
Developing a Sustainability Plan

V&A

In September 2021, the V&A published its Sustainability Plan. Arranged under the three headings of Place, People and Programme, it identifies key issues and actions that will be prioritise over the next three years in the context of a long-term net zero carbon target.

Many actions are on a pathway – firstly data needs to be collected or guidelines in a particular area produced, and then changes can be made and embedded. The net zero target is underpinned by some external consultancy work which calculated a detailed carbon footprint covering Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and then mapped out possible decarbonisation pathways.

It was first important to define why sustainability is important and connect it to the organisation's mission. The overarching ambition was agreed to, 'enable people, through art, design and performance, to contribute to a thriving planet and shape sustainable futures.'

The plan then focused in on three areas:

Place – The V&A will reduce the negative environmental impact of how it deliver its activities and operate its buildings, targeting net zero emissions by 2035 for Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. The V&A team have developed a 2019/20 baseline of the organisation's emissions and are refining a decarbonisation pathway.

People – It will support people, partners and sector to embed sustainable decision-making and practices, and to share knowledge and skills.

Programme – It will take a bold approach to engaging our audiences in issues of planetary limits and climate justice, focusing on people's agency to take positive action.

Actions within in each of these areas were agreed following consultation with staff and approval by Executive Board. Regular monitoring and clear annual reporting on a wider range of sustainability measures (both qualitative and quantitative) is being instigated and progress of the plan reviewed annually. A grassroots staff Sustainability Coordinators network and strategic Sustainability Steering Group help to maintain enthusiasm and motivation. The Sustainability Plan, 2021-24, can be read in full [here](#).