



# SUSTAINABLE SUSSEX



## FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Universities exist to answer the big questions – and there is no bigger question than how we build a sustainable planet.

This is the greatest single challenge facing humankind and this strategy puts sustainability right at the heart of everything we do at the University of Sussex.

Our academic expertise in this area is already considerable and forceful. Our ambition now is to become a leading light in the sector across all our activities.

This strategy has been co-created with students, researchers, lecturers, professional services staff, partners and stakeholders.

All have been brought together by our dedicated Sustainability Team to set out our vision for a more hopeful and sustainable planet: a future where we are one of the most sustainable universities in the world. Inspired by this vision we are going to build a place that provides global leadership and learning about the biggest challenges that we as humanity must face together.

At a time when CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are forecast to rise by the second highest annual amount on record, and at a time of mass extinction and loss of biodiversity, it is time for ambition and hope.

Yet it is also time for realism and a focus on results. That is why this strategy contains well thought out targets and an action plan for delivering real strategic sustainability successes.

This includes our new target of being net zero by 2035. I am pleased to confirm that this target includes both our direct emissions and our indirect emissions from our supply chain, financial investments, and the way that our staff and students travel.

I hope you will join me in bringing the strategy to life. You can get involved by following the links to calls to action within the University's new [sustainability web pages](#).

I look forward to working with you to create a greener university for a better world – a place of hope for the future where we are one of the most sustainable universities in the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Tickell".

**Adam Tickell**  
Vice-Chancellor

# VISION: SUSTAINABLE SUSSEX – ONE OF THE MOST SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD

## PURPOSE

Our vision is clear. Our strategic goal is for the University of Sussex to be one of the most sustainable universities in the world. We will show global leadership in demonstrating and promoting all forms of environmental, social and economic sustainability at a local, regional, national and international level.

## OBJECTIVES

This strategy contains four high-level objectives that we will realise through sixteen key aims and a detailed action plan:

1. **Ethical Educators** – we will embed sustainability into all aspects of student learning and experience
2. **Decarbonising the Economy** – we will reach net zero by 2035 through our action plan for achieving this
3. **Civic Leaders and Partners** – we will positively impact the community through a sustainable supply chain, social responsibility and low transport emissions

4. **Environmental Champions** – we will promote biodiversity and sustainable food, waste and water consumption and recycling.

All four of these objectives directly support the realisation of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that enable positive environmental, social and economic development.

You can see how each theme corresponds with the following SDGs on page six of this document.



◀ The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

# KEY AIMS

Each of our high-level objectives will be realised through the achievement of 16 key aims clustered together into the following themes.

## ETHICAL EDUCATORS



Students as partners and innovators



Sustainability taught within all degrees



Sustainable research practices



Supporting equality, diversity and inclusion

## CIVIC LEADERS AND PARTNERS



Sustainable supply chain



Active and sustainable commuting



Better business travel



Community and voluntary impact

## DECARBONISING THE ECONOMY



Net zero by 2035



Excellent carbon accounting



Decarbonised energy infrastructure



Energy-efficient campus

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS



50% of waste recycled by 2025



Responsible food and water production and consumption

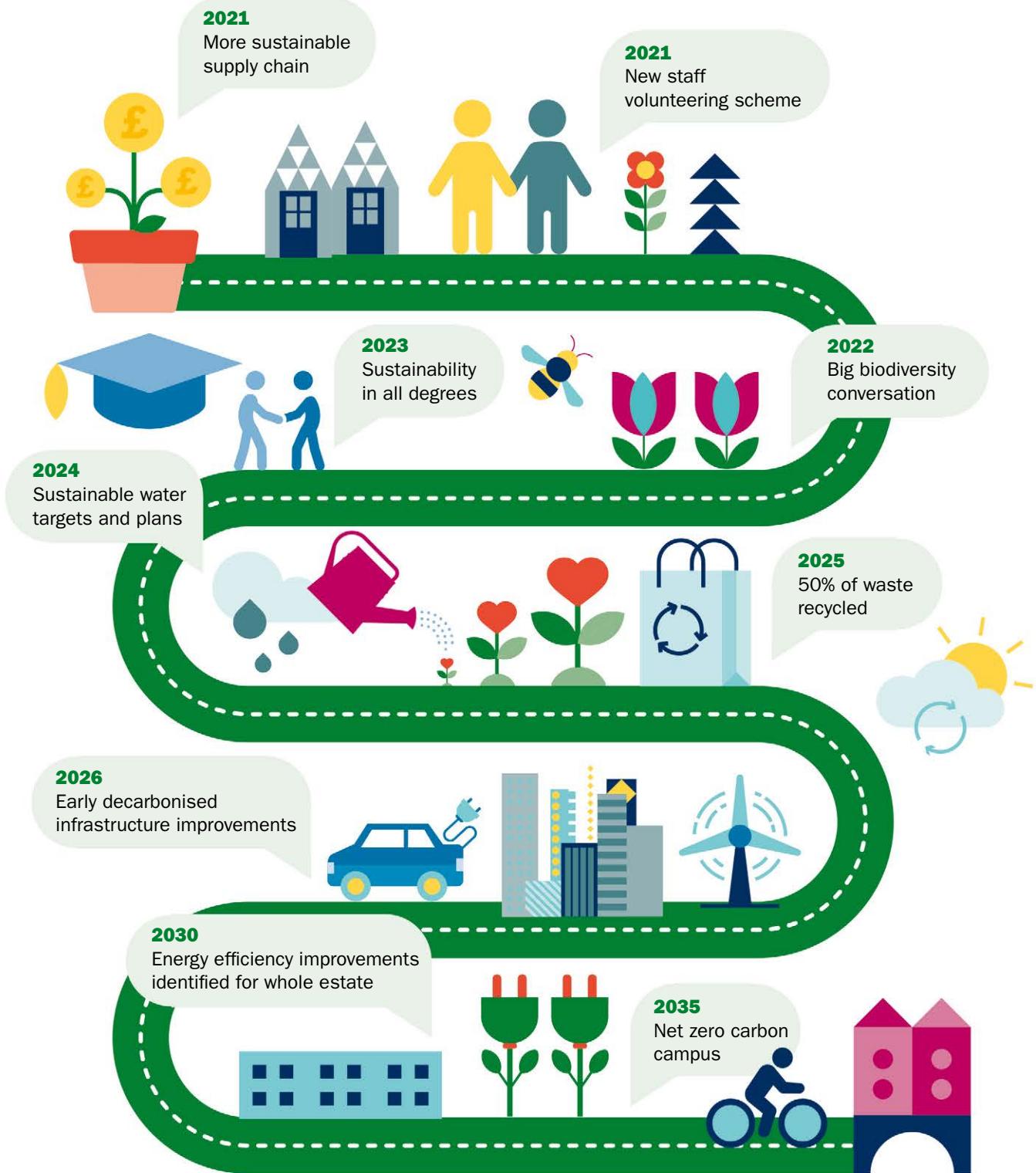


Biodiverse campus



Behaviour changers

# OUR SUSTAINABILITY ROAD MAP



# HOW THE STRATEGY SUPPORTS THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

While all the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) overlap and are interlinked, this strategy was developed by grouping the SDGs into four clusters that formed the basis and scope of the four themes within the strategy. This clustering can be illustrated below as follows:



# ABOUT US – OUR SUSTAINABILITY STORY

The University of Sussex is a leading research-intensive university near the lively city of Brighton & Hove in the UK. We have both an international and local outlook, with staff and students from more than 100 countries and enthusiastic engagement in community activities and services.

We are located within a UNESCO Biosphere Region, with the campus surrounded by the South Downs National Park, and we are passionate about sustainability.

We have a long history of promoting sustainable and international development and are ranked number one in the **QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021** for development studies, in conjunction with the Institute of Development Studies.

In 2018, the University published the **Sussex 2025 Vision** – a strategic framework for creating a better university for a better world. This set out our vision for creating a progressive, values-driven university that is disruptive by design and puts students at the heart of everything we do.

In August 2019 we declared a climate emergency and decided to employ a dedicated Sustainability Team to drive forward sustainability at Sussex. This allowed us to build on existing environmental achievements, such as the creation of the largest solar farm in any higher education institution in the UK.

In November 2020 we published our first **annual sustainability report**. This showed our performance against all 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In parallel we applied to be benchmarked in the **Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings** for the first time.

The results were published in April 2021 with the University of Sussex ranked 41st in the world, out of around 1,200 higher-education institutions, in relation to sustainability. This put us in the top 5% of universities in the world and the top 10 UK universities – that applied to be independently ranked by the THE – for sustainability.

This ranking reflected our excellence as an institution in the field of sustainability research and our long-standing commitment to community outreach, environmental stewardship and innovation.

While we are delighted with this achievement, we know that there is still a lot of room for improvement and that we want to do much more. We are committed to building our strengths and showing sectoral sustainability leadership.

This strategy sets out our ambitious plans for further strengthening our position of being one of the most sustainable universities in the world - ideally being recognised as one of the top 10 most sustainable institutions in the world in the *THE Impact Rankings*.

# OUR SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

As a world-leading teaching and research provider in the field of sustainability, one of our biggest challenges is to continue to set new education and research standards that can have real world transformative impacts.

