As a university, our core purpose is to increase knowledge and opportunity for the betterment of society. To do this, we have made firm commitments to take our economic, social, environmental and cultural responsibilities seriously.

WHAT’S IN THIS REPORT?

Reflecting these commitments, our Annual Report is a total impact report – a more holistic appraisal of our social, environmental, economic and cultural impacts. To demonstrate our total value, our report is full of case studies, commitments, progress, facts and figures. Together these tell the story of the amazing work we are doing to become an even more sustainable university. It’s by no means an exhaustive record of all the initiatives and projects we’ve devised or been involved in, but it provides a great overview of what we’re up to, how sustainability is embedded across the University, and our ambitions for the future.

Critically, it’s an honest reflection of where we are. Across the University of Leeds, we’ve had some brilliant achievements and even exceeded our own targets in some areas; but we’ve also struggled to meet some of the stretch commitments we gave ourselves. This Annual Report is a chance to both share our progress and take stock internally as to what we need to prioritise in the future to become the leading sustainable university we know we can be.

Once again, this year’s Annual Report is structured under the four themes that we set out in our Sustainability Strategy: Embedding sustainability through collaboration; Building knowledge and capacity; Being a positive partner in society; and Making the most of resources.

MATERIALITY

The themes set out in our Sustainability Strategy, and subsequent Annual Reports, reflect the economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of the University of Leeds. Our targets and commitments reflect the issues that we know we can have a direct and indirect impact upon – our material topics that have, or can create, a real difference.

Although some of these will have a financial impact, our materiality goes beyond that to environmental, social and cultural impacts. That’s why you’ll find commitments ranging from carbon reduction and resource efficiency to research and volunteering.

To determine these materiality issues, we engaged with our staff and students. Working together we determined the actions and commitments we could make to bring about the most impact across the university and beyond to local, national and international communities. These are reviewed regularly to ensure we stay relevant, impactful and able to make a significant difference.