ Employees ☒ External Stakeholders ☒ Learners ☒ Partners ☒ Suppliers
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This form must be completed when drafting a new policy/procedure or amending an existing policy/procedure. It should be completed at the earliest opportunity so any issues can be resolved/mitigated in advance.

POLICY / PROCEDURE DETAILS	
Name of policy / procedure:	Environmental Sustainability Policy
Version:	Amended
Date of latest version:	28 August 2025
Manager responsible:	Donna Walker
Others involved in this EIA:	Tina Hannant

ASSESSMENT			
What evidence have you used? (This could be internal data, surveys, complaints/grievances or other external quantitative or qualitative research)	government guidance, AoC guidance and resources.		
Who have you engaged / consulted with? (This could be individuals, groups, networks or organisations)	Executive Team, Estates and Facilities Team.		
For each protected characteristic, does the evidence show that the policy/procedure...	does not inadvertently disadvantage or discriminate against staff, learners or service users?	Actively explores opportunity and fosters good relations between people of different protected groups and backgrounds?	Where 'no' is checked, or concerns have been identified detail them here:
Age (including older and younger people)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Disability (including those with physical disabilities, unseen disabilities and mental health issues)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Sex (both men and women)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	

Gender reassignment or Gender identity (including trans staff and students who have transitioned, are considering transitioning or are in the process of transitioning from one gender to another, and also non-binary staff and students who do not identify with, or reject gender labels)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Pregnancy / Maternity (including breastfeeding mothers)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Race and Ethnicity (including nationality, colour, native language, culture and geographic origin)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Religion and belief (including those with no religion or belief)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Sexual orientation (including, but not limited to, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer and straight staff and learners)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Intersectionality (although not a protected characteristic itself it's important to consider how characteristics intersect)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	

ACTION PLANNING		
Issue Identified	Planned or completed remedial action	Person responsible and timeframe
No issues identified during assessment.	No remedial actions required at this time.	

MONITORING AND REVIEW
How will the impact of your policy and procedure be monitored and reviewed once agreed?
Supporting action plans will be monitored annually and reported to Executive Team and Governors.

AUTHORISATION		
Signature		Date
Manager responsible:	Tina Hannant	29 August 2025
EIA Panel:		
EIA Committee's Comments if applicable:		