

Leeds Environmental Design Associates

Sustainability Policy

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Introduction

This Sustainability Policy has been written to ensure a high level of ethical, sustainable and environmentally friendly business practices with reference to the following material:

- The United Nations - Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
- Bioregionals - One Planet Living framework (OPL)
- ISO 37101:2016 - Sustainable Development in Communities
- ISO 26000 - Guidance on Social Responsibility
- Carbon Trust - Online Assessment

This policy is intended to guide operations, practice and output at all levels to ensure LEDA conducts its business with proper regard to its environmental impact and ensure sustainable practices to the best of its abilities. LEDA uses its considerable knowledge on the subject to make sure that all its activities are monitored and controlled to help create a healthy and sustainable working environment. Alongside this, LEDA recognise that any negative social or environmental impacts as a result of our services or operation cannot be justified or offset by positive contribution.

All members of LEDA hold the responsibility for implementing this policy in day to day activities whilst the Office Administrator having overarching responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the operational impact of this policy. Project Leads are responsible for monitoring and maintaining the design impact of this policy throughout the project. In the event that an Office Administrator is absent, the responsibility will fall upon a nominated member or members, or the membership as a whole.

LEDA aim to be a flag bearer for environmental and sustainable development in both the built environment and the workplace, taking careful consideration to its environmental impact and a “think global, act local approach”. To ensure this, LEDA comply with current legislation as a minimum and work to establish and apply best practice across its activities where possible. Regular operational and design updates for legal regulations, changes and software upgrades are received and implemented via our membership organisations.

As part of LEDA’s ongoing development and drive to be at forefront of environmental standards, we have revised and updated our Environmental Policy (Environment Policy 2018), incorporating it into our Sustainability Policy, covering a much greater breadth of environmental and sustainable principles to which LEDA adhere.

This policy is to work in conjunction with LEDA’s existing policy and strategy documentation and has been formally reviewed and agreed with the LEDA membership.



Jim Wild - Director

March 2021

Areas of Application

To apply the guidance from the aforementioned documentation to this policy, areas of applicability have been identified with regards to LEDA’s practices (general business practices, member management, office operation) and its products (services LEDA offers). Table 1. outlines the areas of which the standards relate, guiding how the policy document should be read in conjunction with the relevant standard.

Table 1. Mapping LEDA’s Practices & Products to the SDGs & OPL Framework

	Practices	Products
OPL	Health & Happiness	Health & Happiness
	Equity & Local Community	Equity & Local Community
	Culture & Community	Culture & Community
	Sustainable Water	Land & Nature
	Local & Sustainable Food	OPL Sustainable Water
	Travel & Transport	Materials & Products
	Zero Waste	Travel & Transport
	Zero Carbon	Zero Waste
SDG	Gender Equality	Zero Carbon
	Decent Work & Economic Growth	No Poverty
		Good Health & Well-Being
		Affordable & Clean Energy
		Sustainable Cities & Communities
		Responsible Consumption & Production
		Climate Action
		Life on Land
		Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

Business Operation Practices

Social Responsibility

As part of LEDA’s dedication to its local community, local regions, in which LEDA can support sustainable practices, have been identified and outlined within an Investment Strategy. In operation, this can include, offering pro-bono or reduced rate services, supply of utilities, voluntary action in regional development or other forms of agreed participation or support.

LEDA is dedicated to supporting organisations that are in line with its ethical values, thus LEDA are committed to donating to charities and notable causes in which all members agree. Current recipients include (but are not limited to) Practical Action, Sustrans & Save The Children.

LEDA offers support for future generations by actively seeking suitable candidates for work placements and internships from local educational institutions and the wider pool of candidates, and actively encourages its

members to involve themselves in the promotion of STEM subjects and sustainable practices in related fields.

LEDA is committed to avoiding any corruptive actions as a result of its services and procurement either locally or internationally. It is a member's responsibility to make relevant authorities aware of any corrupt behaviour and to actively prevent corruption wherever possible.

Members

LEDA understands that member well-being is important to its business practices, and that nurturing a positive working environment within the office provides mutual benefit for LEDA and its members. With regards to current best practice, LEDA aims to produce policy frameworks that offer members attractive benefits to their employment and encourages, healthy working practices and positive experiences.

To encourage members to actively participate in business practice, LEDA operate in a semi-hierarchical cooperative structure, encouraging participation in business decisions at all levels and engagement in its practices. To facilitate this, monthly meetings are held with the membership, to discuss business practice and decision making and allow working groups to take greater responsibility for agreeing and delivering on key areas of business practice.

LEDA regularly evaluates its policies to ensure it is meeting at least the minimum standards for welfare and to offer benefits where possible. As part of its welfare focus, LEDA offers flexible working patterns and offers generous annual leave allowances alongside other benefits outlined in the employee handbook.

LEDA offers space for recreation, reflection and personal duties, including, gardening space to the rear of the office, a kitchen, changing & showering facilities and a relaxation room.

