

Approver: Board of Visitors, Pitt Rivers Museum

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Environmental Sustainability Policy

Pitt Rivers Museum

We find ourselves in a period where a dramatic rise in environmental pollution, loss of biodiversity and changes of climate have made us acutely aware of the precarity of our planet. While planetary in cause and scale, the negative effects of these environmental changes are unequally distributed, affecting most intensely some of those whose positions are already most fragile, including indigenous and formerly colonised people around the world. The planetary crisis, therefore, is contributing to rising global insecurity and inequality. As part of this Sustainability-Policy, the PRM will find ways to use the collections and galleries as spaces which create active discussion around the impact of humans on the planet, while also highlighting what long-term perspectives can tell us about sustainability for developing positive futures. As such, we aim to centre the Museum as a place of care for people and the planet we inhabit, aligning our Environmental Sustainability Policy with our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Strategic Plan.

The Pitt Rivers Museum is committed to environmental responsibility and seeks to **monitor and minimise** its environmental impact as much as practicably possible. As a department of the University of Oxford, we commit to working towards the institution-wide targets for net zero carbon emissions and biodiversity net gain as detailed in the [University's Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#). We will develop these targets with the support of the [University Environmental Sustainability Team](#), as well as the GLAM Sustainability working group. These targets will also allow us to work towards a [Green Impact Team award](#).

Considering the environmental impact of Museum activity, we have identified five key areas where we need to engage deeply with our environmental impact - travel, energy use, food, resources and public engagement. In each of these areas, we have worked to pinpoint where action might be taken to improve our operational function regarding sustainability during the period of the **Museum's next Strategic Plan (2022 - 2027)**.

Whilst many of these aims involve better use of resources and sharing information and best practice across the Museum and across the Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) division of the University, some may pose a financial challenge, and the Museum will seek sources of funding (GLAM, internal University and external), where necessary, to implement these actions.

Sustainable Travel

Reduce staff travel for work purposes to a minimum to reduce energy use, in particular emissions from aviation, and encourage visitors and researchers to also use sustainable forms of transport when visiting the Museum.

Travel Guidelines

The Museum will ensure that infrastructure is in place to minimise travel for work purposes, and in particular reducing flights, by working to the following travel guidelines:

- Avoid travel and use remote working technologies
- Travel without flying
- Fly only when: there are no practicable alternatives, it is sanctioned by the Director, and emissions are offset through the Oxford Sustainability Fund
- All staff will use Key Travel to book flights (www.keytravel.com)

Minimise staff travel

The Museum will enable staff to adhere to the travel guidelines by reducing the need to travel in the first instance through the provision of remote working technology in various settings, and by developing a culture of minimal and sustainable travel. To provision remote working technology, evaluations will need to be carried out for virtual working environments in the Museum and off-site to determine necessary equipment for staff to work safely and effectively whilst remote working (web cameras, microphones, external screens, keyboard/mouse).

Sustainable travel information

While a high percentage of staff either walk, cycle or use public transport to commute to the Museum, staff will be regularly reminded of Museum and University-wide resources to enable sustainable travel to and from work, and staff will be encouraged to participate in University-wide initiatives such as Bike to Work Week.

Visitor information on the Museum's website will promote travel to the Museum via public transport, cycling and walking, as appropriate.

Museum vehicles

Alternatives will be considered for the Museum's current diesel fuel van, including electric vehicle or sharing the van across GLAM or renting. In case of the former, we can apply for funds from the University Green Travel Scheme: <https://travel.admin.ox.ac.uk/go-electric>.

Facilities

The Museum will provide bicycle storage, staff showers, changing facilities, and lockers to encourage staff to cycle, run or walk to the Museum where possible. We can apply for funds from the University Green Travel Scheme: <https://travel.admin.ox.ac.uk/fund/showers>. Plentiful bicycle racks are provided for staff and visitor use. Facilities will be highlighted on the Visit Us section of the Museum's website.

Sustainable Energy Use

Identify areas of inefficient use of energy and work with the University Estates department and all Museum staff to reduce energy wastage where possible.

Energy consumption targets and monitoring

The Museum will monitor its annual energy consumption and set targets to reduce this.

Building users' guide and maintenance manuals

The Museum will create a comprehensive, accessible building users' guide with information on energy efficient features and strategies. Effective operations and maintenance manuals will help ensure that equipment is maintained at optimal working conditions. New appliances will be selected according to their energy efficiency. Preliminary investigation into the placement of solar panels (on the south facing side of the extension roof) for supplying power for the server room began in 2020 and there is scope to determine whether this could be widened to more areas.

