

A photograph of four children running across a green grassy field. In the background, there is a stone wall and some trees under a cloudy sky. The children are dressed in school uniforms; three are in light blue dresses and one is in a blue cardigan and shorts. They are all smiling and appear to be in motion.

# Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

**BECKFOOT  
TRUST** 

# Introduction and Purpose

## **The need to act on climate change**

Beckfoot Trust's Sustainability and Climate Action Strategy is in place to outline our approach to reducing the impact our Trust has on the environment whilst supporting us to deliver our mission of creating remarkable schools where no child is left behind.

We cannot rightly say we are concerned about creating remarkable schools without reflecting on our use of resources and our impact on the environment. As educators, we have a role to play in influencing the behaviours of the young people in our schools, to help them make the right choices and to enable them to have a positive impact on society. In all likelihood, their passion and knowledge about this topic will mean we will all learn together.

## **The national context**

The UK government has adopted a legal framework under the Climate Change Act (2008) with a national net zero target of 2050. The DfE "Sustainability and climate change" (2022) policy paper identifies the importance of the education sector, ensuring that current and future generations are given the right knowledge and skills for a world affected by climate change.

21% of the public sector carbon emissions are generated by primary and secondary education and therefore we have a crucial role to play in supporting that national target, which requires sustained action over the course of the next 5 years and beyond to make a pathway to net-zero achievable. The Committee on Climate Change have made clear that this requires action across all areas and levels of government, the public and private sectors and the population.

## **The case for action in education**

A recent national survey found that 77% of young people feel anxious about climate change, so a robust and actionable strategy and plan around climate change and sustainability will support our work on supporting student mental health and belonging. There are also benefits in making our organisation more commercially effective and on attracting and retaining talent because it is important to many people.

## **Purpose of this strategy**

This document, supported by an accompanying action plan, aims to lay out the principles underpinning our approach to initiate and sustain effective sustainability initiatives across our Trust. Guided by the Department for Education's (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, this strategy aims to ensure a consistent and accountable approach across all schools, reducing the risks associated with inaction in this area. Without structured coordination, efforts to address climate change may become fragmented or ineffective. Our action plan ensures leadership is clear, responsibilities are shared, and outcomes are measurable.

# Our Strategic Pillars



## Climate education, training and jobs

The One Trust Contract commits schools to a “knowledge rich curriculum” that incorporates ‘knowing how as well as knowing that’.

We also recognise the importance of extra-curricular for developing the whole child, supporting wellbeing and building cultural capital for all and time on civic engagement and an emphasis on the development of self-determination as the best way of developing positive mental health and wellbeing.

We are ambitious for our children and young people to be confident communicators, knowledgeable and expert learners, community contributors, future ready young people. Knowing that the climate is changing and how to take individual, corporate and systemic action to tackle it and adapt to a changing world aligns to these principles and the aims of the DfE strategy.

## Decarbonisation

The DfE’s Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy aims to achieve a 75% reduction in emissions by 2037. Thinking about the built estate, and given the PFI arrangements in place at 4 of our schools, it will require significant decarbonisation of the other 6 schools to achieve this figure across the whole estate, alongside action in partnership with the PFI providers. This work has already begun with £2million spent on retrofit and generation (See “Where are we now?”), but every opportunity to electrify heat generation, reduce consumption and increase generation of our own electricity will need to be taken whenever replacement is required, or any refurbishment is taking place.

Decarbonisation will also need to extend to other parts of school and trust operations including procurement, catering and transport as we move from thinking purely about scope 1 and 2 emissions to scope 3.



## **Adaptation and resilience**

We have a varied estate with some of our buildings approaching 125 years old, some having had extensions and refurbishment over the years and some are relatively new.

