



Sustainability Policy



About this policy

Our world is undergoing rapid and catastrophic environmental change brought about by the unsustainable exploitation of the planet's resources. Chester Zoo's mission is to prevent extinction – creating meaningful connections between our work, our visitors, nature and humans. We are passionate about creating a future where nature can survive and thrive.

The Conservation Plan for Chester Zoo sets out a road map to deliver our mission to prevent extinction with a set of bold targets that make a significant contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Convention on Biodiversity's Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

As part of our mission to prevent extinction, our strategy must include measures that can reduce the global threats to ecosystems presented by climate change, waste pollution and the over exploitation of natural resources. This Sustainability Policy sets out how we will deliver sustainability as an organisation.

Responsibility for the Policy sits with the Trustees of Chester Zoo, with delegated responsibility to the Executive Directors, who operate through the Sustainability Steering Group, led by the Chief Operating Officer. Responsibility for delivery against the Policy sits with all Chester Zoo employees and volunteers.

“Chester Zoo” refers to the **North of England Zoological Society (NEZS)** and its subsidiary companies, which are collectively referred to as “Chester Zoo” throughout this policy, and references to “we”, “us” and “the zoo” refer to the Chester Zoo entities collectively.



Our commitment to sustainability

Chester Zoo is committed to improving sustainability across all its activities and our approach will be regularly reviewed as best practice evolves and striving for continuous improvement on sustainability.

Sustainability encompasses environmental, social and economic factors, as well as demonstrating good governance around sustainability within the organisation. Given our standing as a conservation and education charity, our initial strategy primarily focusses on our vision for environmental sustainability at Chester Zoo.

Over time, we will further develop our strategy for sustainability to enhance positive environmental outcomes, to demonstrate our commitment to social and economic factors and to develop our governance structures to provide further transparency and accountability for positive outcomes, aligned to our purpose as a conservation and education charity.

Sustainability principles

The following principles sets out our approach to sustainability. We will:

- **Minimise** the negative environmental impact of our organisation and its operations, including taking a lifecycle approach.
- **Maximise** positive contributions to the environment through our operations and delivery of positive gains for biodiversity across our estate.
- **Build resilience** to climate change into our estate, operational site and operations.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, policy and industry guidance to deliver **good environmental practice**.
- Deliver **good practice sustainability** and apply **Biodiversity Net Gain** principles in our capital development and maintenance projects.
- Seek to apply the **best available solutions**, balanced with financial viability and operational needs, to deliver our commitments to sustainability.
- Follow a **sustainable procurement policy** and purchasing procedures.
- Put in place the **necessary action plans** and **financial planning** to demonstrate how we will deliver against the Sustainability Policy.
- Put in place **robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms** to understand our environmental impacts and demonstrate progress towards and achievement against the Sustainability Policy.
- Establish **governance structures** that embed consideration of sustainability throughout the organisation.
- **Showcase good practice sustainability** to inspire and empower others to adopt more sustainable ways of working, including through partnerships and collaborations with others.
- Deliver **wider social outcomes** by using our influence through policy and education work to change the behaviour of consumers and corporates, encouraging sustainable practices, contributing to our Conservation Plan targets to **empower 10 million people to live more sustainably** and for the benefit of wildlife, and, **influence positive change in policy for wildlife** in five major thematic areas.



Our sustainability targets

Central to our commitment is demonstrating environmental sustainability across the organisation's operations, including the zoo (60 hectares) and its landholdings (205 hectares).

Aligned to our medium term strategic plans to 2031, we have set the following sustainability targets for our organisation, for the decade to our centenary year in 2031:

Carbon Net Zero in our scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030

Towards a zero waste operation by 2030

Procurement of deforestation-free commodities in all our major supply chains

Achieve net gain for UK biodiversity, with at least 30% of zoo owned land being managed for UK biodiversity by 2030



**CARBON
NET ZERO**

by 2030 in our scope
1 & 2 emissions

Towards a

**ZERO
WASTE**

operation by 2030



**PROCUREMENT OF
DEFORESTATION-FREE
COMMODITIES**

in all major
supply chains



**NET GAIN
FOR UK BIODIVERSITY**

with at least **30%** of
zoo land managed for
UK biodiversity
by 2030

Carbon Net Zero in our scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030

We will address our activities as an organisation that contribute to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions.

