

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a long, straight path lined with mature trees, leading towards a body of water under a clear blue sky. The path is paved and has a red brick border. The trees are lush green, and their shadows are cast onto the path. The water is visible in the distance on the right side.

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Sustainability Strategy

2020-2025

SUSU.

Our Students'
Union



Summary

This document is the University of Southampton's (UoS) Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025 (the Strategy). It was developed by the University in partnership with the University of Southampton Students' Union (SUSU). It sets out our ambitious vision for a sustainable University and what we need to achieve to get there.

Climate change and ecological destruction are the greatest challenges of our time. We have a responsibility to respond to these crises, and as a university we can play a unique role in doing so. We need to rapidly reduce our negative environmental impact, while drawing on our world-leading research and education to help tackle the climate crisis. This Strategy has been developed rapidly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic because we want to take advantage of this opportunity to change our behaviour and processes, and thereby build a better future.

To deliver on our vision we have identified the following goals.

- Goal 1** Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2030
- Goal 2** Measure our total emissions footprint and set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions
- Goal 3** Adopt a value-based approach to reduce emissions from business travel
- Goal 4** Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025
- Goal 5** Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS' research and societal impact
- Goal 6** Implement a sustainable and ethical investment policy

Enablers of the Strategy

Partnership working. We will deliver Strategy through partnership with the whole University community, including gathering ideas and drawing on expertise and resources from all.

Leadership. We need commitment from leaders at all levels of the University to implement the initiatives in the Strategy and model sustainable behaviour.

Governance. We have developed a governance structure that ensures we hold ourselves accountable to deliver on our sustainability vision and supports implementation in different areas of the University.

Culture and behaviour. We cannot deliver this Strategy without the University's people. We need to harness commitment to sustainability across the University, use networks and champions to promote change, and encourage positive behaviour.

Community engagement. We need to reinforce our identity as a civic university and link our sustainability vision to that of the Southampton, Winchester and wider regional community.

Communication. We need to effectively demonstrate our commitment to sustainability and our world-leading sustainability-related teaching and research to the outside world.



Our vision

Our vision is that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University of Southampton does: our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future. This is key to achieving our mission of changing the world for the better.

University of Southampton Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025



What is the context?

Our civic engagement
The University Strategy
Education Strategy
International strategy
Research and Enterprise Strategy
Estates Strategy

Partnership working
Leadership
Governance
Community engagement
Communication
Culture and behaviour

How will we deliver it?

About the Strategy

The Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025 sets out our ambitious vision for a more sustainable University, and what we need to do to achieve this vision over the next five years. It contains six goals, each of which will be delivered by a set of initiatives with associated targets. This document also includes information on the 'enablers' of the Strategy and our high-level approach to implementation.

This Strategy was developed in mid-2020 by the UoS in partnership with the SUSU. It builds on existing work to improve our sustainability and incorporates input from students, staff, and other members of the University community. This input was gathered through a rapid, comprehensive consultation process which involved workshops, interviews, and the opportunity – which is ongoing – to provide written feedback on a [Green Paper](#). The details of the consultation process are provided in the Appendix.

Why act?

The global and local context

Climate change and ecological decline are the greatest challenges of our time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that the global average surface temperature has already warmed by 0.87 degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial times and will have warmed by 1.5 degrees by 2040 at the current rate of change.¹ Rising temperatures have already led to higher sea levels, displacement of communities, and more frequent and intense severe weather events including wildfires, droughts, and floods. Biodiversity – the scale and variety of life on earth – is also declining at an unprecedented rate. A 2019 report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) showed that around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction.²

The 2016 Paris Agreement aims to address the climate crisis by keeping global temperature increases well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. It has 175 signatories, including the United Kingdom (UK). Under the 2008 Climate Change Act, the UK Government committed to an 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050, which was modified in 2019 to net zero emissions by 2050.³

Our local community has also committed to action. In 2019, the Southampton City Council declared a climate emergency and published its Green City Charter: a set of commitments through which the City Council and the wider city will become 'cleaner, greener, healthier, and more sustainable'.⁴ In 2020, the City Council released the Green City Plan, which describes how it will deliver its environmental commitments, including reaching net zero emissions by 2030.⁵ In parallel, Winchester City Council has developed a Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (2020-2030) which focuses on reduction, elimination and offsetting carbon emissions to achieve net zero by 2030. We will work in partnership with both Cities and the wider region to deliver this Strategy.

1. IPCC, 2018, 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C', accessed at: [link](#).

2. IPBES, 2019, 'Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services', accessed at: [link](#).

3. UK Government, 27 June 2019, 'UK becomes first major economy to pass net zero emissions law', accessed at: [link](#)

4. Southampton City Council, 2019, 'Green City Charter', accessed at: [link](#).

5. Southampton City Council, 2020, 'Green City Plan 2030', accessed at: [link](#)



Where are we now?

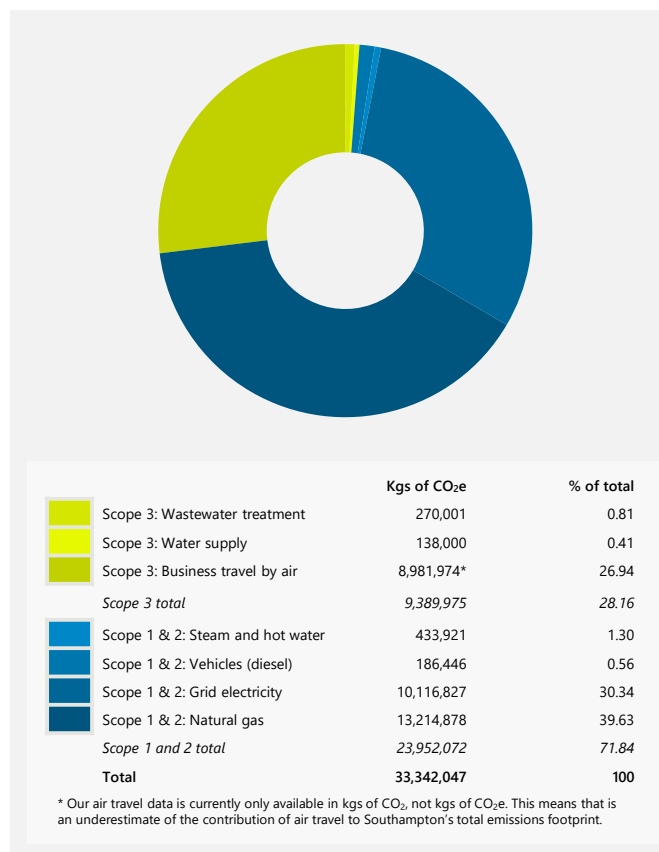
As a University, we want to support the actions of our community and provide an ambitious model for how other organisations can improve their sustainability. Last year we committed to the Southampton City Council's Green City Charter, pledging our support to the goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2030. UoS currently chairs the Worldwide Universities Network's Global Challenge group for Responding to Climate Change and is a member of the EAUC Climate Change Commission Council. We have had an Environmental Management System for several years, which is certified ISO 14001:2015 standard and rated 'Platinum' by EcoCampus. We were ranked 12th in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings in 2019 and are also a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accord, which commits us to embed the United Nations' (UN) SDGs into our education, research, leadership, operations, administration and engagement activities. The SDGs are the UN's blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