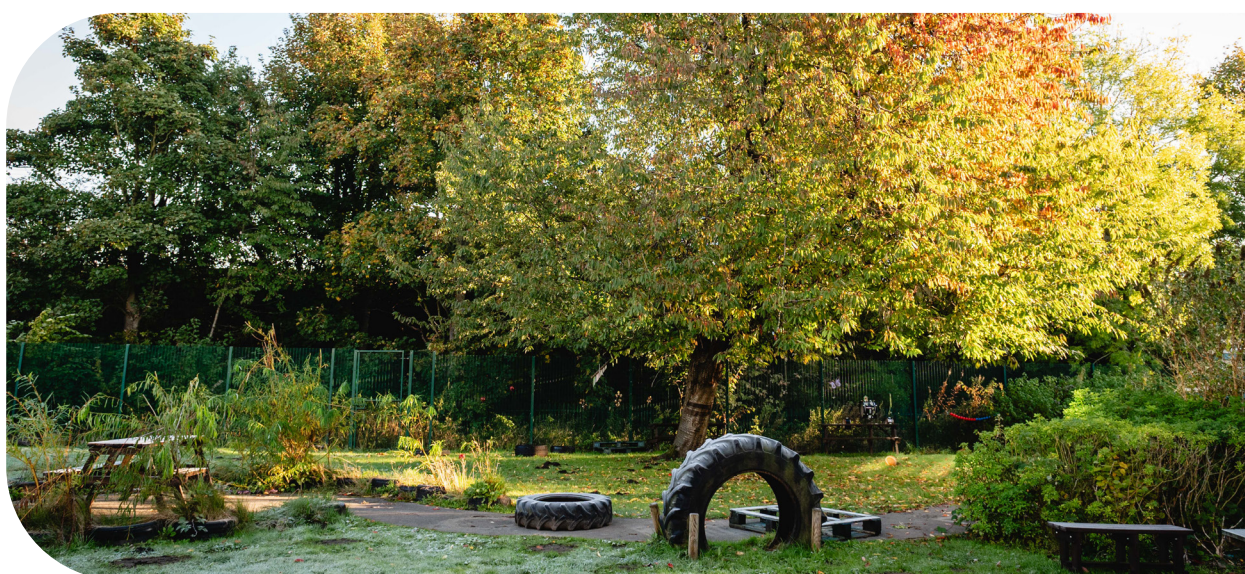
Climate change will increase the number of, and intensity of extreme weather events, and we need to ensure the whole estate is available to us throughout those periods and they therefore need to be resilient to events such as heatwaves, ice and snow and flooding. With average temperatures rising, the need for effective ventilations and strategies to reduce overheating, particularly in our special schools is a pressing concern.

## **Biodiversity**

As well as an understanding of climate change, we share the DfE's ambition for students to have an appreciation of the natural world.

The DfE strategy says "Practical opportunities to participate in activities to increase climate resilience, reduce carbon impact and enhance biodiversity will enable children and young people to translate knowledge into positive action to improve their local communities, their country and the planet".

We are fortunate that many of our sites have significant amounts of greenspace including woodland, which provides us with ample opportunities to engage our students with nature, but we know we can do more with the spaces we have and improve the biodiversity and protect these areas (from plastic pollution for example). We will also seek to do this through the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, collaboration with other local MATs, community organisations, participation in the National Education Nature Park and updating our grounds maintenance plans.



# Our Strategic Objectives

## Our Climate Action Plan will help our Trust to:

- Increase the confidence and capacity of leaders, staff and students to engage with climate issues
- Foster a culture where sustainability is embedded in daily practice
- Share effective practice across our Trust through the use of collective efficacy and central leadership in this area
- Use data to identify, prioritise and target actions relating to areas such as energy and water use
- Monitor and reduce carbon emissions
- Decrease operational costs
- Enhance resilience to climate change impacts
- Promote biodiversity on school grounds
- Equip learners with the skills and knowledge for green careers.

The plan supports the UK's Net Zero by 2050 goal and reflects Beckfoot Trust's commitment to embedding sustainability into its leadership, learning, and operations.

Our Trust will have an overarching climate action plan and provide a framework for schools to take actions relevant to their own sites with an aim for them to develop individual plans in future years that align with the overarching strategy and plan.



# Baseline Assessment: Where we are now

Beckfoot Trust has made progress over the last 5 years with some significant capital investment in the schools to reduce their collective impact on the climate, and other procurement activity which either reduces our impact now or provides an opportunity to do so in the future. These projects include:

- A ground source heat pump at Beckfoot Thornton
- LED lighting and insulation installations at 6 schools
- Solar panel installations at Beckfoot Thornton, Beckfoot Nessfield, Beckfoot Allerton, Beckfoot Phoenix and Beckfoot Heaton
- Replacement of roofs and windows to modern, energy efficient standards
- A more sustainable paper supplier for our Trust
- A single waste contract for our Trust (unless there is a PFI arrangement in place)
- A single catering contract for our Trust.