We aim to reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions in our Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030, from a 2019 baseline – those emissions within our direct control, associated with fuel and electricity use. We will focus on avoiding or reducing emissions to decarbonise wherever possible and minimise the need for offsetting, which will only be used to offset residual emissions.

In practice, this will involve:

- Minimising our energy demand – only using what we need.
- Expanding our use of low carbon technologies.
- Protecting, enhancing and creating habitats for carbon storage on the estate.
- Offsetting any residual emissions that cannot be avoided or reduced through verified greenhouse gas removal projects and, wherever possible, which also provide wider benefits nature.

We aim to reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions in our Scope 3 emissions by 2050 at the latest, from a 2019 baseline.

In practice, this will involve:

- Embedding a sustainable procurement policy and purchasing procedures and working with suppliers to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of purchased goods and services.
- Adopting low carbon design principles in maintenance and development activities.
- Promoting low carbon travel options to employees, volunteers and visitors.
- Applying the principles of a circular economy to waste streams.



Towards a zero waste operation by 2030

We will address the environmental impact from our organisation's waste through applying the principles of a circular economy to prevent, reduce, reuse and recycle. We aim to avoid the use of incineration and landfill as a means of waste disposal.

We will work towards being a zero waste operation by 2030, aiming to address the environmental impact from our organisation's waste, where it is within our direct operational influence and excluding residual waste (see below). This will apply to the activities on the zoo site and its landholdings, including materials provided by our supply chain.

In practice, we will work towards this through:

- Minimising the production of waste through using resources efficiently and influencing our suppliers to reduce waste that is 'bought in'.
- Maximising resource recovery by applying the principles of responsible consumption, prevention, reduction, reuse and recycling.
- Working to avoid the use of incineration and landfill as a means of waste disposal, wherever possible.

Residual waste streams are those that must be disposed of in specialist ways and are outside of the zoo's direct operational influence. Therefore, they will be reported separately and will not be included in the zero waste operation by 2030 target. Whilst not included within the target, we will work to reduce the volume of this waste we produce and minimise the impact of these waste streams, including influencing suppliers, industry, government and visitors.



Procurement of deforestation-free commodities in all our major supply chains

We will address the goods and services purchased from our major supply chains that have the potential to contribute to deforestation and wider land use change (also known as ‘forest risk commodities’), as part of a wider approach to sustainable procurement.

This will focus on the following commodities: cattle (beef and leather), cocoa, coffee, palm oil, timber, pulp and paper, and soy; in our major supply chains (areas of spend where we are using or purchasing high volumes of forest risk commodities).

In practice, to deliver this we will:

- Collaborate with others to develop definitions of deforestation-free commodities and build upon existing certification schemes.
- Understand our exposure to forest risk commodities and meet legislative and due diligence requirements as they emerge.
- Embed best practice into our supply chain to ensure we work towards purchasing deforestation-free commodities for at least those commodities listed above by 2030.
- Use our influence to promote wider industry change towards deforestation-free commodities.



Achieve net gain for UK biodiversity, with at least 30% of zoo owned land being managed for UK biodiversity by 2030

For all aspects of zoo operational and development activities, we will aim to avoid or minimise any negative impacts to UK biodiversity. Where impacts occur, the mitigation hierarchy will be followed as per national/local planning policy Biodiversity Net Gain principles, to ensure that demonstrable annual improvements for UK habitats and species are made overall on the zoo and its landholdings.

We will have a minimum of 30% of the zoo and its landholdings dedicated as UK biodiversity areas by 2030. These will represent areas of wildlife habitats managed for UK biodiversity on the zoo landholdings and signify Chester Zoo's commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework flagship target of “30x30”.

