

Liverpool Biennial

Environment and Sustainability Policy

1. Statement of Intent

This is the Environment and Sustainability Policy of Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art Limited, 55 New Bird Street, Liverpool, L1 0BW.

This policy outlines our planned actions to reduce the carbon we generate and impact on the environment in our operation and delivery of the 2025 Festival and beyond. This will remain an active document, transparently monitoring our continuous progress towards a more sustainable operation and festival.

Through the application of this policy, Liverpool Biennial is committing to:

- Continue utilising [Julie's Bicycle annual monitoring](#), with a focus on monitoring carbon outputs from energy use in office (4 tonnes of CO₂e in 23/24, calculated via Julie's Bicycle), alongside implementing new resources from [Gallery Climate Coalition](#).
- Prioritise reuse of waste materials in the production of artworks and recycling waste materials where possible in the decommissioning process
- Undertake more research into understanding the impact and embedded carbon of common building materials such as MDF, emulsion paint, and carpet and reducing use of these and other materials
- Ensuring recyclable/reusable supplies are used in workspaces and minimal waste goes to landfill
- Ensuring production for 50% of the projects in the 2025 edition are undertaken in Liverpool
- Commissioning a minimum of 1 work per edition which addresses issues of climate change
- To encourage and support artists, staff and visitors to use lower-impact environmentally friendly forms of transport as part of their work with, and visits to, Liverpool Biennial
- To effectively record our overall environmental impact using current data methodologies and actively reduce the environmental impact of Liverpool Biennial 2025.
- Encourage our visitors to use active and public modes of transport to travel to Liverpool and around the Festival.

2. Our Impact

Liverpool Biennial has multiple areas of environmental impact.

The largest impacts are generated by artist and staff travel by air, transporting artworks by airfreight and fossil fuel energy consumption. In 2018 our carbon footprint was 137.78 tonnes of CO₂e, of which 49.3% was artist and staff air travel, 40% air freight, and 30.6% fossil fuel energy consumption for our office and temporary exhibition spaces. In 2023 (our first Biennial after COVID-19

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restrictions had been fully lifted), our carbon footprint was 37 tonnes of CO₂e of which 74.02% was artist and staff travel, 16.72% was energy usage for the office and venues, 9.22% was waste from the office and venues, and 0.04% was water and sewage from the office and venues. Air freight was not captured in the data for 2023, which would add a significant amount to the total carbon output.

In the 2023 – 2024 monitoring, our carbon footprint was 66 tonnes CO₂e of which 80.39% was staff and artist travel, 6.84% was energy usage, 12.73% was waste and 0.04% was water and sewage for the office and venues. However, this was during a non-festival year, with results expected to fluctuate biennially between festival and non-festival years.

Another considerable environmental impact we have is from the use and waste of materials for the fabrication of artworks and the building of exhibitions.

We know that audience travel has a significant carbon footprint and are working to capture data and develop tools to calculate its impact through a more in-depth carbon audit.

Through the artists we work with and the audiences we reach we can advocate for wider societal change. By working with our networks and partners locally, nationally, and internationally, we contribute to research and then develop best practice on how to work more sustainably.

3. Our Commitment

As a cultural organisation working locally, nationally and internationally, we recognise our leadership role in working sustainably, championing action and raising awareness of climate change to all. We will seek to reduce our carbon output within the following scopes:

- Scope 1: Direct carbon output through our direct operations such as office utilities and equipment
- Scope 2: Carbon outputs which we have not directly produced but have caused such as artwork production and shipping, and staff and artist travel
- Scope 3: Carbon outputs that we have opportunity to influence such as audience travel

We are continually working and developing our ambition of being a leading organisation in sustainability practice. Working with Liverpool partners within the [Shift Liverpool](#) network, we bring together knowledge, resources and create new initiatives to benefit the cultural sector and beyond to meet Liverpool City Region's 2040 zero-carbon target. We have partnered with Liverpool John Moores University to complete a full carbon audit of the organisation to understand our output and reduce our carbon footprint further.

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We will continue to explore ways of calculating the carbon impact of projects (e.g. through the LJMU carbon monitoring tool and Gallery Climate Coalition) and will share this approach with international biennials and other peers. As part of our campaigning and advocacy, we will commission at least one work per biennial that directly addresses issues of climate emergency/ environmental sustainability.

Since 2022, several changes have been made to improve our direct operations. These include using a renewable energy supplier, using a carbon neutral waste disposal company, and using recycled/recyclable office supplies where possible. In 2023 an air source heat pump was installed which supplies the office with more efficient energy, giving out 3kWh for every 1kWh used, whereas the previous heating system gave out 1kWh for every 1kWh.

We will continue to offer as much of the Biennial exhibition experience digitally as possible while also prioritising venues and locations with accessible public transport links, encouraging audiences to use public transport or other more environmentally friendly alternatives when planning their visit.

Travel and shipping have historically been one of the organisation's most significant carbon outputs. We have implemented changes to staff travel; meetings are held remotely where possible, and if not, public transport is prioritised using methods other than air travel. We have implemented a hybrid working policy beyond the pandemic, allowing staff to continue to work from home. and reduce impact of travel to and from the office. Our Julie's Bicycle reporting includes the estimated impacts of home working as well as the office and this data is used to inform the hybrid working patterns of all staff. We are aware that working with artists based globally can significantly increase our environmental impact. Longer term, we are exploring the possibility of a 'green travel' budget to facilitate a reduction in air travel.

We have committed to the eradication of oversized and excessively heavy shipments for future biennials. Works needing larger than standard crate sizes or weighing a considerable amount must be made in the UK. For those standard shipments, we will consolidate all shipping where possible. Any new commission will be made from renewable and recycled/recyclable materials in discussion with and through support of the artist. This also includes the staging of exhibitions.

We will continue working with artists and suppliers to reduce the carbon impact of all projects through advising on environmental credentials of suppliers and producing locally where possible. LB2025 artists will be asked to prioritise sustainability within proposals and the team will review sustainability clauses in contracts and freelance starter packs.

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Every staff member understands their responsibility for delivering environmental and carbon sustainability. Each staff member has a minimum of one environment & sustainability focussed aim within their appraisals.

Liverpool Biennial has embedded its commitments across the organisation to deliver on its targets, and each staff member recognises their role in revision in all activities affecting the environment. Carbon Literacy training will also be delivered to the wider team, looking at each element of carbon output: direct, supply chain, programme, travel, and communication.

This statement was last updated in August 2024.