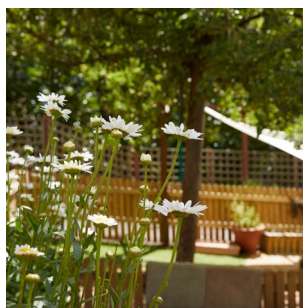
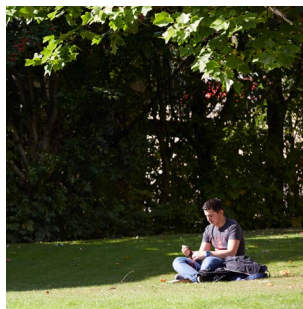


# Sheffield Hallam University

Knowledge Applied



## Climate Action Strategy

# Introduction



*Professor Rory Duncan,  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)*

**The Climate Emergency is the greatest challenge facing humanity. We are all going to face enormous change in everything that we do and everything that we experience.**

The Mission Zero Review led by Chris Skidmore MP<sup>1</sup>, reiterates the scale of the emergency, the urgency to change, and the colossal opportunity for individuals, communities, and economies. The transition towards net zero will see a fundamental shift from the systems of today, from changing how we generate, store, and consume energy, to how we travel and the objects we use. This is transformation on the scale of the first Industrial Revolution and inaction is not an option.

Any university's essential purpose is in helping society ready for a better future. As part of our vision to become a world-leading applied university, we are creating an ambitious approach to tackle climate change. Our new strategy embodies our values, mission, and civic commitments in a systems approach.

Our responsibilities extend beyond reducing our direct carbon emissions. We will help nurture a climate-conscious community of staff and students; we will work in partnership with organisations and groups across our region to drive positive sustainable change; we will ensure that our own systems and structures are fit for the future; and we will provide innovations and thought leadership for the new world. We also must prepare our students so that they have the knowledge and skills to lead new sectors that don't yet exist.

This Climate Action Strategy sets out a necessary whole-of-institution approach, highlighting some of the initiatives and actions we will undertake across every aspect of our work. This is not just about fulfilling our net zero ambitions; it's about taking a truly systematic approach so that climate consideration is embedded in everything we do and in decisions we make.

We are building on strong foundations, but we know that there is far more that we can – and should – be doing. Here, we set out some first steps. If you have comments or suggestions – please get in touch. We look forward to the conversation.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-net-zero>

# Our Commitments

In 2021, the University made a global pledge to tackle climate action by joining the UN Race to Zero, making a public commitment to deliver net zero on direct emissions by 2030, and to make significant progress on indirect emissions by 2038. Yet without ambitious leadership and investment we will not fulfil this pledge.

That's why, steered by Professor Rory Duncan, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, we are making a number of commitments and investing in new and existing initiatives that aim to make a positive contribution to tackling the climate emergency and embedding climate awareness in everything we do.

Our commitments are guided by three overarching principles: to reduce the University's overall emissions, to mobilise our communities to take action, and to advance new knowledge and leadership. We will:

## Reducing our emissions

- Deliver an efficient and sustainable campus that makes a positive difference to climate change, biodiversity, and the city. Our £250m Campus Plan will be delivered in phases, through new buildings, disposal of less efficient buildings, and effective refurbishment and maintenance of our existing estate. It will lead to a significant reduction in energy consumption and carbon emissions, critical to deliver on our net zero targets.



- Reduce our use of air travel in favour of more sustainable options, and reinvest savings to deliver on our climate commitments.
- Invest in improving Active Travel infrastructure, policies and incentives for staff and students, such as:
  - Enhancing our staff Cycle to Work scheme to include e-bikes, and the option to claim business mileage when travelling by bike.
  - Improving facilities on campus that provide safe and secure bike storage.
  - Providing discounts for public transport, rail season ticket schemes and discounts for cycling maintenance services.
- We have done lots of work in recent years to achieve ambitious targets on recycling; reductions in waste, printing and water use; and creating a more sustainable catering offer. We know we can do more and will work with staff and students to set ambitious targets for positive change.
- Procure 100% green electricity as standard and completely electrify our fleet of university vehicles by 2024.

## Supporting our communities to take action

- Grow and reinvigorate our existing Green Champions staff network, giving members the opportunity to access development opportunities that give them the tools to implement positive change in their teams.
- Enable students to become more climate conscious through a new climate and sustainability study module, to be offered from 2025.