Because we face an existential environmental crisis, it is also not enough to just teach about sustainability. We, as an institution, need to ‘walk the talk’ and be a beacon of sustainability practice.

2020 was the hottest year on record as our climate continues to change. The International Energy Agency has warned that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are set to rise in 2021 by the second highest annual rate since records began

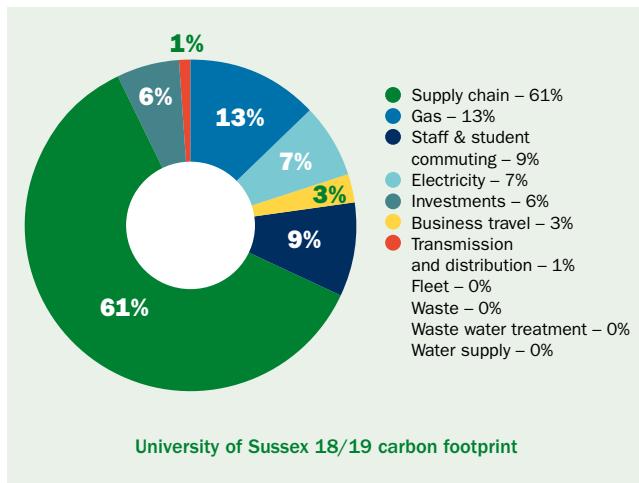
Our carbon footprint is still far too large to support international efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as recommended by the International Panel on Climate Change to prevent catastrophic climate disaster.

We estimate our full 2018/19 carbon footprint to be around 100,670 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>1</sup> Left unabated without further action, we predict that this would increase by almost a further 50% by 2035. We realise that this is completely unacceptable and urgent action needs to be taken immediately.

That is why we are using this strategy document to reverse this trend and set a target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2035.

In calculating these emissions and our future target we have included both our direct greenhouse gas emissions (known as scope 1) and our indirect emissions, including those in our supply chain (known as scope 2 and 3 emissions).

This is because we understand that over 60% of our emissions are currently indirect emissions from the goods and services we buy and if we do not address them, we will be part of the climate problem rather than the solution. We currently estimate our emissions to be broken down as follows:



After procurement and investments, our largest source of emissions come from transport and heating the buildings within our estate.

Prior to the current Covid-19 pandemic, our campus accommodated just under 20,000 students and 2,800 staff across 123 buildings, with a total floor area of over 250,000m<sup>2</sup> (around the size of 35 football pitches).

In the 2018/19 academic year we used approximately 272,000 gigajoules of energy. This was provided by a mix of power from our District Heating System, Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHP) and our solar farm. Over 11% of this energy came from renewable sources such as solar and combined heat and power.

Some of the buildings in our estate are listed buildings that are expensive to heat and cool because they lack double glazing, modern building energy management systems, insulation and low-carbon heating and ventilation.

We also lack accurate metering data in some of these buildings and need to rely on estimates that may be less accurate and specific than we would like in an era of smart metering.

In order to reduce our direct heating emissions and energy use, it will be vital for us to audit the energy efficiency of our entire estate and set in place a programme for making the most urgent improvements in a strategic and timely manner. This should include the replacement of ageing energy assets and fixtures with modern cleaner alternatives.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that all of the estimates of our energy use and carbon footprint in this section are rough imperfect estimates as we seek to put more robust carbon-accounting systems in place that can increase our data confidence going forward towards 2035.

Looking ahead, as the way we work is changing, with an increase in remote working and learning, it will be important for us to encourage our staff and students to green their homes and work spaces beyond campus too. Thinking of our estate as a fixed place that people visit will need to change as the world changes around us.

We also face a significant challenge to reduce our transport emissions and associated air pollution. The campus has good public transport links with a train station on our doorstep, and eight bus routes connecting to Brighton and beyond. However, commuting made up around 9% of our emissions in 2018/19; and cars still remain the single most popular mode of transport for our staff travelling to and from campus, with 46% of journeys made this way in 2019.

Our foreign business travel emissions are also higher than we would like. They account for around 3% of our total carbon footprint per year. While we still want to enable our students and staff to work with international partners, we need to find and promote more sustainable ways of doing so. The same applies to the trips made by our international students, when travelling back and forth between campus and their home countries.

Closely related to achieving net zero, there has never been a greater need for responsible consumption and production. The National Academy of Sciences has confirmed that we are currently in the sixth mass extinction as a result of the loss of biodiversity. Meanwhile, every day around eight million pieces of plastic make their way into our oceans, bringing the risk that by 2050 they will contain more plastic than fish.

While the University has trail blazed in certain areas of responsible consumption and production – such as having the largest solar farm of any university in the UK and being the first UK university to have an aerobic digester to convert commercial food waste to compost – we need to do much more.

In 2018/19 the University produced over 2,500 tonnes of waste and recycled only 17% of this weight. This was below the UK sectoral average and we understand that it is not good enough. We also believe that although it is good to recycle it is even better to reduce the amount of waste produced in the first place.

That is why this strategy includes two new stretching targets in relation to waste. The first is to reduce the amount of waste produced per student by 10% by 2025. The second is to recycle 50% of all waste generated by 2025. This will allow us to reduce the impact of waste upon the environment by collectively throwing away less in the first place.

Achieving the ambitious sustainability targets in this strategy is going to be challenging and will cost money. However, the cost of doing nothing is inconceivably high, both for us as an institution and for future generations too.

It will be far more cost effective to make all of our infrastructure as low carbon and energy efficient as feasibly possible now – even if it means paying slightly more than the price of more carbon-intensive alternatives – than to pay for more expensive retrofitting, replacement or carbon-offsetting measures in the next decade. For example, our internal net zero analysis predicted that the cost to the University of reaching net zero by 2035 would be approximately £13.8 million less than the cost of reaching it by 2040.

This is especially true due to the number of external funding opportunities that are currently available, such as the UK Government's public-sector decarbonisation fund, to help pay for the decarbonisation of our campus. We are also lucky to have a number of social enterprises in the local area that are willing to pay for the upfront costs of new green infrastructure in a way that can be cost neutral to the University on account of their not-for-profit status, while supporting the local economy.

By creating a more energy efficient campus we know we will be taking the most cost-effective route to reaching net zero and reducing our long-term operating costs through cheaper energy bills. Ultimately helping us to save money and the planet at the same time.

In addition to our environmental challenges, we also face social and environmental challenges, related to inequality and poverty amongst our staff and students that we need to face together as we build a more inclusive and fairer society.

## KEY FACTS

Our **2018/19**  
carbon footprint was

**~100,670 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**



Estimated Carbon Footprint if  
we do nothing by **2035** =

**145,995 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

**60%**



of emissions are  
indirect from our supply  
chain and investments

Campus area of

**252,409 m<sup>2</sup>**

= over 35 football pitches



**19,413** students     **2,800** staff     **123** buildings

Energy used in 2018/19 =

**271,770** Gigajoules



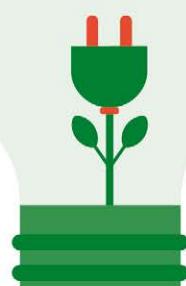
**17%**  
waste recycled

**2,548** tonnes of waste  
produced in 2018/19

**11%**  
of energy generated from  
renewable sources



**0%**  
waste to landfill



**46%**  
staff journeys by car



Estimated money saved  
by reaching net zero by  
**2035** instead of **2040** =

**£13.8 m**

# OUR SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITIES

If the scale of the environmental and socioeconomic challenges we face today seems daunting, let's not be fatalistic or disheartened. The biggest challenge we face is harnessing the tremendous amount of positivity, willingness and untapped human capital of all our staff, students and local, national and global strategic partners, to pull together to build a greener university and a greener world.

We are uniquely located in the only constituency in the UK that has a Green Member of Parliament with a Green-led Local Authority. The election of these representatives can be interpreted as a reflection of our local community's deeply held progressive socioeconomic and environmental values and of how important sustainability is to them.

These are the same values that we have set out in our Sussex 2025 vision. The same values that are held by many of our academics that have dedicated their life's research to improving sustainability. The same values that we see in our students, who are passionate advocates of behaviour change – creating no fewer than **20 societies** that promote social, environmental and economic sustainability on campus.

