

University of Liverpool, Campus Trade Unions, and Liverpool Guild of Students

Joint Declaration of a Climate and Ecological Crisis – November 2021

The University of Liverpool, campus Trade Unions, and Liverpool Guild of Students are today making a joint declaration on the climate and ecological crises affecting our planet.

Environmental exploitation is devastating our habitats, finite resources, and exhausting the limits of our ecological biosphere. These unsustainable practices continue to contribute enormous amounts of greenhouse gases to those naturally occurring in the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effect and global warming. Consequently, climate change is having a devastating impact across all regions around the world, and is an escalating threat to humans, wildlife and ecosystems. In particular we acknowledge our responsibility to the Global South and marginalised communities, which are feeling a disproportionate impact of climate change – including effects of adverse weather patterns, resource scarcity, food poverty, and geo-economic displacement – despite these communities contributing the least to the climate changes we are witnessing.

Across our organisations we recognise the deep concerns of our students and staff, and their calls to action. Achieving a level of warming of 1.5°C, in line with the Paris Agreement, requires rapid and immediate reductions in carbon emissions. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that the “limiting warming to 1.5°C, compared with 2°C, could reduce the number of people critically exposed to climate-related risks and poverty by up to several hundred million people by 2050”. It is our responsibility to act as swiftly and decisively as possible to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

As a civic university we are aware of our social responsibilities and will be taking immediate and substantive steps to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful environmental impacts. This step change has begun most recently, and most significantly, with the launch of the University’s Sustainability Strategy and the commitment to become net zero carbon by 2035. We are committed to a net zero carbon target deadline no later than 2035, with the ambition of bringing this deadline forward as we implement our strategy. Our new sustainability governance model is built around university collaboration, to support delivery on the UN SDGs and to take climate action now for a sustainable future.

We are committed to mobilising action across the University to transform our climate and ecological impact, invest in a critical transformation of our energy infrastructure, drive innovation in climate research, deliver teaching rich in sustainability, and critically lobby and collaborate across our wider City and Region.

With strong leadership, good governance, and our commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals we are committed to developing policies and plans for achieving the deadline with clear, measurable, incremental targets and defined responsibilities. We will commit to ambitious targets and change, while ensuring that they facilitate a just transition in which no one in our community is left behind. Urgent action to meet these challenges will require the thoughtful and committed input of our university community, our partners, stakeholders and wider local, regional and global

communities. This requires effective engagement between the organisations who are party to this statement on climate and ecological impacts, and issues arising from the green transition.

It will also require meaningful action to ensure the transition to a sustainable University whose curriculum and research activities are in line with a decarbonised economy that protects biodiversity and challenges global inequalities. We are engaging with groups outside of the university community and will continue to work closely to develop the research capacity to make a full transition from a carbon-based economy.

As a partnership of civic and anchor organisations – the University, campus Trade Unions, and Liverpool Guild of Students – we commit to mobilise joint, swift action to critically address the climate and ecological crises of the 21st century.