- Support our Students' Union to develop new policies and plans and promote new initiatives and campaigns so our student community can lead the way in taking action to protect the planet.
- Encourage our staff to take up climate action and sustainability volunteering opportunities as part of our staff volunteering scheme.
- Work in partnership with key regional organisations to build partnerships that increase our reach and the scale of our impact.

## Advancing new knowledge and leadership to tackle the challenge

- Invest up to £1 million each year through a new Sheffield Hallam Research and Innovation Fund, to support bold research and innovations to advance our understanding and impact on climate and sustainability issues.
- Embed climate values and understanding in all aspects of staff development, from recruitment and induction through to professional training and leadership development.
- Implement a programme of Transforming Lives Fellowships, which will see a number of new academic leaders recruited to Hallam who will further strengthen our climate credentials.
- And finally, we also commit to never directly investing in fossil fuels.

This is the first set of commitments in our new strategy. As we deliver on these, we will do more, setting out new ambitions to be more sustainable and tackle climate change.





# Understanding our impact

Over the last year we have worked with Arup, a leading sustainable development organisation, to understand our climate impact. We now have a comprehensive Carbon Management Tool to help us accurately track our progress against our targets and ensure evidence-based decisions.

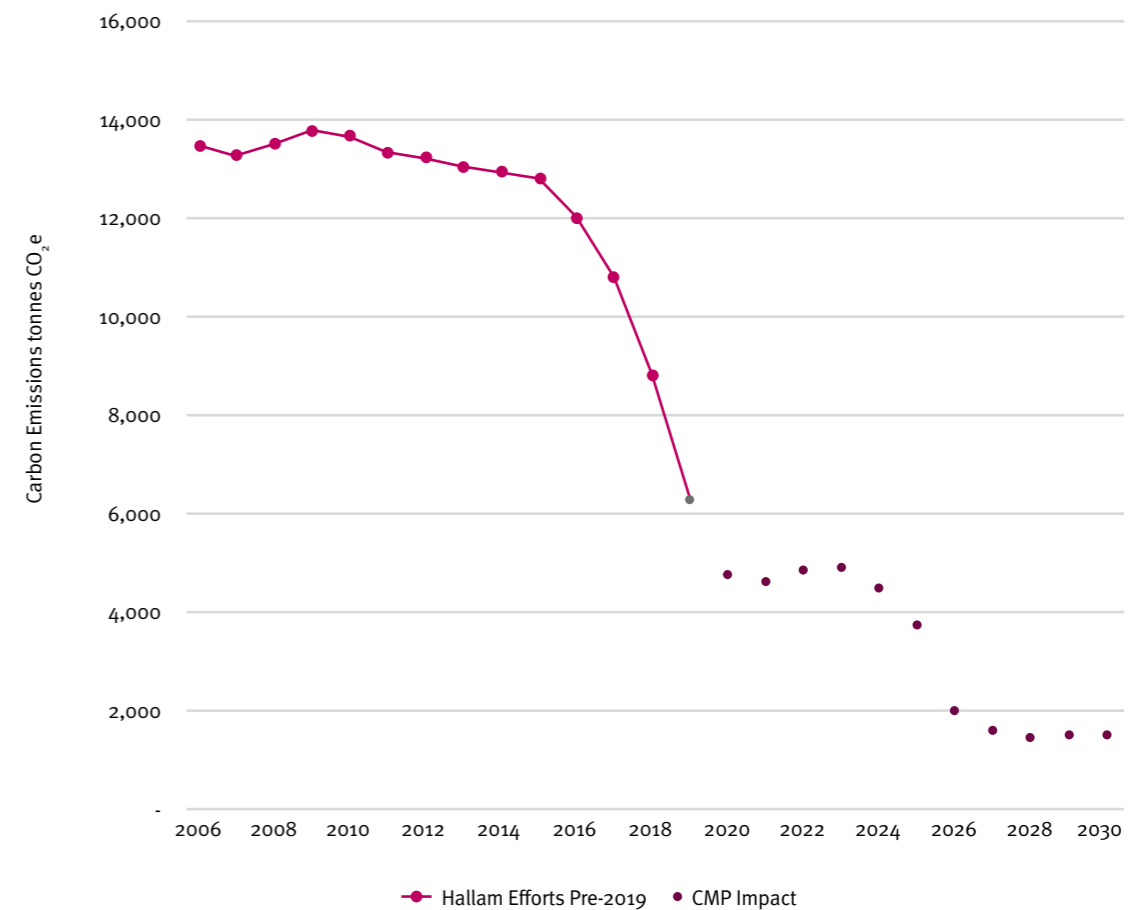
We can track our energy use and environmental impacts, building by building. Each year we will publicly report on progress against our targets. We know that transparency, urgency and evidence are key to driving change.