We also have significant strengths in sustainability-related teaching and research. We are world-leading in areas including Engineering, Social Impact, Demography, Global Health and Earth and Marine Sciences, and we have several existing research centres and groups dedicated to sustainability (for example, the Energy and Climate Change Group, the Sustainable Energy Research Group, the NEXUS Science Strategic Research Group, the Clean Carbon research group and the Future Towns Innovation Hub).

However, like all universities we face tough challenges in reducing our environmental impact. With over 22,000 students and 5,000 staff, a large estate with on-campus accommodation, and the laboratories and other facilities that support our world-leading research, we are a significant energy user and major producer of waste. We have managed

to prevent our emissions from increasing during a period of significant growth, but we have not driven down our overall footprint. As of 2019, our emissions per student and staff FTE had reduced by 17 per cent compared to 2005/06. However, we had only reduced our overall Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 3 per cent, well short of our 20 per cent reduction target.

Figure 1 | Southampton's emissions for 2018/19⁶



Greenhouse gas emissions are grouped into three 'Scopes'

Scope 1: direct emissions that the University controls, mainly from fuel combustion on-site (e.g. operational vehicles, or gas boilers).

Scope 2: indirect emissions from electricity purchased and used by the University.

Scope 3: all other indirect emissions from sources the University does not own or control. This includes emissions associated with travel, procurement of products consumed by the University, and waste and water.

Scope 3 emissions are far more difficult to measure and control than Scope 1 and 2 emissions, which is why most universities and organisations do not yet measure and report on them. The UoS has measured its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions since 2005/6 and it has some data on its Scope 3 emissions from business travel, but not enough to gain an accurate picture of its total Scope 3 emissions. Figure 1 gives an overview of UoS' recent annual emissions for categories that we report.

⁶ HESA, Estates Management Record, 2020, 'Table 3 – Emissions and waste': [link](#). HESA calculates CO₂e using the Department for Business, Energy & Sustainable Industry conversion factors to account for additional greenhouse gases including methane and nitrous oxide. Business travel data is from the Clarity Travel Management System.



Our Vision

What will the University of Southampton look like in 2030?

Our vision is that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the UoS does across all our campuses. We want to demonstrate leadership in sustainability to our students, and to our local and global communities.

In practical terms, this means that by 2030 we want to have achieved our target of net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, have substantially reduced our Scope 3 emissions and have embedded sustainability into our teaching, learning, research, and professional services operations. By 2030, we want to attract people to study and work at UoS because they share our commitment to sustainability.

What will the University of Southampton look like in 2025?

By 2025, we want to be well on the way to achieving our 2030 vision. This means having:

- **Reduced our Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions** in line with our 2030 net zero target.
- **Developed a robust approach to measuring Scope 3 emissions** and set an ambitious target to reduce our Scope 3 emissions.
- **Reduced our emissions from business travel** through an approach that balances the benefits of travel with its impact on the environment.
- **Given our students, staff, and wider community multiple opportunities** to learn more about sustainability and adapted what we teach to the changing world.
- **Put structures in place** to support and enhance our sustainability-related research and to measure the impact of our investment in this area.
- **Implemented a sustainable and ethical investment policy**, which helps us to support positive action to address the climate crisis.



Our vision

Our vision is that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University of Southampton does: our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future. This is key to achieving our mission of changing the world for the better.

Our approach to sustainability

'Sustainability' is a broad and complex term that can mean different things to different people. We define sustainability as living within the boundaries of our planet to meet the needs of current generations while protecting the needs of future generations. While environmental sustainability is the primary focus of this Strategy, we know that economic and social sustainability are important components of sustainability overall. This means recognising the broader implications of our goals beyond environmental outcomes. It also means accepting the need to balance our environmental outcomes with long-term financial sustainability, because we want people to benefit from UoS decades into the future. We have developed a conceptual framework to illustrate our approach to sustainability and put this Strategy in context (See Figure 2).

The series of rings show the University's people at the centre. Our staff and students are at the core of what we do, and promote sustainability through their actions and behaviour. The second ring represents the University's strategic goals. This includes the goals outlined in this Strategy, those defined in our University Strategy, and those defined in our Education, Research and Enterprise, International and Estates strategies. The third ring comprises the University's areas of operations – such as estates and operations, teaching and learning, and so on – where our sustainability goals are translated into practical action. The final ring depicts the 17 SDGs, to demonstrate that our goals and operations sit within the context of the key areas of sustainability action identified by the international community.

This framework also emphasises that the University exists within its local and global community. Each of the goals in this Strategy is likely to have an impact on the City of Southampton, the City of Winchester, and our region (for example, by contributing to cleaner air). Each goal will also

have a global impact (for example, by stimulating more global partnerships devoted to sustainability research). These relationships work both ways, with the University sharing its expertise and contributing to the communities of which it is a part, and learning lessons and gathering resources from elsewhere.