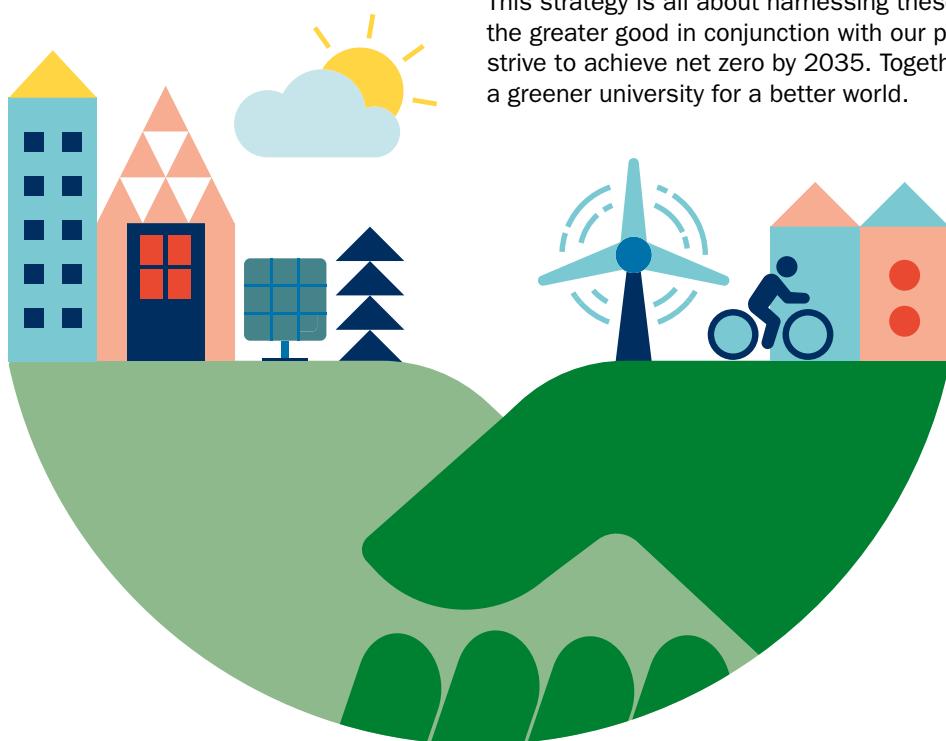
We are also fortunate to be located next to an abundance of natural assets that we are ideally placed to protect and steward through direct conservation activities and research. In addition to being next to a national park and the sea, we are located within the Living Coast, the only urban UNESCO biosphere zone in the world.

Harnessing the social capital of our students and staff to engage in local environmental protection is one of the biggest opportunities within this strategy.

Similarly, we as an institution have always had a global outlook and we are open to inward investment opportunities from partner organisations looking to demonstrate new sustainable technologies and practices. We are a living laboratory and are actively seeking partners who share our ambitions to be global beacons at the forefront of sustainability.

So, in summary, we at Sussex have the skills, resources, knowledge, connections, passion and enthusiasm to rise to all of the challenges we face, and to build one of the most progressive and sustainable universities in the world.

This strategy is all about harnessing these resources for the greater good in conjunction with our partners, as we strive to achieve net zero by 2035. Together, we will build a greener university for a better world.



SUSTAINABLE SUSSEX



# ETHICAL EDUCATORS

US  
UNIVERSITY  
OF SUSSEX

# WE WILL EMBED SUSTAINABILITY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF STUDENT LEARNING, EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH

We will achieve this objective through four key areas of activity that we refer to as our aims. Firstly, making students partners and innovators in sustainable development. Secondly, including sustainability in all degrees. Thirdly, being at the forefront of sustainable research practices. And fourthly, by supporting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Our key commitments in this area are summarised below and explained in more detail in the remainder of this section.

## KEY COMMITMENTS: ETHICAL EDUCATORS

- Actively engage students, student societies and the Students' Union on co-delivering the outputs from this strategy and shaping future sustainability policy from August 2021
- Recruit recent Sussex graduates and current students to be paid members of the University Sustainability Team by August 2021
- Hold grand challenges and innovation competitions to support our students to create the sustainability solutions of the future by July 2021
- Conduct a review focused on promoting social impact in student entrepreneurship by September 2021
- Develop action plans in all Schools to deeper embed sustainability in the curriculum by August 2022
- Offer a new online interdisciplinary introduction to sustainability certificate course to all first- and second-year undergraduate students from August 2022 enabling each academic School to adapt the content into a School-specific 15-credit module from August 2023 if appropriate
- Directly link all of our student careers initiatives to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and monitor our impact by September 2021
- Gain Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) sustainable lab accreditation by August 2022
- Further embed sustainable research practices within all our research methods and processes by December 2023
- Achieve the goals set out in our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – Inclusive Sussex – by December 2025.

# STUDENTS AS PARTNERS AND INNOVATORS



At Sussex we dare to be different and truly value the importance of student voice in co-creating a more radical and meaningful sustainable student experience.

We will **actively engage students on co-delivering all of the outputs from this strategy**. Recognising the great work done by the numerous sustainability related societies on campus, such as the Leave No Trace Society and Food Waste Café.

As an organisation, we will **collaborate closely with the University of Sussex Students' Union**.

We will: proactively respond to student referenda on environmental issues; ask for advice from the independent Student Sustainability Committee; and hold citizen-style assemblies on contentious sustainability issues with current staff and students. This will start with a **citizen-style assembly on reducing meat consumption on campus by 2023**.

We will **recruit current Sussex students through our Student Connector Programme (and recent graduates through our Sussex Graduate Programme) to be paid members of the University Sustainability Team**. This will help to strengthen student voice and engagement in all that we do.

Students are a continuing source of innovation and new ideas for improving the world that we live in. For example, our recent Product Design BSc graduate, Lucy Hughes, won the global James Dyson Award in 2019 for developing a fish waste derived alternative to synthetic single-use plastic, following support and incubation at Sussex. We want to continue to harness the spirit of social and environmental innovation within our student body. So, we will **hold grand challenges and innovation competitions to support our students to create the sustainability solutions of the future**.

We are **launching our first grand sustainability challenge for students alongside this strategy**. First- and second-year students will be asked to work together in teams of up to six, to put forward innovative ideas for improving sustainable waste, water consumption, biodiversity and travel on campus in ways that can benefit the wider community and help aid Covid recovery. **Four teams will win a prize of £5,000 each to implement their ideas** and will receive incubation support from the University innovation team in autumn 2021 to help bring their ideas to life.

In recognition of the importance of students as sustainability innovators and early adopters we will also **conduct a review by September 2021 focused on how to promote social impact in student entrepreneurship**, including whether to extend entrepreneurship work to local under-represented residents.



**▲**  
Product design graduate Lucy Hughes won a James Dyson Award for developing a bioplastic from fish skins that could replace non-biodegradable, single-use plastics.

# SUSTAINABILITY TAUGHT WITHIN ALL DEGREES



Universities are uniquely placed to help shape – and be shaped by – the thinking of younger generations, organisational cultures and even geopolitical ideologies. For this reason, fully embedding the principles of sustainability within our curriculum is a practical way of helping to create a better future.

We actively listen to what our students want to learn in relation to sustainability. Our students have made it very clear that they want to see **relevant sustainability content provided through their chosen degree topic that matches their existing academic interests and will help their employability and impact in their chosen profession.** For example, this could include increasing renewable infrastructure content for engineering students, or offering psychology students options or content in relation to promoting environmental behaviour change.

That is why we plan to consult with students and staff **in each school** in the 2021/22 academic year to better understand **and identify options for embedding new sustainability content within each School's mainstream curriculum.** This will allow each School to develop and produce an **action plan by August 2022** for embedding sustainability in the curriculum, which can be approved as part of the planned University-wide curriculum review that is taking place in 2021–2024.



We will also pilot offering a **new interdisciplinary introduction to sustainability elective module to all undergraduate students from August 2022.** Students without electives would also have the choice of taking this module as standalone credential. This will be developed with a view to **enabling each academic School to adapt the content into a School-specific 15-credit module from August 2023** if appropriate.

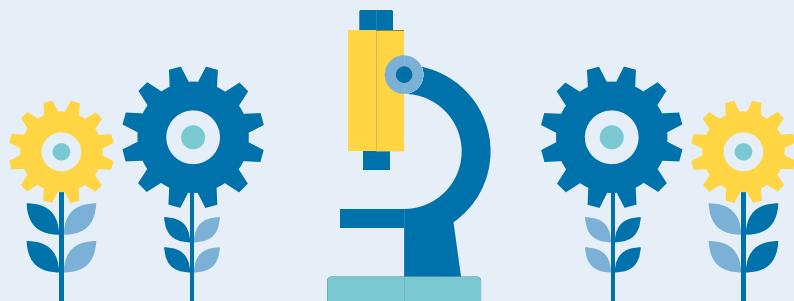
Once this module is established and evaluated we will **review its suitability to be offered to interested parties within the community** who are not current students. We will also **support schools to develop their own sustainability-related pathways**, where appropriate, for example sustainable food, water and agriculture. This will further strengthen our existing sustainable education offer.

We also understand that learning does not just start and end in the classroom. We are passionate about enabling students to gain practical work experience, placements and internships in the local community, in addition to wider field trips. That is why we are **directly linking all of our student careers initiatives to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.** All of our internships, work placements and our new student consultancy to business are designed to empower students to create positive social, economic and environmental change.

We will also **continue to run really innovative practical sustainability courses as part of our pedagogic revolution**, such as our forest food garden and role models modules that see students actively improving biodiversity on campus and/or providing real-world mentoring in the community. This is one of the ways that we will continue to dare to be different and espouse our institutional values of kindness and courage.

↳ Zoology undergraduate Robbie Hoar is learning about and taking part in creating a forest food garden on campus.

# SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH PRACTICES



We are a research-led institution. **Our research can and does help to advance the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. This can be evidenced by our University ranking in the top ten universities in the world by the *Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2021* against the UN SDG Goal 1: No Poverty.

We are at the forefront of work around climate action, biodiversity, sustainable food and the circular economy. We will also continue to be a **key enabler and supportive trusted partner in delivering sustainability both regionally, nationally and internationally**. You can read more about our research and the work of the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme, Sussex Energy Group, STEPS Centre and others in our [dedicated sustainability research web pages](#).

