





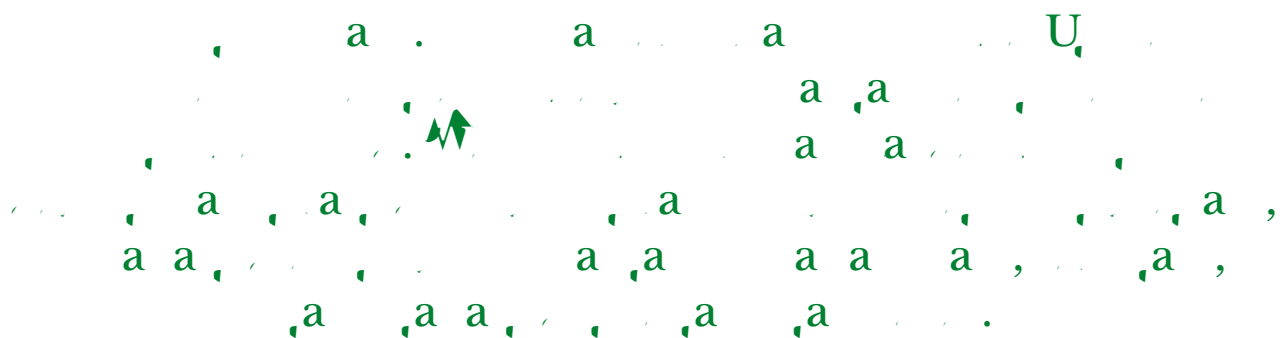
## FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

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.

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

## PURPOSE



## OBJECTIVES

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

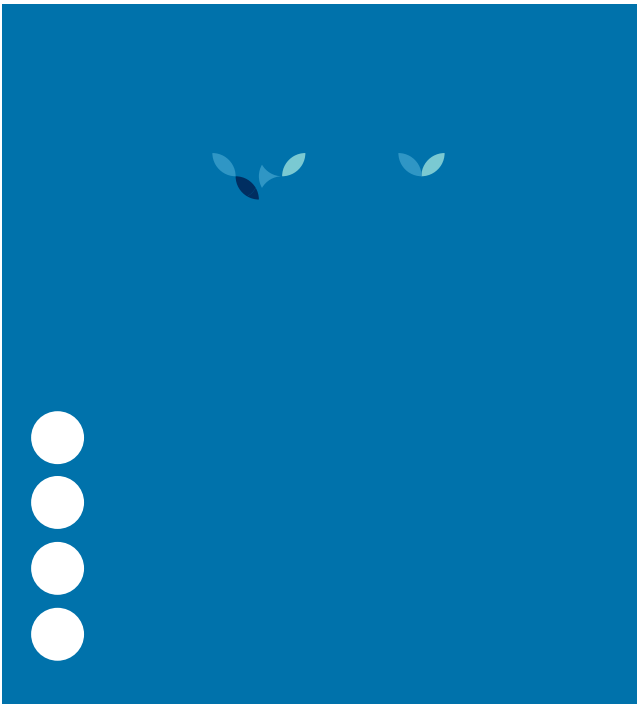
1. **Educational Excellence** – we will embed sustainability into all aspects of student learning and experience
2. **Decarbonisation** – we will reach net zero by 2035 through our action plan for achieving this
3. **Community Leadership** – we will positively impact the community through a sustainable supply chain, social responsibility and low transport emissions