Figure 2 | Our conceptual approach to sustainability in this Strategy



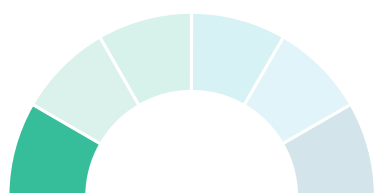
Our ongoing work

The goals defined below do not stand alone. There is important ongoing work, for example, in the areas of biodiversity, waste and recycling at the University. This Strategy focuses on specific sustainability issues that we have identified as needing the most attention, with the aim of complementing continued progress in other areas. For example, as well as the broader University strategies noted above, this Strategy sits alongside the University Travel Plan and Biodiversity Policy, which will continue to drive our approach to sustainability in those key areas. We also see this Strategy as interlinked with our role as one of the UK's leading civic universities: we must deliver our sustainability goals in partnership with our city and regional communities.



Goal

01



Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2030

Targets and indicators

- ▶ Between September and November 2020, we will hold a series of workshops and consultations to develop our roadmap to net zero, including interim Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions reductions targets for 2025.
- ▶ By the end of 2020, we will have published our roadmap to net zero and our 2025 interim targets. This Strategy will be updated to reflect the roadmap and interim targets.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the leading cause of the planet's rapidly changing climate. UoS urgently needs to reduce its emissions to support the global effort to address the climate crisis. At a local level, reducing our emissions will contribute to improved air quality in our region and will help the City of Southampton and the City of Winchester to deliver on their net zero commitments.

The Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education Students and Leaders (the Climate Commission) – of which the University is a member – has advised that all higher education institutions should aim for net zero GHG emissions for Scope 1 and 2 by 2030 as a minimum, as per IPCC recommendations.⁷ We are determined to meet this goal.

Our net zero by 2030 target covers Scope 1 and 2 emissions, but not Scope 3 emissions. This is because we don't yet have an accurate baseline for our Scope 3 emissions (See Goal 2). Once this baseline has been established we will set ambitious Scope 3 emissions reduction targets, which will be incorporated into our roadmap to net zero (see below).

What will we do?

Achieving this goal will require careful planning that draws on the expertise of our academics, professional services staff and students. To this end, we will create a detailed 'roadmap to net zero' (see inset). A key part of the roadmap will be interim 2025 emissions reduction targets, because we need to make significant progress by this date to put us on the path to net zero.

Our roadmap to net zero:

The roadmap will identify the biggest opportunities to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions and outline the initiatives we will implement to achieve net zero by 2030. The roadmap will be aligned with the Climate Commission's Carbon Management Hierarchy principles of 'avoid, reduce, replace and offset'.

Specifically, it will contain:

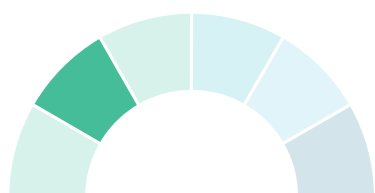
- **Projected BAU emissions to 2030** and the scale of reduction needed to reach our target.
- **Interim 2025 emissions reduction targets** that will put us on the path to achieve net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030.
- **A firm commitment to incorporate sustainability** into all our investment decisions such that they support emissions reduction, even if the payback is over the long term.
- **Initiatives to reduce emissions**, including:
 - Installing on-site renewable energy and buying grid electricity from renewable providers.
 - Conducting energy retrofitting of buildings to make them more efficient and allow them to be powered by green energy.
 - Implementing highly efficient standards for the University's buildings and modifying our Estates Strategy in line with these standards.
 - Replacing all end-of-life University vehicles with electric vehicles and making associated investment in charging infrastructure.
 - Developing a University-run offsetting scheme (to be used only as a last resort for difficult to control emissions) that focuses on enhancing the biodiversity of our estate and region.

Once our Scope 3 baseline and targets have been developed, they will be incorporated into the roadmap. This will extend the roadmap beyond 2030 to the achievement of full net zero across Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

⁷ EUAC – The Appliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, 2020, 'Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education Students & Leaders', link.

Goal

02



Measure our total emissions footprint and set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions

Targets and indicators

- ▶ By early 2021 we will have published our methodology to measure Scope 3 emissions and have established a Scope 3 baseline.
- ▶ By the end of 2021 we will have set an ambitious target to reduce our Scope 3 emissions and incorporated this into our roadmap to net zero.

We have set an ambitious target to reach net zero for Scope 1 and 2 by 2030, but this will not eliminate our total GHG footprint. We also need to tackle our Scope 3 emissions, which occur because of our activities but over which we do not have direct control. Scope 3 emissions make up an estimated 60 per cent of emissions for higher education institutions,⁸ and include student and staff commuting, business travel, and the products we buy and consume. It is vital that we work towards achieving net zero for Scope 3 emissions to play our role in addressing the climate crisis.

The first step towards this is understanding our total emissions footprint. Our aim is that by early 2021, we will have developed a methodology to measure our Scope 3 emissions and define a baseline. Then, we can set ambitious Scope 3 reductions targets and add these to the roadmap. An interim 2030 target on the road to net zero for Scope 3 emissions will be included as a key goal in the Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 (for example, a reduction of 30 per cent by 2030). We will need to carefully consider how these targets align with and impact our Estates Strategy and International Strategy.

It is critical that we determine a Scope 3 baseline so that we can track our progress over time. However, this should not prevent us from developing plans now to reduce the Scope 3 emissions we already measure – particularly those from commuting, business travel and waste. We will reduce our emissions from commuter travel by implementing the Travel Plan to 2030, while business travel is addressed in Goal 3.

What will we do?

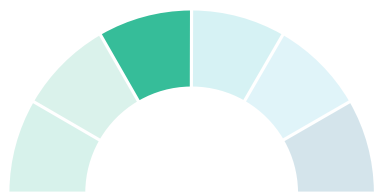
- Build on previous UoS work to develop a rigorous, flexible method to measure our Scope 3 emissions. The methodology will be based on the Government GHG conversion factors⁹ and other sector-wide conventions. It will require us to determine the University's boundaries and categories for Scope 3 emissions.
- Use this methodology to define the University's total Scope 3 baseline, its baseline for different categories of Scope 3 emissions and its total carbon footprint for all three Scopes.
- Set ambitious targets to reduce Scope 3 emissions and incorporate these into the net zero roadmap.

⁸ Arup, CenSA and De Montfort University, 2012, 'Report to HEFCE: Measuring scope 3 carbon emissions – supply chain (procurement)', accessed: [link](#).

⁹ Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, 2019, '2019 Government greenhouse gas conversion factors for company reporting: Methodology paper for emission factors', accessed at: [link](#).

