CLIMATE-POSITIVE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

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Summary

What is this document about?

This document outlines the University's approach to becoming climate-positive and a leader in environmental sustainability.

Who is this for?

The University of Portsmouth Staff, students and key stakeholders.

How does the University check this is followed?

The Sustainability Strategic Delivery Group (SSDG) will monitor progress and adherence to this policy.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

Ian McCormack, Energy and Environment Manager.

Executive Summary

This document outlines the strategic approach to the University of Portsmouth becoming a climate-positive university and leader in environmental sustainability. This is the key step in creating a more sustainable pathway for the University. There is a recognition that procurement, energy use in buildings, the maintenance of the estate, travel and construction comprise the bulk of the University's carbon emissions. However, in order to get into the realm of being climate-positive (remove more carbon out of the atmosphere than emitted), the University needs to leverage its world-leading sustainability research and innovation activities to sequester residual carbon. The University will continue to embed sustainability in its teaching as well as proactively encouraging staff and student behaviours to reflect our climate-positive and environmental sustainability aspirations. Therefore, our sustainability aspirations will be reflected in the University strategies for People, Education and Global, as well as Research & Innovation. Finally, we will demonstrate success through improved and open carbon emission reporting, as well as performance in environmentally sustainable league tables, mindful that the Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that universities will be reporting all their carbon emissions by 2024 and will publish university targets and progress from 2025.

Policy Overview

Our Vision

Become a **climate-positive University** and be acknowledged as **leaders in environmental sustainability**

Our Mission

Embed environmental sustainability **across all aspects** of the University, from research through education to operations, so it is **in our DNA**

Our Objectives

We will achieve our vision and mission by:

1.   Directly reducing our carbon emissions
2.   Leveraging Research & Innovation to sequester residual carbon emissions;
3.   Empowering People

Our Goals

1.   The University has tangible plans in place to achieve its target to become climate-positive by 2030;
2.   Trusted leaders, advisors and influencers on environmental sustainability locally, nationally and globally.

Our Values

1.   <u>Ambitious</u>. Making climate-positive our goal, as opposed to net zero, sets us apart from other HEIs and is an appropriately ambitious response to the climate emergency.
2.   <u>Open</u>. We will be transparent in reporting progress and, in particular, will ensure that any carbon sequestration activity is genuine and justifiable (i.e. we will consciously not engage in greenwashing).
3.   <u>Responsible</u>. We will take responsibility to work collaboratively with staff, students, partners and our supply chain to deliver holistically on our goals.

Introduction

The need for urgent action on climate change has never been clearer. Extreme weather around the world continues to escalate annually, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives and disrupting countless more. Scientists are clear that human-caused climate change is driving this trend and have warned that if global warming breaches 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, it will be impossible for many communities to adapt and for many ecosystems, such as coral reefs, to survive[1]. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has stated the only way forward as a species is through the rapid transformation to a low-carbon global economy and society. Portsmouth is already experiencing the effects of the climate crisis and, as an anchor institution in a coastal city, the University not only has an obligation to have a robust response to the climate emergency but also has the profile to be advocates for drastic transformation and behaviour change in our city.

Whilst the University has taken action to reduce carbon emissions over the last decade, to expedite the journey to being climate-positive, the institution must make a coordinated effort to embed carbon mitigation techniques in all aspects of operations. This will be done in tandem with, and not disregard to, the other strategic priorities of the University, with action on sustainability being reflected in the University strategies for People, Education and Global, as well as Research & Innovation. As a University we will seek to identify and maximise opportunities that are mutually beneficial[2], as well as consciously focussing efforts on areas that will create the biggest impact[3]. However, whilst relentless carbon reduction is critical, on its own it will not be sufficient to achieve our climate-positive goal as it will not be possible to eliminate all emissions by 2030.

To bridge the gap between our carbon reduction actions and becoming climate-positive, we will build upon our world-leading research and innovation to drive solutions to some of the problems that we will inevitably face as we balance our response to the climate emergency with delivering on our strategy and associated action plans. For example, seascape restoration[4] is already underway, with significant research council and philanthropic funds in place to support the necessary

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[1] https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2022/11/john-gray-dangerous-conceits-green-revolution

[2] For example, becoming a climate-positive university will support the strategic imperative regarding student recruitment, as increasing numbers of prospective students expect their university to have a positive and planned approach to tackling the climate emergency that is meaningful and not an exercise in greenwashing.

[3] Procurement accounts for around 50% of the institution's carbon emissions. The other main emission types are construction (variable year on year), transportation and travel (15%), and energy consumption (10%).