Yet, despite the enormous benefits we deliver through our sustainability research programme, we want to do more to demonstrate **global leadership** in how we embed sustainability in our research practices, both among fellow researchers and amongst our stakeholders.

We will do this by consulting with our academic community on how best to pioneer and **further embed sustainable research techniques and good practice** in all of our **research methodology courses, grant funding proposals, research ethics applications and research projects** in all disciplines by December 2023.

We will aim to include all stages of the research projects, from conception to monitoring, reporting and evaluation, with a focus on material consumption, energy use, transport and mobility, and advocacy and knowledge sharing.

We will also **consult with our academic community** this year **on how best to monitor the sustainability impacts of our research projects from September 2022 (both activities and outcomes). And we will set progressive targets from September 2023 for environmental impact reduction and improved sustainability performance every five years, while maintaining a proportionate admin burden.**

We also recognise the risks that can be associated with certain laboratories in relation to the use of hazardous chemicals, single-use disposable consumables and energy- and water-hungry equipment. We want to guard against any unnecessary environmental impacts without compromising on the overarching net societal benefits of our research. That is why we are committing to **apply for sustainable lab accreditation through the LEAF scheme by August 2022**.

As a leading research institution, ultimately we will actively advocate and facilitate change within the Higher Education sector and our stakeholder communities to embed sustainability in research and engagement in line with our key organisational value of collaboration.

# SUPPORTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lies at the heart of sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Two specific SDGs, on gender equality and reduced inequality, show the importance of the intersection between equality and sustainable development.

We share this vision. That is why our parallel **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Inclusive Sussex**, aligns with our sustainability strategy and sets out high-level commitments and goals to **ensure we are an inclusive organisation and address any inequalities of outcomes and opportunity**.

Our progress in delivering these EDI goals will continue to be monitored by our Inclusive Sussex Programme Board. We will also support and co-monitor these interlinked strategies as part of our overall sustainability strategy and reporting processes.

Inclusive Sussex sets out several programmes related to disability, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex plus (LGBTQI+) and race. It contains specific targets to:

- Hold a **Race Equality Charter award by 2025**
- Become a **Top 100 Employer in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index by 2025**
- Become a **Disability Confident Leader by 2025**
- Hold an **Institutional Athena SWAN** award and for all Schools to hold Athena SWAN awards

These awards will provide independent verification that we are adopting good practice in relation to race, sexuality, disability and gender respectively.

We are also committed to **improving gender equality**. That is why we have a target to **halve the gender pay gap by 2024** and will **annually monitor and publish pay gap data** with a commitment to taking actions where gaps are identified

A newly created role of **Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Culture, Equality and Inclusion)** will lead work to deliver **Inclusive Sussex**. The post-holder will work closely with colleagues across the University. This will include staff from our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit, staff networks, steering groups and self-assessment teams – which are led by our four academic leads for equality (race, disability, gender, LGBTQI+).

We also operate a contextual **admissions policy, helping those students that are under-represented in higher education** access the University with lower grades. We continue to deliver programmes, such as our **Widening Participation activities, in schools, colleges and our community to help recruit students from under-represented groups**.

We will continue to work together across the University, bringing together colleagues in our EDI Unit, Widening Participation and Sustainability Teams and beyond to **align our overlapping equalities and sustainability agendas**.



# DECARBONISING THE ECONOMY

## **WE WILL REACH NET ZERO BY 2035 THROUGH OUR ACTION PLAN FOR ACHIEVING THIS**

We will achieve this objective through four key areas of activity. Firstly, by setting strong aspirational net zero targets. Secondly, by accurately recording and analysing our emissions annually via excellent carbon accounting. Thirdly, by decarbonising our energy infrastructure; and fourthly by creating a more energy-efficient campus through better insulation and energy use. Our key commitments in this area are summarised below and explained in more detail in the remainder of this section.

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### **KEY COMMITMENTS: DECARBONISING THE ECONOMY**

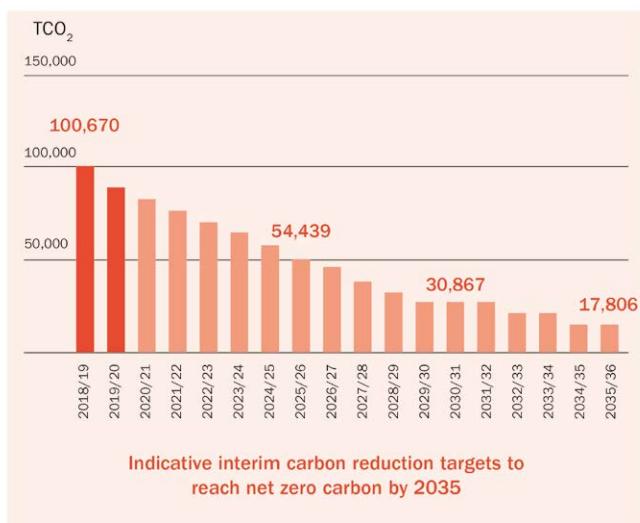
- Set a target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2035, with indicative interim targets for 2025 and 2030
- Set an annual carbon reduction target every August to be monitored as a key performance indicator by Council each year from August 2022
- Put in place more robust carbon-accounting practices and achieve Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) Net Zero Carbon Standard accreditation by August 2023
- Begin to invest in replacing priority fossil fuel dependent infrastructure with lower carbon alternatives by December 2026, with a first step of producing feasibility studies in each of the following areas by December 2021:
  - Replacement of our Combined Heat and Power Plant with a low carbon alternative
  - Expanding our renewable energy production
  - Creating a new sustainable transport hub
  - Upgrading electric vehicle, scooter and bike charging infrastructure
- Reduce our digital emissions through our IT Network Replacement Project and Cloud-First Policy by December 2024
- Improve the energy efficiency of our campus by:
  - High-level auditing of the energy efficiency of all of our estate by December 2021
  - Producing investment opportunity analysis of the 20% of our most poorly performing buildings and business cases for improvements by 2023
  - Upgrading our Building Energy Management Systems – e.g. automatic heating controls – by August 2022
  - Developing minimum environmental product standards for the furnishings and fixtures that we buy for our estate by December 2022
  - Identifying if there is a business case to move beyond BREEAM Excellent construction standards for new buildings by December 2022
  - Introduce new more modern flexible ways of working that can reduce our carbon footprint by 2025.

# NET ZERO BY 2035



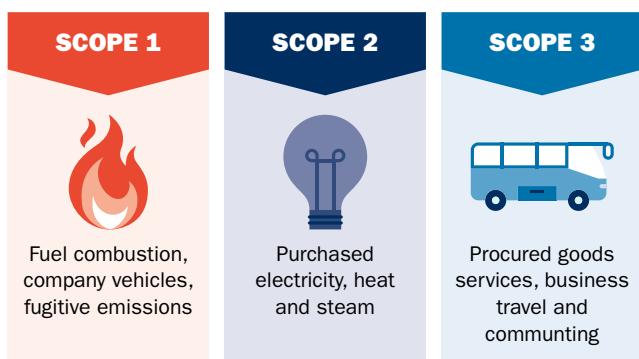
In February 2021 we completed internal modelling of our current carbon footprint and options for decarbonisation by 2030, 2035 or 2040. We have used this analysis to set a **target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2035, with indicative interim targets for 2025 and 2030** that we will review and update annually.

The following graph shows our indicative interim targets for reaching net zero.<sup>1</sup>



Not all net zero targets are the same. We are proud that **our net zero target contains both direct emissions and indirect emissions** caused by our supply chain, financial investments, and the way that our staff and students travel.

The **Green House Gas Protocol** classifies emissions in three ways – known as scope 1, 2 or 3 emissions. Examples of these are given below.

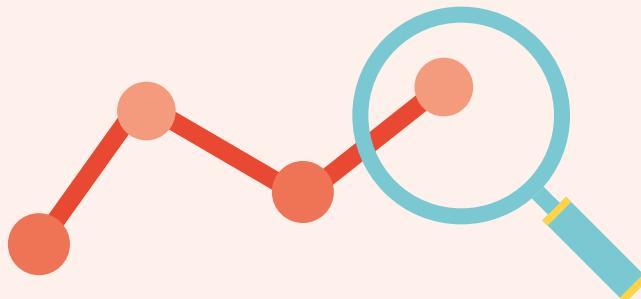


Our target means that **we will be net zero for all scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions by 2035**. This puts us ahead of many other organisations who are only committed to being carbon neutral for scope 1 and 2.

Having a clear understanding of our greenhouse gas emissions and stretching SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed) targets for reducing them are the key to success. The remainder of the Decarbonising the Economy section of the strategy outlines how we will reduce our scope 1 and 2 emissions, while the subsequent section of the strategy (Civic Leaders and Partners) includes our plans to reduce our scope 3 emissions from travel and the supply chain.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that we still expect to have a carbon footprint of 17,860 TCO<sub>2</sub> in 2035, which we will either need to compensate for or rely upon new technological solutions arising over the next decade that can enable us to become net zero. We will actively pursue ways to achieve net zero as sustainably as possible, for example, through demand reduction or appropriate carbon sequestration measures.

