Introduction – Sustainable Procurement and Circular Economy Plan 2025- 2030

1. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to set out objectives that the University needs to meet to reduce the sustainability impacts associated with its procurement activities, these will include reducing its Scope 3 carbon emissions, addressing social value and civic impacts and economic activity.

2. Plan Vision

Sustainability needs to be embedded across the supply chain, influencing how we procure goods and services, the types of goods and services we procure and how we manage those goods and services from cradle to grave.

The University of Surrey has a number of significant sustainability impacts associated with its supply chain. To be a truly sustainable University, Surrey needs to address these impacts such as the 56,000tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted due to our buying of goods and services.

Every good and service procured by the University carries with it a series of impacts deleterious to the local and global environment along its supply chain. From extraction of raw materials to final delivery, resources are expended, waste created, energy consumed, and greenhouse gases released, contributing to climate change and the degradation of the natural environment. On top of this the impact on communities, their health, labour rights can also be negatively impacted.

Despite this, the continued provision of goods and services is essential to sustaining the operations of the University, so that it may continue to provide valuable research and teaching, including in its leading contributions to sustainability. Therefore, it is essential that the University takes steps to decarbonise its supply chain, allowing for long-term responsible sustenance of operations, that it takes action to have a positive impact on communities.

Furthermore, universities across the UK and around the world are beginning to address their Scope 3 emissions, recognising the importance of consumption-based decarbonisation, a concept deeply embedded in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under SDG 12 – responsible consumption and production. The University must act upon this goal to ensure it remains at the forefront of sustainability in the UK higher education sector.

3. Definitions and Terminology

3.1 *Scope 3 emissions* – Indirect greenhouse gas emissions caused by anything other than the combustion of fuel or generation of electricity.
3.2 *Supply chain* - The sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of a commodity or service.
3.3 *Value-for-money* – The most advantageous combination of cost, quality, and sustainability (across all three domains) to meet requirements.
3.4 *Whole-life-costing* - Considering the cost (economic, environmental, and social) of a commodity across its entire lifespan, from the first step in its supply chain to the final stage in the processing of its waste.

3.5 Circular Economy – An economic system based on reuse and regeneration of natural, economic, and social capital.

4. Plan Principles

The principles underpinning the sustainable procurement and circular economy plan are set out as below. The emphasis on these principles will change as the University progresses towards meeting its targets and the plan will be reviewed accordingly to reflect this. New objectives may also be introduced, or existing ones replaced at review.

4.1 Prioritises the use of regenerative resources – reusable, non-toxic, renewable.

4.2 Preserves and extends the life of what's already been made – repair, upgrade, upcycle.

4.3 Turning waste into a resource – reuse, remanufacture, creating a secondary resource, recycling, no-landfill.

4.4 Designing for the future – longevity, low maintenance, reusable, adaptable.

4.5 Collaboration – working with the supply chain as partners, within and outside the university.

4.6 Rethinking our business model – Whole life costing and life cycle analysis

4.7 Incorporating digital technology – Offering opportunities to connect organisations in delivering the six principles above.

5. Plan Aim

5.1 Integrate the 7 sustainable procurement and circular economy principles into the University's purchasing and operational activity to help deliver a sustainable University and help suppliers transition to a low carbon and sustainable operating model.

6. Plan Objectives

6.1 Monitoring and Measuring Carbon

The University will monitor carbon emissions from procured goods & services on an annual basis via its supplier engagement tool.

The University will investigate how to improve the consistency and accuracy of its scope 3 data.

The University will continue to identify and work with priority suppliers, and determine which suppliers are strategic and critical, based on supply chain carbon impact, expenditure, locality and business size.

Suppliers will be strongly encouraged to join the University's supplier carbon management tool – NETpositive – and submit their data.

6.2 Supplier Management

The University will begin to conduct a supplier management programme through its supplier management tool, encouraging its suppliers to reduce their environmental impacts and communicating the emphasis placed by the University on procuring sustainable products.

The university will work to increase its local supply chain and SME's where relevant.

Continue to practise and develop a category management rather than a buyer approach.

6.3 Awareness and Training

Key staff – procurement category managers and key purchasing staff – will receive advanced training in sustainable procurement. New staff will receive basic training in sustainable procurement.