[4] Seascape restoration is the process of improving the quality and/or area of shallow and intertidal habitats, such as saltmarsh, seagrass, oyster reefs and kelp habitats in the Solent, that have been degraded or lost by a range of natural and human pressures. These habitats naturally remove carbon from the atmosphere and lock it away in their structures and associated sediments, in most cases more quickly and reliably than terrestrial ecosystems. By restoring these coastal habitats, their carbon uptake will increase significantly. As restoration activities progress, the enhanced carbon uptake in these ecosystems will be measured and verified and used to bring our net emissions to below zero.

underpinning research activities. Other areas of the University's research and innovation activities that can support our climate action include the study of building energy efficiency, effective behaviour change, more sustainable use of plastics and options to green the campus. Finally, we have a duty to educate and learn from our students on sustainable practices, giving them the skills to embody the society and citizenship tenets in our graduate hallmarks.

The University has taken the decision to be sector-leading in our commitment to work towards becoming climate-positive. Becoming climate-positive means moving past net zero by taking more carbon out of the atmosphere than the University emits. This is a bold but challenging commitment that goes above and beyond most institutions, making the University of Portsmouth one amongst a handful of progressive world-leading universities committed to substantive climate action[5]. The University will be careful to avoid any allegations of greenwashing by ensuring that the actions we take to tackle the climate emergency are measurable, verifiable and transparently reported based on the Scientific Based Target initiative[6].

For our ambitious 2030 vision and targets to be met, carbon impact will need to be one of the lenses through which all operationally significant decisions are assessed at the University. Fundamentally, for the University to achieve its vision of being climate-positive and acknowledged as a leader in environmental sustainability, collective responsibility and initiatives must become distributed across the organisation and become business as usual (so it is 'in our DNA'). The University is committed to fulfil its compliance obligations, prevent pollution and continually improve through its environmental management system. The Sustainability Strategy Delivery Group will ensure that the University is targeting areas that are coherent with the wider University strategies, undertaking actions supporting local public pledges to the Portsmouth Green Partnership Charter, and reporting progress in an open and transparent way.

This policy reflects the ambition inherent in our 2030 Vision, and is a key step in placing the University on a sustainable pathway. However, sustainability is a rapidly evolving field, in terms of practices and legislation, so we will continue to develop our thinking and actions to help secure a liveable future. We anticipate that as we develop our approach we already wish to include conscious efforts to encourage biodiversity, but our ambition may extend further to wider social goals as captured in the UN's sustainable development goals. Therefore, this policy will be reviewed annually

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[5] The Royal Anniversary Trust published their ambitious 'Accelerating Towards Net Zero' roadmap for carbon reduction in the tertiary education sector, supported by the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC).

[6] Our reporting will support our transparent approach and will allow us to use the Department for Education's (DfE) data collection tool, which will be released in the 2023-24 academic year. The DfE have confirmed that universities will be reporting their carbon emissions by 2024 and that they will publish university targets and progress from 2025.

so that we continue to raise our ambition and evolve our approach to adopt best practices within the sector.

Climate-Positive Sustainability - Our journey so far

The University has a track record of implementing initiatives aimed at reducing our carbon impact and supporting environmental sustainability. Some of the actions that we have carried out to date are set out below.

Energy, fuel (all Scope 1 and 2 emissions), water and waste (selected Scope 3 emissions) have been reliably measured and recorded since 2009 with the development of the University's first carbon management plan prepared by the Carbon Trust. Since then, our measured carbon emissions have steadily decreased through the implementation of £1.2 million worth of Salix Finance energy efficiency projects, rationalisation of University-owned halls of residence and decarbonisation of UK national grid electricity supplies. Ironically, warmer winters are having a positive impact by reducing our fossil fuel gas consumption and the Covid-19 pandemic caused reduced emissions with fewer students and staff using University facilities. Since 2009, there has been a 60% reduction in our measured Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. However, this reduction excludes the vast majority of our Scope 3 emissions that we have not been able to measure, most notably procurement, travel and construction which make up over 80% of our total carbon footprint. Like many organisations on their various sustainability journeys, the University is testing new methodologies to fully measure Scope 3 emissions.

Energy Efficiency Technology
The University is constantly fine-tuning the provision of ventilation and heating in buildings to accurately match demand and satisfy customer expectations. For example, timetabling information is used to accurately set heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) provision in lecture theatres via the building management system (BMS). The next step is to fully automate this functionality.

LED lighting technology and the systematic replacement of lights with LED's versions is reducing lighting energy consumption by 50%. The same efficiencies apply to replacing old pulley-driven fans in ventilation systems with plug-and-play direct-drive fans, especially in high-use areas. The benefits of installing solar panel arrays and solar thermal tubes that support the provision of hot water have been surveyed and there is a strong commitment to moving forward with solar panel technology at the University.

