

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

2026 – 30



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

Foreword

Through developing knowledge and skills, the University of Southampton plays a significant role in guiding society towards a sustainable future via its research and knowledge generation. We have the capacity to develop curricula to train our student cohorts with appropriate skills whilst establishing the needed community engagements to support sustainability at the institution, city, regional, and global levels. Hence, the development of our research, curriculum, estate management, and community engagements is ecological and climate aware, and are established to contribute to the creation of a more sustainable society. This is embedded in our vision which states that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University of Southampton does: our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future. This is key to achieving our mission of changing the world for the better.

Over the last five years the Sustainability Strategy 2020-25, which covered energy, carbon emissions, research, knowledge exchange, education, and organisational excellence, has matured significantly. Goal-specific outcomes, compliance expectations and enhanced reporting, coupled with stakeholders' evolving expectations and scrutiny have resulted in new policies, standards and governance structures. These progressions provided institutionally relevant building blocks to support an ambitious and balanced refreshed Sustainability Strategy for 2026-30.

The Sustainability Strategy 2020-25 already made progress towards our commitments - we have reduced our Scope 1 and 2 emissions by approximately 30% from the 2018-19 baseline. We have also recognised that Scope 3 emissions remain the largest and most complex component of our emissions which will require sustained collaboration with all stakeholders. We have embedded sustainability in most of our compulsory education programmes, created the Sustainability and Resilience Institute, and signed the Research Concordat, joined the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF), and reduced our fossil fuels investment exposure to 0.04% [2].

The 2026-30 Sustainability Strategy builds on the progress achieved to date, and reflects input from over 30 stakeholder consultations and reviews by the Sustainability Strategy Board, the Sustainability Implementation Group, and the University Council. With links to the other University strategies, the Sustainability Strategy also encapsulates the University's ongoing engagements at city, region, national and international levels, reaffirming our commitment to working in partnership for changing the world for the better.

The Strategy is one of twelve University Strategic Plans [1] and underpins and drives forward the overall sustainability within the University. The refreshed Strategy presented here has been developed to further strengthen our governance and culture to deliver sustained environmental and social impacts taking into account ecological aspects and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is ambitious, balanced, and pragmatic, underpinning the future of sustainability framework in our university, whilst putting us at the forefront of innovative approaches to institutional sustainability. The University is well positioned to progress towards its sustainability and net zero objectives and understands that delivering the stated ambitious Goals will require innovation and sustained commitment from our people staff and students alike, whilst creating opportunities and culture to develop a more resilient, fair, and sustainable future for all.



Professor Phillip Wright

Senior Vice-President (Academic).

Strategy Sponsor and Chair of the Sustainability Strategy Board and Champion



Professor AbuBakr Bahaj

Head, Energy and Climate Change Division, Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science.

Chair Sustainability Implementation Group

Executive Summary

The Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 sets out the University of Southampton's approach to embedding sustainability across all areas of activity over the next five years. This refreshed Strategy builds on the outcomes of the inaugural Sustainability Strategy 2020-25 [2] which stipulated a formal refresh of the Strategy in 2025. The refresh was undertaken through a process of over 30 consultations within the University culminating in this presented Sustainability Strategy for the period 2026-30.

The Sustainability Strategy is one of twelve University Strategies [3] which collectively underpin the University's global impact through research, education, and partnerships and future progression and direction geared to inspire excellence and build an inclusive world. The Sustainability Strategy was established to create a more sustainable institution and defines clear priorities and actions to support the University's mission of changing the world for the better. The Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 vision is that **by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University of Southampton does: our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future.** This vision is underpinned by three core commitments:

- By 2030, sustainability will be fully embedded across our research, teaching, knowledge exchange and operations, shaping the student experience, academic and institutional culture.
- By 2035, we aim to achieve net zero carbon for Scope 1 and 2 emissions and establishing clear pathways towards net zero target for Scope 3 emissions by 2045.
- Within the next 5 years, we aim to be recognised as a leader in sustainability research, education, policy and practice, making Southampton a destination of choice for those who are inspired by our commitment to tackling global challenges.

These commitments are embedded through six strategic Goals that collectively aim to create positive impacts across all 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainability Strategy 2025-30 six Goals are as follows:

- Goal 1** Achieve net zero Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2035.
- Goal 2** Establish pathways to reduce our Scope 3 emissions through inter-Scope 3 classification, in-house data analytics and supplier engagement, with net zero Scope 3 emissions target by 2045.
- Goal 3** Adopt university and technology-sensitive travel emissions pathways to achieve net zero Scope 3 emissions for travel by 2045 whilst maintaining economic and sustainability viability.
- Goal 4** Embed sustainability and its impacts across the University education and student experience frameworks.
- Goal 5** Make sustainability a cornerstone of our research, practice and societal impact.
- Goal 6** Develop and systematically enact processes and policies ensuring sustainability is at the core of our university operations and finances.

These Goals and the programme that underpin them reflect the transition from an inaugural Strategy to a more institutionally-embedded and delivery-focused framework. The Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 builds on the foundations established during the previous five years and responds to evolving environmental, social, policy, and institutional contexts, informed by extensive consultation across the University.

Climate change and the wider environmental degradation present material risks and challenges to society, the economy, including the higher education sector. Universities have a responsibility to address their own environmental impacts and contribute to the knowledge, skills, and evidence to support wider societal needs. For the University of Southampton, this Strategy commits to the continued reduction of operational environmental impacts alongside the systematic integration of sustainability across research, education, and knowledge exchange activities, aligned with national and international policy frameworks.



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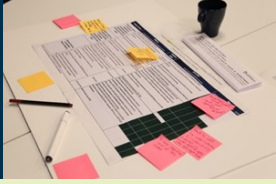
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Introduction

Since its launch in 2020, the Sustainability Strategy and its six Goals, covering energy, carbon emissions, research, knowledge exchange, education, and organisational excellence have matured significantly. Over the 5 year period, Goal-specific outcomes, compliance expectations and enhanced reporting, coupled with stakeholders' scrutiny and evolving expectations from our staff and students has resulted in new policies, standards and governance structures. These progressions provided institutional relevant building blocks to support an ambitious and balanced refreshed Sustainability Strategy for the period 2026-30.

The 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy stipulated a formal refresh in 2025 to support the next phase of the Strategy to 2030 and beyond. The refresh was informed by more than 30 consultations with stakeholders across the University. Various workshops and engagements were undertaken through the period June – December 2025 where outlines of the Goals and their delivery (milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were discussed (see Appendix A for details of the consultation). The outcomes provided a clear framework for delivery, accountability and reporting, ensuring that progress can be monitored and communicated transparently, whilst reflecting five years of implementation experience, strengthened governance arrangements, and clearer expectations around performance and outcomes. These consultations coupled with benchmarking studies undertaken of sustainability strategies across Russell Group universities informed and fed into the resultant refreshed Sustainability Strategy 2026-30, presented here. Similar to the previous period, the 2026-30 Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed in 2029.

The Sustainability Strategy is essential to support the University's long-term resilience, culture and impacts. It enhances the health and wellbeing of our community and strengthens our institutional reputation, and performance, whilst reducing environmental impacts. It equips our students with sustainability knowledge, as well as skills across all disciplines and embeds sustainability at the heart of research and innovation, and ensures that University policies, investment and decision-making processes address the sustainability challenges in an ethical and responsible manner. In essence, the Strategy is rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



“ If we look at the challenges confronting society, it is clear that our impact on our climate is changing our summers and winters. As a socially responsible institution, sustainability is one of our core values. By actively making real commitments to reduce our environmental impact we can ensure that the University makes year-on-year progress. Such progress is crucial if we are to be a sector-leading, world top 100 university in this area. ”

President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Mark E. Smith CBE

Achievements to date

Like many higher education institutions, the University of Southampton faces substantial challenges in reducing its environmental impact, given the scale and complexity of its activities. The University supports ~24,500 students [4] and ~6,000 staff [5] across a large and diverse estate, including teaching areas, laboratories, accommodation and specialist facilities, presenting both operational challenges and opportunities.

Since the launch of the Sustainability Strategy 2020–25, the University has made significant progress in embedding sustainability across institutional processes and decision-making supported by the introduction of tools, standards and frameworks, including the Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool and Sustainable Building Design Standard [6], [7], [8]. The Strategy has enabled a more coordinated and systematic approach to implementation, through the development of coherent milestones to support its 6 Goals and their targets, as highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Goals and targets for the 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy.

