Biodiversity Strategy
Streatham Campus 2021-2026

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The University of Exeter manages 153 hectares of land in Exeter. The estate continues to represent a wide range of habitats, which help support amphibians, birds, reptiles, insects, mammals and aquatic life.

The habitats should not be viewed in isolation, as they cumulatively help form important links and wildlife corridors to other areas of nearby public open space and private land, including woodlands and watercourses.

This makes the open spaces the University manages an important contributor to biodiversity in Exeter and the wider Devon area.

Our Biodiversity Strategy represents a continuing commitment, by the University, to preserve existing important habitats and, where the opportunity arises, create new sustainable habitats. It forms part of a commitment to sustainable practices for buildings and the public realm, engaging with students, staff and the local authority, to strike a valued balance that places buildings in a landscape setting.

Streatham Campus Biodiversity Map

Site 1: Reed Hall Arboretum and listed historical landscape

Site 2: Birks Bank Arboretum

Site 3: Edinburgh Wild Conifer Collection

Site 4: Old Botanic Garden, Poole Gate

Guiding principles/priorities

The Streatham Campus map has been annotated to indicate the priority areas for preserving and enhancing landscape and biodiversity, as a commitment within the Estates Strategy, considering the ongoing development of an ambitious University wishing to deliver facilities and environments that support its values and priorities.

1 Preserve and enhance existing landscapes and habitats

The following existing sites have been prioritised as they have important landscape and habitat value, which shall continue to be managed for species conservation:

- **Reed Hall Pond and Arboretum**

This site is part of a listed historic landscape. It contains habitats such as standing water, mixed woodland and specimen plants.

- **Birks Bank Arboretum**

A tree collection with rare conifers and an understory with naturalised bulbs.

- **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Wild Conifer Collection**

Areas of the campus where, in association with RBGE, seeds collected from conifers in the wild are being grown and monitored to determine their adaptation for the UK climate and potential introduction to the commercial market in the UK.

- **Lower Hoopern Valley/ Taddiforde Brook**

Designated as a County Wildlife site this area is sympathetically managed to try and benefit wildlife with habitats such as semi-natural woodland, semi-natural grassland and a watercourse with areas of both flowing and standing water.

2 Identifying specialist measures to protect vulnerable species

- Plot known badger setts on campus to ensure compliance with the Badger Act. Consult ecologists regarding best practice to avoid disturbance of setts.
- Continue to install bat boxes on buildings and landscaped areas.
- Continue to monitor bird populations on campus, with a view to preserving and enhancing habitats on campus where red and amber list species have been identified.
- Continue to develop wildflower meadows and nectar highways, to encourage pollinating insects.
- Modify strimming and mowing regimes to maximise biodiversity, as well as maintain access and meet aesthetic demands.

3 Zero green waste to landfill

- Continue to seek exemption from the Environment Agency to store and screen green waste on campus.
- Use screened green waste on campus as soil improver and mulch during landscape projects and improvement works.
- Establish three new locations for habitat piles, bug hotels and insect palaces each year of the strategy.

4 Work plans to incorporate sympathetic tree and hedgerow management

- Works will comply with the adopted arboricultural and hedgerow management principles.
- Non-essential tree works will be avoided during the bird nesting season (approx. April to September).
- Non-essential hedgerow maintenance works will be avoided during the bird nesting season.
- Where works have to be undertaken e.g. for health and safety, sight line, access etc. trees and hedges will be checked for bird nesting activity prior to implementation and nests left undisturbed.

5 New and upgraded planting schemes

- Incorporate a range of plants, trees and shrubs that cover a wide range of flowering periods, with a balanced mix of deciduous and evergreen species, as well as plants which are native and adapted to the University microclimate. The aim is to enhance habitats, to encourage year round wildlife activity and introduce adaptability to cope with any impact of the effects of global warming.

6 Watercourse management

- Continue a programme of tree pruning and management, to reduce excess shading and over-nitrification from organic input around ponds and watercourses.
- Continue a programme of controlling exotic and problem aquatic weed species, to ensure they do not dominate pond life and have a detrimental effect on oxygen levels in ponds.
- Continue to provide ecostrips and margins around ponds, to provide safe areas for aquatic life such as birds and amphibians.
- Introduce a phased programme of pond management, to regularly control the build-up of silt and excess organic material around the campus watercourse systems.

7 Continue to review non-sustainable peat use

- Continue to use 0% peat in grounds nursery production, unless peat is the only option to cultivate a rare plant.
- Reduce the use of peat in grounds estate management practices by 100% by 2023.
- Increase the use of shredded green waste as a soil improver and mulch on campus to 100% by 2023.

8 Encourage engagement with biodiversity on our campuses

- Work with the Students' Guild to encourage student participation with biodiversity on campus, including practical volunteering with project works on the estate.
- Work with the Staff Association to encourage staff volunteering for biodiversity project work on campus.
- Promote the campus outdoor areas as a living lab for research and study.

New building and refurbishments will be undertaken with biodiversity and sustainable practices at their forefront to help achieve carbon neutral status.

In order to help monitor the impact of developments and refurbishments on campus, we will reference metrics such as Building for Nature and i-Tree to ensure our values and priorities are not compromised.

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