Goal

03



Adopt a value-based approach to reduce emissions from business travel

Targets and indicators

- ▶ By the end of 2020, we will have set a target for business travel emissions reductions by 2025. The target will use 2018 as a baseline, because this is the first year for which Clarity data is available. This Strategy will be updated to reflect the target, which will also be incorporated into our roadmap to net zero.
- ▶ By the end of 2020, we will have incorporated an emissions calculator into Clarity.
- ▶ By the end of 2020, we will have published a consultation paper on the implementation of a points system for assessing the value of travel.
- ▶ During the 2021/2022 academic year, we will pilot the points system for assessing the value of business travel in selected Schools/Departments.
- ▶ By the end of 2021, we will have conducted a feasibility study for a University-wide emissions budget for business travel.
- ▶ The points system will be rolled out across the whole University for the 2023/24 academic year.

The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have led higher education institutions around the globe to reappraise the value of business travel (including for conferences). UoS has demonstrated its ability to successfully hold regular meetings online and gain value from virtual conferences. We want to seize the opportunity presented by this unique moment in time to become a leader in the sector on more sustainable approaches to business travel.

Emissions from business travel form one of the largest components of our Scope 3 emissions. According to the Clarity travel system, staff and postgraduate research student business travel by air generates approximately 1.15 tonnes of CO₂e/FTE per year, with the majority of this travel being for conferences. Travel for conferences has a significant impact on a global scale – a recent article in Nature estimated that total emissions caused by travel to one large academic conference can rival the CO₂e emitted by an entire city over the course of a week.¹⁰ By reducing our business travel, we can make significant progress towards reducing our Scope 3 emissions.

We will do this by adopting a value-based approach to business travel supported by a sector-leading approach to virtual collaboration and conferences. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues we will invest in our people and technology to ensure that, as far as possible, our online interactions create as much benefit as face to face engagement. We want to demonstrate that virtual collaboration and conferences can be useful and inspiring so that universities, academic associations, and funding bodies don't fall back into old habits when travel becomes more viable. As we begin to travel again, we will do so using a value-based approach that balances the environmental impact of each trip against its contribution to our core mission. We recognise that as a world-leading, research-intensive university, our staff and students sometimes need to travel in support of our educational and research goals. We will support staff and students to make informed choices about their mode of travel and their trip itinerary.

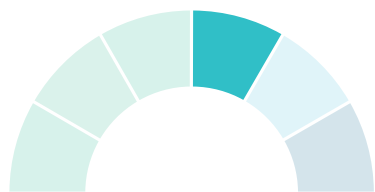
What will we do?

- Invest in high-quality virtual collaboration and communication technology and offer training in virtual facilitation and presentation to staff and students.
- Implement a points system which helps individuals to estimate the value of travel. The system will be based on a framework that outlines consideration for enhancing education, delivery of research, exchange of ideas and other benefits.
- Implement an emissions calculator tool in the Clarity system to show individuals the emissions produced by different travel modes for a given trip. This will allow staff to make informed choices about their travel. It will also allow individuals to see their total emissions from travel in a given month or year.
- Proactively influence the sector to reduce emissions from travel. This will include encouraging other UK universities to adopt a similar, value-based approach to reducing emissions from travel, promoting virtual conferences or other measures (such as regional hubs) to reduce emissions associated with conference travel and influencing professional associations to accept online international collaboration as valuable for academic progression.
- Undertake a feasibility study for a University-wide emissions budget for business travel, comprising budgets for each Faculty.

¹⁰ Kloewer, Milan, Hopkins, Debbie, Myles, Allen, and Higham, James. 'An Analysis of Ways to Decarbonize Conference Travel after COVID-19.' Nature 583, no. 16 July 2020 (2020): 356–539)

Goal

04



Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025

Targets and indicators

- ▶ By the end of the 2020/21 academic year, all Schools will have had at least one training session on incorporating sustainability into the curriculum.
- ▶ Beginning in 2021/22, all students and staff will have the opportunity to participate in carbon literacy training as part of their orientation.
- ▶ From 2021/22, an online, interdisciplinary sustainability module will be available to all students. The module will later be made publicly available.
- ▶ By 2025, all education programmes will have integrated, subject-relevant sustainability themes.

Our role in educating thousands of people every year gives us a great opportunity to help shape the global response to the climate crisis. We know our students and staff care deeply about sustainability and are eager to learn more about it. During the consultations that informed this Strategy, we consistently heard that students want sustainability to form an integral part of their UoS education. We will ensure that our graduates are equipped to become leaders in sustainability and will support our students to contribute to a more sustainable future while they study with us. We want students to apply to UoS because they are attracted to our focus on sustainability.

Our aim is that by 2025, every student studying at the University will have an opportunity to learn more about sustainability and their role in a more sustainable future. We will offer carbon literacy training to all students (and staff) and develop a standalone, online sustainability module that helps our community to better understand the pressure we are placing on the planet's finite resources, the impact of our individual behaviour, and how we can act to protect the planet for future generations. Students also want to understand how sustainability relates to their field of study, so we will integrate tailored sustainability components into every UoS education programme. This will look different across Schools and Departments.

To achieve these goals, we need to work in partnership with our students to build on our existing strengths in sustainability education. We will support staff and students who already work on sustainability-related issues to pass their knowledge on to others, and will offer training that assists both staff and students to integrate sustainability into their programmes. Our efforts in this area will align with our commitment to the SDG Accord, which requires us to incorporate the SDGs into our education, research, and operations.

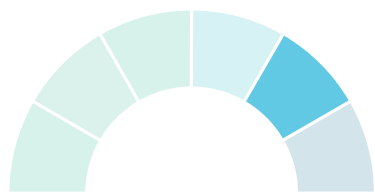
What will we do?

- Offer carbon literacy training to all students and staff as part of orientation (for example through the Carbon Literacy Project¹¹). Carbon literacy training equips people with a basic understanding of the science behind climate change and the things they can do to reduce their environmental impact.
- Develop an online, interdisciplinary sustainability module with input from academics and students from across the University. This will be made available as part of all first-year courses. The module will draw on existing teaching at the University and will be made available to the public in future.
- Empower staff and students to integrate sustainability into the curriculum through a 'train the trainer' model. This means equipping a mix of staff and students from across the University with the skills to teach others in their School how to incorporate sustainability themes into their programmes in a subject-specific way.
- Showcase programmes that have successfully integrated sustainability and share lessons learned.