Decarbonisation of Heating

With the government's policy emphasis on decarbonising heating, there are iterative and consistent feasibility studies conducted to replace end-of-life fossil fuel gas boilers with air source heat pump technology where possible. To take advantage of the most recent heat decarbonisation grants the University has engaged building services consultants to bring forward designs and costs to convert three buildings to all-electric heating and hot water provision while simultaneously making building fabric thermal improvements and installing LED lighting to minimise increases in electricity demand.

Low-carbon Travel Incentives

The Covid pandemic interrupted staff and student travel surveys and the ubiquity of hybrid working has changed staff commuting patterns. Staff have been encouraged to use low-carbon travel modes through train and bus commuter discounts, season ticket loans, an electric car salary sacrifice and a cycle-to-work scheme. New parking policy restrictions have also played their part, deterring staff from driving through a permit exclusion zone and permit cost increases.

Carbon Dashboards

New energy and water monitoring dashboards have been set up to capture inefficiencies and promote awareness through access to data and usage patterns. New utility contracts have also been introduced with improved data availability and frequency, which will help the University identify usage anomalies.

Low Carbon Design Policy Instruments

The University has set the highest BREEAM standard rating 'Outstanding' for sustainable building design and also requires new buildings to achieve an energy certificate 'A' rating in operation. The University will also require all refurbishments and fit-outs to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' or equivalent standard (e.g. SKA rating). New buildings are being designed to be all-electric to avoid the use of fossil fuel gas heating, such as the Ravelin Sports Centre opened in September 2022. The 'soft landings' approach is then used to track and ensure energy efficiency systems meet design expectations.

Renewable Electricity Supply Tariff

The University's electricity current contract is a REGO-backed renewable energy tariff. Our ongoing intent is to switch our electricity supply to a renewable investment or partnership tariff, and enhance our zero emissions reporting.

Catering

Sustainable food and catering supplies are important to us. We promote planet friendly products, continually aim to reduce food miles and have significantly reduced our food waste. Any food left

over is redistributed or collected for recycling. Finally, we are continually looking to improve our approach to reducing the use of single use plastics.

Waste

The University achieved a 75% recycling rate over the 2021/22 academic year, and is committed to maintaining and exceeding this level in the future. The University is committed to implementing the waste hierarchy and focusing on removing unnecessary single-use plastic waste streams from its operations. We continue to monitor our waste streams and are currently working collaboratively with our waste provider to create a waste carbon reporting framework.

Biodiversity

Although we are a city centre campus we take opportunities when we can to provide habitats. For example, our Ravelin Sports Centre has a green roof growing amongst the solar panels and the surrounding park has more trees and wildflowers than ever before; this approach will continue as an integral part of delivering our estates masterplan.

Ethical and Sustainable Investment

The University's Ethical and Sustainable Investment Statement affirms the University's appetite for investing in companies which are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, for example those which have policies on environmental protection or are engaged in the development of environmental technologies. Furthermore, the Statement signals that companies lacking published plans on climate change and plastic waste reduction are not regarded as appropriate investments for the University.

Compliance Obligations

Certification to the international standard for environmental management (ISO 14001) continues to provide reassurance that our legal environmental obligations are being meet and that we aim to continually improve our environmental performance.

Climate-Positive University

University Carbon Boundary and Footprint

The University is a large and complex organisation with many activities that result in carbon emissions, including teaching, research, travel and our estate. Setting the boundary for what are 'our' emissions is an essential step towards determining the University's carbon footprint in line with the Science-Based Target initiative (SBTi) and the GreenHouse Gas Protocol (GHG) which defines emissions as either Scope 1, 2 or 3. Scope 1 and 2 relate to our use of energy; Scope 3 relates to emissions generated in all other facets of our work, including procurement, travel and construction. It is clear from the guidance that our boundary should include investments, student flights and refrigerants used to cool buildings. The University's current view on 'our' carbon emissions by scope is contained in table 1 below.

Table 1: University Carbon Emissions by Scope (2020/21 baseline data)

Carbon Emission Scopes	Categories	Included/ TBD	2020-21 t/CO2
Scope 1	Gas consumption	Included	2,929
	Vehicle fuel (used by UoP)		36
	Other fuel (backup generators)		4
Scope 2	Electricity consumption	Included	3,507
Scope 3	Water supply and treatment	Included	18
	Waste collection and management		6
	Electricity distribution		331
	Capital assets (equipment, machinery, buildings, facilities, vehicles)		9,382[7]
	Procurement (goods and services, excl. construction)		29,084
	Student commute (in term)[8], staff commute[9], business travel[10]		7,817
	Transportation and distribution (of manufactured products)	N/A	0
	Investments, Working off campus, private halls energy, student flights (start/end of term)	To Be Decided	0
Scopes Total			53,114

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[7] From HESCET report
[8] 2017 travel survey data
[9] 2020 staff travel survey data
[10] Extrapolated from 2020 staff travel survey and based on typical business travel behaviour of other Universities

Carbon Emissions Reduction Forecast to 2030

Our most recent data estimates that University annual carbon emissions are c53,000 t/CO$_2$. To forecast year-on-year reduction to 2030 is complex particularly when the estate is going through a programme of accelerated modernisation. Construction projects will add to annual emissions as they complete but these all-electric sustainably designed buildings will result in lower emissions in operation. This means that emissions will go up during phases of construction but the overall result will be a lower carbon energy efficient estate with multi-purpose buildings used more frequently.