LEDA is aware of the importance of a suitable salary on an employee's wellbeing and as such, the sustainability of its business practices. With regards to this, LEDA is committed to regularly review member wages and keep in line with the National Living Wage and aims, where possible to meet the current Real Living Wage, as published by Living Wage Foundation.

Transport

LEDA endeavour to minimise harmful atmospheric pollutants from petrol combustion. Public transport is to be used wherever possible for travel to and from meetings and site inspections. Bicycles are recommended for short local journeys or links with a mileage rate of 20p per mile paid in expenses. We suggest use of cars that emit less than 120g/km and engine capacities under 1600cc for business use and encourage car-pooling wherever possible.

LEDA seeks contract work on a regional basis to minimise the impact of transport and aim to work within a 100-mile radius of Leeds. However, projects close to this limit will be discussed and agreed in meetings, dependent on the potential for using public transport for essential site visits, and the option of remote conferencing/video chat.

Commuting to and from work by public transport and or bicycle is encouraged where possible with uptake of financial incentives for purchasing bicycles & cycle infrastructure being encouraged via the Cycle to Work and other initiatives.

LEDA supports members to attend training for cycling, which is currently available here <https://www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk/get-cycling/adult-cycle-training/>

As part of The Travel Plan Network, LEDA can offer The Corporate Annual MCard. It offers a 12% discount on full price Annual MCard rates. It offers commutes great value when using buses, or buses and trains run by different companies in West Yorkshire.

More details here: <https://www.m-card.co.uk/the-cards/corporate-annual-mcard/>

The office premises include cycling provisions such as a shower, clothes storage, secure bicycle storage, which is locked and covered by dummy CCTV's, and a reservable folding bicycle for business use that may be used when available.

LEDA is a member of the West Yorkshire Travel Plan Network, a supporter of Sustrans, and a Leeds Bike Friendly Business and regularly partakes in schemes to encourage business and member bike usage.

The Practice Manager takes responsibly for travel initiatives; such as organising the cycle to work scheme, arranging staff cycle rides and managing the staff bike calendars. Time is allocated in the role for this.

All members have the option to claim expenses for a standard bike maintenance, up to the value of £40. This is to encourage cycling to work. Please see the Expenses Policy for more details.

The Practice Manager has the capacity to arrange regular bike maintenance sessions for staff, by sharing members knowledge, or arranging for an external provider to visit.

Equipment

All equipment is operated to ensure maximum energy savings and to minimise harmful emissions. When purchasing any equipment, LEDA will undertake an assessment of energy efficiency, emissions and performance, to select the best performance necessary within the budgetary and operational criteria. Lifecycle costing will be used to evaluate purchases of all new electrical equipment.

Paper Media and Equipment

In order to reduce carbon emissions and reduce waste, electronic methods of communication and storage are to be used where possible and within the context of our own quality management systems. All paper products and equipment will be from recycled/recyclable material where possible and sourced from preferred suppliers based on their environmental principles.

All technology that requires batteries should use only rechargeable batteries and goods and appliances sourced, wherever possible, from local suppliers who have a stated commitment to sustainable development, in line with our procurement policy.

Utilities

To ensure LEDA's activities are as non-detrimental to the environment as possible, steps have been taken to reduce premises related carbon emissions by refurbishing the office building; installing insulation, photovoltaic panels, high efficiency heating & hot-water, automatic low-energy lighting and low energy appliances/IT equipment.

LEDA sources its electricity and gas solely from ethically and environmentally aware suppliers with a majority of the electricity used supplied via the PV system and surplus being fed back into the grid. At times of peak electricity use, extra energy is sourced from a renewable supplier. For heating needs, gas is supplied from a supplier whom has a commitment to reducing natural gas usage and that include an environmentally friendly alternative in its gas fuel mix. Alongside this, heating needs are met by means of a high efficiency wood pellet boiler, using pellets certified by environmentally friendly scheme.

Any maintenance tasks relating to energy/resource use will be acted upon in a prompt manner to reduce the unnecessary waste of finite resources.

To ensure LEDA's commitment to reducing energy use and efficiency, LEDA will produce an annual Sustainability Report to inform, internally and externally. This is to include, but not be limited to, consumption of energy vectors and related carbon emission, drivers of energy use, utility tracking, appropriate targets, benchmarks and pitfalls, improvement opportunities and outcomes/impacts.

Alongside the report, regular reviews will take place to identify areas of improvement and follow up specific actions. Members will be regularly updated with necessary training and information regarding energy use and new members will be inducted as to how best to reduce their office energy use in line with this policy.

Alongside these efforts, LEDA have achieved 'Green Level' accreditation and are Green accredited members with Investors in the Environment (iE) and The Green Business Network, and are committed to continue in with these accreditations. Green level accreditation is the highest achievable level within iE, equivalent to BS8555 level 1. Green level accreditation demonstrates a sustained commitment and systematic approach to reducing the environmental impacts of our organisation. This includes a minimum 2% improvement in resource efficiency over agreed baseline figures for all utilities and having a recycling system in place.