¹¹ The Carbon Literacy Project, 2020, 'About Us', accessed at: [link](#).

Goal

05



Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS' research and societal impact

Targets and indicators

- ▶ By December 2020, we will have undertaken an audit of all sustainability research currently being done at the University to be used as a benchmark for assessing future progress.
- ▶ By the end of the 2020/21 academic year, we will have completed consultations on the role of the Hub, established its conceptual framework, and communicated this to the rest of the University.
- ▶ By 2025, we will have increased the number and total value of research projects linked to sustainability at the University.

One of the biggest contributions the University can make to addressing the climate crisis is through its research. We have a vital role to play in increasing the world's knowledge about the sustainability-related challenges facing our society, and solving these challenges through innovation and expertise.

We are a world-leader in areas aligned with environmental sustainability, such as Earth and Marine Sciences and Engineering. There are a range of successful sustainability-related research groups and initiatives across the University, including the Energy and Climate Change Group, the Sustainable Energy Research Group, the NEXUS Science Strategic Research Group, the Clean Carbon Research Group and the Future Towns Innovation Hub.

We believe we can grow our sustainability research and increase its impact by establishing a Sustainability and Resilience Research Hub. The Hub will be a virtual research 'centre', which brings together researchers from a range of disciplines to deliver interdisciplinary research projects addressing the SDGs. The Hub will take a systems-based approach to sustainability, which recognises the complexity of 'wicked problems' such as climate change.

By 2025, our aim is to have developed and embedded the Hub as a cornerstone of the University's research and impact, with a growing number of researchers aligned to it. We want the Hub to have stimulated and supported interdisciplinary research teams that have successfully obtained support from external funding sources. Finally, we want even more researchers to be attracted to UoS because of our distinctive sustainability research.

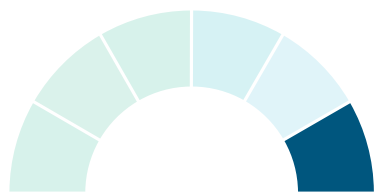
What will we do?

A Steering Group led by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Interdisciplinary Research and the Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Medicine will gather input on the Hub, including its focus and how it can best support researchers. The results of these consultations will shape this goal, but as a starting point, we plan to:

- Develop a clear statement of purpose for the Hub and how researchers should engage with it, based on feedback from the consultations.
- In the first year of the Hub, pilot projects using existing internal research funding to build momentum for research linked to the sustainability theme.
- By 2022, assuming the Hub has been successful so far, create the position of Hub Director. The Director will be responsible for communicating the Hub's purpose, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, and identifying appropriate external funding sources.

Goal

06



Implement a sustainable and ethical investment policy

Targets and indicators

- ▶ By February 2021, we will have completed an audit of fossil fuel exposure in our portfolio.
- ▶ By 2022, we will have put in place our sustainable and ethical investment policy.
- ▶ By 2025, our portfolio will be fully compliant with our sustainable and ethical investment policy.

As a large organisation, the University has significant buying power and ability to exert influence through the way it uses its assets and how it engages with other organisations. We want to use this power to support a more sustainable and ethical future. To do this, we need to articulate a clear sustainable and ethical investment policy for how we use our assets.

The University is a not-for-profit organisation, and the purpose of its investments is to enable us to continue to deliver our core mission. The University aims to ensure value for money in all its activities – mindful of both its public and non-public funding sources. The primary objectives of the University's treasury management activities are to ensure the security of the principal sum it invests, maintain adequate liquidity to meet operational needs and gain an appropriate level of investment return. The cash balances we hold are for our own investment – for example, through new buildings, IT infrastructure and seed funding projects. Treasury management, and the creation of investment portfolios, aims to protect our cash until such a time as required, and the income generated ensures value for money is achieved with no risk to security.

We will develop a sustainable and ethical investment policy that outlines how we will use our investments to achieve positive influence in these areas. The policy will define our approach to 'decarbonisation', a term for reducing the exposure of an investment portfolio to companies that extract and produce fossil fuels. We need to determine how far we expand our definition of decarbonisation and ensure that our investments support companies and activities that are working to address the climate crisis.

As a future consideration, we need to ensure that the values embodied by this Strategy and our sustainable and ethical investment policy are reflected in other areas of the University's operations. This will require a larger piece of work that defines a values framework for the University as a whole. This values framework would shape our relationships with our suppliers, our research funders, and the companies we partner with more broadly.

What will we do?

We have already established an Investment Committee, which will be responsible for developing our sustainable and ethical investment policy and advising on the path to decarbonisation. This committee will:

- Develop a sustainable and ethical investment policy for all our investments that reflects our vision in this Strategy.
- Work with fund managers to apply the policy to the University's current investment portfolio.
- Establish a transparent process of reporting on the sustainable and ethical investment policy and how it has influenced the University's investment decisions over time (while protecting sensitive information where necessary).

Implementation

Following the launch of this Strategy in September 2020, the Sustainability Strategy Implementation Group will develop a detailed Implementation Plan for 2020-2022. This will be published before the end of 2020 and for each goal will include specific activities, sequencing, measurable targets and estimates of resource requirements.

An initial, two-year implementation plan will allow us to plan with as much certainty as possible. We will follow the 2022 plan with a plan to 2025.

Overview of implementation to 2025

We have developed an indicative, 5-year timeline for how we could deliver these goals and the key milestones to 2025 (see Figure 3). This plan is necessarily high-level but reflects some key assumptions about our approach to implementation. These include:

- **A combination of incremental and ‘big bang’ changes.** The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced the University’s execution bandwidth, but it has also made us reconsider long-held assumptions around our ways of working. We want to make the most of this disruption without over-burdening our staff and students. Therefore, we will implement this Strategy using a combination of incremental changes and ‘big bang’ initiatives that build momentum by creating rapid, high-impact wins.
- **Focusing on initiatives with early payback as well as long-term benefit.** We aim to begin the Implementation Plan with a mix of initiatives that will have early payback (for example, offering carbon literacy training to students) and initiatives that will bring benefits over time, such as developing our roadmap to net zero. This will allow us to demonstrate positive change from the Strategy in the short-term, while

laying the foundations for long-term success.