Sustainability Strategy Goal	Key Target
Goal 1: Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 & Scope 2 by 2030.	Reduce current Scopes 1 & 2 emissions to net zero by 2030 & address heat, electrical power & retrofit at different scales.
Goal 2: Measure our total emissions footprint & set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions.	Systematically quantify Scope 3 emissions & identify a progressive reduction path to net zero by 2045.
Goal 3: Set a business travel emissions reduction target & implement through an appropriate action plan.	Set targets & implement action plan to balance travel benefits with environmental impact, targeting net zero by 2045.
Goal 4: Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025.	Sustainability mapped across 100% of compulsory taught programmes & provide training to all Schools, maintaining periodic renewals.
Goal 5: Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS research & societal impact.	Create support structures to enhance innovations & impact at institutional, city, regional, national & international levels.
Goal 6: Implement a sustainable & ethical investment policy.	Address our exposure to fossil fuel investments & through sustainability criteria influence fund managers.

Summary of progress under each Goal for the Sustainability Strategy 2020-25 is summarised in Figure 1 below.

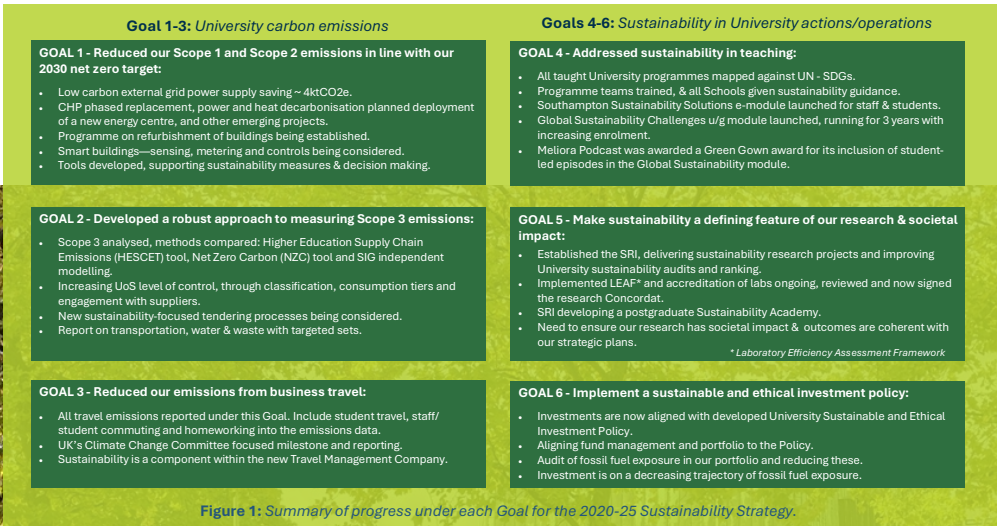


Figure 1: Summary of progress under each Goal for the 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy.



Where are we now

The University of Southampton's greenhouse gas emissions are reported annually through the University of Southampton Annual Sustainability Reports [2]. The emissions per Scope for the period 2023-24 are shown in Figure 2. Our Governance stipulated that emissions are reported both with and without student travel, reflecting current reporting practices across the UK Russell Group.

Historical emissions data are presented in Figure 3, with the academic year 2028/19 used as the baseline. The total University emissions reported for the academic year 2023-24 under Goals 1, 2 and 3 were approximately 243.2 ktCO₂e including student travel. This represents an increase of around 15% compared with the previous year and approximately 51% above the 2018-19 baseline. Scope 1 emissions, which the University has full control, were ~15.8 ktCO₂e, or ~6% of total emissions, representing an increase of around 18% from the baseline year. This is a relatively small increase, considering that since 2018-19, the size of the University's estate and staff numbers have grown by 7% and 18% respectively. During this period students' numbers increased by ~12% of which ~51% were international students.

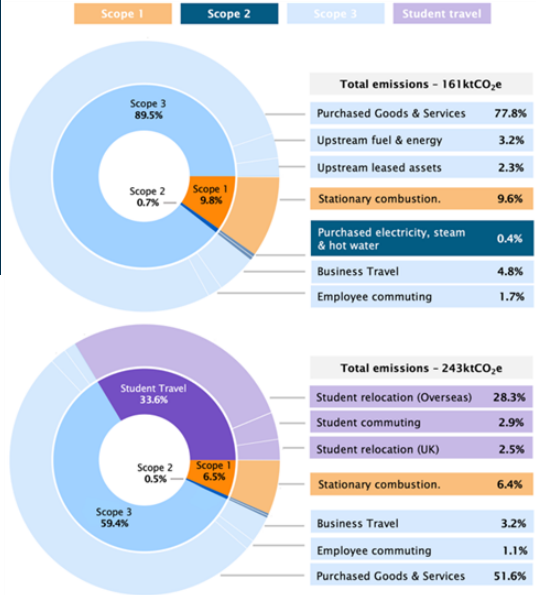


Figure 2: Summary of University of Southampton emissions per Scope for the period 2023-24 (top graphic is excluding student travel).

Figure 3 data shows a gradual downward trend in Scope 1 emissions since 2021-22. Scope 2 emissions for 2023-24 were approximately 1.2 ktCO₂e, accounting for less than 1% of total emissions and is 89% lower than the baseline. This is primarily due to purchasing certified low-carbon electricity since 2021 reducing our emissions by approximately 4 ktCO₂e. Scope 3 emissions are the highest of all scopes, totalling approximately 226.2 ktCO₂e or 93% of total emissions and increasing by around 65% since 2018-19 due to including student travel in the data. Purchased Goods and Services were around 52% of total emissions, while student travel emissions, including relocation and local commuting, accounted for approximately 34% relative to the baseline year. In comparison, the total University emissions for 2023-24 without student travel was 161 ktCO₂e (Figure 2). Full details of our emissions can be found in the University of Southampton Annual Sustainability Report [2].

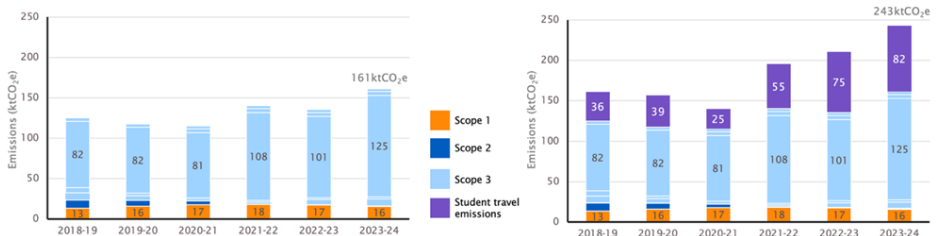


Figure 3: Historical University of Southampton Scope 1-3 emissions, where 2018-19 is set as a baseline (left graphic is excluding student travel).

Note that emissions are reported as CO₂e – carbon dioxide equivalent units. This enables the reporting of emissions from non-CO₂ sources which have different warming potentials than CO₂ to be quantified & compared.

Scope 1 direct emissions owned/controlled by UoS, such as using gas for the CHP & boilers.

Scope 2 indirect emissions from the purchase of heat & power, e.g. purchased electricity.

Scope 3 emissions from activities that the UoS is indirectly responsible for, up & down its value chain, e.g. goods/services purchased, waste & business travel.



Find out more:

Scan the QR code to visit the University of Southampton Annual Sustainability report.

Our Vision

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

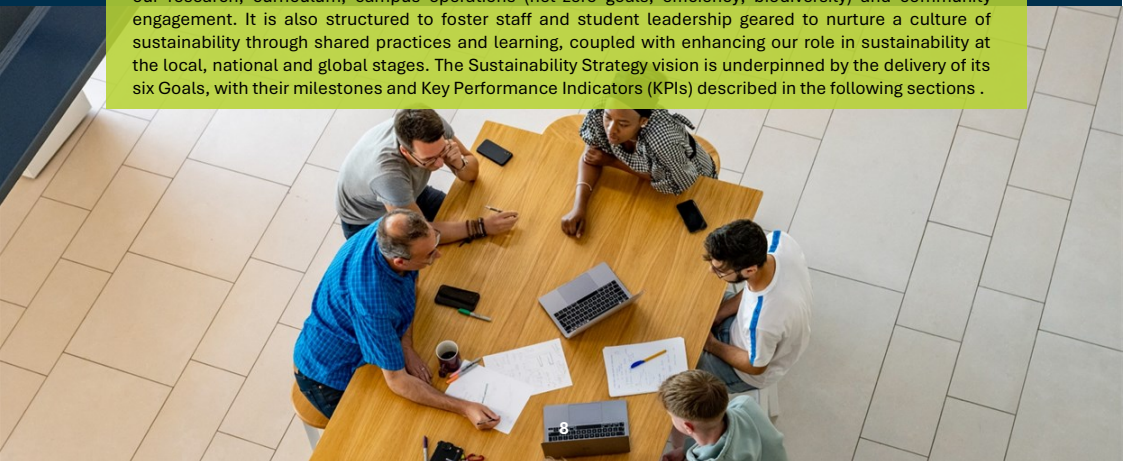
This vision is underpinned by the following three core commitments, which are embedded within the structure and Goals of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30:

- 1) By 2030, sustainability will be fully embedded across our teaching, research, KEE and operations, shaping the student experience, academic and institutional culture.
- 2) By 2035, we want to have achieved net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions and established clear pathways towards net zero target for Scope 3 emissions by 2045.
- 3) Within the next 5 years, we aim to be recognised as a leader in sustainability research, education, policy and practice, making Southampton a destination of choice for those who are inspired by our commitment to tackling global challenges.