Lighting

Most luminaires are fitted with LED or low energy fluorescent lamps. All lights are to be switched off when not required. Lighting in low use areas have been fitted with motion detector PIRs and office lighting includes dimming and localised controls. LEDA continue to assess their lighting needs and strive to reduce their energy use as a result of lighting by further implementation of low energy lighting.

Heating and Ventilation

To ensure the office is energy efficient, all windows will be kept shut during winter periods unless required for ventilation and with the heating system programmed to operate during working hours only. In the coldest months, the pellet stove should be lit to heat the main office to reduce our consumption of non-renewable energies. The gas boiler is one of the most energy efficient available, and is to be regularly serviced to ensure efficient operation.

Water

LEDA minimise water consumption through the use of water flow regulators and low water content W.C.'s. Any water leakages should be acted upon immediately to reduce unnecessary wastage.

Furnishing and Finishes

Selection is made on the basis of minimising harmful emissions from formaldehyde, VOC's (volatile organic compounds), etc. and for use of materials from a renewable and managed source. Where possible they should be recycled or recyclable or safely disposable.

Waste

All waste is to be recycled where possible, including: paper, cardboard, cans, glass, print cartridges, recyclable plastics and broken electronic equipment. Non-protein food waste is composted, batteries are to be recycled, all cartridges are to be sent to a local company for recycling/sustainable disposal and large office equipment is to be sent to a local charity, resold or disposed of in an environmentally sustainable way.

Site Environment

LEDA maintain a gardening space to the rear of the office building for members to grow fruit and vegetables that can be used for lunches or taken home. The space is to be tended in an environmentally friendly way, free from chemical fertilisers, pesticides or other environmentally damaging substances. Existing mature trees have also been maintained on the grounds around the office and a pond has been constructed to encourage a wider range of wildlife. Furthermore, gardening practices are encouraged that nurture biodiversity.

Office Consumables

LEDA aims to purchase supplies from local businesses in order to reduce delivery-related transport. Materials purchased by LEDA are to have minimal embodied energy from transportation arising from their manufacture and delivery. Environmentally sustainable cleaning materials are to be used and office consumables such as tea and coffee are to be purchased from an ethical supplier with items being Fair Trade certified where possible.

Public Reporting & External Affairs

LEDA aims to produce an annual Sustainability Report in-line with its efforts to ensure sustainable practices and inform our forecasting, strategy and actions going forward. The reporting is to include but not be limited to, energy use (impacts, carbon emissions and outcomes of our efforts to influence these vectors), social responsibility involvement, actions taken the previous year and strategy for the coming year. LEDA has produced an Investment Strategy outlining areas in which LEDA may invest, time, resource or finance. Any investment made is to be in-line with our ethics and ideals outlined in this document.

Design Business Practice

LEDA is an architectural and environmental design company dedicated to creating sustainable, healthy and enjoyable buildings. Our designs are informed by concepts such as LEAN design, the Circular Economy & other ecological standards and we have a commitment to actively engaging in these practices to ensure sustainable development.

The key environmental principles employed in LEDA's undertakings are:

Enhance and facilitate

- Recycling of materials in construction and building use
- Use of renewable and low carbon energy
- Building user participation in the design process
- Local economy and people's well-being
- Ecological habitat

Reducing the embodied energy of materials (from transport and manufacturing) from

- Waste in construction
- Energy consumption
- Water use
- Carbon emission
- Transport impacts
- Noise, light and atmospheric pollution

In the event that a client (or other decision-making body), have little concern for environmentally or sustainable practices, LEDA will strive to encourage responsible decision making. LEDA, have expertise in many efficiency/environmental standards (Passiv Haus, BREAM, WELL, AECB, One Planet Living) and will use these to ensure our products are in line current best practice, encourage wellbeing, environmentally sound and minimise energy consumption where possible.

In order to resource natural resource consumption and cost, designs are to be as efficient and optimal. By reducing the need for energy demand in buildings by making and encouraging investment in a "fabric first" approach, LEDA will influence projects by reducing the heating and cooling demand necessary. In order to further reduce resource consumption, designs will use low flow fittings, flow restrictors and energy recover measures where possible.

Alongside resource consumption, designs by LEDA are to be mindful of impacts on wellbeing, the environment, health, accessibility, equality and the community, all of which will be considered when undertaking a project. To reduce project related carbon emissions from transport, manufacture and logistics, we will strive to use/encourage the use of ethical and/or local third parties where possible.

We are registered with, or are members of many organisations that audit our sustainable building design practice or have received training from bodies which ensure our professional capabilities.

To propagate an environment in which LEDA are active in practicing the above principles, LEDA will deliver regular internal and external training for its members to maintain the highest standards of service and product delivery.



The UK Passive House Organisation