## EXCELLENT CARBON ACCOUNTING

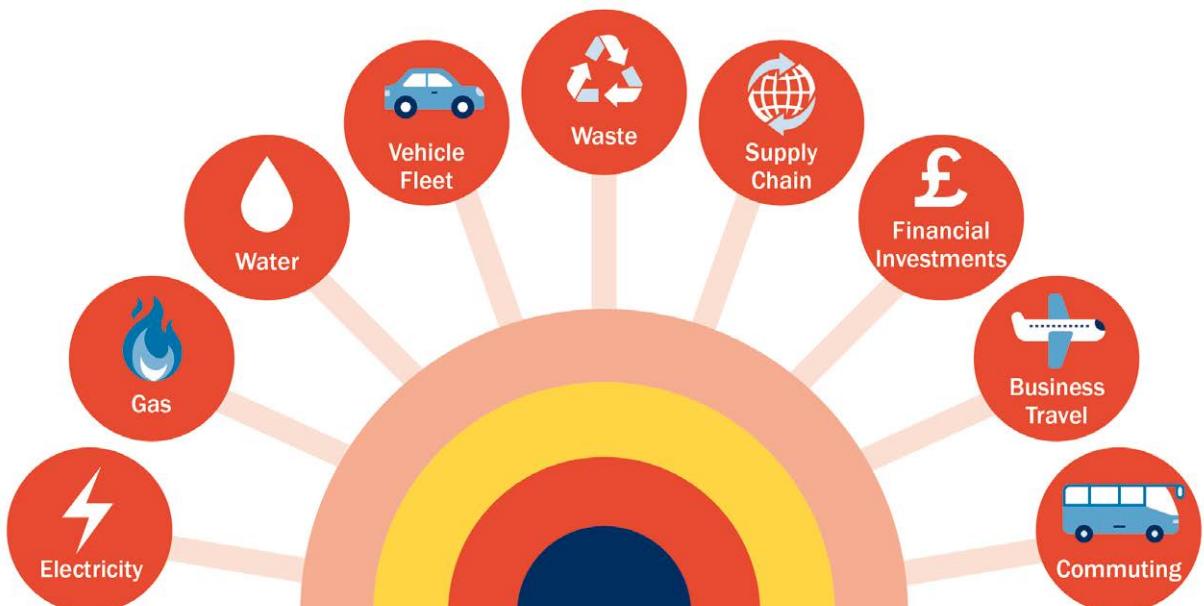


We will work with our relevant energy management service partners – currently Sussex Estates and Facilities (SEF) – to **put in place robust carbon-accounting practices** based on the Green House Gas Protocol produced by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. This will allow us to track our progress towards achieving our net zero target.

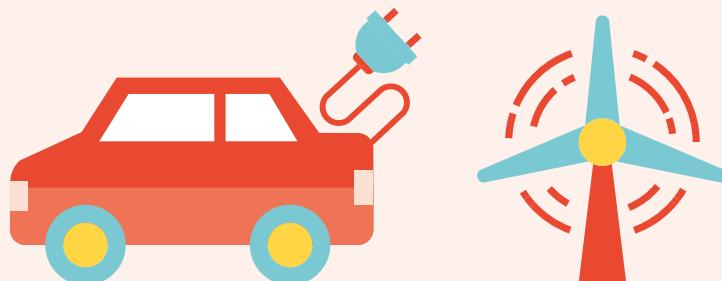
We will ask SEF – in an improved energy management agreement – to **provide an annual report on our carbon footprint** to the Sustainability Committee, chaired by our Vice-Chancellor every February. We will then use these data to agree an **annual carbon-reduction target** for each academic year from August 2022 onwards. Achievement of this annual carbon-reduction target will be a **key performance indicator** that the Sustainability Team reports to the University Council (the highest governing body at the University) each year for scrutiny, challenge and approval.

We recognise that the quality of our carbon accounting will only be as good as the quality of the data that we are collecting to inform it. So, we will **review our current carbon footprint data and produce an improvement plan** by December 2021, which we will implement by December 2022. This means we will review the data quality in relation to our top 10 sources of carbon emissions and put in place an improvement plan for each area. For example, utilising industry best-practice methodologies to calculate indicative emissions from our procurement activity and investments.

In order to ensure that our carbon-accounting policies and procedures are guided by best practice we will also look to **apply to the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) Net Zero Carbon Standard accreditation** by August 2022 with an aim to have received accreditation by August 2023. This standard sets out requirements for quantification, reduction and compensation of greenhouse gas emissions for organisations, products and events.



## DECARBONISED ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE



Even if we have the best carbon-accounting system in the world, it will mean nothing if we do not **invest in replacing our fossil fuel dependent infrastructure from the 20th century with modern lower-carbon alternatives.**

This process requires a change in mindset from thinking about what is the cheapest product to buy now in today's world as opposed to what is going to be most cost effective over the life of this strategy. It is about asking what to invest in now to **prevent us from having to pay for expensive carbon offsetting and higher energy costs in the future** because we did not decarbonise early enough.

In setting a net zero target for 2035, we cannot predict where technology will be by then to know all the future decarbonisation avenues available to us. However, we have **identified the four biggest opportunities to decarbonise our infrastructure over the next five years.**

That is why we are committing to working with the **Greater South East Energy Hub** to produce feasibility studies in each of the following areas by December 2021:

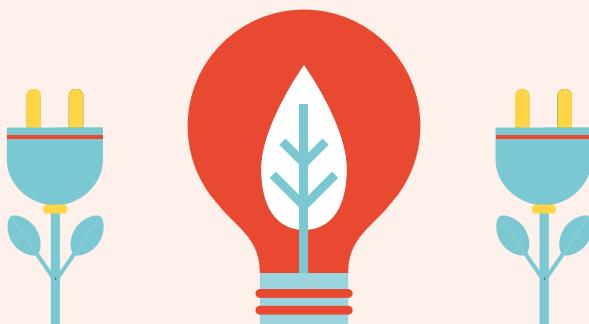
- **Replacing our Combined Heat and Power Plant with a low carbon alternative**
- **Expanding our renewable energy production** through the creation of an additional solar farm
- **Creating a new sustainable transport hub** with bike storage, showers, public transport infrastructure and solar ports
- **Upgrading of electric vehicle, scooter and bike charging infrastructure.**

These feasibility studies will allow us to appraise the best options and solutions in each of these areas. They will also enable us to estimate the relative costs and benefits (both financial and environmental) of each option. This will give us the necessary data to **make appropriate business cases to the University's Capital Programmes Committee and external funders**, such as the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to obtain the budget to begin to **pay for the necessary capital infrastructure investments by December 2026.**

In prioritising the above feasibility studies, it is important to acknowledge that we are not currently looking to decarbonise our existing district heating system. This is because the current system has at least 15 years left to run and it would create perverse carbon impacts if we replaced it at this time. However, we will **commit to replacing our district heating system with a low-carbon alternative by 2035.** We will also regularly review the advances in technology as they arise, and identify any opportunities to retrofit the existing system to become lower carbon.

Finally, we will **reduce our digital emissions** through progression of the Digital Infrastructure Programme, including realisation of our 'cloud first' principle **by 2024** and commit to being at the forefront of low-carbon computing and software techniques within our research.

## AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT CAMPUS



While it's great to invest in cleaner energy infrastructure as outlined above, reducing overall energy consumption is usually the most cost-effective way of saving carbon and reaching net zero. That is why **improving the energy efficiency of our campus** is the absolute bedrock of our net zero action plan.

That is why we will **undertake an initial high-level audit of the energy efficiency of all of our buildings** to identify the most cost-effective ways of reducing our energy consumption by December 2021. We will do this using our current contract with Sussex Estates and Facilities (SEF). We will then take these findings to prioritise a **more detailed audit of the 20% of the most poorly performing buildings by 2023** and complete a detailed investment opportunity analysis of the entire estate by 2030. For each audited building we will calculate:

- how energy efficient it currently is compared to similar buildings of its type
- the specific measures (such as improved insulation, double glazing or underfloor heating) that could make it more energy efficient
- how much the improvement would cost
- how much carbon the improvements would save; and
- the payback period (i.e. how many years would it take for the improvement to pay for itself in reduced energy costs).

We will use this audit information to **make regular business cases for funding for energy efficiency improvements** to our Capital Programmes Committee and external grant funders, e.g. the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme so that these improvements can be built into our annual maintenance and project plans each year.

These new investments will help us to build on already planned investments totalling £660,000 to complete the first stage of **upgrading our Building Energy Management Systems** – e.g. automatic heating controls – by August 2022.

We will also **develop a register of minimum environmental product standards** for the furnishings and fixtures that we buy for our estate by December 2022. This will allow us to ensure the optimal energy efficiency of everything from our fridges to our taps. We will commit to using these standards every time that we buy and/or replace a fixture or fitting in our building.

We also want to make any new or refurbished buildings on campus as sustainable as feasibly possible. We already require new buildings to achieve the BREEAM Excellent standard in relation to sustainable construction but want to know if we can go even further. That is why we are going to conduct a review of current environmental building standards and **identify if there is a business case to move beyond BREEAM Excellent environmental construction standards by December 2022**.

Finally, we recognise that the way that we use buildings is as important as the technologies and fabric that we introduce. So, we are investigating how we can **introduce more modern flexible ways of working** – including more remote working – that can help **lower our carbon footprint** by August 2025.