Emissions from procurement activity is another complex area difficult to forecast. Until discussions with suppliers reveal a truer estimate of their product/service contract emissions instead of relying on converting category spend data then any reduction will remain unquantified. It is however estimated that working with suppliers will introduce lower carbon products and services to the university with an overall emissions reduction.

Very simply by 2030, gas consumption emissions could be halved through conversions to all electric buildings and switching our electricity contract to a renewable investment tariff will allow us to report zero emissions in good faith (saving 3,507 tCO2). Reductions in travel and procurement emissions might save c 13,000 tCO2 and so by 2030 our annual carbon emissions should have reduced to nearer 36,000tCO2. The University will then use its investment in accredited blue carbon scheme research in local marine habitat restoration to sequester as much of the 36,000 tCO2[11] as possible, and if needed source additional responsible offsets, to become a climate-positive University.

Becoming Climate-Positive
UoP's 2030 targets

Scope 1 and 2 target: 80% emission reduction by 2030 from a 2020-21 baseline year (remaining annual emissions 1,296 tCO2).

Scope 3 target: 25% emissions reduction by 2030 from a 2020-21 baseline year. (remaining annual emissions 35,000 tCO2).

The remaining emissions will be offset through research initiatives.

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[11] This is the upper range of the estimates that Jo Preston has provided: uncertainties remain about whether we can achieve this and in what time scale. We will have more accurate site specific data on the range of potential carbon sequestration from the Solent Restoration project in the next 6 to 18 months.

1.Carbon Reduction

1.1 Climate-Positive

The first of the University's priorities on the journey towards becoming climate-positive is tackling the areas that account for the majority of the University's carbon emissions. Therefore, activities and initiatives that focus on the categories below will be prioritised within our planning and actions.

Priorities

- **Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy:** In most years, procurement accounts for over 50% of our total emissions. In 2020/21 ICT accounted for 51% of procurement emissions (based on spend) [12], business services for 25% and medical and precision instruments for 18%. The other 6% was made up of other products, paper, waste and water etc.

- **Reduce Energy Use and Procure Renewable Energy:** Approximately 11% of our total emissions. 4% from gas and fuel (Scope 1), and 7% from the purchase of electricity (Scope 2).

- **Promote Sustainable Modes of Travel:** Based on the data we have (which is not up to date) travel accounts for around 15-20 % of emissions. That includes student flights to/from their country of origin.

- **Reduce Construction Emissions:** Emissions from Construction rise and fall significantly depending on what is being built. They can range from as low as 4% of total University emissions to up to 40%[13].

Image 1, below, is a visual representation of the breakdown of total emissions.

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[12] This % is based on spend. The SSDG will determine whether there are more accurate ways of measuring emissions.

[13] This estimate will increase over the next few years as the accelerated Estates Master Plan is implemented and requires the construction of new buildings.