Awareness of the principles of sustainable procurement will be promoted among the user community for specific high impact commodity areas.

Sustainability impact assessments will be created for key commodity areas and distributed to key staff.

6.4 Embedding Sustainability in the Purchasing Process

Sustainability criteria will be included when evaluating offers from potential suppliers, including environmental, economic and social. These aspects will also be included when specifying goods or services, and contracts will be awarded primarily on the basis of value-for-money and whole life costing.

6.5 Benchmarking and Progress

The University will measure its progress in sustainable procurement according to the Flexible Framework, determining its level initially via self-assessment.

The University will use the governments flexible framework to guide its development of sustainable practices, aiming to achieve level 4 within 3 years and level 5 within 5 years.

The University has expanded the governments flexible framework from 5 levels to 10 levels to help more effective delivery. A copy of the document is attached in appendix one.

Consider ISO 20400 to certify the University's sustainable procurement approach.

6.6 Assisting in Delivering Net Zero

Contribute to delivering the University's 2030 Net Zero target across scopes 1 & 2 by only purchasing energy efficient electronic goods, and by avoiding equipment using chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) or HCFCs as refrigerants. White goods and chest freezers should have a minimum energy efficiency rating of "A".

6.7 Collaborating with colleagues and suppliers

Support colleagues in procuring goods and services that enable sustainable practices, such as Laboratory equipment, waste management bins and energy efficiency products.

7. Action Plan examples

7.1 Deliver the actions set out in the flexible framework for people, policy, communications, processes, engaging suppliers and measuring results.

7.2 Join NETpositive trial using supplier engagement carbon measurement tool and use the outputs from the tool to inform decisions on reducing our scope 3 carbon emissions, complete by Christmas 2024.

7.3 Encourage key university suppliers to sign up to the free tool and provide scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions, as well as creating an action plan to deliver sustainability and carbon changes. Complete by July 2024.

7.4 Baseline progress against the flexible framework on 6 monthly intervals, review supplementary actions.

7.5 Review Cambridge University Sustainability Impact assessments for different categories to use as a reference for the University.

7.6 Employ an 'establishing the need' framework, 1) Is it required/essential, 2) Does its exist already and can be shared or reused, 3) Is a more sustainable product/service available compared to the product/service.

7.7 Specify reuse within all contracts for both product and logistics.

Area of concern	Action	Sub-actions	Target completion date	Current position 2024/25	Benefits
People	1.Provide sustainable procurement training to all staff involved in purchasing, according to job role **(Objective 6.3)**	Select appropriate training material for each level of staff Distribute the training via online platform Include sustainable procurement training in inductions for relevant staff	Procurement team Summer 2025 Buyers Summer 2026 All staff Summer 2027	Training provided to procurement team Agreed to host training on procurement website	Staff have skills necessary to make sustainable choices – emission reduction
	2.Embed sustainable procurement into hiring, appraisals, and performance objectives **(Objective 6.3)**	List sustainable procurement credentials as desirable in purchasing staff	To be included Autumn 2025	Agreed to include in appraisals	Attract staff with SP experience and credentials
		Create incentives for success in sustainable procurement	Summer 2027		Greater resources devoted to SP
Procurement Process	3.Create and distribute impact assessments for	Host SIAs on an online platform	Summer 2025	SIA's created, to be hosted on procurement website	Specific information available for SP in all purchasing

	key commodity areas **(Objectives 6.3,6.4,6.6,6.7)**	Inform and encourage use by relevant staff			
	4.Implement asset management for key commodity areas **(Objectives 6.1,6.6)**	Includes IT equipment, capital lab equipment, AV equipment.	Summer 2027	No current asset register	Allow use of PCFs and reduction in buying
	5.Explore options for inter and intra university equipment sharing **(Objective 6.7)**	Options include Warp-it and Cambridge equipment sharing database	Summer 2026		Reduction in buying and waste
	6.Adopt lifecycle thinking, whole-life costing and value for money principles **(Objectives 6.1,6.4)**		Summer 2027	Principles included in plan	Reduced emissions and cost over time
	7.Create sustainability specifications for relevant goods **(Objectives 6.1,6.2,6.4)**	Carbon product footprint where available Efficiency of goods using energy e.g. white goods & IT Given percentage of recycled or recyclable material for wood, plastic, metal products Construction and refurbishment done according to BREEAM standards	Summer 2028	No current specifications for commodities Specification for construction in place	Restricts choice to ensure low carbon options in high impact areas Reduction in energy & water use
Suppliers	8.Formulate supplier engagement programme, targeting key suppliers to provide data and	Filter suppliers by materiality and actionability	Start 2025, with on-going delivery by 2030	Suppliers filtered by commodity, impact and size	Improve supplier relationships and availability of low carbon goods

