



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACTION PLAN 2022

Environmental Policy Statement

The Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes (AHA-MK) recognises its responsibility in reducing the negative environmental impacts of its activities and is committed to understanding, measuring, improving and communicating its environmental performance, ensuring compliance with environmental legislation as a minimum standard.

AHA-MK aspires for Milton Keynes's cultural sector to be an exemplar of Environment Responsibility. Milton Keynes prides itself on its commitment to environmental sustainability being a leading early adopter of household recycling and electric buses, and has an impressive range of electric charging points for electric cars. The Milton Keynes Council Sustainability Strategy for 2019-2050 (<https://www.mkfutures2050.com/>) approved by MKC at a full council meeting in January 2019. 'Milton Keynes will strive to be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050 while creating one of the world's most truly sustainable economies and models for growth.' From the 7 Big Ambitions, #2 is to Make Milton Keynes a LEADING GREEN AND CULTURAL CITY BY GLOBAL STANDARDS. Our cultural sector must contribute positively and creatively to these demanding deadlines in our rapidly growing city.

Business Overview

The Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes (AHA-MK) champions the rich heritage and inclusive, creative future of Milton Keynes. As the unifying, independent voice for cultural development, we support, develop and promote the work of over 40 cultural organisations and stakeholders.

We occupy a unique supporting role within Milton Keynes, meeting sector needs where capacity and/or experience is challenged, from audience development, cultural advocacy and cross sector working, to data share collection, outreach and skills development, pooling resources, partnership building and undertaking sector R&D.

Acting as a backbone organisation for Milton Keynes' cultural sector since 2001, we support our members in working together to tackle common challenges and embrace shared opportunities. Often seen as the 'glue' in Milton Keynes' creative landscape, we advocate for the role of culture in ensuring that our city is an inspiring place to live, work and visit.

AHA-MK's charitable objectives are:

1. To promote arts and heritage for the benefit of the public in Milton Keynes in particular but not exclusively by supporting and representing the arts and heritage sector through promotion, representation, and development.
2. Work in partnership with other like-minded organisations to achieve joint goals that further the CIO's charitable purposes.

Between 2021 and 2024, AHA-MK's business plan supports these objectives through a commitment to the development of three strands: Cultural Inclusion and Diversity; Cultural Education; and Membership

Services. In 2022, AHA-MK trustees agreed to source funding in 2023 to develop a fourth strand of work around Environmental Responsibility. The learning and action points generated from the Environmental Responsibility strand will directly support AHA-MK's commitment to delivering its other strands.

MAKE (our MK Cultural Education Partnership led by AHA-MK) has already included a statement of commitment towards greener cultural education in its three-year business plan, 2021-2024. The youth voice is a powerful influencer for environmental responsibility, and will inform the ongoing work of AHA-MK.

Impacts

Identifying and understanding the impact of AHA-MK's business activity is the first step in planning to reduce any negative environmental outcomes as far as possible.

AHA-MK currently employs one full-time executive, the Programme and Partnerships Manager. Part of this role is to conduct AHA-MK's **executive functions**. In a spirit of partnership working, their office space is hotdesking at the Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre, and they often work at other meeting places across Milton Keynes. The Programme Manager is embraces good energy saving practices in any of these workplaces, such as:

- switching off hardware and lights at the end of each day;
- managing and reducing waste materials through recycling procedures, internal printing protocols to reduce paper and ink consumption the prioritising digital over paper-based working wherever possible, using the short flush on the toilet etc.;
- embedding this working ethos in AHA-MK's procedures with any freelance staff and visitors;
- All governance and board papers are distributed digitally.

As a city-wide partnership with over 40 partners and in a city that has poor public transport routes **business travel** is a major consideration for AHA-MK. AHA-MK will seek to reduce unnecessary travel for meetings, and favour public transport/digital options instead. By 2023 it aims to have a hybrid (face-to-face and virtual) option for all partnership meetings.

In its **financial and procurement procedures** AHA-MK will favour sustainable choices wherever possible. Those with purchasing responsibility (including freelancers) will be required to seek the most sustainable choice, for example, reducing food waste, using suppliers local to the area, and using suppliers that demonstrate good environmental practices. Accounts and invoicing are done online.

In the production of AHA-MK **public-facing events** such as forums and meetings, training days etc., AHA-MK will proactively engage with environmentally sustainable options. In contributing to its members public-facing events, AHA-MK will play a key role in sharing best practice on environmental responsibility and sustainability through training, information-sharing, and creating opportunities for collaboration.

Commitments:

Between 2022 and 2026 AHA-MK makes a commitment to:

- Reduce annual energy used by AHA-MK by 10% and work towards a zero-waste policy;
- Undertake research and training to better understand environmental responsibility;
- Implement a sustainable travel and expense policy, reducing the mileage and associated environmental impacts of journeys made on behalf of the Alliance;
- Map links from the cultural sector to MK Council's green priorities;

- Produce and launch a data report for MK's cultural sector that evidences our members' current positioning including recommendations, an action plan and manifesto
- Establish a Working Group from our members already engaged in greener practices, linking the group with MK Council's Environment Team, MK Green Alliance and Community Action MK;
- Consult a diverse range of people to establish a first stage action plan;
- Develop a framework for monitoring ongoing progress
- Use AHA-MK's platforms to distribute transferable lessons, actions and models;
- Work with young people to create an interactive trail that creatively connects them with nature and sustainability and introduces them to the sector;
- Co-ordinate a symposium to spotlight Environmental Responsibility;
- Report on the impact of our support for Environmental Responsibility;
- Create a Green Cultural City Award for Environmental Responsibility;
- Ensure Environmental Responsibility is key to AHA-MK's advocacy and highlighted in its newsletter.

Sector-wide Ambition

The scale and diversity of AHA-MK's activity offers a valuable opportunity to exert influence and inspire positive action on environmental sustainability across the MK arts and heritage sector. During this period, AHA-MK will endeavour to work with national organisations (such as Julie's Bicycle) that are specifically leading on sustainability initiatives, in the cultural sector to inform its strategic activity and define a sector-leading role. We will develop an Environmental Responsibility working group, formed of key partners that have already made significant developments in their environmental journey.

Monitoring and Review

AHA-MK's Board of Trustees leads on the organisation's commitment to environmental responsibility, ensuring it is embedded in all aspects of governance and management. Two trustees will take the lead on Environmental Responsibility and have oversight of this policy and its commitments. In consultation with the two trustees, the AHA-MK Programme Manager will set and monitor targets and report on progress against them. Both the policy and the action plan as it emerges will be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis, or whenever there is a significant change in working practices, whichever arises first.

Communication and Reporting

All inductions of new members of the AHA-MK team, including staff, freelancers, volunteers and trustees will refer to this policy, and its contents will be made available to them in full. Formal and informal training opportunities for addressing environmental issues, when deemed to be relevant and feasible, will be offered to AHA-MK team members. Environmental Responsibility will be included as a fixed agenda item at all board meetings.

AHA-MK is committed to communicating information about its environmental performance and will make this policy available on its website, along with any other progress reports detailing actions undertaken.

AHA-MK, August 2022