Image 1: Visual Representation of Categories as Percentages of Total Emissions

Categories as % of Total Emissions (2020/21)
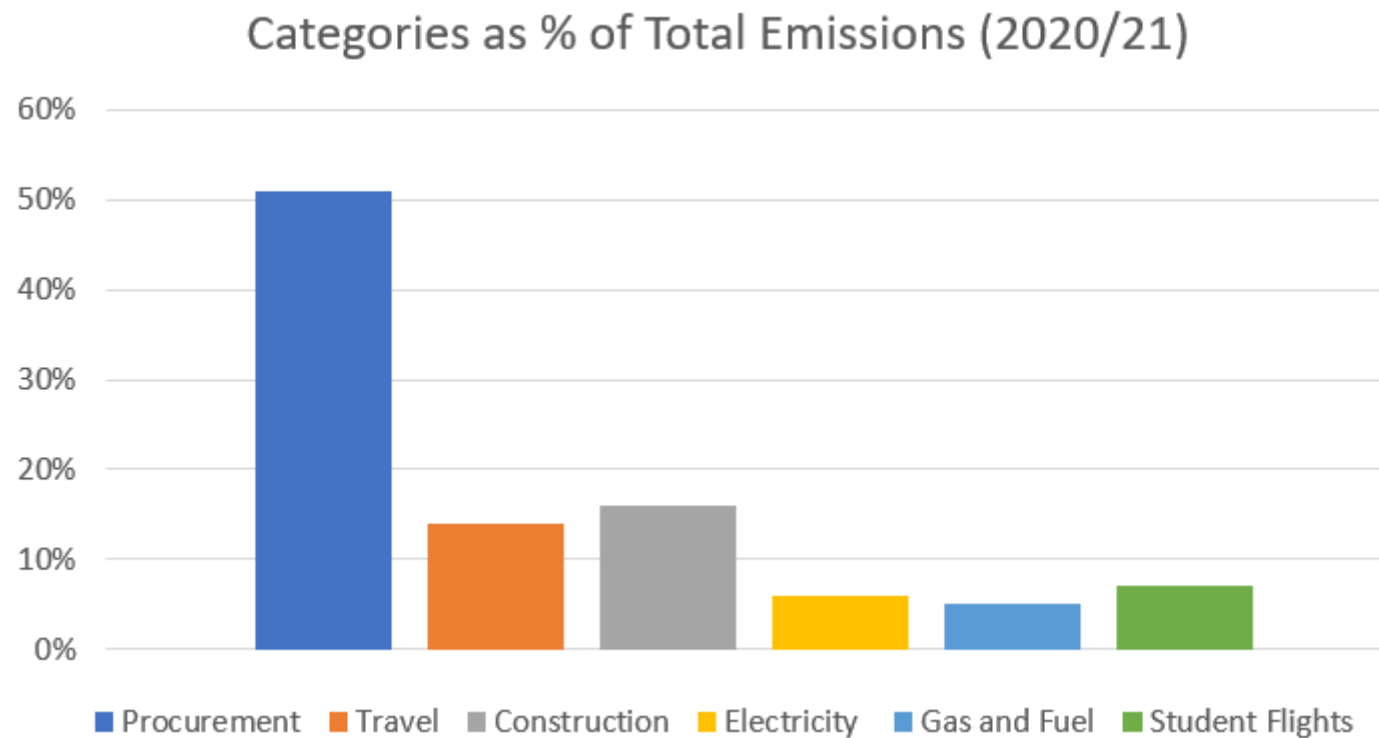
2. Leveraging Research and Innovation

2.1 Sequestering Carbon Emissions

The University of Portsmouth has a strong institutional focus and track record in research and innovation in environment and sustainability, which is one of the five University research themes. This draws together natural, social, economic and arts-based researchers to tackle some of the most pressing environmental challenges facing the world today. In light of this we will continue to prioritise the research and innovation below to reach our climate-positive goal:

Priorities

- **Continue Commitment to Sustainability and Climate Science Through Research and Innovation:** The Centre for Enzyme Innovation is developing new approaches to plastic recycling that avoids the pitfalls of existing conventional methods and moves the world substantially closer to a circular plastics economy. Additionally, the Centre for Blue Governance is actively leading the transition to a sustainable blue economy around the world, reducing the environmental impact of marine resource use and supporting more sustainable livelihoods in coastal communities.

  The University is also at the forefront of developing and testing new forms of low-carbon energy production and storage. While many of these research activities generate significant reductions in carbon emissions, the reductions cannot be used to sequester our own emissions. However, a key area of our research and innovation activity that can be leveraged to support our climate-positive ambitions is seascape restoration.

- **Engaging local business:** Greentech South is working with businesses across the south of England to support cleaner and more sustainable business practices and models.

- **Seascape Restoration:** The University of Portsmouth is already a global leader in seascape restoration, led by the Institute of Marine Sciences in collaboration with the Centre for Blue Governance. Seascape restoration is a nature-based solution that improves the quality and/or area of shallow and intertidal habitats, such as saltmarsh, seagrass, oyster reefs and kelp habitats in the Solent, that have been degraded or lost by a range of natural and human pressures. These habitats naturally remove carbon from the atmosphere and lock it away in their structures and associated sediments, in most cases more quickly and reliably than terrestrial ecosystems. By restoring these coastal habitats, their carbon uptake will increase significantly. As our restoration activities progress, the enhanced carbon uptake in these ecosystems will be measured, verified and used to bring the university's net emissions to below zero. This work is already underway, with significant research council and philanthropic funds in place to support the necessary underpinning research activities.

- **Capitalise on Other Areas Of R&I Opportunity:** Other areas of the university's research and innovation activities that can support our climate action, including the study of building energy efficiency, effective behaviour change, more sustainable use of plastics, and options to green the campus.