a £250m Campus Plan that will help us to meet our commitment to net zero by 2030, a growing offer of carbon literacy training, and regionally focused academic collaborations, focused on more sustainable partnerships.

We have been making good progress to embed more sustainable approaches, with environmental management systems in place,

We have already been proactively recording and reducing Scopes 1 and 2 for several years, with a steep reduction of 44% since 2015.

Scope 1 & 2 Emissions Trendline



## We now have a robust breakdown of our environmental impact:

### Scopes 1 & 2 (direct emissions)

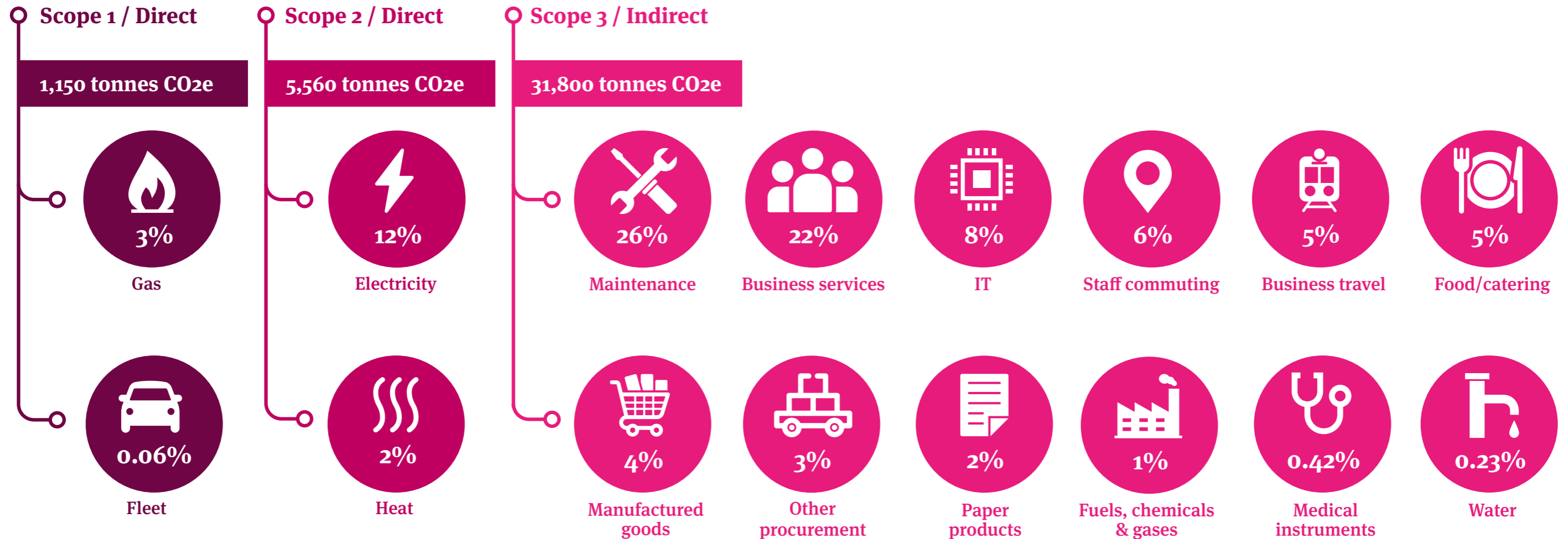
Scopes 1 and 2 covers the carbon emissions we are directly responsible for, such as the electricity, heat and gas that we use, and our vehicle fleet. The path to net zero for Scopes 1 and 2 is achievable and the greatest contribution within our direct control will be the successful delivery of our Campus Plan.