Heating and insulation

The Museum will work with Estates Services to implement a comprehensive maintenance programme with a view to reducing energy consumption.

Lighting

All circulation lighting in the public areas including temporary exhibition gallery migrated from tungsten halogen, beginning in 2015, except for circulation lighting on the main and fire escape stairwells and lighting in the corridor outside the public toilet cubicles (to be completed by March 2022):

- Main flood circulation lighting in the Museum was upgraded to LED lighting in 2018.
- The perimeter circulation lighting was upgraded to LED in 2015.
- The architectural lighting that illuminates the iron work at high level is LED.
- All the existing case lighting is illuminated by LED, a combination of dimmable LED fibre optic and dimmable LED strip courtesy of Light Fantastic project in 2013:
 - The LED lighting in the Haida box and ship model cases need incorporating into the main case lighting circuits if possible.
 - The "Didcot" case on the SE side of the lower gallery has LED lighting but needs standardising and connecting to the main lighting circuit (currently on mechanical timer).
 - The Hawaiian cloak case in the Court is lit by fluorescent and needs upgrade to LED.
- The information and shop platform area are illuminated by metal halide and halogen lamps rather than LED and requires upgrading

For the back-of-house part of the Museum, LED lighting has replaced circulation lighting in the east corridor office areas on all floors and been supplemented by PIR motion detectors with the removal of light switches in 2021. LED lighting has been added to the first floor library/circulation space in 2021. The workshop and loading bay have been upgraded to LED lighting:

- Most individual office and artefact store lighting still requires upgrading to LED from fluorescent.
- The external fascia lighting requires upgrading to LED and connecting to a light sensitive device rather than a mechanical timer.

Collections storage

The University's Gardens, Libraries and Museums are in the process of commissioning two new purpose-built storage facilities: a Collections Teaching and Research Centre (CTRC) in central Oxford and a Collections Storage Facility (CSF) in Swindon. These will be designed and built with high standards of sustainability in accordance with Estates Services' Sustainability Design Guide.

Sustainable Food

Minimise the environmental impact of catering in the Museum (café, catering for in-house and external events, food products in shop) and limit food and packaging waste.

In-house event catering

The Museum commits to ordering only vegetarian/vegan catering for all in-house meetings and events. GLAM colleagues who work from the Museum will also be encouraged to commit to this. Where food allergies and/or cultural practices require meat-based alternatives, we will look to ensure organic and/or sustainable alternatives are ordered.

External catering

External hirers will be encouraged to consider plant-based catering in line with the Museum's own activity.

We will review the environmental sustainability practices of our recommended caterer and work closely with external caterers to ensure responsible sourcing of ingredients and disposal of food waste.

Displays and events

Develop educational resources and programming around the huge range of multicultural, diverse, and sustainable ways of producing and consuming food represented by the collections (vessels, hunting). Explore contemporary issues around sustainable food through the collections, such as the relationship between sustainable local resource use in the past vs. unsustainable resource exploitation and problems on a global scale in the present (eg palm oil).

Food and packaging waste

We will work with neighbouring departments to arrange shared food waste collection, to allow food waste bins in staff rooms. We will also encourage staff to personally discontinue use of single-use cutlery and crockery and to store personal reusable crockery in the staff tea rooms.

Single-use crockery and packaging (eg plastic drinks bottles) will be avoided where possible during Museum events, and any single-use crockery will be fully biodegradable and disposed of properly.

Shop

Any food-related products sold in the shop will be responsibly, and, where possible, locally sourced.

Sustainable Resource Use

Ensure that environmental sustainability and the Museum's impact on biodiversity is a primary consideration in purchasing decisions and resource use.

Purchasing

The Museum will use the University sustainable suppliers list, ensuring that environmental impact is central to purchasing choices. This will be circulated to all staff, included in induction documents.

Waste Disposal

The Museum will continue to reuse and recycle as much waste material as possible, sharing unwanted furniture through WarpIT, providing additional resources and recycling facilities, and sharing these with

neighbouring departments where practical (see Food). This will include better labelling of recycling bins and recycling points in the staff tea rooms and throughout the Museum.

We will ensure that we are fully informed of how Museum waste material is treated, including how external contractors (eg caterers, cleaners, electricians) dispose of our 'unseen' waste.