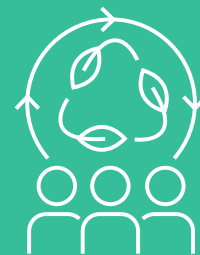
- **Piloting, testing, and adjusting approaches.** We want to use different parts of the University to pilot initiatives, evaluate different approaches, and modify our solutions before implementing them more broadly. For example, we aim to pilot our approach to reducing emissions from business travel in a School or Department, and to integrate sustainability into a small group of programmes before rolling this out across the whole University.

Reporting and Monitoring

We will measure and assess our progress against the goals and targets outlined in the Strategy on an annual basis. The Sustainability Strategy Implementation Group will lead on this assessment process (likely to be towards the end of the academic year) with support from operational areas and departments across the University. In addition to this end-of-year assessment, the Sustainability Strategy Steering Group (SSG) will meet monthly to monitor and discuss progress on implementing the Strategy, and will report monthly to the University Executive Board (UEB; see Governance section below).

The end-of-year assessment will inform an Annual Report, which will be delivered to the UEB in September of each year. This Report will also be publicly available on the University’s sustainability website page.

It is critical that as part of our annual public reporting, we also clearly advertise our 2030 net zero target and show how we are reducing emissions in line with this goal. This will help to hold us to account and send a clear message to our community about our commitment to the vision in this Strategy. By reporting publicly on how we are reducing emissions, we also contribute to the growing pressure on other universities and organisations to act.



Resourcing for implementation

The Implementation Plan 2020-2022 and its successor will identify the total amount of funding needed over the life of this strategy. Because it will be difficult to judge this total, we plan to first develop a detailed estimate of the funding and resources required for the first two years of the Strategy. This will consider the cost of individual projects to reduce the University’s emissions footprint (for example, through building refurbishment or switching energy providers), as well as the people resource required to implement initiatives.

The first Implementation Plan will align with existing processes to plan for and secure funding in the University.

Figure 3 | Implementation overview to 2025

Initiative	Goal	2020/2021		2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024	2024/2025
		Sep - Feb	Mar-Aug	Sep - Feb	Mar - Aug	Sep - Feb	Mar - Aug	Sep - Aug	Sep - Aug
Establish Implementation Group and develop Implementation Plan 2020-2022	N/A								
Establish monitoring and reporting arrangements	N/A								
Establish network of sustainability champions	N/A								
Develop sustainability communications plan	N/A								
Develop roadmap to net zero by 2030	G1								
Consult on business travel points system and set 2025 reduction targets; incorporate emissions calculator into Clarity	G3								
Conduct audit of sustainability research	G5								
Audit fossil fuel exposure and report	G6								
Develop methodology to measure Scope 3	G2								
Procure and prepare to deliver carbon literacy training	G4								
Consult on conceptual focus for Hub and communicate to the University	G5								
Deliver training to staff and students on integrating sustainability into programmes	G4								
Develop sustainable and ethical investment policy	G6								
Measure Scope 3 emissions and set reduction target	G2								
Conduct feasibility study on University-wide emissions budget for business travel	G3								
Launch online sustainability module and carbon literacy training	G4								
Deliver first year of Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduction projects	G1								
Pilot points system for reducing emissions from business travel in a School/Department	G3								
Pilot first year of research projects linked to Hub	G5								
Develop Implementation Plan 2023-2025	N/A								
Pilot integrating sustainability into a selected group of programmes	G4								
Evaluate success of points system pilot	G3								
Evaluate success-to-date of Hub	G5								
Deliver second year of Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduction projects	G1								
Deliver first year of Scope 3 emissions reduction projects	G2								
Establish Director and additional funding for Hub	G5								
Pilot integrating sustainability into a larger group of programmes	G4								
Roll out points system for business travel to whole University	G3								
Roll out sustainability integration for all University programmes	G4								
Deliver third and fourth year of Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduction projects	G1								
Deliver second year of Scope 3 emissions reduction projects	G2								

G1

Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2030

G2

Measure our total emissions footprint and set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions

G3

Adopt a value-based approach to reduce emissions from business travel

G4

Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025

G5

Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS' research and societal impact

G6

Implement a sustainable and ethical investment policy

N/A

Implementation Group activities

Enablers

Achieving the vision expressed in this Strategy will depend on a series of strategic ‘enablers’: elements that cut across all six goals, which will help us to successfully deliver the initiatives and monitor our progress.

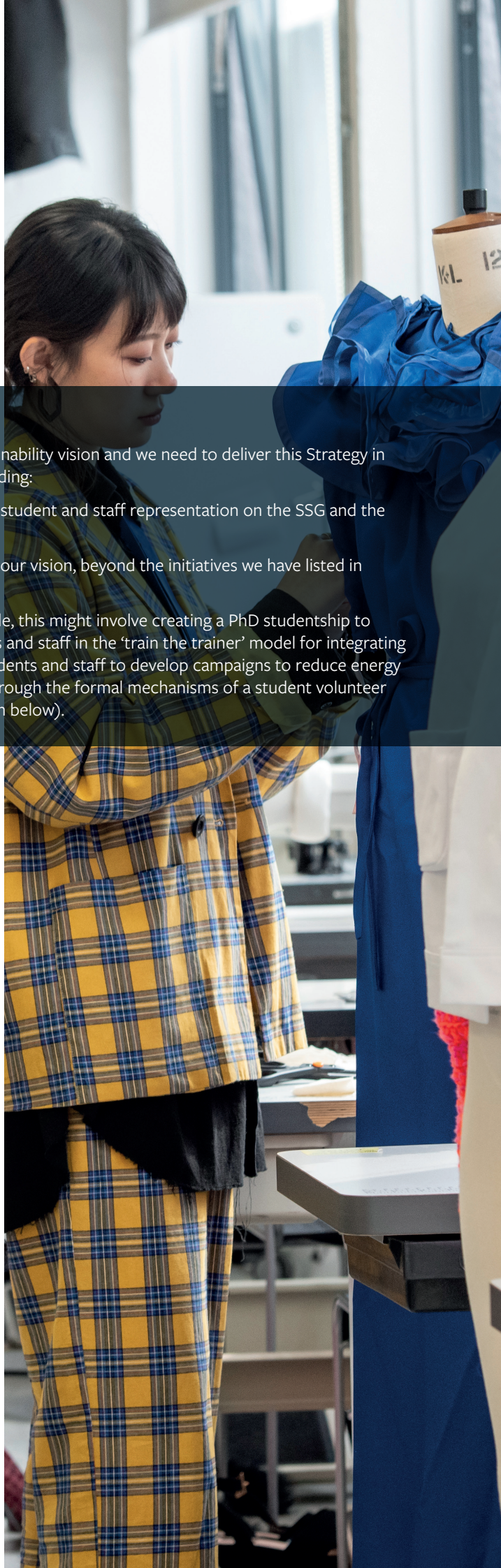
Partnership working

Our students and staff are deeply committed to realising our sustainability vision and we need to deliver this Strategy in partnership with them. There are several ways we will do this, including:

- Involving students and staff in all decision-making, by ensuring student and staff representation on the SSG and the Implementation Group (see Governance section below).
- Gathering ideas from students and staff on how to implement our vision, beyond the initiatives we have listed in this document.
- Using students and staff as our preferred resource. For example, this might involve creating a PhD studentship to assist with Scope 3 emissions measurement, involving students and staff in the ‘train the trainer’ model for integrating sustainability into education programmes, or working with students and staff to develop campaigns to reduce energy use. We will draw on student and staff expertise and energy through the formal mechanisms of a student volunteer pool and a subject matter expert pool (see Governance section below).

Leadership

We will need commitment from leaders at all levels to achieve the ambitious vision outlined in this Strategy. This includes commitment from the Vice Chancellor and Executive Team, as well as student leaders, leaders in Schools and Departments, and professional services team managers. Leaders will play more than one role in implementing the Strategy. They will help to deliver the goals (for example, an Associate Dean (Education) in a Faculty might guide programme leads to integrate sustainability into their curricula) and they will model commitment to sustainability to their Schools/Departments and teams. Leaders are also responsible for helping to hold the University to account.



Governance

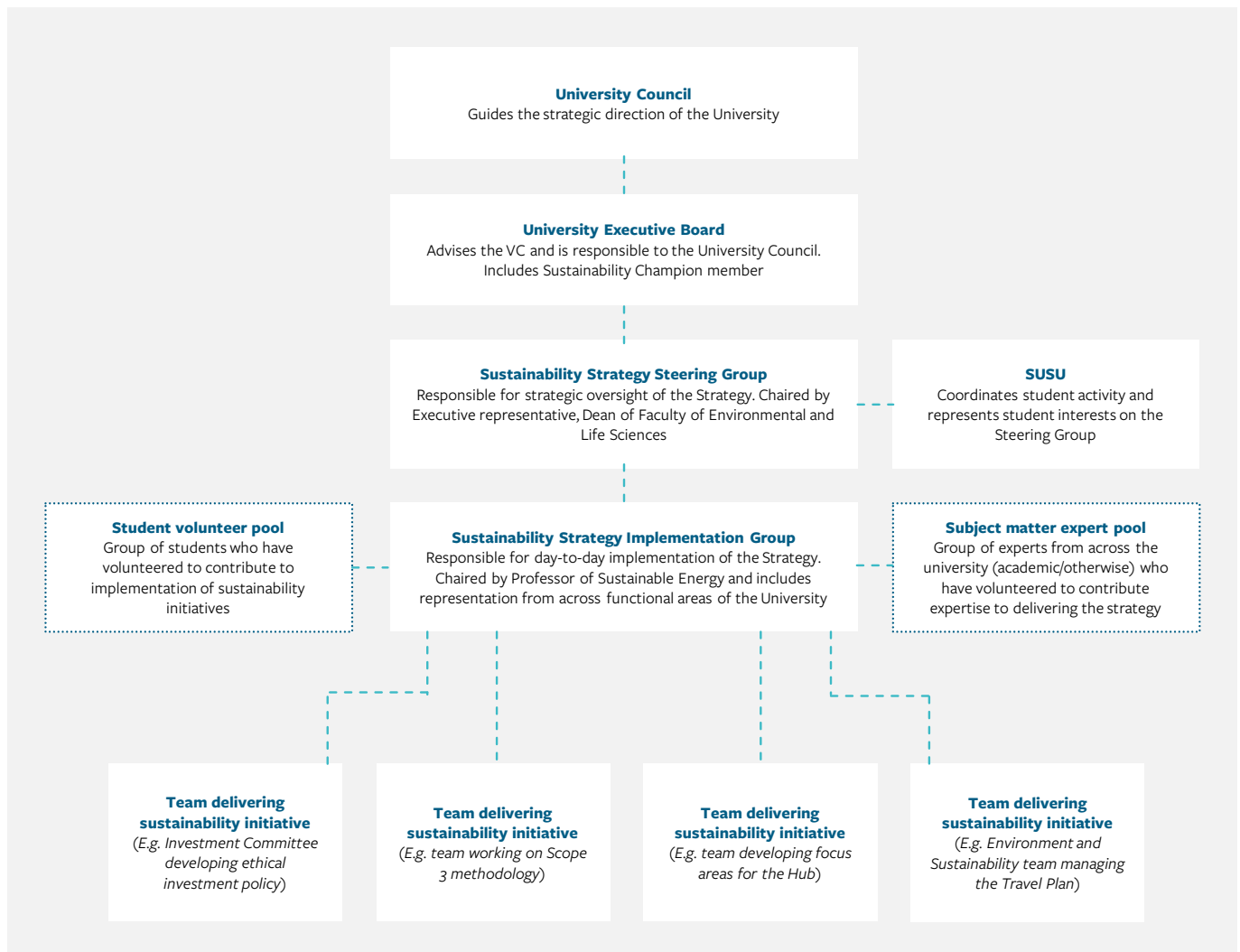
The Strategy will be supported by a governance structure that ensures we hold ourselves accountable to deliver our sustainability vision (see Figure 4). This includes:

- **The University Executive Board.** The UEB, including the Vice Chancellor, has overall accountability for achieving our sustainability vision, as part of delivering the University's broader strategic goals. The University Council holds the UEB to account for delivering this. The Dean of the Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences will act as Sustainability Champion on the UEB.
- **The Sustainability Strategy Steering Group.** This group oversaw the development of this Strategy and will continue to provide strategic oversight for its implementation. The SSG includes Executive representation from the Dean of the Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences. It also includes the SUSU President, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Estates and Facilities, and the Director of Finance (Planning). This group will provide strategic advice to the Implementation Group and report monthly to the UEB on progress towards delivering the Strategy's goals.