To inform the continuation of the Sustainability Strategy, it will be reviewed and refreshed in 2029 to inform the 2030-35 Strategy and ensure continued ambition and delivery.



The vision provides an integrated framework embedding sustainability (environmental, social, and economic) as one of our institution strategies making it mission critical to support decision-making whilst ensuring accountability at all levels. Our Sustainability Strategy represents a core identity permeating into our research, curriculum, campus operations (net-zero goals, efficiency, biodiversity) and community engagement. It is also structured to foster staff and student leadership geared to nurture a culture of sustainability through shared practices and learning, coupled with enhancing our role in sustainability at the local, national and global stages. The Sustainability Strategy vision is underpinned by the delivery of its six Goals, with their milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) described in the following sections .



Goal 1

Achieve net zero for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2035

Goal 1 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is entitled **Achieve net zero for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2035**. In comparison, Goal 1 for the period 2020-25 was titled Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2030 [2].

For the period 2026-30 the major outcome for Goal 1 is that by 2030 the University will **establish a coherent route to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions in line with our 2035 net zero target, addressing power, heat and building retrofit**.

The Strategy and its delivery coupled with the Estates Master Plan now provide the required information to support the net zero trajectory for Scopes 1 and 2 under Goal 1. The planning and the technological needs required to achieve the net zero target stipulated a longer timeframe to allow this to happen on a coherent and a realistic development pathway. Hence, extending the net zero target date for Scopes 1 and 2 emissions to 2035. The approved Estates Master Plan indicated that the Strategy's goal 1 is on a better footing pending the required planning and investments approvals. Furthermore, in terms of comparisons with other Russell Group Universities this revised target remains consistent with some of our peers and is not an outlier as several institutions have recently adjusted their net zero timelines [9].

The milestones for Goal 1 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 are shown in Table 2. Like other Goals, each milestone for Goal 1 has been designed to support and demonstrate the delivery of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy to 2030. However, although the initiatives within the milestones are overarching and represent what should be undertaken for each Goal, we need to be pragmatic and prioritise these in terms of importance, giving an initial set of achievable targets. Hence, we highlight that milestones 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 in Table 2 are the priority areas which are considered critical in achieving the proposed major outcome of Goal 1 for the period 2026-30.

Although the milestones provide the underpinning of Goal 1 delivery, it is also important to encompass these in terms of overarching strategic intentions, ownership of the milestones and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to show success or otherwise. These are also captured in Table 2 which encapsulates the linkage between these three parameters for the period 2026 - 30 of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy.



We push boundaries with sustainability – addressing buildings, on-site power & low carbon heat providing better living space for our communities.

Goal Champion:
Kevin Argent
Executive Director Estates & Facilities

Table 2: Goal 1 plan - strategic intentions, milestones, ownership, KPIs and implementation timeline for 2026-30.

Strategic Intentions	Milestone (what we will do to achieve our Goal 1 strategic intentions)	Milestone Owner	KPI to 2030 (what to measure to evidence success, noting inter-goal dependencies)		Year				
			25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		
Establish detailed Scope 1 & 2 net zero roadmap.	1 (a) Review (SWOT) and revise current plans and publish a multi-scenario Scope 1 & 2 net zero emissions roadmap covering all University sites (UK & International) taking into account the Estates Master Plan.	SIG / Goal Lead	By 2027/28 develop Scope 1 & 2 net zero emissions roadmap including interim targets to achieve net zero by 2035 from the baseline of 2018/19 ^[i] .						
	1 (b) Define a strategy for decarbonising the academic and residential estates including heat and power taking into account the Estates Master Plan.		By 2028/29 develop a costed plan for the low carbon energy (power and heat) supply to our estate including the CHP in Highfield.						
	1 (c) Incorporate SMART ^[ii] target reporting for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, whilst fulfilling the requirements of the SCEFi ^[iii] framework.		By 2026/27 set SMART targets for Scope 1 & 2 emissions.						
Publish an absolute net zero emissions roadmap for Scope 1 & 2 by 2029/30 with the preliminary target date for achievement to be set by 2045, taking into account UoS & national policies, & benchmarked against competitors.	2	Goal Lead / SIG	By 2029/30 develop a zero emissions roadmap for reducing our Scope 1 & 2 by 2045 with an interim target set for 2034/35.						
	Identify & deliver activities / projects to reduce Scope 1 & 2 emissions as set out by the Estate/SIG working group, addressing electrical power, heat, decarbonisation, building refurbishment & energy security.	3	Goal Lead / Champion / SIG	Establish Goal 1 working groups consisting of relevant membership from Estates & Facilities & the SIG. The group is tasked to deliver decarbonisation projects across all our estates as per Estate Master Plan.					
		4	Goal Lead / SIG / Estates	Assess suitability of buildings and formalise plan to invest in renewable energy generation by 2026.					
Implement, high quality offsetting / insulating scheme(s) where appropriate.	5	Goal Lead / SIG	Review our current metering infrastructure and establish a programme to enhance and augment data capture with sufficient granularity by 2028/29.						
	6	Goal Lead / SIG / Isolators / Estates	Appropriately evaluate space utilisation within the estates to inform policy interventions by 2027/28.						
	7	Goal Leads & Champions / SIG	Pilot and roll out space utilisation surveys and monitoring technology across the University estate to determine utilisation.						
			By 2029/30 review, consult and agree upon a credible carbon offsetting and/or insulating scheme/approach to enable achievement of the Scope 1 & 2 net zero emissions' 2035 target.						

[i] Specific, Measurable, Actionable/Agreed, deemed to be Realistic/relevant and Time-bound targets.

[ii] Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework.

[iii] Requiring at least an 80% reduction in emissions from the baseline of 2018/19.

[iv] Subject to planning & financial approval by the University.

Goal 2

Establish pathways to reduce our Scope 3 emissions through inter-Scope 3 classification, in-house data analytics & supplier engagements, with net zero Scope 3 emissions target by 2045

Goal 2 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is entitled **Establish pathways to reduce our Scope 3 emissions through inter-Scope 3 classification, in-house data analytics and supplier engagements, with net zero Scope 3 emissions target by 2045**. In comparison, Goal 2 for the period 2020-25 was titled Measure our total emissions footprint and set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions [2].

For the period 2026-30 the major outcome for Goal 2 is that by 2030 the University will **refine Scope 3 emissions data and reporting, and establish coherent pathways to reduce Scope 3 emissions, through engagement with suppliers and University policy in line with our 2045 net zero target**.

The net zero target for Scope 3 will remain as set out previously with a date of 2045. This is in line with other Universities e.g. Birmingham [4], but later than other Russell Group Universities (RGUs), such as University of Glasgow [5] and Oxford [6] who have Scope 3 net zero target dates earlier in 2040 and 2035 respectively. However, currently there are 11 RGUs having a net zero target date for Scope 3 of 2050, with a further 5, e.g. the

University of Cambridge [7], with no Scope 3 net zero target set. The milestones for Goal 2 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 are shown in Table 3. Like other Goals, each milestone for Goal 2 has been designed to support and demonstrate the delivery of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy to 2030. However, although the initiatives within the milestones are overarching and represent what should be undertaken for each Goal, we need to be pragmatic and prioritise these in terms of importance, giving an initial set of achievable targets. Hence, we highlight that milestones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 in Table 3 are the priority areas which are considered critical in achieving the proposed major outcome of Goal 2 for the period 2026-30.

Although the milestones provide the underpinning of Goal 2 delivery, it is also important to encompass these in terms of overarching strategic intentions, ownership of the milestones and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to show success or otherwise. These are also captured in Table 3 which encapsulates the linkage between these three parameters for the period 2026-30 of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy.



We need to keep sustainability at the forefront of our minds, embedding it into our work and informing our choices of suppliers.

Goal Champion:
Wendy Appleby
VP Operations

Table 3: Goal 2 plan - strategic intentions, milestones, ownership, KPIs and implementation timeline for 2026-30.