Shop

The Museum Shop product ranges will be audited and lines that encourage irresponsible resource use (eg single-use plastic, excessive packaging) will be discontinued.

External spaces

Work with Oxford University Parks Department to ensure that planting and care for external spaces will be planned to encourage biodiversity, especially when replacing borders after the 2021 lawn building works to include borders with native wildflowers for pollinators. Funding will be sought to support this project.

Public Engagement

Enable the Museum's audiences to reflect and take action on the climate crisis, and human impact on the environment and biodiversity in an informed, evidence-based manner.

Inspiring audiences

We want to be an inclusive, reflective Museum that is centred on care by building open, engaged relationships with diverse audiences and communities. We recognise that the objects in our care are repositories of ecological knowledge from a diverse range of places and communities which celebrate relationships between nature and culture, humans, plants, and animals. At the same time, we recognise that these objects also reflect the afterlives of colonialism, which has disproportionately affected indigenous and colonised communities, contributing to global inequality. Our Museum, therefore, if utilised as a space for redress, healing, and care, can re-connect communities with historical ecological knowledges, and in that process work towards building sustainable futures by sharing and celebrating these stories with visitors. We can mobilise collections in a way that helps visitors understand the connected contemporary challenges of climate change and social inequality, and how collections offer exciting and promising ways of paving a new future that allows for multiple voices and ways of being in the world.

Exhibitions, events, and education

As part of our curating the contemporary programme, we will develop educational resources (Endangered! trail together with OUMNH) and changes to the messages in our permanent galleries (Ivory, Featherwork) which celebrate the rich biodiversity and indigenous ecological knowledge represented in the collections.

We are a partner institution of the Taking Care project (2019-2023), co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, which we use as a platform to host public talks, workshops, and discussions linking planetary precarity, colonialism, and environmental injustice through research on the collections.

Communications and publicity

Make available and promote the Museum's Sustainability Plan through the Museum website.

Promote relevant aspects of the public programme and permanent and temporary exhibitions on the Museum's social media channels.

Partnerships and collaborations

Work in collaboration with local, national, and international NGOs, indigenous climate action groups and academics to inform and develop the Museum's public engagement around the interdependency of natural and cultural resources, and how capitalism, colonialism, and the climate emergency are intertwined as part of a global politics of exploitation.

Implementation

The draft of this Environmental Responsibility Policy was circulated to all staff for comment in June 2021. During an all staff meeting on 15 June 2021, staff were invited to comment on the policy and to take a survey which asked them nine questions on understanding current working practices, use of resources and environmental impact of our activities. 27 staff members filled out the survey. Most of the staff comments and feedback/suggestions were around our disposal of waste and provisions for recycling materials, especially related to materials used by Conservation and Technical Services and food waste.

Sustainable waste recycling practices in Museum sections or of individual staff members highlighted in the staff survey have been gathered into a central document and as far as possible have been actioned during MT 2021 and guidance will be included in the new staff induction packs.

Approval Process & Governance

The policy was agreed by PRM Executive Board on 13 July 2021 and went to PRM Board of Visitors on 12 October 2021 and a final draft presented for approval at the 8 February 2022 Board meeting.

The implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy will be led by a working group within the Sustainability Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Wellbeing Committee (SEW), with representatives from Research, Collections, Facilities, Public Engagement, Retail and Operations departments.

The group will meet at least every two months and will report on progress made to relevant committee and Executive Board every six months. This will help us to review a plan of action across the sections in the Museum that will be responsible for the targets and estimate timelines and budgets for these actions.

The chair of the working group will join the *GLAM sustainability champions* for constructive collaboration with our sister departments. The Museum will engage with the University's Green Impact programme and will work towards a Green Impact Silver Award.

All staff will be encouraged to attend **training** on sustainability issues relating to their area of work, and sustainable working practices will be included in **inductions and induction packs**.

Next steps

Given the urgency to action changes in practice and behaviours as soon as possible, the working group will expand on the audit done in June 2021 and **create a local action plan with timetable for implementing** the aims set out above at the Pitt Rivers Museum **by June 2022**. Ideally, we would measure the impact of our changes from a baseline footprint audit.

A **carbon footprint audit** would build a baseline of current activity, this audit would be done across GLAM and in line with the University policy. This audit will measure travel, waste, resources, and energy use; and include an audit of current regular purchasing and hire agreements and **assess areas for improvement**.

The PRM local action plan will be reviewed and adapted once this audit has been finalised.