

## Procurement review is supporting our journey to a zero-carbon future

With its ambitious climate initiative Cambridge Zero, the University is helping to build a zero-carbon future. Now, sustainable procurement - which is meeting the University's need for delivering goods, works and services in an environmentally friendly way - has been embedded at the heart of the Finance Division's [Strategic Procurement Review](#) (SPR).

The SPR launched in the summer this year (2019) as part of the [Finance Business Transformation Programme](#), analysing a sample of 25 departments that demonstrate the breadth of subject areas and differing levels of spend across the University. As a result, the review has put how the University buys and pays for its goods, works and services under a microscope with the aim of developing a simpler, more user-friendly approach with sustainable procurement at its core.

With the assistance of external sustainability experts [UL](#), the SPR identified the current operating model limits opportunities to understand, manage and measure the University's [scope three supply chain emissions](#). Through benchmarking against nine peer organisations, from both the Higher Education and private sectors, it is evident that Cambridge's approach to sustainable procurement performance is behind. The University of Oxford, for example, has a deep understanding of its emissions impact and opportunities across 40 categories of goods, whilst AstraZeneca similarly has strong awareness and aims to deliver a carbon impact reduction of 20% by 2025.

The proposed recommendations therefore so far include:

- Aligning with peers such as Oxford in the mid to short term with a view to aiming higher and adopting approaches deployed in the private sector
- Using [ISO20400](#) Sustainable Procurement Guidelines to integrate sustainability within Procurement
- Developing a three to five-year sustainable procurement strategy and proactive guidance on integrating sustainable procurement into buying activities

**Head of Group Procurement, Helen Wain, commented:** "The University has already made great strides with its sustainable food policy which launched in 2016 and has achieved a 33% reduction in carbon emissions per kilogram of food during this time.

"Now we have a clear understanding of the current picture and where the opportunities to improve lie, there is great, realistic opportunity to similarly develop on the University's sustainable procurement.

"I am delighted that the SPR is getting us on a path to tangible change and making a significant contribution to our aims with Cambridge Zero."

Following the review which ended in November, the University is currently considering a potential new operating model for how it buys and pays for its goods, works and services which includes a sustainable strategy. The project team is working through this with relevant governing committees and a wider University update will follow soon.

More detailed information about the SPR can be found [here](#).