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

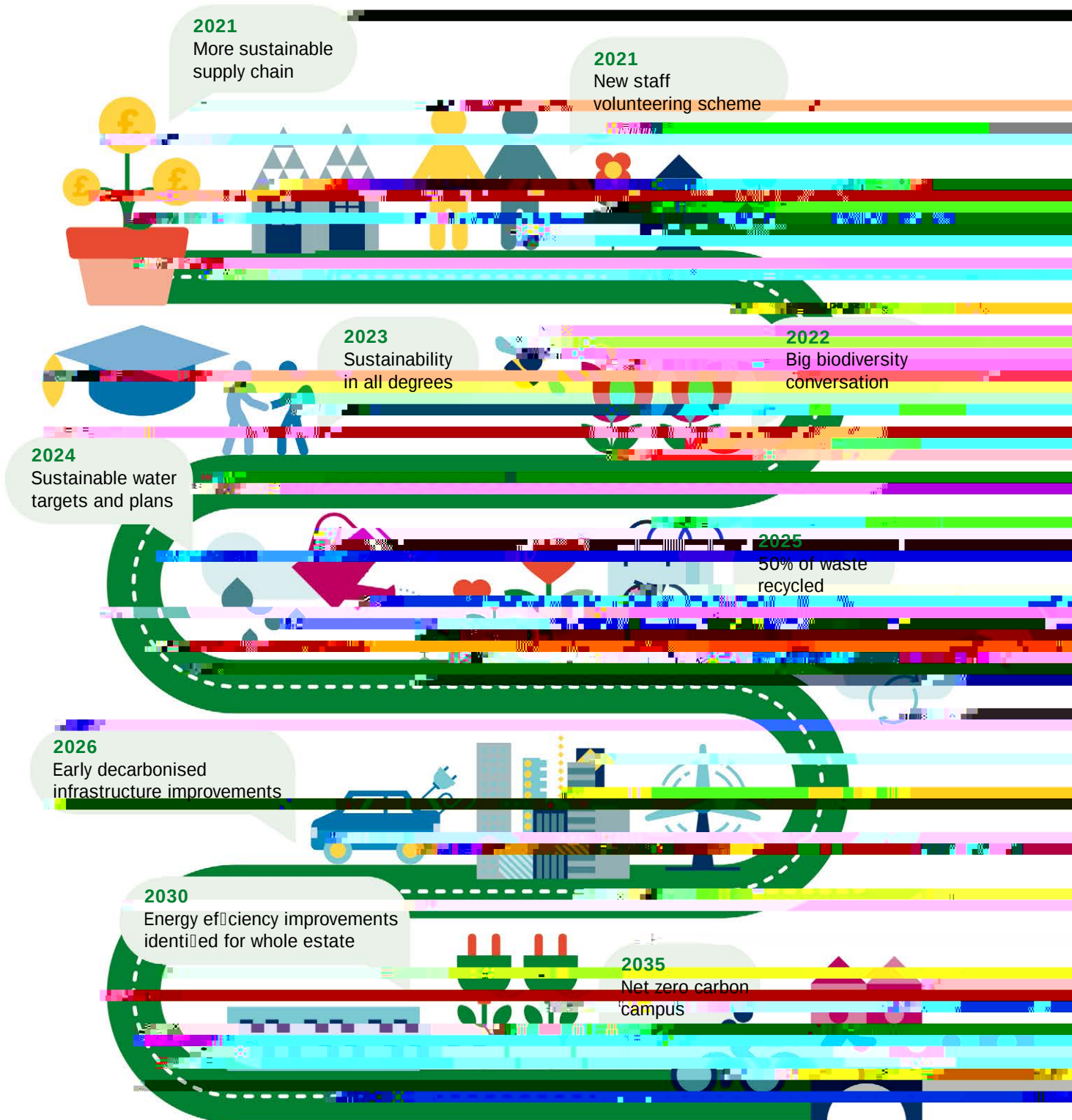
All four of these objectives directly support the realisation of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that enable positive environmental, social and economic development.