We recognise that successfully achieving our other commitments will also be critical – such as the electrification of university vehicles by 2024; procurement of 100% green electricity; and a mix of innovations to reduce waste, save energy, and use smarter technology across our estate.

### Scope 3 (indirect emissions)

As for most organisations, Scope 3 is the most challenging area to address and that’s why there are longer timeframes for action. Over 80% of our emissions in 2018/19 were from activities largely outside our control. Main emission areas include the maintenance of our estate (26%), business services (22%), staff daily commuting (6%), business travel (5%) and food/catering (5%).

Yet, there are things we can do. These will require behavioural and systems changes in areas such as catering, business travel and commuting, and in our supply chain. As our strategy develops, we will explore more sustainable approaches in our catering offer, more active travel, and purchasing choices.

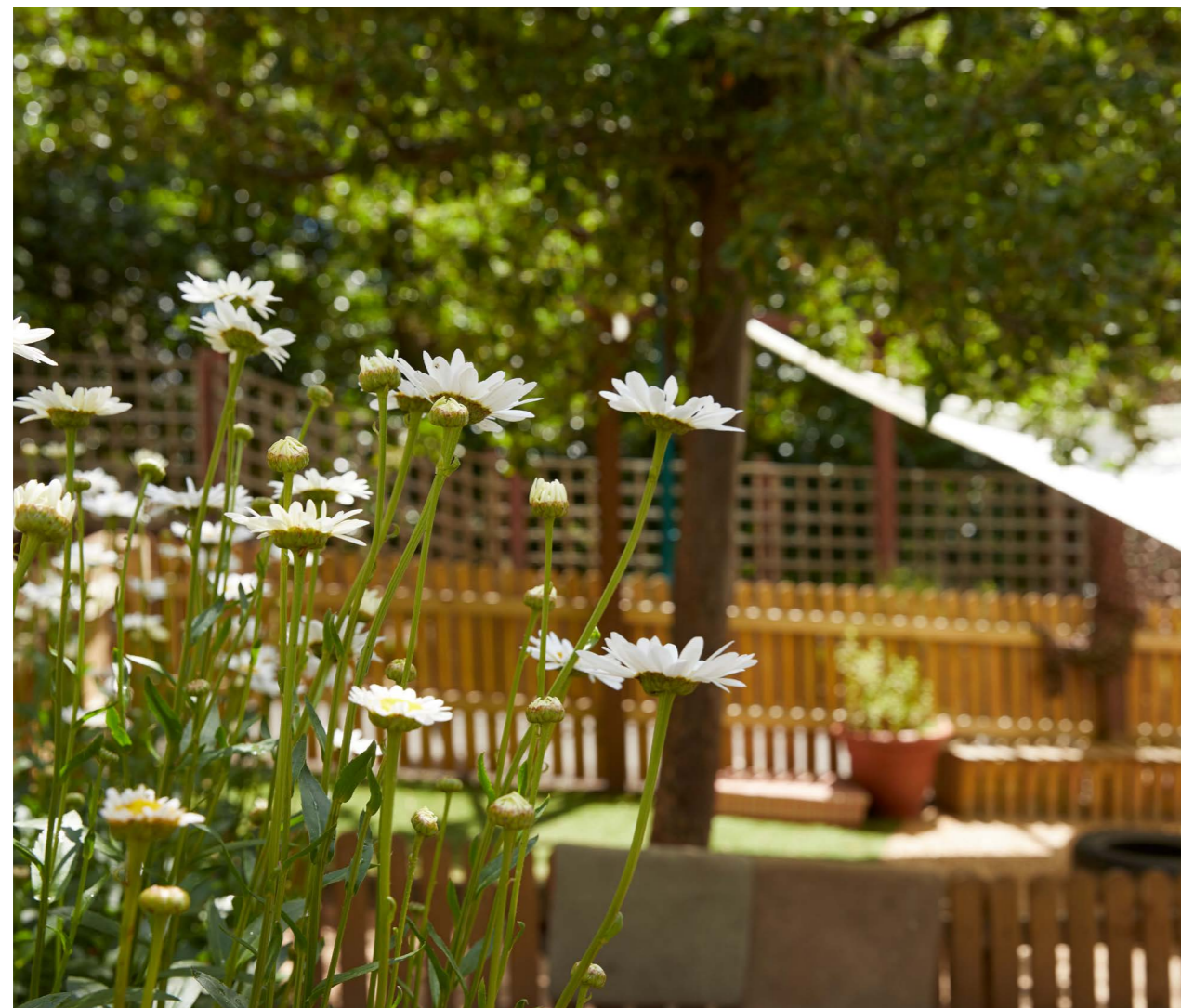


# Our whole-of-institution approach

**Achieving net zero is just one part of our strategy, and we know that our staff and students want us to do more to address the climate emergency.**