# CIVIC LEADERS AND PARTNERS

# WE WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY THROUGH A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LOW TRANSPORT EMISSIONS

We will achieve this objective through four key areas of activity. Firstly, introducing new sustainable procurement principles to apply to all future contracts. Secondly by promoting active and sustainable commuting. Thirdly by developing better business travel. And fourthly by further increasing our community impact through enhanced outreach, volunteering and partnership activity. Our key commitments in this area are summarised below and explained in more detail in the remainder of this section.

## KEY COMMITMENTS: CIVIC LEADERS AND PARTNERS

- Launch a new Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework to help select the suppliers that more closely share our sustainability values by June 2021
- Assess the quality of our sustainable practices against the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Standard by August 2022 and consider what (if any) action is required to make any desired improvements by August 2023 (subject to a feasibility review)
- Investigate the feasibility of applying for Living Wage Accreditation by August 2023
- Set annual active and sustainable commuting targets from August 2022 and implement our active and sustainable travel plans in full by August 2025
- Reduce the emissions made by car journeys by introducing: more progressive parking charges (subject to equality analysis); ride sharing; and a possible lower cost ultra-low emission vehicle leasing scheme for staff by August 2023
- Make all of the University's vehicle fleet ultralow emissions by August 2025
- Introduce a new sustainable business travel policy by December 2022
- Ensure our contracted Travel Management Company works with us in a manner that provides the optimal balance between value for money and sustainable travel, consistent with our sustainable business travel policy by December 2022
- Review our video conferencing options and work with staff and students to set annual targets for reduction in business travel emissions from August 2023
- Promote an increase in volunteering among staff and students – including introducing a new staff volunteering allowance from August 2021
- Identify opportunities to help make our employees' homes more sustainable by August 2024
- Be active partners in various community sustainability partnerships.

# SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN



We already have a well-established approach to sustainable procurement through our **Supplier Code of Conduct and Purchasing Policy**. These policies set out minimum ethical, social, and environmental standards and behaviours expected of suppliers. However, with our supply chain accounting for over 60% of the emissions that we need to reduce to be net zero by 2035, we want to go even further.

That is why we are launching **a new Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework** in summer 2021 alongside this strategy. The framework sets out the nine areas of sustainability (three social, three environmental and three economic) that we want the organisations that supply our goods and services to be committed to. These areas are:

- Net zero target and action plan
- Recycling target
- Responsible consumption and production
- Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training for staff and supply chain staff
- Staff access to wellbeing programmes
- Supporting and volunteering in local issues
- Initiatives to reduce inequality in the workplace
- Real living wage accreditation
- Engaging small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) in the supply chain.

The framework will enable us to set out minimum standards in certain areas and **to help select the suppliers that more closely share our sustainability values** in other areas, through a process of proportionate competitive scoring. We will monitor performance against these principles throughout contract lifecycles to ensure our suppliers share our dedication to these aims, and deliver against their promises. In doing so we will avoid creating unnecessary barriers to SMEs and VCSEs.

While we are confident that our new procurement principles will promote social, environmental and economic sustainability, we are keen to **collaborate and learn from others in relation to best sustainable procurement practices**. So, we will use an independent organisation to **assess the quality of our sustainable practices against the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Standard** by August 2022 and consider what (if any) action is required to make any desired improvements by August 2023 (subject to a feasibility review).

We will also **investigate the feasibility of applying for Living Wage Accreditation** by August 2023. This award is provided by the Living Wage Foundation in recognition of employers who voluntarily pay all staff more than the statutory minimum wage; and who are working towards ensuring that their sub-contractors on campus such as catering and maintenance staff employed by third-party organisations are doing the same. So, we will work with these partner organisations to see if we can all pay the Real Living Wage together and say ‘no’ to poverty in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Finally, we will **continue to be active members of the Responsible Procurement Group**, where non-profit organisations and education institutes share best practice.

# ACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUTING



We estimate that commuting to and from campus made up 9% of our carbon footprint in 2018/19. We are addressing this through an **ambitious active and sustainable travel plan** containing three strategic goals:

- promoting active travel
- promoting decarbonised public transport
- reducing fossil fuel dependent car journeys.

We will **promote active travel** by introducing a **new active travel reward app for our students and staff** by August 2021. This will allow us to record the carbon footprint of participating staff and students when they commute to and from campus. It will also allow us to set **challenges and competitions that result in rewards and benefits, such as free coffees**, in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council.

Promoting active travel is important because it will both reduce our emissions and **contribute to our staff and students' health and wellbeing**, which is a key UN Sustainable Development Goal in its own right.

As part of our drive to increase sustainable and active travel, we will **promote an increase in cycling** through measures including: continued provision of a Cycle to Work Scheme, reintroduction of **critical mass cycle trains**, cycle maintenance and safety training, more Brighton Bike Share Scheme bikes, secure cycle storage, e-bike charging points and showers on campus.

We will seek to provide some of these improved cycle facilities alongside better public transport facilities on campus by **commissioning a feasibility study by August 2021 into the creation of a new sustainable travel hub**.

We will do this alongside a **review of all signage, cycle lanes and pedestrian paths on our campus** to ensure that they are optimised for a substantial increase in sustainable travel by August 2025.

While active travel is great for those who can participate, we recognise that it is not suitable for everyone so we will **work hard with our local strategic partners to improve the sustainability and quality of public transport to and from campus**. This will include lobbying for the further decarbonisation of local bus routes and seeking further discounts if possible for our staff and students to use public transport.

Similarly, a certain percentage of our staff will need to continue to travel by car. However, we want to support lower-carbon car journeys so we will look to **introduce progressive parking charges where cleaner vehicle users pay less – subject to a full equality analysis** by August 2023.

We will also encourage **greater ride sharing and investigate creating a new ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) leasing scheme for staff**, based on salary sacrifice (like our Cycle to Work Scheme), which would make it cheaper to drive an ULEV on account of tax benefits, by January 2022. We will also make all of the University's vehicle fleet ultralow emissions by 2025 by only procuring and leasing new vehicles that are ULEVs.

The above actions will enable us to **set annual targets for increasing active and sustainable travel to and from campus from August 2022 onwards**.

## BETTER BUSINESS TRAVEL



As a globally focused university, it is important that we **continue to enable our academics and students to travel to conduct world-leading research** that furthers the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yet research suggests that air travel may account for around 80-95% of universities' business travel emissions, and air travel has one of the highest carbon footprints of any human activity.

That is why we will **publish and promote a new sustainable business travel policy by December 2022** to encourage business travel to be made as mindfully as possible, based on sectoral good practice, such as adopting the [Tyndall Centre travel decision tree](#) and travel hierarchy.

This will **support staff to make informed and responsible business travel decisions such as using the train rather than plane for domestic journeys** under a certain distance – subject to equality impact analysis.

The policy will also include **good practice guidance on carbon compensation** as appropriate for staff business travel and student fieldtrips.

As with many areas of our carbon accounting, we also want to improve the data on our business travel. We will do this in partnership with a **travel management company by December 2022**. In doing so, we will select a partner for staff (and, in some circumstances, students) through whom to book their business travel, whose **algorithms provide the optimal balance between value for money and sustainable travel**, and which are consistent with our sustainable business travel policy.

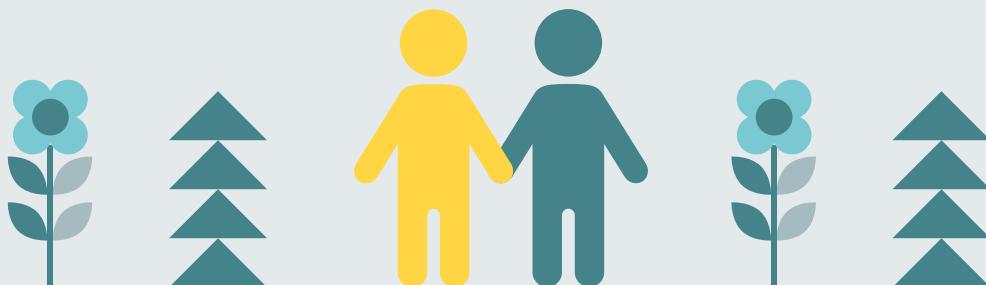
We will also ensure that they provide **excellent quality carbon impact data for our net zero reporting** and an attractive and easy to use interface that will **encourage all staff to book their business travel through a central system**.

In addition to making travel more sustainable, we also want to make the decision not to travel to be more appealing in certain circumstances by **reviewing our video conferencing options** and identifying if there is a business case to procure new technology solutions such as those using virtual reality, to give a better remote meeting and conferencing experience.

We will also **engage with our academic community** to understand if there is scope to offer more domestic field trips to students and/or options to compensate emissions incurred through voluntary activities within the areas that they are visiting.

Once we have completed these actions by December 2022 we will **begin to set annual targets for reduction in business travel from August 2023**. We hope that, if appropriate and necessary, these will enable us to achieve the recommended targets of achieving a 30% reduction in business travel by 2030 and a 40% reduction by 2035 as currently assumed within our internal carbon pathway analysis for achieving net zero by 2035.

# COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY IMPACT



We want to be more than a university. We want to be part of a thriving sustainable city and community within the Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere. To do this we want to have maximum community impact in all that we do.

We already support and encourage our students to volunteer through our Spirit of Sussex Award Scheme. From August 2021 we will increasingly **identify and promote new opportunities for students to volunteer in the community on projects** that support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We will also **better record and showcase the vast amount of community outreach work that our academic staff undertake**, such as the provision of talks, workshops, mentoring and support services and advice.

We will **report on these achievements in our annual sustainability report** that we will publish every autumn (with the first report published in November 2020). In order to do this effectively, we will ask all academic staff to report on how they have contributed to each of the 17 UN SDGs on an annual basis.

Despite many of our staff and students being extremely active in the community we, as an employer, have not previously provided all our staff with a consistent volunteering allowance. We want to change this and **allow all of our staff to be given time out from their day jobs to support good causes in the community**.

That is why we are piloting the **introduction of a new staff volunteering allowance of at least two days per year** (pro rata) for all employees on a contract of 12 months or more from August 2021. The volunteering scheme will be directly aligned with the UN SDGs and the University Sustainability Strategy and will enable us to further maximise our contribution to the community. We will review the success of the scheme in August 2023 with a view to introducing a five-day fixed volunteering entitlement by August 2024.

We will also **continue to support local voluntary, community and social enterprises** (VCSEs) and causes. For example, we have chosen **Surfers Against Sewage** to be our charity of the year for 2021 on account of their excellent work protecting our beaches and oceans.

In addition to these commitments, we will **continue to be active partners in various community partnerships and forums**. For example, our Vice-Chancellor sits on the Greater Brighton Economic Board. This means that as an active member of the Board we have signed up to all 10 of their **environmental pledges for tackling climate change**.

Finally, we know that our staff and students do not stop being sustainability leaders and champions when they leave the campus. That is why we are committed to **identifying a package of opportunities for staff to make their homes more sustainable**, such as energy- and water-saving advice and signposting to low-cost energy-efficiency improvements.

SUSTAINABLE SUSSEX



# ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS

US  
UNIVERSITY  
OF SUSSEX

# WE WILL PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD, WASTE AND WATER CONSUMPTION AND RECYCLING

We will achieve this objective through four key areas of activity. Firstly, introducing new recycling and waste-reduction targets. Secondly by introducing policies to make our food and water consumption more sustainable. Thirdly, by increasing the biodiversity of our campus. And fourthly, by engaging staff and students as change agents in greening our campus. Our key commitments in this area are summarised below and explained in more detail in the remainder of this section.

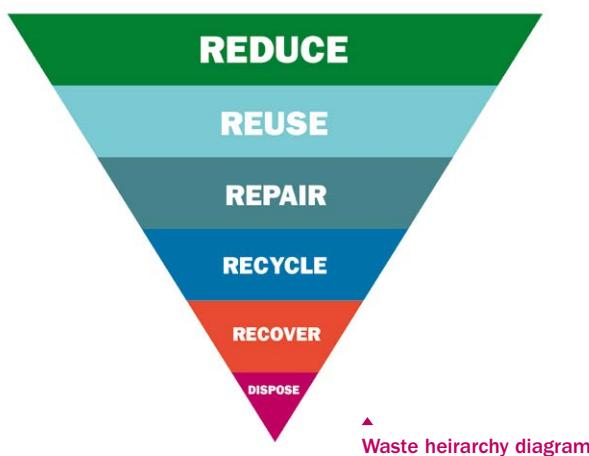
## KEY COMMITMENTS: ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS

- Recycle 50% of our waste by 2025 (subject to further compositional analysis) and reduce the tonnage of waste produced per student by 10% by 2025
- Set annual recycling targets for all of our waste streams by August 2022
- Tender our waste contracts, ensuring appropriate recycling targets and innovation are included within them by December 2022
- Review of our current bin numbers, locations and signage by December 2021
- Launch a waste and recycling communications and engagement plan by August 2022 that will enable us to recruit a network of waste champions to help support and promote recycling and create behaviour change.
- Produce policies on plastic and project waste reduction by December 2022
- Introduce new sustainable food priorities to encourage:
  - sourcing produce from local suppliers
  - better consumer information
  - an increase in net zero cafés
  - a reduction in meat consumption by August 2023
- Support continued sustainable food production and distribution on campus including the continued redistribution of surplus food
- Conduct a strategic review of options to improve water sustainability and set water consumption targets by August 2024
- Publish our draft biodiversity policy by August 2021 and hold a *Big Biodiversity Conversation* from January 2022 to agree our target for setting aside either 30%, 40% or 50% of the land on campus for nature
- Engage every member of staff, students – and, where appropriate, community members – in bringing our sustainability vision and strategy to life

# 50% OF WASTE RECYCLED BY 2025



We have all been moved by the images of plastic in the ocean and appalled by the volume of unwanted food waste as children go hungry. Waste is an emotive issue. If we want to be truly ethical and sustainable consumers we need to **do more to reduce, reuse and recycle the waste that we produce** from our daily lives.



That is why we are introducing two ambitious waste reduction, reuse and recycling targets. The first is to reduce the total volume of waste produced. We will do this by setting a target of **reducing the volume of weight produced per student by 10% by 2025**.

The second is to **recycle 50% of our waste by 2025**.<sup>2</sup> This includes separate sub-targets of recycling 55% of residential waste and 70% of non-residential waste over the same time period. By setting these stretching and challenging targets for ourselves as an institution, we aim to be at the forefront of tackling the waste problem and promoting a more circular economy.

To achieve these targets, we will improve the quality of our waste data by amending our contract with Sussex Estates and Facilities (SEF) to require more detailed waste reporting and to enable us to **set annual targets on all of our waste streams from August 2022** based on regular waste audits and compositional analysis.

We will then look to **tender our waste contracts by December 2022** and ensure that all of these targets are passed down the supply chain to our subcontractors as key performance indicators with appropriate reporting requirements. We will also use these procurements to **ask for new innovation in our recycling approaches**.

Yet, how much waste we can reduce and recycle will largely come down to the quality of the facilities that we provide, our communication and engagement activity and our subsequent ability to drive positive behaviour change.

That is why we will ask SEF to undertake a **review of our current bin numbers, locations and signage by December 2021** so that we can make the necessary business case for any improvements in signage, facilities or replacement, such as additional aerobic digestors for student food waste.

We will also develop a waste and recycling strategic **communications and engagement** plan that will enable us to:

- Recruit a network of **waste champions** to help support and promote recycling
- Engage students in competitions to design **better recycling information**
- Include recycling information in staff and student inductions
- Highlight and support pre-existing **reuse activities**, such as donations to local charities and clothes swaps on campus.

All of this communication and engagement work will be underpinned by the production of a **policy on plastic and waste reduction and reuse**, and a **project-waste recycling policy** for the University and our contractors by December 2022.

<sup>1</sup> This target is provisional, subject to a full compositional waste analysis to understand current recycling practices that has not been possible during the production of this strategy due to Covid-19.

# RESPONSIBLE FOOD AND WATER PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION



The United Nations estimate that farming and food production cause around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions. This is a massive environmental impact and we will not take it lightly. We are passionate about providing sustainable food choices on campus, with Sussex Food (the University's catering provider) being awarded the highest-possible rating by the Sustainable Restaurant Association in 2019.

However, we want to go even further. That is why we have created **four new sustainable food priorities** that we want to see on our campus. Firstly, we will ensure that at least 80% of our fresh produce, excluding dairy, comes from **local producers** with a focus on seasonally appropriate foods where possible.

Secondly, we will **improve the quality of consumer information** in relation to food sustainability. We will do this by **piloting the introduction of a food sustainability traffic light system**. This will rank different menu choices as red, amber or green according to their sustainability in the same way that salt, fat and sugar content is colour coded on supermarket food from September 2021.

Thirdly, we will **review all catering outlets to identify their suitability for becoming net zero cafés** by December 2022, and use the findings to select a number of locations to offer net zero catering.

Fourthly and finally, we will respond to the recent Students' Union referendum result on banning the sale of beef and lamb on campus by **establishing a citizen-style assembly of students and staff**. This will identify recommendations on what would need to be done to change consumer demand to support the campus consuming less meat and/or becoming **beef and lamb free** by 2023, and **if there is a place for sustainably sourced meat on our menus**.

Outside of these principles we will continue to **actively support the production and distribution of sustainable food** on campus via our Forest Food Garden project, and student run Roots allotments and Food Waste Café. In particular, our Sustainability Committee is supportive of the Students' Union investigating the feasibility of establishing a community kitchen on campus. We will also **continue to support the redistribution of surplus food** to food banks and other community destinations.

We will also support the **sustainable production and consumption of water on campus**. We will do this by building water-efficiency products and standards into all of **our work around energy-efficient buildings and achieving net zero**. However, we want to go even further than this and treat clean water and sanitation, water conservation and the protection of aquatic ecosystems as key priorities in their own right.

This has not historically been an area of comparative strength for the University, so we will create a task force to conduct a **strategic review of options** to increase sustainable water consumption and production on campus from January 2024 that will result in the **setting of water consumption targets from August 2024 onwards**.