Strategic Intentions <i>(what we will do to achieve Goal 2 strategic intentions)</i>	Milestone <i>(what we will do to achieve Goal 2 strategic intentions)</i>	Milestone Owner	KPI to 2030 <i>(what to measure to evidence success, noting inter-goal dependencies)</i>	Year					
				25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	
Enhancing the resilience in our Scope 3 data, analytics and reporting	1	SIG	Implementation of SCEF emissions reporting across all appropriate Scope 3 mandated categories, progressing each to the highest appropriate reporting status.						
	2	Goal Lead / SIG	Engage with major suppliers to accrue more accurate Scope 3 data capture (less than 2% of suppliers equates to over 50% of Purchased Goods emissions).						
	3	SIG	Identify and document major suppliers' decarbonisation plans and assess and quantify their impact on our emissions.						
Identify and deliver activities to reduce Scope 3 emissions	4	Goal Lead / SIG	Implement policy to encourage purchasing from the lowest environmental footprint suppliers, taking into account University regulations and externalities.						
	5	Goal Lead / SIG	Deliver Scope 3 emissions reductions projects for selected suppliers and focused initiatives.						
	6	Comms / SIG	Conduct behavioural change campaigns to inform staff and student on sustainability actions/behaviours in relation to resource efficiency, in e.g. purchasing, waste, water and food, according to Communication and Engagement Strategy.						
	7	Estates	Review and implement reporting on water, waste and recycling, setting resource reduction targets and their commensurate emissions from 2028.						
Establish Scope 3 net zero roadmap	8	Goal Lead	Revise and publish supplier-informed Scope 3 net zero roadmap, establishing future interim targets, key projects and expected/necessary technological advancements.						

[1] Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework
[1] British Standards Institution

Goal 3

Adopt University & technology sensitive travel emissions pathways to achieve net zero Scope 3 emissions for travel by 2045, whilst maintaining economic and sustainability viability

Goal 3 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is entitled **Adopt University and technology-sensitive travel emissions pathways to achieve net zero Scope 3 emissions for travel by 2045 whilst maintaining economic and sustainability viability**. In comparison, Goal 3 for the period 2020-25 was titled Adopt a value-based approach to reduce emissions from business travel [2].

For the period 2026-30 the major outcome for Goal 3 is that by 2030 the University will **deliver evidence-based approaches to reduce travel emissions across all modes of transport for staff and student journeys, consistent with the UK’s CCC pathways and our net zero target of 2045, taking into account the long-term University business and financial sustainability**.

The milestones for Goal 3 in the Sustainability Strategy

2026-30 are shown Table 4. Like other Goals, each milestone for Goal 3 has been designed to support and demonstrate the delivery of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy to 2030. However, although these initiatives are overarching and represent what should be undertaken for each Goal, we need to be pragmatic and prioritise these milestones in terms of importance, giving an initial set of achievable targets. Hence, we highlight that milestones 1, 2 and 4 in Table 4 are the priority areas which are considered critical in achieving the proposed major outcome of Goal 3 for the period 2026-30.

Although the milestones provide the underpinning of Goal 3 delivery, it is also important to encompass these in terms of overarching strategic intentions, ownership of the milestones and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to show success or otherwise. These are also captured in Table 4 which encapsulates the linkage between these three parameters for the period 2026-30 of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy.



We aim to make personal University travel more sustainable, cutting emissions while maintaining the economic and social benefit.

Goal Champion:
Prof. Jane Falckingham
VP Engagement & International

Table 4: Goal 3 plan - strategic intentions, milestones, ownership, KPIs and implementation timeline for 2026-30.

Strategic Intentions	Milestone (what we will do to achieve our Goal 3 strategic intentions)	Milestone Owner	KPI to 2030 (what to measure to evidence success, noting inter-goal dependencies)	Year					
				25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	
Align and enhance travel emissions reporting and reductions in line with UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) methodology, supported by improved data and transparency.	1 Align travel emissions milestones with UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) methodology.	Goal Lead / SIG	By 2025/26 develop travel emission milestones/targets for all modes of travel for staff and students (commuting, relocation and business travel) adopting a system-wide approach aligned with national policy (UK CCC), UoS growth ambitions and Scope 3 net zero target date of 2045.						
	2 Revise and pilot student commuting methodology and approach to increase coverage (engagement) and breadth of understanding (e.g. Uber usage and home v campus study).	Goal Lead / SUSU / Estates / SIG	Review and enhance student commuting survey methodology and data collection programme by 2028/29.						
	3 Publish a Travel Emissions dashboard on SIG SharePoint to be accessible to all staff and students.	SIG	By 2027/28 publish an internal travel emissions dashboard including business travel, staff/student commuting and student relocation data.						
Update sustainable travel guidance in UoS travel policies.	4 Update and expand our Travel Plan to include "policy" for staff & students and to appropriately account for all modes of working and transport, specifically road, rail and aviation – undertaken nationally and internationally, to be benchmarked with Russell Group Universities aspirations/commitments.	Goal Lead / Estates / SIG	By 2026/27 publish a revised and expanded Travel Plan / Policy covering all modes of travel and benchmarked against sector competitors.						
	5 Develop UoS travel hierarchy with well-justified emissions guidance, catering for career pathways and level, according to a revised Travel Plan & Policy.	Goal Lead / Estates / SIG	By 2027/28 develop a university travel hierarchy / decision tree to encourage carbon-efficient travel decision making and provide specific guidance to staff and students.						
Pilot pro-sustainable travel policies.	6 Undertake University-wide consultation on pro-sustainable travel policies (e.g. domestic flight restrictions and carbon charge/levy per flights, mandating UK train-based travel within bid applications to uplift travel costs or carbon budgets).	Goal Lead / SIG	Appropriately consult University community on pro-sustainable travel policies.						
	7 Pending consultation outcomes, pilot pro-sustainable travel policies.	Goal Lead / SIG	Implement pilot schemes.						
	8 Evaluate success of pro-sustainable travel policies pilot and if appropriate, roll out across whole University.	Goal Lead / SIG / Estates	Evaluate outcomes from the pilots and if appropriate, deploy University-wide by 2029/30.						

[1] The current student travel survey (N=635) represents less than 3% of the total cohort.

Goal 4

Embed sustainability and its impacts across the University education & student experience frameworks



Goal 4 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is entitled **Embed sustainability and its impacts across the University education and student experience frameworks**. In comparison, Goal 4 for the period 2020-25 was titled Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025 [2].

For the period 2026-30 the major outcome for Goal 4 is that by 2030 the University will ensure **sustainability is embedded across the university education (skills, career development) and student experience frameworks, supporting students and empowering them to build sustainability thinking into their future lives and careers.**

The milestones for Goal 4 in the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 are shown in Table 5. Like other Goals, each milestone for Goal 4 has been designed to support and demonstrate the delivery of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy to 2030. However, although the initiatives within the milestones are overarching and represent what should be undertaken for each Goal, we need to be pragmatic and prioritise these milestones in terms of importance, giving an initial set of achievable targets. Hence, we highlight that milestones 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8 in Table 5 are the priority

areas which are considered critical in achieving the proposed major outcome of Goal 4 for the period 2026-30.

Although the milestones provide the underpinning of Goal 4 delivery, it is also important to encompass these in terms of overarching strategic intentions, ownership of the milestones and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to show success or otherwise. These are captured in Table 5 which encapsulates the linkage between these three parameters for the period 2026-30 of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy.



It's important to coordinate & embed sustainability education and learning across the whole university including both in curricula and in the wider opportunities for learning and development we offer our students.

Goal Champion:
Prof. Deborah Gill
VP Education

Table 5: Goal 4 plan - strategic intentions, milestones, ownership, KPIs and implementation timeline for 2026-30.

Strategic Intentions	Milestone <i>(what we will do to achieve our Goal 4 strategic intentions)</i>	Milestone Owner	KPI to 2030 <i>(what to measure to evidence success, noting inter-goal dependencies)</i>	Year				
				23/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Ensure sustainability is embedded within our student education and experience offer.	1 Establish a Sustainability Education and Student Experience Steering Group, led by the SRI, to facilitate engagement with the sustainability agenda across the curriculum and student experience.	Goal Lead	The Steering Group reports annually, starting 2025/26, on how it is supporting the sustainability agenda across the broad area of education and student experience.					
	2 Refresh the training resources for programme teams building on previous engagements covering the integration/incorporation of sustainability into the curriculum through the Programme Approval and Review process.	Goal Lead	Working with CHEP and the DHOSE and Programme Lead Networks to refresh current training information and toolkits to ensure access for all education leads to Programme Approval and Review support and resources.					
	3 Champion the inclusion of sustainability focused learning opportunities in all programmes and for students at all levels of study.	Goal Lead	Implement the e-module training within the induction of students & staff by 2026/27. Annually audit uptake of (mandatory) training and publish results.					
	4 Develop and publish externally facing resources to showcase how UoS has considered SDGs relationships to programmes and the broader student journey.	Goal Lead	Monitor and enhance the number and programme diversity of students taking UOSM2043 module - Global Sustainability Challenges.					
Develop the range of ways students can act as Sustainability Ambassadors and leaders.	5 Explore the appetite for and potential impacts of Sustainability Ambassador roles within the student body and develop mechanisms to support their impact and reporting.	Goal Lead / SUSU / Sustainability Lead	Consult on Student Sustainability Ambassador roles and if appropriate implement a sample scheme starting 2027/28.					
	6 Maintain and enhance student partnership opportunities.	Goal Lead / SUSU / Sustainability Lead	Starting 2027/28, annually publish details of student led sustainability focused engagements and events including number of students participating in Meliara podcast episodes.					
Develop our external reputation as leaders in sustainability education.	7 Maintain and expand opportunities for external promotion, presentations and engagement to build our national and international reputation.	Goal Lead	By 2026/27 measure reputation as national and international leaders in sustainability education and student experience.					
	8 Maintain and enhance career thinking and opportunities in sustainability and national green growth strategies.	Goal Lead / Head of Careers & Employability	Audit and publish sustainability focused skills and career development of students by 2027/28 aligned with the Clean Growth and Energy Industrial Strategy growth sector. Monitor use of Southampton Skills and SDGs document.					