While we are building on strong foundations, we need to embed climate action across our structures, services and systems. That's why we have developed a Climate Action Toolkit to support teams, services and departments to consider climate action and sustainability as part of their work. We will begin to roll this out across the University in 2023.

To achieve real change, we need a whole-of-institution approach. Our climate action work will be split into five key areas. Each area will be led by a senior member of staff to ensure our commitments are met and our future ambitions can be realised.



## Leadership and Governance

We will ensure that climate impact is a central influence in key institutional decisions. As part of our commitment to the UN Race to Zero, we will publicly report on our progress to meet our climate targets and seek to positively leverage our purchasing power for more sustainable approaches. And we will empower and support our staff to be more climate conscious, through university-wide initiatives and training and development opportunities.

## Campus management

Our £250m Campus Plan is the largest net zero capital development of its size and shape. By utilising smart technology, new software and other building interventions, we will ensure that we use our estate more efficiently and effectively. Alongside our initial commitments to procure 100% green electricity, electrify our fleet, and provide more climate-friendly approaches to travel, these will all contribute to creating a greener, more biodiverse campus. We are audited biannually for energy and environmental management and are required to demonstrate we have the systems and interventions in place to keep our ISO certification.

## Teaching and Learning

Our students will be key to addressing the climate emergency, so we want to equip them with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need. In some areas, climate action has already been embedded as part of the curriculum, so we will explore how to scale this so that all students benefit. Making climate action the focus of our climate and sustainability elective module is an important initiative to help equip our students with the skills to help them thrive in the future. At the same time, we want to understand how our teaching and learning impacts on the environment and climate – whether in labs, field trips or placements – and take the necessary steps to reduce our impact. Importantly, we will

explore the future skills people need to enjoy flexible, dynamic careers in sectors that may not yet exist.

## Research and Innovation

Solutions and inventions to address climate change are essential if we are to collectively address the challenges facing our environment. This requires input and expertise from across all disciplines, and we will play a vital role in developing the people, tools, techniques and collaborations that help. We are actively committing research investment towards more climate challenges, while pursuing interdisciplinary funding opportunities and PhD studentships. Our Transforming Lives Fellowship scheme will enable us to recruit leading academics in climate agendas, building on existing expertise and interest. We are also committing to climate conscious approaches to our research governance, including measures to consider the carbon impact of our research and systematically screening our funding sources appropriately.

## Civic, Staff and Student Engagement

Communication, engagement and empowerment are central to our approach. Our strategy will only work if it actively engages students, staff and partners. We need to ensure that individual ideas can flourish alongside institutional initiatives. That's why we are committing to reinvigorating our Green Champions network to enable staff to drive positive change within their own teams and communities. Collaboration with Hallam Union will mean we can work together on targeted campaigns and meaningful initiatives that meet our students' priorities and passions. Ensuring climate action is central to our civic and place-based work will mean working closely with regional partners on critical city-wide agendas like biodiversity, active travel and decarbonisation plans.

# Get involved

**This summary document provides a snapshot of our current intentions, commitments and ambitions.**

Our plans will evolve and develop as new thinking, new knowledge, new technologies and policies emerge. And critically, it will need our staff and student community to keep testing, challenging and inspiring change.

This strategy was developed by the University's Climate Action Steering Group, bringing together academic and professional expertise from across the University. Our ambitions and commitments have been informed by staff surveys, workshops and extensive consultation, as well as drawing from best practice at other universities. We also adopted the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges' (EAUC) Higher Education Climate Action Toolkit framework to guide our approach.

Find out more and get involved at [shu.ac.uk/climate](https://shu.ac.uk/climate)

Please email [climate@shu.ac.uk](mailto:climate@shu.ac.uk) with questions or suggestions.

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