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





# 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

# 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

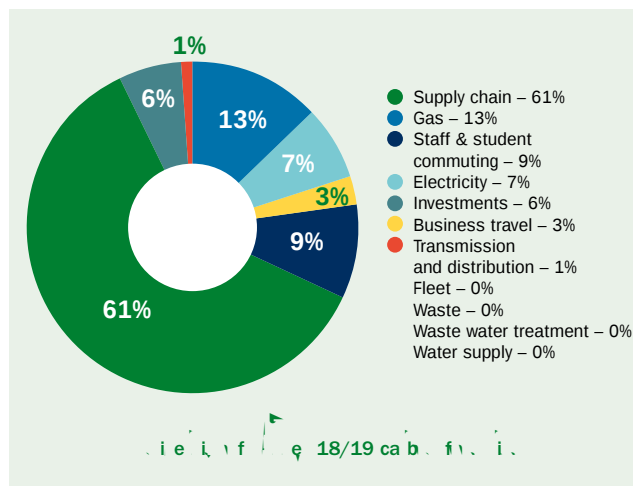
Our carbon footprint is still far too large to support international efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as recommended by the International Panel on Climate Change to prevent catastrophic climate disaster.

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

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 150,000 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

## KEY FACTS

Our **2018/19**<sup>\*</sup> carbon footprint was

**~160,670** tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Estimated carbon footprint if we do nothing by **2035** =

**145,993** tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Câmpus area of

**252.4179** ha

= over 35 football pitches

**60%**

of emissions are indirect from our supply chain and activities

**19,413** students

**2,800** staff

**126** buildings

Energy used in 2018/19 =

**271,770** GigaJoules

**17%**

waste recycled / recycled

**11%**

of energy generated from renewable

waste to landfill

**46%**

staff journeys by car

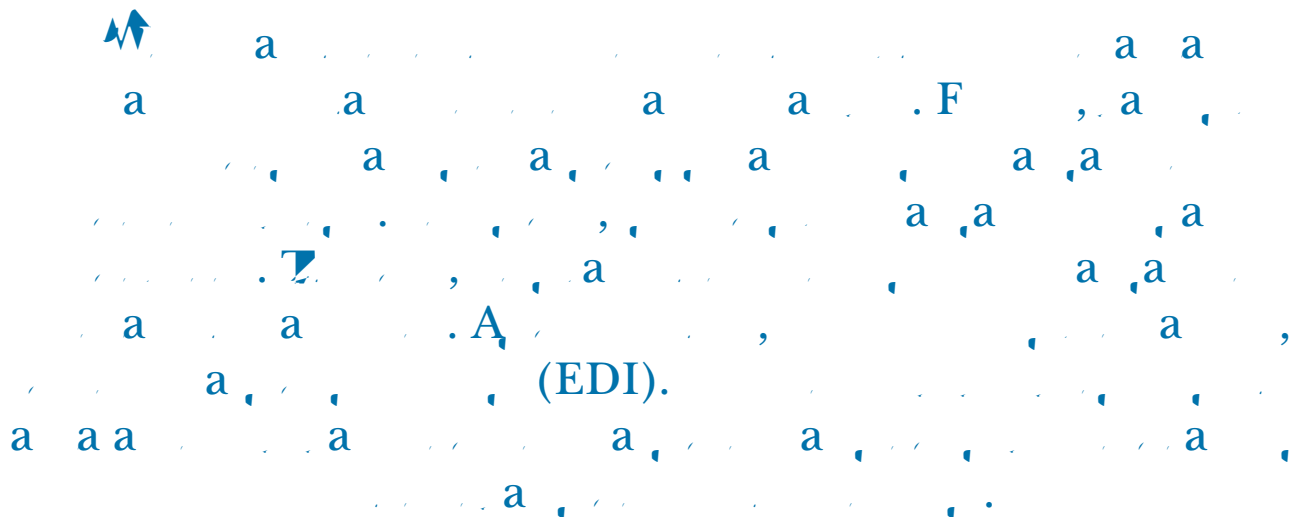
Estimated money saved by reaching net zero by **2035** instead of **2040** =

**£5,604m**



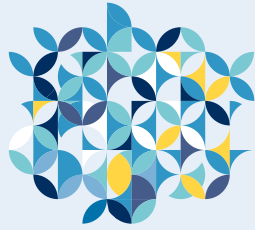


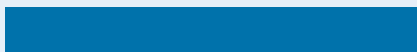
# WE WILL EMBED SUSTAINABILITY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF STUDENT LEARNING, EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH

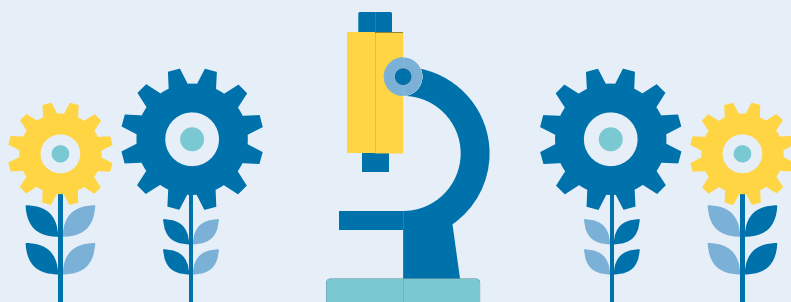
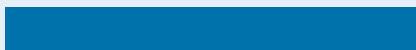


## KEY COMMITMENTS: ETHICAL EDUCATORS

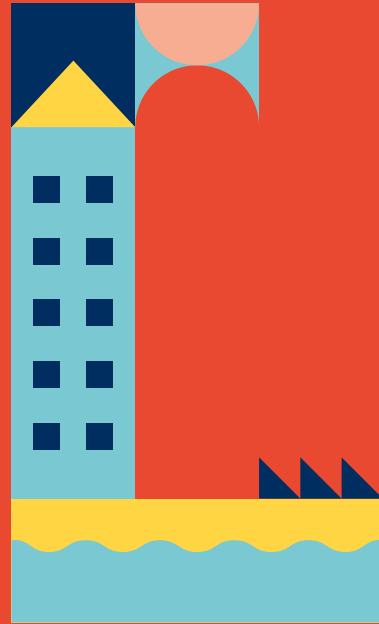
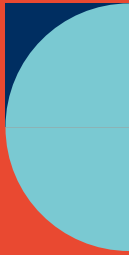
- Actively engage students, student societies and the Students' Union on co-delivering the outputs from this strategy and shaping future sustainability policy from August 2021
- Recruit recent Sussex graduates and current students to be paid members of the University Sustainability Team by August 2021
- 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.











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



## 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.



## EXCELLENT CARBON ACCOUNTING

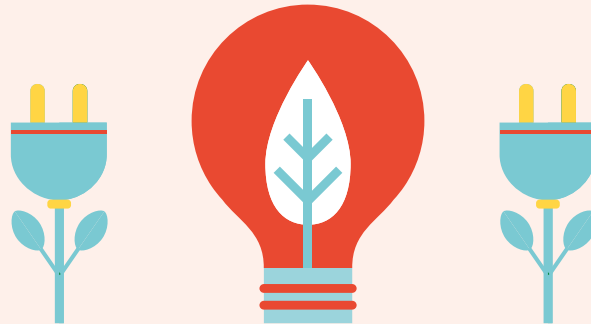


We will work with our relevant energy management service partners – currently Sussex Estates and Facilities (SEF) – to develop a carbon accounting system based on the Green House Gas Protocol produced by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. This will allow us to track our progress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

We will ask SEF to develop an improved energy management agreement to include carbon data. This data will be reported to the Sustainability Committee, chaired by our Vice-Chancellor every February. We will then use these data to agree a carbon reduction plan for each academic year from August 2022 onwards.



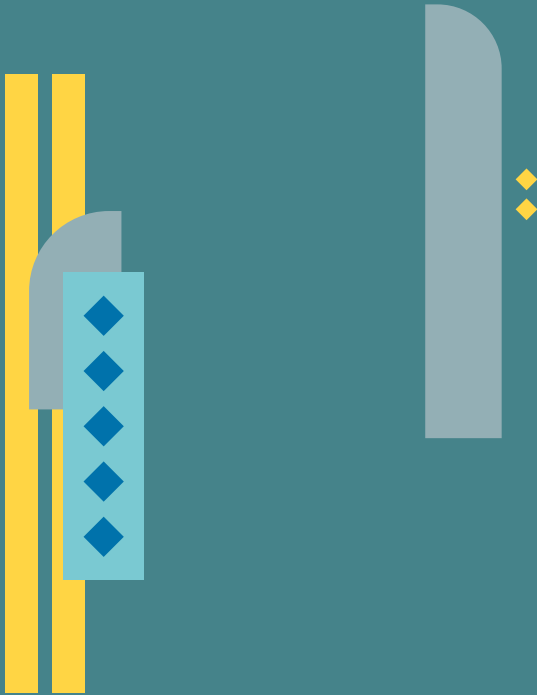
## AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT CAMPUS