In practice, to deliver this we will:

- Create, restore and manage habitats across the zoo for UK priority species recovery; including providing habitat connectivity and buffers across the zoo and its landholdings and with adjacent land to facilitate species dispersal.
- Provide monitoring and evaluation to inform land management for UK biodiversity and evidence biodiversity gains.
- Conduct Biodiversity Impact Assessments and apply Biodiversity Net Gain principles to all zoo developments and changes in land use practice.
- Improve our activities and processes across the zoo and its landholdings to employ sensitive practices that promote UK biodiversity, protect or enhance UK wildlife habitats, and promote carbon storage, soil health and good water management and quality.
- Collaborate with local stakeholders and networks to apply and promote best practice, support local wildlife strategies and provide opportunities for public connection with nature.





Governance

Policy Author: Jennifer Kelly, Head of Sustainability

Responsible Officer: Dominic Strange, Chief Operating Officer

Review Period: This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Policy Author, Responsible Officer and the Sustainability Steering Group, to benefit from best practice as it evolves.

Date of adoption: July 2023 (V1)

Date of last review: December 2025 (V3)

Disclosure: The Sustainability Policy is disclosed publicly on the Chester Zoo website at: www.chesterzoo.org/sustainability

Appendix 1 - Key definitions

We use the following definitions for key terms used:

Carbon Net Zero Definitions

Net Zero emissions – Net Zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period. (Aligned with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) definition)

Carbon – Typically used to mean greenhouse gas emissions, except where used relating to carbon stocks and sequestration.

Greenhouse gases – Greenhouse gases are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation that causes the greenhouse effect, which leads to global warming. There are seven main greenhouse gases, as covered by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) guidance on emissions reporting: carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PCFs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃).

Scopes 1, 2 & 3 – The Greenhouse Gas Protocol is a global standard for accounting for greenhouse gas emissions. It classifies greenhouse gas emissions into three 'scopes'. Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources (e.g. fuels used for heating buildings). Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy. Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the organisation, including both upstream and downstream emissions (e.g. the emissions associated with capital development projects, the goods and services we buy, and visitor and business travel).

Deforestation-free Definitions

Deforestation-free – No new conversion of natural forest to agriculture or other land uses.

Land use change – No new conversion of natural ecosystems to agriculture or other land uses.

Commodities – A raw material or primary agricultural product that can be bought and sold. These may be within the products, goods and services, bought by the organisation, from supply chain partner organisations.

Deforestation-free commodities – The key commodities (also known as forest risk commodities) within UK supply chains responsible for most tropical deforestation. They are cattle (beef and leather), cocoa, coffee, palm oil, timber, pulp and paper, and soy.

Major Supply Chains – Chester Zoo's major supply chains are those areas of spend where we are purchasing high volumes of forest risk commodities, for example, food & beverage, cleaning and hygiene, retail, office supplies, animal feed, capital projects and maintenance.

Zero Waste Definitions

Waste – Any substance or object, which Chester Zoo discards or intends to discard.

Zero waste – Resources from Chester Zoo will not be wasted by adhering to the principles of waste prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling. We avoid disposal by incineration (including energy recovery) or landfill, except for residual waste material.

Operation – All activities associated with the operations at the zoo and on its landholdings Chester Zoo, including our construction projects.

Residual waste – The offensive (including sanitary and nappies), hazardous, residual general waste produced by our operations that is beyond segregation, alongside the legacy materials already on site, veterinary and medical waste, and materials mandated by construction regulations or animal welfare requirements. These waste streams must be disposed of in specialist ways and will be reported separately and will not be included in the zero waste operation by 2030 target. Whilst not included within the target, we will work to minimise the impact of these waste streams.

Biodiversity Definitions

Biodiversity – The variety of plant and animal life or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable to maintain a functioning ecosystem.

Biodiversity net gain – Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Under the Environment Act 2021, planning permissions granted in England will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain.

Biodiversity impact assessment – An analytical process to systematically examine the possible biodiversity consequences of the implementation of a project.

Post-2020 **Global biodiversity framework (GBF)** – A United Nations-led initiative to tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss. The GBF "30x30" conservation target calls for 30% of the earth's land and sea to be conserved through the establishment of protected areas and other area-based conservation measures by 2030.