[i] Measured by (i) representation in leadership positions of national groups, (ii) number of awards for sustainability education / student experience, & (iii) invitations / presentations at conferences.

Goal 5

Make sustainability a cornerstone of our research practice and societal impact

Goal 5 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is entitled **Make sustainability a cornerstone of our research, practice and societal impact**. In comparison, Goal 5 for the period 2020-25 was titled Make Sustainability a cornerstone of UoS' research and societal impact [2].

For the period 2026-30 the major outcome for Goal 5 is that by 2030 the University will ensure *our research and practice are environment, climate and socially sensitive with impactful innovations at institutional (Triple Helix), city, regional, national and international levels, propelling us as leaders in sustainability*.

The milestones for Goal 5 in the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 are shown Table 6. Like other Goals, each milestone for Goal 5 has been designed to support and demonstrate the delivery of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy to 2030. However, although the initiatives within the milestones are overarching and represent what should be undertaken for each Goal, we need to be pragmatic and prioritise these milestones in terms of importance, giving an initial set of achievable targets. Hence, we highlight that milestones 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 in Table 6 are the priority

areas which are considered critical in achieving the proposed major outcome of Goal 5 for the period 2026-30.

Although the milestones provide the underpinning of Goal 5 delivery, it is also important to encompass these in terms of overarching strategic intentions, ownership of the milestones and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to show success or otherwise. These are also captured in Table 6 which encapsulates the linkage between these three parameters for the period 2026-30 of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy.



Sustainability and resilience are key challenges for the world, we are growing our research and knowledge exchange to provide solutions.

Goal Champion:
Prof. Mark Spearing
VP Research & Enterprise

Table 6: Goal 5 plan - strategic intentions, milestones, ownership, KPIs and implementation timeline for 2026-30.

Strategic Intentions	Milestone <i>(what we will do to achieve our Goal 5 strategic intentions)</i>	Milestone Owner	KPI to 2030 <i>(what to measure to evidence success, noting Inter-goal dependencies)</i>	Year				
				25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Ensure that our research is conducted in a sustainable way promoting excellence, whilst being sensitive to the environment, and the climate.	1 Sign and adhere to the Research and Innovation Concordat.	Goal Lead / SIG	Concordat signed & published on the website by 25/26.					
	2 Conduct laboratory audits and ensure all our laboratories are accredited in accordance with best sustainability standards.	Estates LEAF-Manager & SIG	60% of UoS Labs to have bronze LEAF accreditation or better by 2025/26 with future targets to be set accordingly.					
	3 Develop processes ensuring our research practice is coherent with sustainable practice & procurement policy, maximising sustainable utilisation of technology and AI.	Goal Lead & Research and Enterprise Executive Group (REEG)	By 2025/26 REEG to focus on procurement guidance for energy efficient equipment and cloud computing. Appropriately review and revise Responsible Collaboration Statement to align with the Sustainability Strategy.					
Establish, formalise and annually measure our success for conducting and delivering sustainability research and quantify its societal impact.	4 Capture and showcase our postgraduate research and its outcomes to enhance our reputation and to increase postgraduate cohort pipeline.	Goal Lead & SRI Centre for Postgraduate Research (CPGR)	In 2027/28 SRI to set defining indicators needed to monitor and baseline published these linked to Sustainability including (i) annual monitoring of PGR publications linked to Sust (top thesis for SRI) and (ii) number of CPGR ⁱⁱ student members, internships and placements.					
	5 Roll out an 'Annual Review on Research and Societal Impact Delivery' at the University level (first year), to Faculty level (3rd year), ensuring outcomes are coherent with our triple helix approach and Strategic Plans and national policies.	Goal Lead	SRI Annual November publications of (i) UoS SDG Report, and (ii) SRI Annual report Inc PE /Civic. Increase our share of UKRI funding aligned with the 'Clean Growth and Energy Industrial Strategy growth sector. Faculty option to be developed by 2027/28.					
Capture and showcase our sustainability research competency.	6 Support University staff in the development of local, regional, national and international research to further enhance our recognition as a research leaders and policy influencer in sustainability. (Through a public facing web portal).	Goal Lead / SIG	SRI to measure this requirement by (i) organising annual engagement programmes covering sustainability ⁱⁱⁱ , (ii) recording representation in leadership positions of national groups and highlighting opportunities to UoS staff.					
	7 (a) Operationally endeavour to increase our key sustainability rankings. (b) Operationally provide guidance for REF2029 impact case studies on describing impact on SDGs.	Goal Lead	SRI in conjunction with wider UoS leadership to report on annual change recommendations to SIG/SSB/UEB for targeted rankings derived from data and linked to university strategy. SRI in conjunction with wider UoS leadership to report on providing guidance on sustainability benefits, language, SDG focus to REF2029 submissions (SPRE statements and impact case studies).					

[i] Centre for Postgraduate Research

[ii] Examples include SRI workshops, annual conference on cities and towns etc.

Goal 6

Develop and systematically enact process and policies ensuring sustainability is at the core of our University operations and finances

Goal 6 of the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 is entitled **Develop and systematically enact processes and policies ensuring sustainability is at the core of our university operations and finance**. In comparison, Goal 6 for the period 2020-25 was titled Implement a sustainable and ethical investment policy [2].

For the period 2026-30 the major outcome for Goal 6 is that by 2030 the University will **embed sustainability into all University operations, investments and governance through robust policies, SMART* targets, and transparent reporting**.

The milestones for Goal 6 in the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 are shown in Table 7. Like other Goals, each milestone for Goal 6 has been designed to support and demonstrate the delivery of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy to 2030. However, although the milestones are overarching and represent what should be undertaken for each Goal, we need to prioritise these milestones in terms of importance, giving an initial set of achievable targets. Hence, we highlight that milestones 1, 2, 5 and 6 in Table 7 are the priority

areas which are considered critical in achieving the proposed major outcome of Goal 6 for the period 2026-30.

Although the milestones provide the underpinning of Goal 6 delivery, it is also important to encompass these in terms of overarching strategic intentions, ownership of the milestones and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to show success or otherwise. These also are captured in Table 7 which encapsulates the linkage between these three areas for the period 2026 – 30 of the refreshed Sustainability Strategy.

Goal 6 in the refreshed Sustainability Strategy 2026-30 will see substantial change from that of the original 2020-25 Strategy, which mainly dealt with ethical investment, see overleaf for the policies that will underpin Goal 6.

*Specific, Measurable, Actionable/agreed, deemed to be Realistic/relevant and Time-bound target.



It's important that our processes and policies help to address the sustainability issues that matter to our staff and students.

Goal Champion:
Yvonne Hawkins
VP Executive Director Governance, Legal & Risk, Professional Services

Table 7: Goal 6 plan - strategic intentions, milestones, ownership, KPIs and implementation timeline for 2026-30.