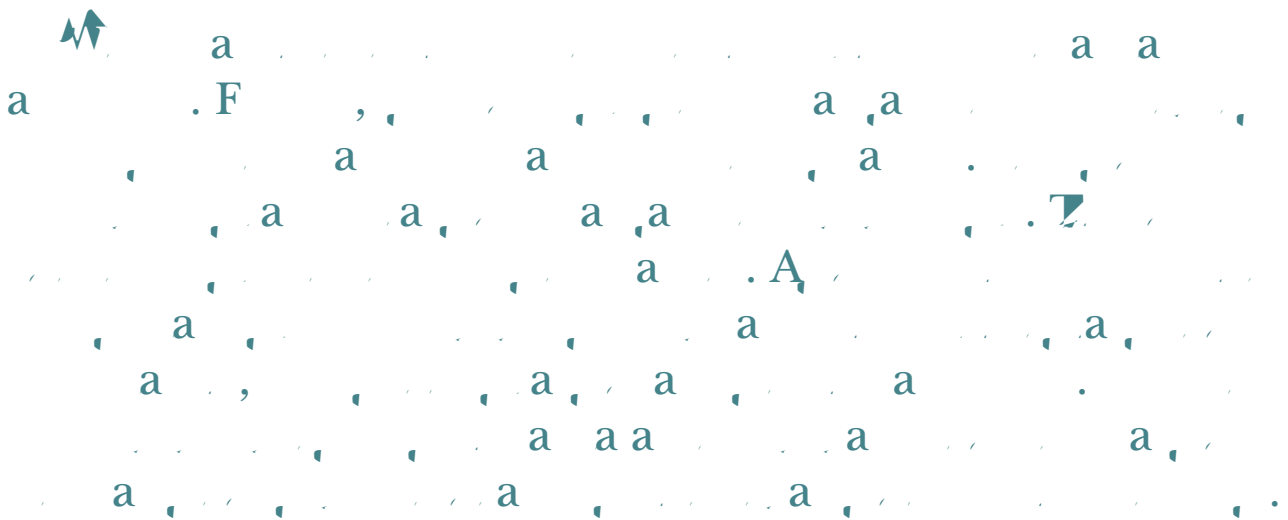
While it's great to invest in cleaner energy infrastructure as outlined above, reducing overall energy consumption is usually the most cost-effective way of saving carbon and reaching net zero. That is why **energy efficiency** is the absolute bedrock of our net zero action plan.

That is why we will **undertake a detailed audit** of **every energy efficient** **existing building** 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 **reduced audit of 20% of the** **existing building** 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
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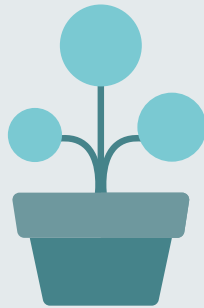


# WE WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY THROUGH A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LOW TRANSPORT EMISSIONS



## 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



## 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 **active and sustainable** strategy containing three strategic goals:

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

We will **measure** by introducing a **carbon audit** by August 2021. This will allow us to record the carbon footprint of participating staff and students when they



# 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 **de f**  
**a d** **u e e** **u e** **ude** **u ee** **ec** **u** **ec** that support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We will also **be e ec** **d a d** **ca e** **e a**  
**a** **u** **f** **u** **eac** **a** **CID 1534 63 561N cMC** **R** **La** **(e -GB)** **CID 1534** **BDC BTJETEMC** **R** **La** **(e -GB)**