## Baseline Assessment

A baseline was originally carried out on 2019 data prior to many of those capital works being completed. We have used monitoring and verification on the decarbonisation projects to determine our carbon and energy savings as follows:

- The GSHP project in 2021 has resulted in annual carbon savings of 67 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and 282k kWh of energy. The LED, PV, insulation and other retrofit changes resulted in a total saving or avoided energy use of 1.38 million kWh of energy
- A heat decarbonisation plan produced in 2023 for the non-PFI schools identified further potential annual energy savings of 2.8 million kWh and carbon savings of 572 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Whilst we know our total energy consumption was 10,695k kWh (2036 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2023/24 as reported in our annual Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR), if we are to take meaningful further action, we need more detailed, holistic data, and we therefore commit to carry out audits or collect further data on:

- Energy: Electricity and gas usage across all sites (including energy generation and review of EPCs)
- Heat generation
- Water: Consumption levels and draining infrastructure
- Waste: Volume, types, and current management practices
- Transport: Travel habits of staff and students
- Food: Procurement, packaging, and waste from meal services
- Procurement and contract management: Sustainability provision in existing contracts and a requirement in future tenders and arrangements with suppliers.



# Our climate goals

## **We have 3 ultimate ambitions in relation to sustainability and climate action:**

1. For students and staff to have knowledge about what climate change and the climate emergency is, what is needed to tackle it (including what part we can play) and how we need to adapt and develop resilience to our changing world.
2. To reduce the impact our Trust has on the environment, specifically with annual reduction targets for our carbon emissions without resorting to green-washing and use of off-setting, which get us to match the DfE's 75% reduction target by 2037.
3. To develop our estate to be low carbon, resilient to the effects of climate change and to be highly biodiverse.

To achieve these goals we commit to the production, and annual review of, action plans including measurable statements of success to help achieve these goals. The objectives from the action plan can be found in Appendix 1.





# Monitoring, Reporting & Accountability

Action plans will be monitored in line with our Trust's accountability cycles, with school sustainability leads reporting into the Trust Sustainability Lead (Head of Estates) on progress on local school actions. The Trust Sustainability Lead will be accountable to the DCEO for progress towards the goals outlined above and the steps in the action plan.

We will continue to provide annually published data on our emissions through SECR (or successor reporting mechanism) in our annual financial report. A link trustee (Jack Fowler) has been appointed for oversight from the board of trustees.

Feedback will be provided to schools and students on progress towards the climate goals above annually in an appropriate form.





# Appendix 1

## Climate action Plan Objectives and Statements of Success

<b>Objectives</b> <b>Statements of success and detailed actions are outlined in the climate action plan</b>	
1.1	Active student leadership of sustainability and climate action
1.2	A curriculum that develops understanding of climate change, climate action and an appreciation of the natural world
1.3	Every school develops and implements individual climate action plans
1.4	To be an active participant, and take opportunities to lead as appropriate, in local and national climate/sustainability conversations and work by working in partnership with others
2.1	Audit and monitor energy and carbon usage (to include procurement)
2.2	Develop capital plans for 25/26 and 26/27 by including elements from heat decarbonisation plan
2.3	A proactive approach to energy and water management and reduced consumption (behaviour change)
2.4	Identification of areas of inefficiency and action plans to improve environmental performance (controls and effective use of data)
3.1	Develop plans to adapt the built estate to be more resilient to extreme temperatures (reduce overheating)
3.2	Develop plans to ensure the drainage (including natural soakaways) provides resilience against flood risk
4.1	Ground maintenance plans in place for all schools with improving biodiversity as a feature
4.2	Engage with National Nature Park programme
4.3	Reduce litter and improve waste management to support biodiversity as a feature
4.4	Minimise the environmental and health impacts of chemical use across cleaning, site operations, and curriculum departments by adopting safer alternatives, improving storage and handling, and embedding sustainable practices