## BIODIVERSE CAMPUS



Blessed with an abundance of green space (including some that falls within national park boundaries) and an impressive list of global biodiversity experts; Sussex is ideally placed to become the most biodiverse campus in the UK.

We will publish a draft **biodiversity policy by August 2021**, ahead of consulting on our future goals in a **Big Biodiversity Conversation**.

The draft policy contains **nine key biodiversity principles** that we will apply to our campus. Shaped in consultation with renowned biodiversity academics, these include: planting native species of plants, creating water habitats and avoiding the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers where possible.

By incorporating these nine biodiversity principles into our annual grounds management plan we can strive to produce an **annual net gain in biodiversity each year**.

We will achieve these net gains by setting an ambitious target of **setting aside a certain percentage of the land on campus to nature**. We will use the *big biodiversity conversation* to engage staff and students on how much land we want to set aside for nature from a range of **options: a) 30%, b) 40% and c) 50% or more**.

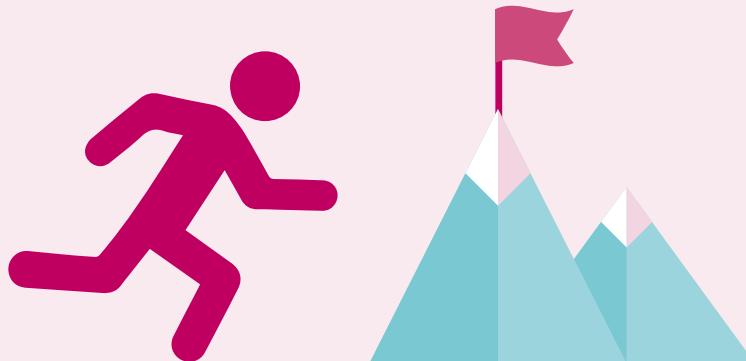
We will do this through the use of maps and visual aids that show how the campus can look under these different scenarios. We will also **ask staff and students to pick their preferred biodiversity projects** for us to take forward on campus. This will include everything from the creation of bee hotels, butterfly banks, orchards and therapeutic gardens to the use of passive rewilding in certain signed areas in compliance with health and safety regulations.

We will **begin the big biodiversity conversation in January 2022**, with the aim of having **agreed our preferred targets and an action plan of biodiversity projects by January 2023**, in time for agreement of the Sussex Estates and Facilities Ground Management Plan for the next academic year.

Once we have completed the *big biodiversity conversation*, we will engage staff, students – and where appropriate community members – in bringing the vision established by the *conversation to life* through practical permaculture and conservation projects and fundraising activities.

We will also **use our knowledge and expertise to help protect and restore local, national and global ecosystems** and help try to reverse the current mass extinction and loss of habitat trajectory that we are on. As part of this work, we will seek to form stronger links with the South Downs National Park, The Living Coast Biosphere, the Permaculture Trust and other key public, private, voluntary and community bodies.

## BEHAVIOUR CHANGERS



Every strategy is only as good as the people who decide to implement it. If we want to achieve the goals set out in this strategy every member of staff and students at our University will need to pull together and do things differently.

By collectively showing a **commitment to positive behaviour change and an increase in volunteering activity, together** we can reach the tipping point – not the tipping point of climate disaster, but the tipping point of reaching net zero, of preventing mass extinction, and of increased equality, diversity, inclusion and social justice.

There is only one goal in this section of the strategy. That is to **engage every member of staff, students – and, where appropriate, community members – in bringing our sustainability vision and strategy to life.** We will do a number of things to support this goal.

Our dedicated sustainability communication and engagement officer will support our staff and students to consciously make more sustainable choices on campus through **new web pages and a programme of communications activities, including a stall at our Freshers Fairs.**

We will also **create a network of sustainability champions** in every academic school and professional service area. These champions will help to implement the strategy and **drive behaviour change from the bottom up** in the areas where they work and study.

Our sustainability champions will not be passive onlookers, they will be partners who get their hands dirty **supporting us in practical audits of our waste.** They will help to **clean up our beaches.** They will **redistribute food** and they will develop sustainability improvement plans in their Schools, offices and accommodation blocks.

We have previously used an external programme called Green Impact, to set environmental challenges for our staff. However, we suspended our Green Impact subscription during the pandemic because of the lack of staff on campus. We want to establish whether Green Impact continues to be the optimum tool for engaging our staff in implementing the vision within our strategy or if we should create our own environmental challenges for staff. So, we will have **focus groups in Summer 2021 with former Green Impact Teams to identify whether we continue with this service or create our own** from August 2021 onwards.

We will also extend our approach of integrating sustainability throughout the entire organisation into our operational processes and procedures.

Ultimately, this strategy needs to be a living, breathing vision powered by our staff and students. Our success will rest on our ability to galvanise everyone on campus and beyond to pull together to use our unique talents and realise our vision of being one the most sustainable universities in the world.

# GOVERNANCE

The **action plan**, which accompanies this document, summarises what we are going to do to realise our vision of strengthening our position as being one of the most sustainable universities in the world and by when.

**All of the actions** in the strategy will be **implemented in partnership between our dedicated Sustainability Manager and a named Senior Leader within the University**. These senior leaders vary by activity and have been named in the action plan as ‘co-owners’ within the relevant sections of the plan.

We will also work to **recruit – from our new sustainability champions network – a named member of staff and a current student or Students’ Union representative** to play a lead role in developing and delivering each of the actions within the plan on a voluntary basis.

In adopting this co-leadership model, we will also **engage a much wider range of staff and students in developing and implementing the strategy**, including input from the Student Sustainability Committee and the sustainability champion leads embedded within the staff teams of our Schools and professional service divisions. It is this form of inclusive co-creation that sets us apart as daring to be different at Sussex – involving students in all that we do.

It is also essential that we transparently **hold ourselves to account on progress at implementing the strategy**. That is why our Sustainability Committee, chaired by our Vice-Chancellor, will play a key role in monitoring our progress in delivering the action plan that accompanies this strategy when it meets once a term.

The **Sustainability Committee will also be responsible for formally reviewing the action plan once a year** in the spring term and **suggesting any amendments to targets or sub-targets on an annual basis, which will be made public on our website**.

These amendments may be necessary as technologies evolve and we become better at measuring our carbon footprint and broader social and environmental impact. In some instances, we may be able to set more ambitious targets and in other areas we may need to be more realistic. The key thing will be to regularly analyse data to ensure that we are optimally responding to changing events.

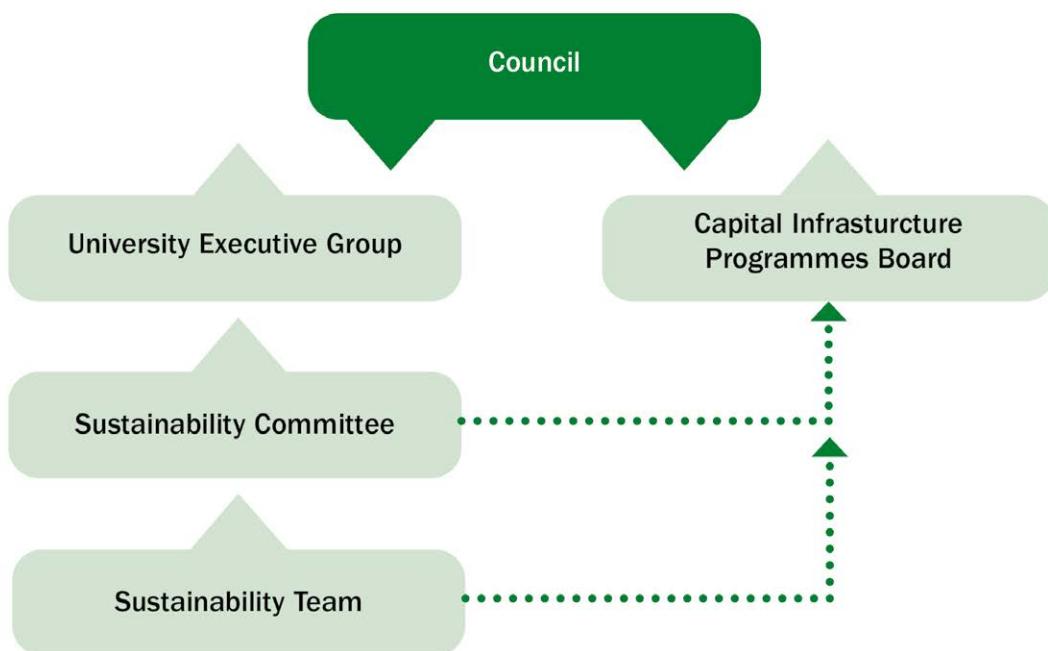
In addition, the Sustainability Committee will **make recommendations to the Capital Infrastructure Programmes Board for new sustainability-related investments and infrastructure commitments based on robust business cases**. This will provide additional scrutiny to ensure that we are getting value for money from all of our investments.

**Finally, our Council** (the highest-level decision-making body at the University) will receive a report on our key performance indicator target in relation to achieving net zero each year and will **hold the University to account on making good progress against the action plan**.

Our Governance arrangements are illustrated in the following diagram.

# GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

## FORMAL GOVERNANCE



## OPERATIONAL DELIVERY / PARTNERSHIP MODEL FOR DELIVERING EACH ACTION IN THE STRATEGY

