

## Introduction

The University of Worcester is committed to developing, maintaining and enhancing its built infrastructure in a manner that promotes sustainability, protects and enhances natural resources and biodiversity, prevents pollution and provides opportunities for the local economy. The University of Worcester declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and is committed to reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 in all three scopes from a baseline 2018/19.

The UK Green Building Council published a report September 2020 on the feasibility into the design, delivery and cost of new net zero buildings. They demonstrate how designs for residential and workplace buildings can be influenced to improve resource efficiency, reduce running costs and get to net zero carbon. The study showed that the increased capital investment in net zero buildings needn't cost the earth. The University intends to fully review its construction and refurbishment policy in line with these findings and set out detailed roadmap for how this will be achieved in the next ten years.

All stages and processes in the design and refurbishment / construction and operation of buildings can contribute towards excellence in sustainability.

This policy seeks to support and complement the University's [Sustainability Policy](#) and the [Sustainability Strategic Plan](#). The application of the principles within this Policy are subject to resource availability.

## Refurbishment Projects

All refurbishment projects with a value in excess of £1million will aspire to achieve a SKA HE rating of Gold.

SKA HE Rating is a Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) environmental assessment method, benchmark and standard for the higher education sector. The SKA HE assessment has been designed to meet the requirements of higher education refurbishments in order to meet clear sustainable good practice. The SKA HE scheme consists of more than a hundred 'good practice' measures covering energy and CO2 emissions, waste, water, materials, pollution, wellbeing, biodiversity, project delivery and transport.

## New Builds

The University of Worcester, has in the past, delivered a few schemes with BREEAM ratings – including BREEAM Excellent. It has since been decided that BREEAM is not the most appropriate measure of sustainability for the University of Worcester – BREEAM rated schemes have been both expensive in terms of the capital costs associated with achieving the BREEAM points and energy inefficient when the building is operational.

The University has therefore decided to seek an EPC Rating of A on all new builds up to [5000 m2]. Any new build larger than this will be subject to a separate discussion as to how best to measure the performance of the development.

## Design Criteria

As a matter of course the University will embed good practice in all aspects of the development process from initial design beyond Handover. This will include but not be limited to

### *Passive Design*

The design of all new developments and refurbishment of existing facilities should aim to minimise energy use through passive design. The design process should take account of factors such as location, orientation, thermal mass, glazing and natural ventilation and daylight. Early consideration and incorporation of such influences will maximise the energy efficiency of the building and reduce the cost of operating the building over its lifetime.

Design to minimise waste. Any waste arising from the construction phase should be minimised and where possible be re-used or re-cycled

- All design teams and contractors employed by the University shall be made aware of the University's list of prohibited materials – *contact university for the current list*
- A Low or Zero Carbon (LZC) approach to building design and refurbishment will be adopted
- Flexibility will be designed into spaces to allow future changing needs to be met
- Design for increased water efficiency and conservation
- Standard specifications for key components will be used to ensure consistency of approach across the Estate
- Comfort cooling will not be provided as standard in University developments/refurbishment schemes
- All wood used in maintenance, development or refurbishment projects is to be from sustainable sources (e.g. FSC or PEFC)
- Paints and other wall coverings should be low or free from VOCs
- Financial assessment of all projects will take account of Whole Life Costs throughout the design development process, including in operation and maintenance costs
- A target of 15% of energy produced from renewable or LZC technologies will be sought for capital projects and major refurbishments OR equivalent fabric improvements made to the design to reduce demand by the same 15%

### *Impact on local communities and the local environment*

The University, its Project Teams and Contractors will aim to be consultative and responsive to the internal and external communities. Where it is deemed appropriate, projects will be registered under the Considerate Contractor Scheme and will aspire to a Gold Award. The University will also encourage the Contractor and its supply chain to bring added social impact (Social Values Act) through the project this may include providing apprentice opportunities, use of local suppliers and labour force, undertaking works for local charitable organisations or providing education



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opportunities for local groups. The University's Medium Works Contractor Framework has established several Key Performance Indicators to monitor this work – this will continue to be followed and reported regularly.

During the design and the delivery stage of a project the University, the wider Project Team and the Contractor (and its supply chain) will look for opportunities to provide and protect habitats. The University of Worcester has a legal obligation to conserve biodiversity and has made policy commitments accordingly. The Natural England and Rural Communities Act (2006) requires all UK public bodies to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity. Biodiversity is a key part of the University's Sustainability Policy and Environment Management System. Where appropriate, biodiversity advice from the Strategic Biodiversity Management Group can be sought (as set out in the University's Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan) to set out how the scheme will both protect existing habitats and species and give details of mitigation, enhancement or compensation plans.

### *Handover and beyond*

The University will ensure training is provided to end users and Estates/Facilities staff to ensure they are suitably trained to operate the systems and controls within the facility. Guidance on the use of buildings (e.g. building manuals, behaviour change projects) will be produced to ensure continued carbon savings once buildings are in use. Where appropriate Soft Landings will be used on schemes to facilitate both smooth handover and operation of the building. Education and CPD opportunities will be constantly sought to maintain the Estates team's knowledge of sustainable construction issues.

To formalise these processes and to ensure the built environment contributes to our net zero carbon commitment by 2030 we will develop a Sustainable Construction Specification by April 2021.