- **The Sustainability Strategy Implementation Group.** This group has been created to oversee the day-to-day implementation of the Strategy. It is chaired by one of the University's academic experts in sustainable energy and will feature a staff member and a SUSU representative responsible for each goal. The Implementation Group will meet on a fortnightly basis and will report monthly to the Sustainability Steering Group.

Responsibility for implementing the Strategy's goals and initiatives will fall to a range of different teams across the University. For example, the Environment and Sustainability Team within Estates and Facilities is responsible for implementing more sustainable transport options, while the Investment Committee is responsible for developing our sustainable and ethical investment policy. These teams will receive oversight from and report on progress to the Implementation Group.

Figure 4 | Governance structure for the Strategy





Culture and behaviour

The success of this Strategy depends on our people. We need to work together across all our campuses to achieve our sustainability vision. Specifically, in the implementation of this Strategy we must:

- **Harness energy and enthusiasm for sustainability at UoS.** The consultations on our institutional strategy in 2019 and those that informed this Strategy demonstrated that there is deep, widespread commitment to sustainability among our community. As individuals, we care about this issue and want our University to make a difference. We need to harness this enthusiasm for the Strategy by involving as many people as possible in implementation.
- **Use networks of champions to promote change.** We want to draw on the enthusiasm for sustainability across the University to establish networks of champions committed to change. Champions can promote our sustainability vision in their area of the University and help to hold people to account. We will connect these champions through informal, organic networks, enabling them to share ideas and increase their influence across the University.
- **Reinforce positive behaviour.** Our Strategy relies on individual behaviour change – for example, encouraging staff to cycle to work rather than drive, or encouraging researchers to attend a conference online rather than flying to attend in-person. It is important that as we implement these behaviour changes over the next five years, we focus on reinforcing and rewarding positive behaviour, not punishing negative ones. This will help to create a culture of sustainable behaviour and prevent backlash from staff and students.
- **Review existing processes and policies to ensure they align with our sustainability vision.** To achieve our vision, we need to put sustainability at the core of everything that we do. This means ensuring that all University policies and procedures are aligned with our sustainability goals.
- **Be mindful of diversity.** Connected to the importance of reinforcing positive behaviour is the need to be mindful that our community is a diverse one, in which behavioural change involves different things for different people. For example, it may be more difficult for people with a disability to conduct more of their work online, or for a person with caring responsibilities to invest time in travelling by train to a conference. We need to continually test and adjust our policies based on feedback from different groups to avoid unintended consequences.

Community Engagement

This Strategy is part of our commitment, as a civic university, to serve our community. We must engage with and draw on this community as part of the implementation process. This includes:

- **Aligning our sustainability vision with our civic engagement agenda.** The University is already working on ways to create value by engaging with our community. We will link this Strategy to our civic engagement agenda and seek out opportunities to deliver on our sustainability goals and engagement goals at the same time. For example, this could involve providing opportunities for people in the community to learn more about sustainability, or delivering sustainability-related research that also directly benefits our community.
- **Linking our sustainability goals to the City of Southampton's Green City Plan and Winchester City Council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (2020-2030).** We are already a signatory to the City of Southampton's Green City Charter, and work on issues such as sustainable transport in partnership with both city councils. We will continue to engage with both city councils as part of the implementation of this Strategy, including demonstrating how our actions help to deliver the Green City Plan and the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, and serving as the go-to place for expertise on achieving regional sustainability goals.
- **Consult on changes that affect our community.** We need to maintain an ongoing dialogue with our community about any changes that could affect them, such as alterations to on-site power generation or transport options serving the University.

- **Draw on the strengths of our community partners to achieve our sustainability goals.** We need to leverage our existing partnerships (for example, our work alongside the Southampton Common Forum) and build new ones to realise our sustainability vision. Drawing on the talent and expertise in our region will help us to achieve our goals and ensure that our successes are shared by our community.

Communication

The Implementation Group will work with the Communications and Marketing team to develop a communications plan in support of this Strategy. The plan will have two main goals:

- **'Tell the story' of our commitment to sustainability.** Currently, we are not telling this story as effectively as we would like. The communications plan will put our world-leading sustainability-related teaching and research and our existing achievements in areas such as biodiversity in the spotlight. This will help to attract people to work and study at UoS because of our focus on sustainability and encourage other universities and organisations to follow our lead in taking ambitious action.
- **Build momentum around this Strategy.** The communications plan will inform UoS staff and students and the broader community about our sustainability vision and goals, and ways in which they can get involved. This will require changes to our sustainability website to make it more engaging and interactive.



Appendix: Details on consultations

Since the beginning of June 2020, we have consulted extensively to develop this Strategy. We wanted to give as many people at the University as possible the opportunity to contribute to our vision for a more sustainable University and how we will achieve this over the next five years. Our University community was very keen to be involved in shaping the Strategy to 2025, and we acknowledge and thank all those who gave their time and input – you have been essential to helping us develop realistic and meaningful goals.

Our consultation process ran from June to August and included:

- A workshop with a mix of staff (including academic experts in sustainability, members of the SSG, and a member of Council) to discuss our conceptual approach to sustainability.
- A workshop with UEB.
- A workshop with Council.
- Interviews and focus groups with academic and professional staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students, alumni and other key stakeholders (see Table 1).
- Online responses to a Green Paper.
- Consultations on operational implications.
- A workshop with senior leaders to discuss targets for the Strategy and implementation.

Interviews and focus groups with members of University community

Group	Number interviewed
Staff	36
Students	27
Alumni	4
Total	67

The Green Paper was published online in July 2020 to gather feedback on the proposed vision and goals. During this consultation phase we received detailed feedback from more than 140 people (see Table 2). This process enabled us to establish what goals were the most important to the University community and hear what people believed was missing.

Feedback on Green Paper

Position	Number of responses
Academic Staff	47
Professional Services Staff	39
PGR & PGT Students	20
Undergraduate students	32
Alumni	3
External	1
Total	142

Following the Green Paper, we conducted a series of 12 operational consultations with 23 staff members to workshop the best ways of achieving the Strategy's goals. These consultations helped us to understand more clearly the practical implications of the initiatives that were proposed.

The feedback received throughout all consultation phases was combined with plans set out in existing University strategies to inform the development of this Strategy.