	improve their processes. **(Objective 6.2)**	Contact suppliers to communicate standards, join NetPositive or request data according to supplier size and type		List of priority suppliers not on tool created	Improvement of current contracts over time
	9.Map supply chains for highest impact suppliers **(Objective 6.1)**		Summer 2025	No supply chains mapped	More accurate data
	10.Implement sustainability requirements into new contracts **(Objectives 6.2,6.4)**	Require signup to NetPositive Require carbon reporting Require commitment to reduction in emissions Compare sustainability credentials of new potential suppliers	From summer 2025	Brief mention of sustainability in contracts	Ensures SP early in purchasing reducing emissions
	11.Agree sustainability KPIs with key suppliers who meet materiality and actionability criteria **(Objective 6.2)**	Set reduction targets for supplied goods & services	Summer 2028	No KPI's or targets set	Reduction in emissions over time

Appendix One

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
People	Sustainable Procurement Champion identified	Key staff have basic training in Sustainable Procurement principles	Sustainable Procurement included in employee induction for key staff	All procurement staff have basic training in Sustainable Procurement principles	Champion has advanced training in Sustainable Procurement principles	Sustainable procurement embedded into appraisals, performance objectives and incentives	Sustainable Procurement listed as desirable in selection criteria	Sustainable Procurement included in employee induction for all staff in regular contact with procurement	Achievements publicised, awards received for achievements	Good practice shared with other Universities
Policy Strategy and Communication	Overarching sustainability objectives agreed and communicated to key staff	Sustainability included in procurement policy in some capacity	Dedicated Sustainable Procurement policy in place	Sustainable Procurement communicated to staff beyond the team	Develop Sustainable Procurement Strategy feeding from policy	Integrate risk, process integration, supplier engagement into strategy	Integrate measurement and review into strategy	Attain policy and strategy approval from Executive Board	Policy and Strategy are communicated widely	Detailed Policy and Strategy review conducted with stakeholder consultation
Procurement Process	Preliminary spend analysis undertaken	Detailed spend analysis undertaken, identifying key areas	Key contracts include sustainability criteria, sustainability considered early in procurement	Value for money and Whole-Life Costing principles adopted.	High Impact contracts assessed for sustainability risks through procurement process.	Key suppliers surveyed to attain supplier-specific carbon factors	High Impact contracts assessed for **detailed** sustainability risks through procurement process	Life-cycle thinking approach to cost / impact is considered for new contracts	Sustainability KPIs agreed with key suppliers	Streamlined life cycle analysis conducted for key commodities
Engaging Suppliers	Supplier spend analysis undertaken	Key suppliers identified for engagement	Supplier questionnaire includes basic sustainability questions	Supplier questionnaire includes detailed sustainability questions.	General programme of supplier engagement conceived	Targeted programme of supplier engagement with key suppliers initiated	Supply chains for high impact suppliers mapped	Sustainability improvement communicated to suppliers	Sustainability KPIs agreed with key suppliers	Intensive development for key suppliers. Supplier audits in place
Measurements and Results	Overall procurement spend-based carbon figure derived	Carbon figure categorised by commodity area and supplier	Simple measures for achieving framework agreed	Simple measures for achieving framework in practice	Report Sustainable Procurement benefit statements.	Report Sustainable Procurement benefit case studies	Compare framework progress to other Universities.	Balanced Scorecard produced addressing Strategy commitments	Sustainable procurement policy reviewed regularly. Benchmarking undertaken	Independent audit on framework undertaken