Strategic Intentions	Milestone (what we will do to achieve our Goal 6 strategic intentions)	Milestone Owner	KPI to 2030 (what to measure to evidence success, noting inter-goal dependencies)	Year				
				25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Publish revised University Environment & Sustainability Policy and set related SMART targets.	1. Revise, establish and publish an expanded University Environment & Sustainability Policy (ESPI) and accompanying policies focusing on core areas addressing the following themes: (i) Environment & Natural Resource, (ii) Energy & Climate, (iii) Sustainable Operations, (iv) People, Learning, Research & Culture and (v) Governance, Finance & Accountability.(i)	Goal Lead / SIG	Starting 2026, review current policies, progressively develop and publish a revised University Environment & Sustainability Policy, referencing constituent policies (Table 3) and monitoring of these, whilst addressing inter Goal dependencies. By 2028/29 Goal 6 will have updated and published highlighted policies across the core areas.					
	2. Progressively set SMART(iii) Targets for the agreed Environment & Sustainability Policies.		By 2026/27 set SMART targets across Scope 1, 2 and 3 metrics for the revised ESPI while taking into account University size and shape as well as balancing environmental, financial and social aspects.					
Engage Sustainability Champions to support, review and feedback on the University Environment & Sustainability Policy	3. Consult and pilot volunteer sustainability champions (iii) (from staff & students) for the 'Governance, Finance & Accountability' policy theme to review and feedback on the University's Environment & Sustainability Policy.	Finance Lead / SIG	In 2027, consult on the deployment of volunteer sustainability champions and if approved, by 2028/29 pilot volunteer sustainability champions across the select core areas.					
	4. Roll out volunteer University sustainability champions of staff & students to support appropriate policy areas/themes within the agreed Environment & Sustainability Policy.	SIG / Goal Leads / Goal Champions / Estates / Finance & Comms	If appropriate, by 2029/30 deploy volunteer sustainability champions across all policy core areas.					
	5. Conduct a review of the Sustainability Strategy Goals and their Milestones (2030) with feedback from the University community (staff & student) arising from engagement workshops/focus groups whilst taking into account University size and shape.	SIG	From 2026 and building on an existing engagement programme, conduct an annual review of the policies and reporting embedded within Goal 6 and the overall Strategy milestones (iv), with recommendations considering the size and shape of the University. By 2028/29 conduct a University-wide consultation on the status of the Sustainability Strategy in preparation for its reporting for the 2030 and the way forward.					
Reduce fossil fuel exposure for our investment portfolio	6. Reduce further our fossil fuel exposure; establish and publish external annual emissions reporting for all our investment portfolio.	Finance	By 2026/27 publish an external annual emissions report for entire LoS investment portfolio.					

(i) Environment & Natural Resource (Biodiversity, Water, Pollution prevention, EMS & Circular economy) | Energy & Climate (Energy & carbon, Climate resilience, Sustainable buildings/construction & Space utilisation) | Sustainable Operations (Responsible procurement, Food, ICT & Travel) | People, Learning & Culture (Education, Research, Engagement/communication, Events, EDI) | Governance, Finance & Accountability (Investments, Responsible collaboration & Environment and Sustainability Policy).

(ii) Specific, Measurable, Actionable/agreed, deemed to be Realistic/relevant and Time-bound targets

(iii) This was proposed in order to enhance transparency and provide a means to bring together the required university personnel/expertise (including both staff and students) to review existing policies and provide recommendations / challenges to ensure all policies are appropriately robust.

Policies needed to underpin Goal 6

Milestone 1 of Goal 6 focuses on revising and expanding the University’s Environment and Sustainability Policy (ESP) [14] to include policies across five core areas (Appendix B). The restructured ESP will provide the needed framework that facilitates the establishment of the Goal’s objectives, targets and key performance indicators. The ESP currently covers our commitments across 13 policies: biodiversity, climate change, education for sustainable development, energy, carbon, engagement, environmental management system (EMS), pollution prevention & legal compliance, procurement of goods & services, sustainable buildings, travel, waste and water. To address these policies, Milestone 1 proposes to (i) expand the current ESP to include additional policies covering: circular economy, research, space utilisation, food, ICT, sustainable events, equality, diversity & inclusion (EDI), investments and responsible collaboration, and (ii) directly link the objectives within the ESP to appropriate University policies and/or statements or strategic commitments (Table 7).

Some of the policies that will be included within the ESP are considered to be more coherent with other Goals. Thus, to optimise our approach and reduce duplication, a number will be managed within the appropriate Goals. For example, Responsible Procurement will be delivered within Goal 2, Travel Policy in Goal 3, Education Policy in Goal 4, and Responsible Collaboration and Research in Goal 5. In addition, all policies within the Energy & Carbon theme will be carried out in Goal 1. Each of these appropriate Goals will have specific KPIs in relation to said policies and will have ongoing oversight under Goal 6. Table 8 summarises the policies to be addressed within Goal 6. Several policy areas, including Water, Food and Biodiversity, are already monitored through the University’s EMS. These and other existing policies will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure alignment with the refreshed Sustainability Strategy and to be comparable with, or ahead of, other Russell Group universities.

Table 8: Sustainability Policies to be addressed within Goal 6.

Policy & Owner	Current UoS status
Environment Natural Resources & Sustainable Procurement	
Biodiversity (EMS), Estates	Biodiversity is part of Estates policies and is reported within the EMS and also within the SIG annual report on the Sustainability Strategy [15]. Under Goal 6, the current Biodiversity Policy [16] will need to be updated as per requirement of Milestone 1.
Pollution Prevention (EMS), Estates	Pollution prevention and legal compliance is reported within the EMS annually and also within the SIG annual report on the Sustainability Strategy [15].
Water (EMS), Estates	Water consumption is monitored and reported within the EMS update, and also within the SIG annual report on the Sustainability Strategy. However, there is currently no public Water Policy document. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1. Examples of water policies can be found as per
Waste (EMS), Estates	The University has a Hazardous Waste Policy [19], however there is currently no public Waste Management Policy document. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1. Examples include University of Oxford [20] and University of Edinburgh [21].
Circular Economy, Estates	The Southampton University Student Union (SUSU) state that they are adopting circular economy principles within their Environment Sustainability Policy [22], however there is to date no public UoS Circular Economy policy. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 and linked to Responsi-
Food, Campus Kitchens	The Food Environmental and Sustainability Policy 2023-24 [25] outlines a range of environmental commitments. However, it does not provide data/ evidence on the "...increasing number of vegan and vegetarian dishes", which will be addressed through Milestone 1.
ICT, Solutions	The University's Web Science Institute (WSI) published a Policy Guidance on the Use of generative Artificial Intelligence in UK Higher Education [26] and there is a policy on Using Generative AI During Your Studies [27]. However, there is currently no overarching ICT Sustainability Policy including waste and disposal of computer technology. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 and is linked to Responsible Procurement and Circular Economy with Imperial College [28] providing an example of such a policy.
People Learning & Culture	
Communication & Engagement,	The Sustainable Implementation Group has an ongoing internal communication strategy that has been developed in partnership with the Communications team. This is currently internal but could be developed into a public facing policy document and will be addressed through Milestone 1.
Events, Events Team	The University does not currently have a public Sustainable Events Policy document. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1. Examples University of Exeter [29] and University of Bristol [30].
Equality Diversity & Inclusion, HRE/EDI Team	The University has a range of EDI Policies including a Disability Statement [31], Equal Pay Review and Gender Pay Gap Report, Inclusion and Respectful Behaviour Policy [32], Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement [33] and Student Disability and Inclusion Policy [34]. These policies will
Accountability, Treasury & Finance	
Investments, Finance	The University has a Sustainable Investment Policy, within Finance Policy 22 – Treasury Management [35], and publishes an annual audit of fossil fuel exposure within its investment portfolio [36]. These policies will be reported on and recorded under Goal 6.
ESP, SIG	It is signed by the Vice-Chancellor and publicly available on the University website [14]. This will need to be revised to cover the above.

Enablers

Achieving the vision set out in the Sustainability Strategy will depend on a series of strategic 'enablers' that cut across all six Goals. These enablers will support effective delivery of initiatives, enable monitor of progress and help embed sustainability across the University.

Partnership Working

Students and staff are central to delivering the Sustainability Strategy. The University will work in partnership with its community by:

- Involving students and staff in decision-making through appropriate governance and representative structures.
- Gathering ideas and feedback through workshops and engagement activities to support implementation and future refinement of the Strategy.
- Drawing on student and staff expertise through formal mechanisms, including student volunteering, internships and a staff subject matter expert pool.

Culture and Behaviour

The success of the Strategy depends on people working collaboratively across all campuses to deliver the sustainability vision. This will be supported by:

- Harnessing the existing energy and enthusiasm for sustainability across the community.
- Using networks of sustainability champions to promote change and embed the Strategy's vision within local contexts.
- Encourage and reinforce positive behaviour change through incentives and supportive interventions, rather than punitive approaches.
- Recognising diversity and inclusion in behavioural change initiatives, and regularly testing and refining policies based on feedback to avoid unintended consequences.



Community Engagement

As a civic university, the Sustainability Strategy forms part of the University's wider commitment to its local and regional communities. Implementation will include:

- Aligning the sustainability vision with the University's civic engagement agenda.
- Linking sustainability goals with priorities for the Cities of Southampton and Winchester.
- Maintaining open dialogue with local communities on activities that may affect them, including transport and on-site power generation.

Leadership

Delivering the Strategy requires sustained commitment from leaders at all levels of the University. This includes the Vice Chancellor, Goal Champions and Leads, student leaders, School and Department leadership and professional services managers (Tables 9-10). Leaders will play a role in enabling delivery, championing sustainability and holding the institution to account for progress.