<b>Objectives</b> <b>Statements of success and detailed actions are outlined in the climate action plan</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Active student leadership of sustainability and climate action</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every school to have a student eco group by Jan 2026</li> <li>• Every school to have selected and made progress against a minimum of 2 actions in 25/26</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>A curriculum that develops understanding of climate change, climate action and an appreciation of the natural world</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A majority of students in a survey indicate they “learn enough about climate and environment action in school”</li> <li>• Staff express increased confidence delivery of sustainability and climate topics</li> </ul>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Every school develops and implements individual climate action plans</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local plan in place and targets achieved by C3 26/27</li> <li>• School sustainability lead in post (with succession planning)</li> </ul>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>To be an active participant, and take opportunities to lead as appropriate, in local and national climate/sustainability conversations and work by working in partnership with others</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at a minimum of 3 events over 2025-27</li> <li>• Publication of a minimum of 5 news or discussion pieces via social channels or website over 2025-27</li> </ul>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Audit and monitor energy and carbon usage (to include procurement)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half hourly data available to Head of Estates and schools in non-PFI schools</li> <li>• Travel data available to inform next steps</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Develop capital plans for 25/26 and 26/27 by including elements from heat decarbonisation plan</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeline in place for delivery of HDP measures</li> <li>• Each (non-PFI) school has a minimum of 1 carbon/energy reduction measure planned for 25/26 and 26/27</li> </ul>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>A proactive approach to energy and water management and reduced consumption (behaviour change)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings of 6%/MWh/tCO<sub>2</sub>e achieved in each years SECR reporting</li> <li>• Savings of 6% litres water on water consumption</li> <li>• Student councils in 100% of schools discuss sustainability (e.g. menu planning) at least once per year with caterers</li> </ul>



<b>2.4</b>	<b>Identification of areas of inefficiency and action plans to improve environmental performance (controls and effective use of data)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings of 6%/MWh/tCO2e achieved in each years SECR reporting</li> <li>• Boiler (or equivalent) run hours reduced</li> </ul>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Develop plans to adapt the built estate to be more resilient to extreme temperatures (reduce overheating)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building issues raised relating to heat/cooling reduced by 20% in 26/27</li> <li>• Heat/cold comments in stakeholder surveys/feedback reduced each year</li> <li>• A maximum of 10 room closures relating to unacceptable temperatures in 26/27</li> </ul>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Develop plans to ensure the drainage (including natural soakaways) provides resilience against flood risk</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of schools sites will have completed a drainage and flood risk assessment by July 2026</li> <li>• Annual maintenance logs will show 100% compliance with inspection schedules</li> </ul>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Ground maintenance plans in place for all schools with improving biodiversity as a feature</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity indicators (e.g. pollinator counts, bird sightings) will show improvement in areas where changes to grounds maintenance has taken place by C3 2026/27.</li> </ul>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Engage with National Nature Park programme</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of school sites mapped and registered with the National Education Nature Park by July 2026</li> <li>• Biodiversity indicators (e.g. species counts, habitat quality) show measurable improvement across mapped sites by 2027</li> </ul>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Reduce litter and improve waste management to support biodiversity across all school and community environments</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By July 2026, schools will have implemented a waste reduction plan with measurable targets for litter reduction &amp; recycling rates</li> <li>• Biodiversity indicators (e.g. pollinator counts, bird sightings) will show improvement in areas where waste interventions have been implemented</li> <li>• Stakeholder feedback that litter is reduced and recycling easier</li> </ul>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Minimise the environmental and health impacts of chemical use across cleaning, site operations, and curriculum departments by adopting safer alternatives, improving storage and handling, and embedding sustainable practices</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of departments using chemicals will have completed a COSHH audit and updated assessments by the end of the academic year 25/26, and have plans in place to replace (and safely dispose of existing) hazardous chemicals by July 2026</li> <li>• Zero incidents of chemical misuse or non-compliance reported annually</li> </ul>

**Beckfoot Trust**  
**Wagon Lane**  
**Bingley**  
**West Yorkshire**  
**BD16 1EE**

**Telephone: 01274 771444**

**Email: [beckfoottrust@beckfoot.org](mailto:beckfoottrust@beckfoot.org)**