3.Empowering People

3.1 Education for Sustainable Development

Embedding the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into curriculum design is now an inherent requirement for Higher Education. AdvanceHE and QAA's 2021 Guidance on ESD acknowledged the breadth of interconnected environmental and social issues that pose existential threats to humanity and require wider and urgent attention in HE curricula. Moreover, meaningfully including environmental sustainability in our academic delivery supports the strategic imperatives of student recruitment, student experience and graduate outcomes.

Academic Development is taking a lead role in facilitating wider institutional engagement with ESD, to capitalise on the excellent pockets of best practice across the University. Key priorities include:

Priorities

- **Develop an ESD theme as part of its Principles to Practise CPD series:** These sessions will collectively introduce the principles of ESD, related skills, knowledge and competencies, and provide a clear rationale for the inclusion of ESD in the curricula. Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a reference point, the sessions will focus on how to creatively embed ESD in learning, teaching and assessment approaches.

- **Incorporate a focus on ESD into learning and teaching events:** ESD speakers are planned for Academic Development's Learning and Teaching Innovation Lecture series. The annual Learning and Teaching Conference also provides a forum for staff to present work focusing on ESD.

- **Grow enABLe:** The University's initiative to support a team-based approach to learning design, also provides a vehicle through which course teams can focus on how to embed ESD into course and module design.

- **Ensure Staff engage with ESD approach:** Ensuring that staff are encouraged to evidence ESD practice when applying for HEA Fellowship and that it is aligned to Professional Values and Dimension V4 within the UK Professional Standards Framework – (acknowledging the wider context in which HE operates and recognising the implications for professional practice).

- **Encourage Students to participate:** Encourage students to submit research that might have an ESD focus in 'RISE', the student research journal.

3.2 Mobilising Staff And Students

Bringing the entire university community on the journey to becoming a climate-positive sustainable institution requires robust and active direction from senior leadership. Senior management will set the tone, direction and expectations for the areas of the university under their charge. Vocal endorsement and championing of both micro and macro initiatives that support the tenets and delivery of the Climate Positive policy should come from the upper echelons of the institution. This active leadership will empower people at all levels of the institution to make the necessary changes as part of a collective effort to push the university towards becoming climate-positive. Mobilising the university community requires:

Priorities

- **Leadership Engagement and Setting Shared Expectations:** With a clear direction set by senior management (in accordance with this policy), people are expected to do what they can within their day-to-day jobs and spheres of influence to edge the university closer to being climate positive.

- **Raising the Profile of the Climate-Positive Sustainable Policy:** A draft communications and engagement plan will be prepared by the Marketing and Communications team that aims to simplify the overall message of this policy and embed SSDG-related updates into communications. However, this now needs to be further developed into a clear and deliverable plan, jointly led by the Sustainability Co-ordinator, Marketing and Communications and the Students Union.

- **Increase Carbon literacy:** It is imperative that knowledge exchange, increased carbon literacy and sharing of best practices become commonplace across the university to expedite the behaviour change required to become climate positive. The SSDG will champion this approach, and support the University to embed sustainability so it is in our DNA.

- **Empower and Enable Action and Activity:** Staff and students should use their agency to innovate and take action where they can and should feel emboldened and supported to do so.

3.3 Civic Responsibility

The University of Portsmouth is committed to becoming one of the top Civic Universities in the UK. We have a unique position as a large institution with expertise in research, knowledge services and education. Additionally, we have numerous strong and long-standing partnerships with other key local organisations, meaning that we are well-placed to work collaboratively to champion environmental sustainability and support a robust response to the climate crisis. However, our boundaries will not simply be limited by geography. We will be directed by need and our assessment of where we can mobilise collective expertise and resources to have the most significant positive impact both in Portsmouth and the surrounding region.

Both Civic and Sustainability are key pillars of our 2025 Strategy and 2030 Vision, so we will continue to engage with partners where this is both resource effective and embeds our sustainable goals into our business-as-usual activity. We are committed to actively spotlighting and signposting civic activities that promote sustainability within the University, Portsmouth City, and beyond. Our focus is on impactful Research & Innovation (R&I) that directly benefits the local community and fosters a sense of individual responsibility and engagement in sustainability initiatives. We will also highlight wider research addressing sustainability concerns, including projects like "Revolution Plastics," and Shaping Portsmouth to inspire collaborative action and create a more sustainable future. Through our Civic approach to sustainability, we will:

Priorities

- **Fulfil our environmental obligations:** Use environmental management systems to continually improve and prevent pollution
- **Champion the Environment:** Consider environmental impacts in all our engagement in the civic environment;
- **Promote Sustainable Activity:** Promote and link up existing and new/proposed activity to start, grow and become sustainable (utilising our networks, process and, where appropriate, resource in kind);
- **Network and horizon scan:** Make sure we are aware of risks and opportunities to our region and can mitigate and optimise effectively at our earliest opportunity as appropriate;
- **Increase visibility:** Promote sustainable activity and contributions creating stronger links between key groups;
- **Network:** Work with, and learn from, other HEIs including working together to optimise impact.
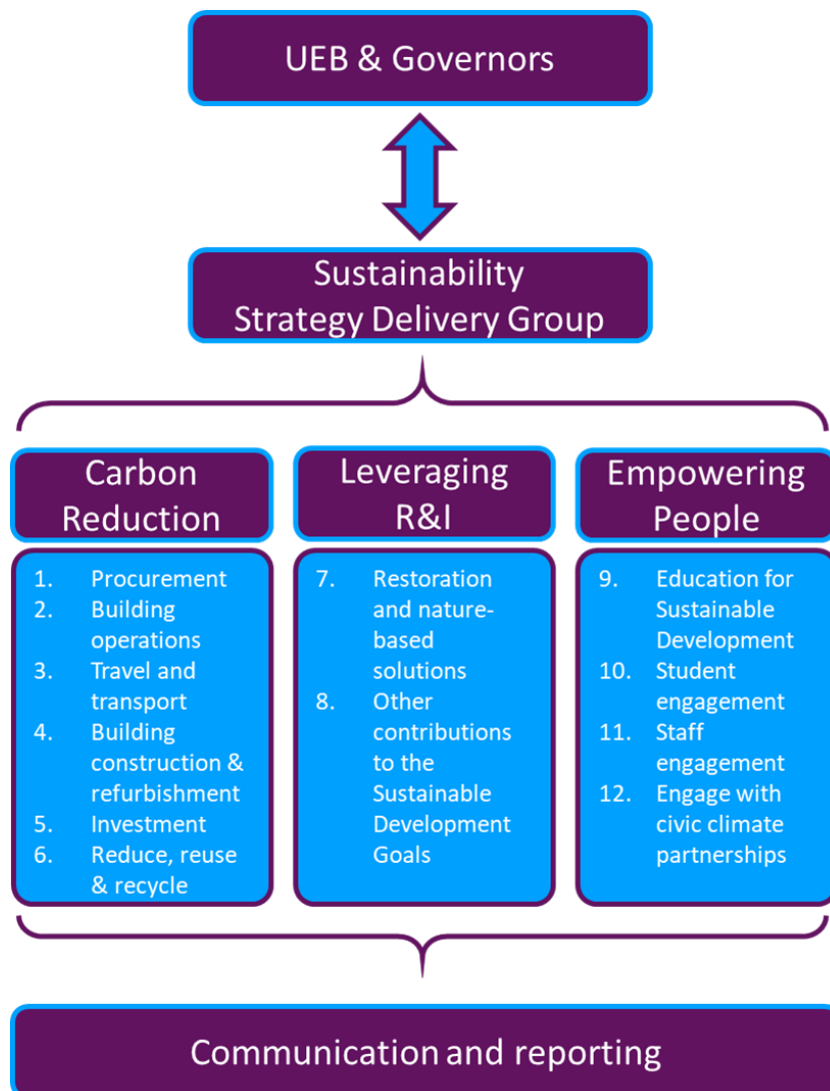
The University is a member of multiple local multi-agency bodies including the Imagine Portsmouth Board, Civic Partnership Board and is a part of local climate pledges such as the Local Green Charter. We will continue to use such forums to maximise our impact and promote sustainable approaches.

Governance & Planning

Governance

The Sustainability Strategy Delivery Group (SSDG) will take responsibility for the achievement of our goals. It will provide the day-to-day leadership, coordination and communication, reporting to UEB and the Board of Governors as appropriate on initiatives across the University that will support the delivery of the vision.

Under the direction of the SSDG nominated leads will coordinate and champion activity based on the three objective areas. These nominated leads will provide the leadership and coordination in their respective areas of responsibility in the action plan, and will escalate proposals that cannot be funded from pre-existing operating budgets to the SSDG for consideration.

UEB & Governors

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Sustainability Strategy Delivery Group

Carbon Reduction	Leveraging R&I	Empowering People
1. Procurement 2. Building operations 3. Travel and transport 4. Building construction & refurbishment 5. Investment 6. Reduce, reuse & recycle	7. Restoration and nature-based solutions 8. Other contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals	9. Education for Sustainable Development 10. Student engagement 11. Staff engagement 12. Engage with civic climate partnerships

Communication and reporting

Membership

The SSDG will be chaired by the COO & DVC. Membership will include leads for the key areas of the action plan, stakeholders from across the University in terms of sustainability leadership as well as representation from areas that are the key contributors to the University's carbon footprint.