Communication

As outlined in Goal 6, the Sustainability Implementation Group will work with the Communications team to develop a Sustainable Communication and Engagement Policy. This will have two primary aims:

- To communicate the University's sustainability commitments and showcase progress and achievements.
- To build understanding, momentum and recognition of the Sustainability Strategy among staff, students and the wider community.



Governance

The Sustainability Strategy is one of the University's twelve Strategic Plans [3] and is supported by a defined governance structure that ensures accountability, oversight and effective delivery across the University (Figure 4). Overall accountability for delivery of the University's Strategies, including the Sustainability Strategy sits with the Vice Chancellor, who is responsible for ensuring progress towards its Vision and targets. The University Executive Board (UEB), chaired by the Vice Chancellor, provides strategic oversight and advice in all matters related to the University.

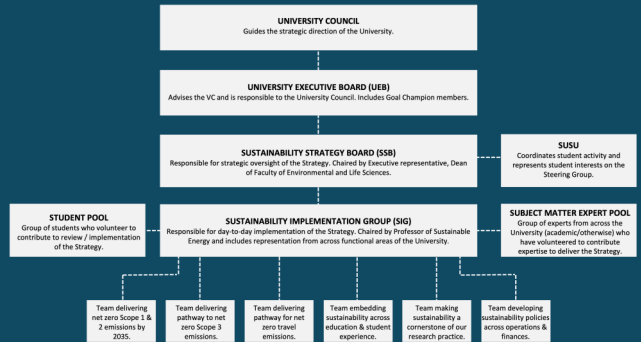


Figure 4: Governance structure for the Sustainability Strategy.

The Sustainability Strategy Board (SSB), chaired by Senior Vice President Prof. Phillip Wright, includes members of UEB as Goal Champions (Table 9), Executive Director of the Estates and the President of the Student Union (Figure 5). The SSB provides strategic-direction to the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG) and reports progress towards delivering the Sustainability Strategy and its Goals to UEB.



Figure 5: SSB responsibilities and membership.



Figure 6: SIG responsibilities and membership.

The SIG oversees the day-to-day implementation of the Sustainability Strategy and is chaired by Prof. AbuBakr Bahaj, Head of the Energy & Climate Change Division in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (FEPS). Membership includes Goal Leads, Students' Union representatives, and representatives from Faculties and Professional Services (Table 10). SIG meets monthly and reports quarterly to the SSB (Figure 6).



Table 9: Sustainability Strategy Goal Champions and Leads 2026-30.

	Goal Champion	Goal Lead
Goal 1	Kevin Argent <i>Executive Director Estates & Facilities</i>	Hayden Matthews <i>Director of Engineering & Infrastructure, Estates & Facilities</i>
Goal 2	Wendy Appleby <i>VP Operations</i>	Eychelle Heywood <i>Head of Procurement</i>
Goal 3	Prof. Jane Falkingham <i>VP Engagement & International</i>	Prof. John Preston <i>Prof. in Rail Transport</i>
Goal 4	Prof. Deborah Gill <i>VP Education</i>	Prof. Simon Kemp <i>Professor of Education for Sustainable Development</i>
Goal 5	Prof. Mark Spearing <i>VP Research & Enterprise</i>	Prof. John Holloway <i>Associate VP Interdisciplinary Research</i>
Goal 6	Yvonne Hawkins <i>Executive Director Governance, Legal & Risk, Professional Services</i>	Sarah Puckett <i>Environment & Sustainability Manager, Estates & Facilities</i>

Table 10: Current Student Union, Faculty & Professional Services Representatives 2026-30.

Southampton University Student Union (SUSU)	Liz Harris <i>SUSU Head of Sustainability</i>
Biodiversity	Amanda Boorer <i>Landscape Services Manager</i>
Comms	Lesley Taunton <i>Internal Communications Manager</i>
EDI	Camilla Gibson <i>Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion</i>
Energy	Sandra Ponponne <i>Energy Manager</i>
Faculty of Arts & Humanities (FAH)	Dr Anna Collar <i>Associate Professor</i>
Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences (FEPS)	Prof. Andrew Cruden <i>Associate Dean Infrastructure</i>
Faculty of Environment & Life Sciences (FELS)	Prof. Felix Eigenbrod <i>Professor of Applied Spatial Ecology</i>
Faculty of Medicine (FMed)	Prof. Edd James <i>Associate Dean Infrastructure</i>
Faculty of Social Science (FSS)	Prof. Ven Tauringana <i>Professor of Accounting & Sustainability</i>
Finance	Sally Crabb <i>Group Financial Controller</i>
Hospitality (catering & events)	Hannah Whatley <i>Deputy Head Catering Hospitality Operations</i>
iSolutions	Robert Irving <i>Director Service Delivery</i>
Public Policy Southampton (PPS)	Gareth Giles <i>Head of Public Policy</i>
Sustainability Resilience Institute (SRI)	Prof. Craig Hutton <i>Director SRI</i>
Technicians/Labs	Peter Morgan <i>Laboratory Manager</i>
Transport	Elliot Prescott <i>Transport Manager</i>
Waste	Osheen Martolia <i>Waste and Environmental Services Manager</i>
Water	Sam Clarke <i>Water Systems Manager</i>

Table 11: Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG) Core Team.

Executive Sponsor / SSB Chair	Prof. Phillip Wright <i>Senior VP Academic</i>
SIG Chair	Prof AbuBakr Bahaj <i>Prof. of Sustainable Energy</i>
Sustainability Coordinator & Comms Lead	Annabel Rodd
Sustainability Data Analyst	Rahul Jain
Sustainability Researchers	Dr Luke Blunden & Dr Philip Turner



Appendix A: Details on consultations

Since the beginning of June 2025, we have consulted extensively to develop the Sustainability Strategy 2026-30. Figure 7 visualises the timeline for the Sustainability Strategy refresh, encompassing Goal Champion and Lead inputs with contributions across the 6 Goals from various stakeholders across the University. We wanted to give as many people at the University as possible the opportunity to contribute to the Strategy and our community was very keen to be involved in shaping the Strategy. We acknowledge and thank all those who gave their time and input, you have been essential to helping us develop appropriately robust and realistic Goals.

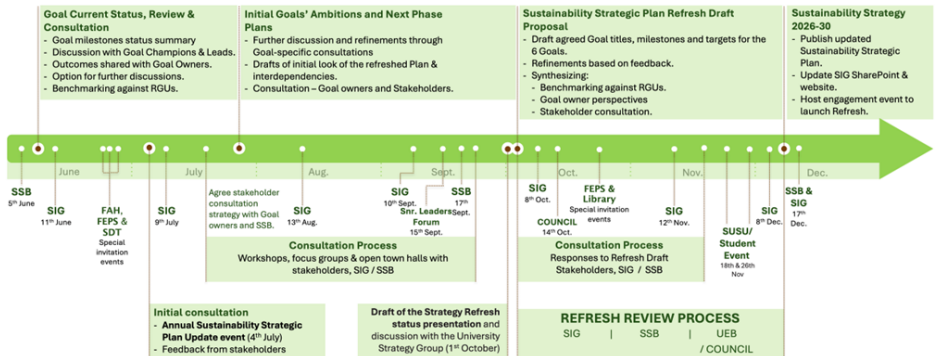
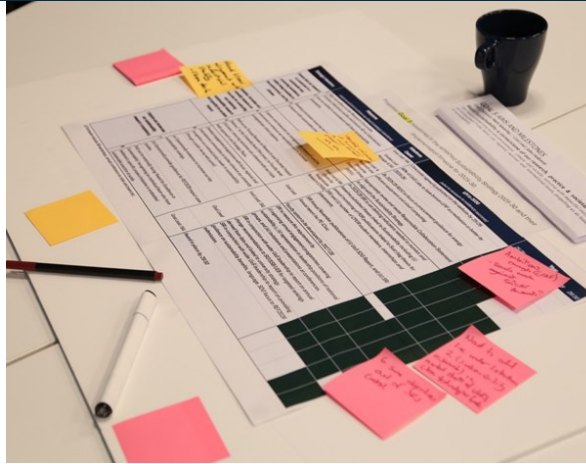


Figure 7: Sustainability Strategy refresh timeline.

During the consultation SIG have hosted over 30 stakeholder consultations engaging with over 400 members of the University community. The feedback received throughout the consultation phase was combined with plans set out in existing University strategies to inform the development of this Strategy.

In addition to the ongoing internal consultations, the SIG team undertook a review of other Russell Group University strategies, with the refreshed Strategy reflecting this benchmarking.



Appendix B: Processes & Policies to be addressed in Goal 6

This appendix provides further details on the policies to be addressed under Goal 6 across five core areas depicted in Table 12 and previously summarised in Table 8.

