

ENP-02 / Environmental Policy

Version Number:2023/1.0

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out Unite Students' approach to managing and reducing the environmental impact of its operations.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of Unite Students' operations under direct operational control.

1.3 Responsibilities

This policy is managed by the Head of Sustainability and applies to all Unite's employees and contractors across all our operations including joint ventures and co-investment vehicles.

1.4 Definitions

[CDP](#) Formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project

EMS: Environmental management system. A collection of policies and processes intended to help manage environmental impacts and drive continual improvement.

[EPRA sBPR](#) European Public Real Estate Association Sustainability Best Practice Reporting Standards

GHG: Greenhouse gasses. Emissions that contribute towards climate change, including a number of gasses some of which are more potent than carbon dioxide. Usually represented simply as tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)

[GRESB](#) Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark

1.5 References

Various other documents are relevant to this policy including:

- Sustainability Policy
- Sustainable Construction Framework
- Procurement Policy
- Net Zero Carbon Pathway

- Online sustainability reporting see <https://www.unite-group.co.uk/responsibility>

2 Policy

2.1.1 Intent

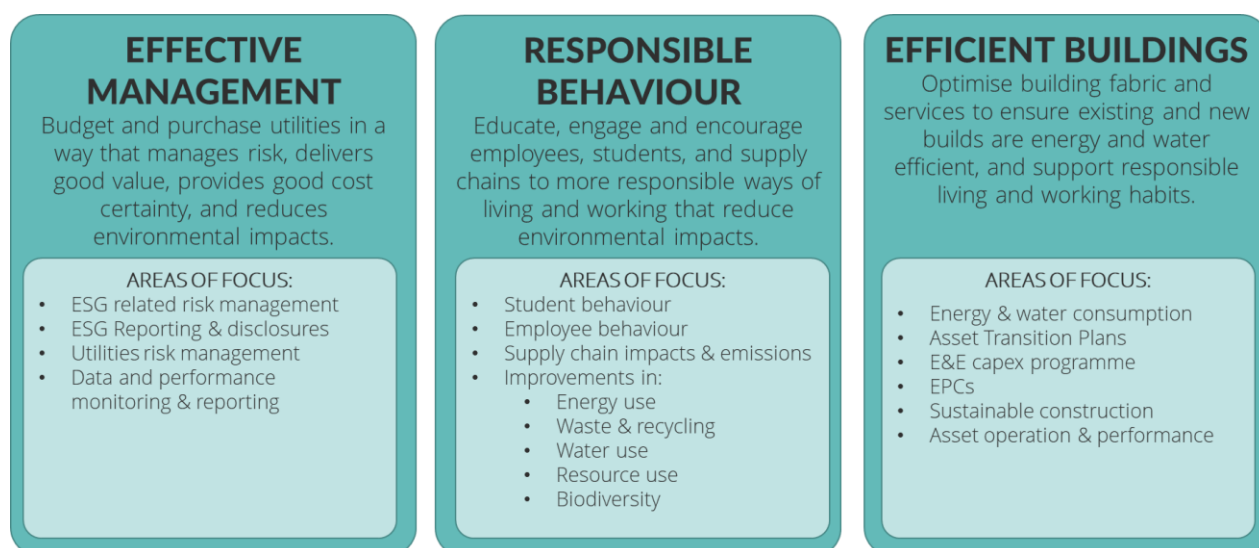
This policy seeks to reduce the environmental impacts arising from Unite Students' business operations in line with our overarching sustainability strategy as set out in our Sustainability Policy, specifically in three areas of our strategy.

- Tackling climate change (including our net zero carbon target)
- Responsible use of resources
- Greener, sustainable buildings



2.1.2 Principles

We recognise that our operations have an impact on the environment, and that we have a responsibility to manage and reduce this for the benefit of current and future generations via the three key areas of ambition set out above. We also have a duty to help our student residents develop lasting responsible living habits. To do this we target reductions in our three most materially significant environmental impacts: **Energy & Carbon, Water, and Resource Use & Waste**, via a range of activity across three environmental themes **Good Management, Responsible Behaviour** and **Sustainable Buildings** as below:



2.1.3 Key Outcomes

Our Environmental Strategy seeks to ensure manage all environmental aspects of our business to ensure regulatory compliance and to reduce environmental impacts, including but not limited to:

- Reducing our contribution to climate change by targeting net zero carbon by 2030 through reductions in operational green house gas emissions and embodied carbon of our new developments
- Managing and mitigating climate related and other environmental risks
- Reducing our energy use
- Reducing our water consumption and waste
- Reducing our resource use and waste, increasing recycling, reducing litter and pollution in and around our sites

- Responsible procurement of materials, products and services we consume to reduce their impact.
- Reducing pollution and emissions to air, water and land
- Supporting biodiversity

The following areas however have been identified during stakeholder consultation to be the most materially significant and so are the focus of our activity:

- **NET ZERO CARBON:** We recognise that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contribute towards climate change, and the serious threat this poses to humanity and the planet, as well as our business. We believe that reducing our GHG emissions is the most significant contribution we can make to reducing our environmental impact, and are aiming to be net zero carbon for both operations and development by 2030. We have published our Net Zero Carbon Pathway that sets out details of our target including Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) validated 1.5°C aligned carbon targets, operational energy reduction targets, renewable energy targets, and new development embodied carbon and operational energy targets.
- **CLIMATE RISK:** The effects of climate change will increasingly impact on our business, and we monitor, assess, track and report on these in line with TCFD in our annual Report and Accounts.
- **ENERGY CONSUMPTION** Energy used within our buildings constitutes our most significant source of GHG emissions, as well as being a significant business cost; we are therefore committed to reducing energy consumption to ensure an environmentally and financially sustainable future for Unite Students. Unlike many real estate companies, all energy consumed by tenants within our buildings is our responsibility owing to our all-inclusive billing model, meaning our scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions include all building energy use. This presents a significant opportunity for us to improve operational energy efficiency.
- **WATER USAGE:** We believe that water is a valuable and finite resource, and that wasting water also wastes energy used in its treatment and delivery, contributes towards water scarcity and disruptions, and necessitates increases abstraction from aquifers, reservoirs and rivers that can be damaging to the environment. The supply of potable water is essential for all our buildings, and also constitutes a significant operational cost. While we neither operate in areas deemed to be water stressed nor undertake water intensive operations, we are nonetheless committed to reducing our water usage through a range of physical water efficiency measures, close liaison with water supply companies, leak detection and student and staff education and engagement. We also ensure new

constructions are specified to have the lowest practicable consumption to avoid placing undue stress on local water supplies.

- **RESOURCE USE & WASTE:** Waste arising from our business activity during the operation, management and maintenance of our buildings constitutes a significant environmental impact. We are committed to ensuring waste is managed in accordance with legislation and regulation at all times, to reducing the overall quantity generated, and increasing the proportion that is recycled. We are also committed to helping our student residents better manage their waste and work closely with local authorities and other organisations who collect the domestic student waste from our properties, and with our students too, to help them manage their waste and maximise the proportion of student waste recycled. We also recognise that there is increasing competition for limited global resources, and we are committed to reducing the impact of resources we consume during the construction and operation of our buildings by considering the full lifecycle impact of materials and resources used. We are committed to applying the principles of sustainability in this area, and our Procurement Policy sets out more details. We are also committed to reducing and controlling the use of hazardous substances and materials we use, and to reducing nuisance from our operations such as that caused by noise, litter and light pollution.

2.1.4 Our Environmental Management System

To achieve this, we operate an Environmental Management System (EMS) based around the principles of ISO14001, including:

- Our environmental policy, that provides more details of our approach.
- Our management structures, roles and responsibilities.
- Identification of significant environmental impacts and implementing procedures and controls for monitoring them.
- Setting and working towards objectives, targets and programmes for continual performance improvements.
- Systems for complying with environmental legislation and other applicable requirements.
- Systems for measuring and reporting our environmental performance.

2.1.5 Governance

As a key part of our business plan, our Executive Committee are ultimately accountable for sustainability performance, including environmental issues. The Unite Group plc Board have oversight of this area via the Board Sustainability Committee, chaired by one of our Non-executive Directors, which meets four times per year. This policy will be reviewed annually.

2.1.6 Reporting

We will actively participate in various environmental and sustainability related reporting and disclosure schemes such as CDP, GRESB, TCFD and EPRA sBPR. In addition, further details targets, activity and progress in this area can be found on our website, in our annual report, and in other reporting we publish.

Appendix A – Document Control Information

Document Management			
Document Ref / Title		Environmental Policy	
Version #	1.0	Status	Live
Classification		Public (everyone has access)	
Reason for development		Set out our approach to managing environmental impacts	
Summary of changes		Updated	
Applicable parties			
Author(s) (name / title)		Head of Sustainability	
Owner (name / title)		Head of Sustainability	
Function			
Approved by (name/ title)		Chief Executive Officer	
Date Approved		22/06/2023	
Review date		15/06/2024	
Location			
Distribution			
Consultation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> NCC / ECC	<input type="checkbox"/> City Teams
<input type="checkbox"/> Sales	<input type="checkbox"/> IT Service Desk	<input type="checkbox"/> IT	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance - AR	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance - Treasury	<input type="checkbox"/> InfoSec	<input type="checkbox"/> HR
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance - AP	<input type="checkbox"/> Procurement	<input type="checkbox"/> H&S	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Intelligence
<input type="checkbox"/> Estates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> Asset Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Support	<input type="checkbox"/> PMO	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition / Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Version History (copy and paste from top section to here as a record)			
Version	Date approved	Author	Summary of changes
1	22/06/2023	Head of Sustainability	Update