Climate-Positive Sustainability Action Plan

A high level action plan that lists all activities being undertaken or receiving oversight by the SSDG can be found in Enclosure 1. A number of the activities contained within the action plan are already underway using existing resources. The SSDG is responsible for capturing the impact of the activities contained within the plan. It should be noted that the action plan is organic and will be further developed by the SSDG. It also does not include all activities aimed at supporting climate change which are taking place in the University.

The SSDG can sponsor projects that will help the University achieve its vision. Before lending its support to any proposals, the SSDG will wish to make sure that it is focusing the University's limited resources on areas of greatest impact and therefore will review any proposals to determine which will be sponsored by UEB (through EPG as appropriate) for approval.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Climate-Positive

Scope 1 and 2 emissions have been accurately monitored since 2009 (using invoice data). However, data collection for most Scope 3 emission categories is still quite crude. For example, carbon emissions for procurement including construction projects are based solely on costs and converted to carbon using standardised government factors without local supply contracts and building designs being taken into account. This lack of specificity at a supplier/product level leaves room for error and makes it difficult to set targets and accurately track progress.

One of the immediate aims of SSDG is to improve data collection and capture so the University can better assess the impact of the implemented carbon reduction policies. For instance, transport emissions data quality will be improved by conducting biannual travel surveys. The Communication Lead will work to improve survey participation rates which will give the University more concrete baselines from which to implement policies. Within procurement, accurate data collection would entail researching and choosing a carbon calculation platform to produce a detailed product and supplier-level breakdown of the University's supply chain emissions. This would allow the University to better identify what products, services and behaviours are most carbon-intensive and enable evidence-based policy-making (see the attached *Supply Chain Research Briefing* at Enclosure 4 for more details). It is already known, based on the current methodology, that IT procurement emissions are a significant proportion and will be targeted to determine reduction opportunities and this approach will be used to target other significant procurement activity emissions. The Estates Masterplan includes the construction of new buildings and refurbishment of others, again another significant source of emissions. The embodied carbon of new construction projects will be calculated and included in progress reports as they happen.

The Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) published their Standardised Carbon Emissions Reporting Framework in January 2023. This methodology, which encourages a more Science-Based Target approach will be used to populate the DfE data collection and reporting tool available during 2023-24. Reporting and action plan progress will be tracked by SSDG.

Environmental Sustainability

Many of the initiatives that focus on behaviour change and sustainable activity will be difficult to measure. Therefore, using the league tables which compare universities on the basis of public commitments to causes, including carbon reduction and sustainability initiatives, is a suggested proxy to measure progress.

In the UK Higher Education sector, league tables are used as a proxy for institutional quality and can influence parent and prospective student decision-making at crucial points in the recruitment process. The Guardian, The Times and The Complete University Guide are the main league tables that aggregate different learning, teaching, research and student experience metrics to rank universities. In recent years, there have been forays into compiling league tables, both domestic and international, comparing universities on their public commitments to social impact causes including carbon reduction and sustainability initiatives. To date, there has not been concrete data collected on how **THE Impact Rankings, the People and Planet League and QS World University Rankings: Sustainability** influence student recruitment. Research demonstrates, however, that more young people want institutions, including the universities they attend, to have clear strategies for tackling climate change.[14] Therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude that these league tables will gain traction and increased importance over time in the decisions made by potential applicants.

Institutions can provide tailored submissions for the rankings below to provide context and strengthen their relative position. Regardless of whether a submission is made, the entities compiling the data will use whatever information is publicly available and easily accessible to assess a university's position. In short, universities will always appear in the rankings. Therefore, it would be in the University's interest to be aware of what information and policies are being assessed and present our information accordingly. Further information on the different league tables can be found at enclosure 2.

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[14] [7 in 10 (69%) 16-19-year-olds are worried about climate change and 79% want institutions to have clear strategies on tackling climate change](#)

Resourcing & Risks

The University will stand the best chance of achieving its sustainability goals if its turnover and investment power is used in a deliberate and targeted way. The overall intent is to ensure that all relevant resourcing decisions are considered in light of the impact on carbon reduction and sequestration, as well as environmental sustainability. The SSDG will strive to ensure that climate-positive commitments are considered at every stage of decision-making when there is additional capital outlay.

The first consideration in all proposals will be the inclusion of the key areas of carbon emissions. The SSDG will require certainty that climate-positive commitments are integral to the proposed future plans (e.g. are a fundamental building block of the estates' masterplan; consideration in any future IT contracts). Second, through representation at EPG and UEB, the chair of the SSDG will ensure that when decisions are made that they have had a climate-positive lens applied to them.

Risks

Risks will be managed in accordance with the University Risk Management Policy and escalated to the corporate risk register as required.

Available upon request:

[Climate-Positive Action Plan](#)

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