The current University Environment & Sustainability Policy (ESP) [14], the latest of which is dated March 2023, provides a framework for establishing objectives, targets and key performance indicators. It lists UoS commitments across the following objectives: biodiversity, carbon, climate change, education for sustainable development, energy, engagement, environmental management system (EMS), pollution prevention and legal compliance, procurement of goods and services, sustainable buildings, travel, waste and water. In addition, the current ESP states that progress against the set objectives will be monitored via the Environment Management System (EMS), including UN SDG reporting with results published in the University Sustainability website. However, these objectives/monitoring are currently not reflected into appropriate University policies. To have clarity and appropriate Sustainability Strategy, this will need to be addressed under the refreshed Goal 6.

Table 12 provides a description and status of all the proposed policies to be incorporated within a revised and expanded University of Southampton Environment and Sustainability Policy (ESP) which will be addressed under

Table 12: *Proposed sustainability core themes and policies to be included within an expanded ESP.*

Policy	Description & Status
(1) Environment & Natural Resource <i>[Estates]</i>	
Biodiversity	Biodiversity within the UoS estates is part of the Estates and Facilities policies and is reported on within the Environmental Management Systems (EMS) annual statement and also in the SIG's UoS Annual Sustainability Report [15]. Under Goal 6 the current <i>Biodiversity Policy</i> will need to be updated as per requirements (Milestone 1, Goal 6). ESP for biodiversity: Maintain, create and enhance habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife.
Water	Water consumption is monitored and reported within the EMS update, and also in the SIG's UoS Annual Sustainability Report. However, there is currently no public <i>UoS Water Policy</i> document. Examples of water policies can be found as per University of Exeter[17] and University of Cambridge[18]. ESP for water: Continue to promote water-saving initiatives to reduce water use.
Pollution prevention	Pollution prevention and legal compliance is reported within the EMS update, and also in the SIG's UoS Annual Sustainability Report [15]. ESP for pollution prevention: Ensure that we protect the environment through pollution prevention, fulfilling our compliance obligations and other specific commitments relevant to the context of the organisation.
Waste	The University has a <i>Hazardous Waste Policy</i> [19], however there is currently no public <i>Waste Management Policy</i> document. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 of Goal 6. Examples include University of Oxford[20] and University of Edinburgh[21]. ESP waste: Manage our waste according to the waste hierarchy – Prevention, Preparing for Re-use, Recycling, Recovery, Disposal.
Environmental Management Systems (EMS)	The University's EMS is certified to ISO14001:2015, with the EMS Review, from the 2024/25 forward, incorporated within the SIG's UoS Annual Sustainability Report[15]. ESP environmental management systems: Make continual improvements to our EMS and set objectives to enhance environmental performance.
Circular economy	The Southampton University Student Union (SUSU) state that they are adopting circular economy principles within their <i>Environment Sustainability Policy</i> [22], however there is to date no public <i>UoS Circular Economy Policy</i> . This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1. Examples include University of Cambridge[23] and University of Exeter[24].
(2) Energy & Climate <i>[Estates]</i>	
Energy & carbon	The University publishes emissions reporting within the SIG's UoS Annual Sustainability Report[15] and has a carbon management plan [37], however the latter is a series of case studies as opposed to a documented carbon management plan which will now be addressed through Goals, 2, 3 and reflected on under Goal 6. ESP carbon: Reduce carbon emissions in line with the Sustainability Strategy targets. ESP energy: Reduce the demand of energy in our buildings through energy-saving initiatives, low-energy new builds and investment in our existing buildings.
Climate Resilience	The University launched the Sustainability and Resilience Institute (SRI) [38] to bring together all our inter and transdisciplinary work in sustainability across the university, alongside the Public Policy team (PPS) identifying and compiling a list of UoS climate change experts [39]. The university has not however published a clear policy/commitment on climate resilience, such as the University of Manchester [40] and University of Edinburgh [41]. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 within Goal 1 and reflected on under Goal 6. ESP climate resilience: Ensure the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy enables the reduction of climate change risk.
Sustainable buildings / construction	The University has already adopted a series of <i>Sustainable Building Design Standards</i> [8] which must be applied to all construction, maintenance and refurbishment projects while also providing a range of contractor guidance documents [42]. This will need to be reflected on under refreshed Goal 6. ESP sustainable buildings: Design, build and refurbish our estate in an environmentally responsible and resource-efficient way.

Space utilisation The University is currently developing a programme to understand and evaluate space utilisation across the estates through appropriately and agreed space policy which will be developed further through Goal 1 of the Sustainability Strategy developing a policy document such as King's College London [43] and Imperial[44]. This will need to be reflected on under refreshed Goal 6.

(3) Sustainable Operations[Procurement, Estates, Solutions & Web Science Institute]

Responsible procurement Currently the University Procurement team use a Flexible Framework to aid on practically embedding sustainability within procurement processes and support progress with the Sustainability Strategy [45]. There is also a Supplier Code of Conduct [46] which sets out the expected standards and practices including environmental obligations. There is however to date, no public *Responsible Procurement Policy* document. This is currently internal but could be developed into a public facing policy document, examples include Cardiff University [47] and University of Exeter [48]. This will need to be reflected on under refreshed Goal 6.

ESP responsible procurement: Manage our supply chain by considering the economic, ethical and environmental impacts and whole-life costs of purchasing decisions.

Food The University catering department (Campus Kitchens) has a *Food Environmental and Sustainability Policy 2023-24*[25] which outlines a range of environmental commitments. However, the policy does not currently provide data/evidence on the "...increasing number of vegan and vegetarian dishes and confectionery across all University campuses". Hence this will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 of Goal 6.

ICT The University's Web Science Institute (WSI) has published a Policy Guidance on the *Use of generative Artificial Intelligence in UK Higher Education*[26] and there is a policy on *Using Generative AI During Your Studies* [49]. However, there is currently no overarching *ICT Sustainability Policy* including waste and disposal of computer technology. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 of Goal 6. Example of such a policy is that published by Imperial[28].

Travel The University has a *Travel Plan* [50] which is supported by *Finance Policy 17 - Travel*[51] which details the current UoS travel expenditure policy. Currently the University are reviewing all internal travel plans/policies to amalgamate into one overarching policy document. This will need to be addressed through Goal 3 where there is a milestone to "*Update and expand our Travel Plan... to appropriately account for all modes of working and transport, specifically road, rail and aviation*". This will also need to be reflected on under the refreshed Goal 6.

ESP travel: Encourage active travel for staff and students and explore opportunities to reduce the need to travel. Improve transport options available to staff, students and visitors to reduce car use.

(4) People, Learning & Culture[SRI, Comms, Events & Human Resources]

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) The University's strategic commitment to ESD forms Goal 4 of the Sustainability Strategy *Ensure Sustainability is embedded across all our programmes by 2025*. It is also one of the five University Education Strategic Major Programmes. This will be reflected within Goal 6. **ESP education for sustainable development (ESD):** Equip our students with knowledge, understanding and skills to contribute to environmental, social and economic wellbeing.

Research Sustainability Practice The University is now a member of the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice Concordat, this will be addressed through Goal 5 where there is a milestone to "*Develop processes ensuring our research practice is coherent with sustainable practice and procurement policy*".

Sustainability Communication & Engagement The Sustainable Implementation Group has an ongoing internal communication strategy that has been developed with the Comms team. This is currently internal but could be developed into a public facing policy document, examples include University of Bristol [52] and University of Exeter [53]. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 of Goal 6. **ESP engagement:** Engage students, staff and the community with the principles of sustainability.

Sustainable Events The University does not currently have a public *Sustainable Events Policy* document. This will need to be addressed through Milestone 1 of Goal 6. Examples include University of Exeter [29] and University of Bristol [30].

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) The University has a range of EDI Policies including a Disability Statement [31], Equal Pay Review and Gender Pay Gap Report [34], Inclusion and Respectful Behaviour Policy [32], Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement [33] and Student Disability and Inclusion Policy [54]. These policies will need to be reported on and recorded under Goal 6.

(5) Governance, Finance & Accountability[Finance & Research and Enterprise Executive Group]

Investments The University has a *Sustainable Investments Policy*, within *Finance Policy 22 – Treasury Management* [35] and publishes an annual audit of fossil fuel exposure within its investment portfolio [36]. These policies will need to be reported on and recorded under Goal 6.

Responsible collaboration The University has published its *Responsible Collaboration Statement* [55] which is supported by a dedicated Research Integrity and Compliance (RICO) team and will be reviewed annually by the Research and Enterprise Executive Group. This will be reflected on within Goal 6.



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Sustainability Implementation Group

The Sustainability Implementation Group was formulated as part of the Sustainability Strategy. Its task is to oversee and co-ordinate the delivery of the University's Sustainability Goals.

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