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



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## 50% OF WASTE RECYCLED BY 2025



# RESPONSIBLE FOOD AND WATER PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

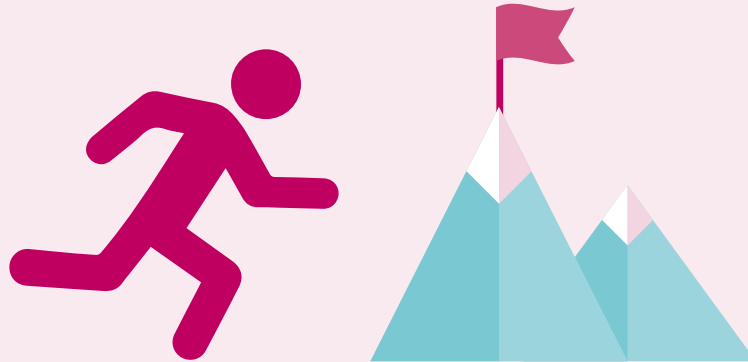


The United Nations estimate that farming and food

#### OBJECTIVE 4: ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS



## 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, 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 ensure that we are a leading force in the world, a d, e e a a e, c u e be b u u a ab a d a e fe. 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 education, a e f c u ca ac e, cud a a a u Fe e Fa .

We will also ensure that we are a leading force in every academic school and professional service area. These champions will help to implement the strategy and ensure that we are a leading force in the areas where they work and study.

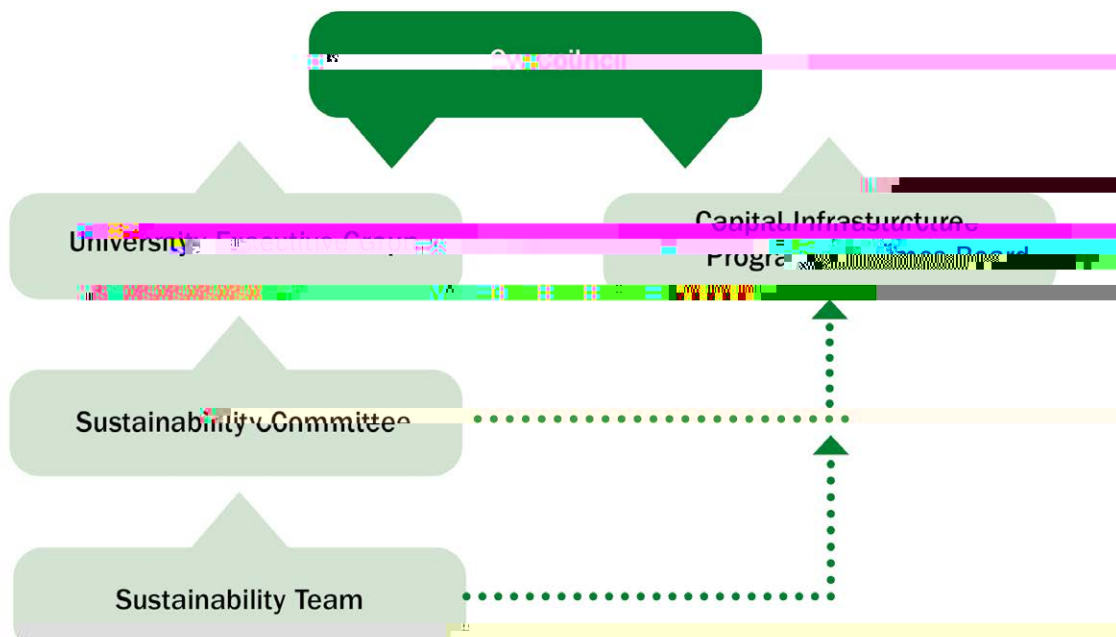
Our sustainability champions will not be passive onlookers, they will be partners who get their hands dirty

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# GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

## FORMAL GOVERNANCE



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

