



University of Essex



# **Sustainability Sub-Strategy Bitesize**

## **Priority 5: Biodiversity and Grounds**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Priority 5: Biodiversity and Grounds	1
Action Plan	2

# Introduction

Our Sustainability Sub-Strategy outlines our commitment to acting in response to the climate and ecological emergency, while supporting the University's mission of excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities.

## Priority 5: Biodiversity and Grounds

With over 200 acres of Grade II listed parkland at our Colchester campus, 5 acres at our Loughton campus and an urban courtyard at Southend, our grounds, green spaces and their biodiversity are a fundamental part of who we are and how we work and live. Our green spaces contribute to the health and well-being of our community and offer us a unique opportunity to nurture, care for and improve biodiversity and habitats, addressing the global challenge of biodiversity and habitat loss. Through new ways of working and smart use of space, our community will contribute to our ability to make better use of the built environment and reduce our need to grow our estate, allowing maximising benefit to be gained from our green spaces.

**Objective: To maintain and enhance our green spaces, encouraging biodiversity, while limiting its reduction and encouraging our community to benefit from it. We will continue to make our outdoor spaces inspiring places to study, work and live.**

- Green space loss will be minimised, ensuring future generations of students and staff can benefit. Regular green space and biodiversity audits will be undertaken to better understand our environment and enable us to increase and measure our biodiversity improvements.
- The ability of our green spaces to contribute to our carbon reduction will be ascertained through regular carbon audits, informing future decision making on our green space use.
- Our green spaces will continue to benefit our community both physically and mentally and our community's awareness and use will be encouraged and improved offering more opportunities to use and benefit from them.
- The environmental impact of maintaining our green spaces will be minimised through emerging technologies, smart working and green technologies.

## Key Performance Indicators

KPI 15: Greenspace policy being delivered by 2024

KPI 16: By 2024 achieve >5% increase in biodiversity from 2022 baseline

KPI 17: By 2025 surveyed student and staff awareness of green spaces increases by 15% and use of green spaces increases 10%, both from a 2020 baseline

# Action Plan

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
<b>Priority 5</b>		<b>Biodiversity and Grounds</b>		
<b>Aim</b>			<b>To maintain and enhance our green spaces, encouraging biodiversity, while limiting its reduction and encouraging our community to benefit from it. We will continue to make our outdoor spaces inspiring places to study, work and live</b>	
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS20</b>	<b>Minimise green space loss</b>	
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS20.1	Develop a green space policy to define how any planned impact on green space is avoided, mitigated and managed	Grounds Manager
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS20.2	Develop a green space and biodiversity plan designating areas for development, non-development and areas where green space and biodiversity can be improved/increased	Grounds Manager
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS21</b>	<b>Gain a better understanding of our campus's biodiversity, ecology and carbon capture</b>	
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS21.1	Undertake regular biodiversity, ecological and carbon capture audits	Grounds Manager
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS22</b>	<b>Retain and increase biodiversity</b>	
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS22.1	Develop and implement a plan to maintain existing and increase areas of biodiversity and ecology across our 3 campuses including native tree planting, wildflower and unmown areas, habitats, water and wetland areas	Grounds Manager
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS23</b>	<b>Increase physical activity among students and staff within our green spaces</b>	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS23.1	Introduce a green exercise class or activity	Director of Sport
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS23.2	Introduce signed walking and running routes of differing distances through our green spaces	Director of Sport
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS24</b>	<b>Increase student and staff usage and awareness of our green spaces</b>	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS24.1	Develop and implement a communication and engagement plan developing our communities understanding of the environment around them	Sustainability Manager

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS24.2	Survey our community to gauge an understanding of awareness and use of our green spaces	Sustainability Manager
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS24.3	Install information boards within green space areas highlighting the breadth of wildlife and biodiversity present to educate and inform our community on our green spaces, biodiversity and wildlife	Grounds Manager
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS24.4	Develop and implement a plan to increase wildlife, habitat and ecology educational walks	Grounds Manager
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS25</b>	<b>Decrease carbon emissions from Ground's maintenance activities</b>	
Deliverable	2026/27	SSS25.1	Introduce electric grounds vehicles	Grounds Manager
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS25.2	Increase level of electric powered hand tools	Grounds Manager
Deliverable	2025/26	SSS25.3	Install PV on Grounds Section barns	Grounds Manager