



Decarbonisation Plan

2026 to 2031

Person responsible: Chief Estates Officer, Nigel Lucker



University of Suffolk
Decarbonisation Plan 2026–2031

Our Pathway to Carbon Neutrality and Net Zero

SCOPE 1 & 2 TARGET	SCOPE 3 TARGET	BASELINE REDUCTION
Carbon Neutral by 2030 Verified REGO electricity + residual offsetting via Woodland Carbon Code	Net Zero by 2050 Travel, waste, water, commuting, supply chain; data boundary expanding 2025–27	Scopes 1 & 2 91% since 2009/10 2,704 tCO ₂ e (2009/10) → 225.73 tCO ₂ e (2024/25). Scope 2 now zero (market basis)

1. Who We Are

The University of Suffolk is a modern civic university located in Ipswich, Suffolk, serving students and communities across the county and beyond. As an anchor institution in one of England’s most proactively sustainability-focused counties, we have both the responsibility and the opportunity to lead by example on decarbonisation, not only in the management of our estate, but through our research, our teaching, and our regional partnerships.

This Decarbonisation Plan sets out our pathway from 2026 to 2031, situating our estate-level decarbonisation work within the broader context of our institutional values, our strategic commitments, and our active role in the Suffolk climate landscape. It is intentionally high-level, designed to be read alongside, not instead of our Decarbonisation Action Plan, Waste Action Plan, Habitat Action Plan, and Sustainable Travel Action Plan, which set out the detailed interventions underpinning each strategic pathway.

1.1 Our Estate

The University of Suffolk campus is located in Ipswich, encompassing approximately 31,500 square feet of facilities across 17 acres. We have 11 buildings across our estate:

Portfolio (9)	Leased Buildings (3)
South Campus: Waterfront, James Hehir Building	Sir Thomas Slade Court (scheduled for exit)
North Campus: Atrium, Health and Wellbeing Building, Student Hub, E-Sports (formerly Long Street), LT4, Nursery.	120 Star Lane (scheduled for exit)

Land: Athena Hall, Car Park Shed 8

Neptune Marina (electricity only, zero Scope 1)

All buildings are included within our emissions reporting boundary. Sir Thomas Slade Court and 120 Star Lane are both scheduled for lease exit during the plan period, which will reduce the estate boundary modestly. Neptune Marina operates on electricity only (zero Scope 1 gas emissions), with all electricity covered by our REGO-backed procurement; however, F-gas-containing cooling systems at Neptune Marina are included in our estate-wide refrigerant inventory and managed under our F-Gas Management Plan.

Figure 1: Campus Map



1.2 Our Emission Scopes

Understanding our carbon emissions is essential for effective environmental management and long-term decarbonisation planning. Emissions are categorised into three scopes, each reflecting different sources and organisational activities.

Scope	Type	Key Activities
Scope 1	Direct Emissions	Onsite fuel combustion (gas boilers, heating systems), university-owned vehicles, refrigerant losses (F-gases)
Scope 2	Indirect Energy Emissions	Purchased electricity for buildings, IT, laboratories, and campus operations

Scope 3	Other Indirect Emissions	Procurement and supply chain, waste, water, business travel, commuting, construction, outsourced services, transmission and distribution losses
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2. Our Commitment

2.1 Targets and Policy Framework

The University of Suffolk is committed to achieving carbon neutrality in Scopes 1 and 2 by 2030 and net zero carbon across all scopes by 2050. These commitments are formally stated and signed off by our Vice-Chancellor and CEO in our Institutional Sustainability Policy Statement, which is published on our website.

In setting these targets, the University has considered investment already made in its campus estate, available future funding sources, and realistic resource allocation, ensuring that our ambition is matched by a credible and financially grounded delivery plan.

2.2 Legislative and Regulatory Context

Our commitments are shaped by, and aligned with, a comprehensive framework of UK and international legislation and policy:

Legislation / Policy	Relevance to the University
Climate Change Act 2008 (amended 2019)	Establishes the UK's legally binding net zero by 2050 target; frames the University's own 2050 commitment
Environment Act 2021	Governs biodiversity net gain obligations, species conservation, and environmental targets; informs our Habitat Action Plan
UK F-Gas Regulation	Governs phase-down of high-GWP refrigerants; drives our F-Gas Management and Elimination Pathway
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Protects species and habitats; relevant to biodiversity management across our estate
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	Establishes public sector biodiversity duty; informs our Habitat Action Plan
Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)	Requires large UK organisations to disclose energy use and carbon emissions annually in financial reporting
GHG Protocol Corporate Standard	International framework for measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions across all three scopes

IPCC Findings and Paris Agreement	Provides the scientific and international context within which our targets are set
Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (SCEP)	County-wide collaborative climate plan to which the University is a named partner and active contributor

2.3 Reporting and Governance

The University's financial year runs from 1 August to 31 July, and all carbon and sustainability reporting is aligned to this cycle. Our reporting framework covers Scope 1 and 2 emissions as a primary obligation, with Scope 3 data covering waste, water, business travel, and transmission and distribution losses reported alongside for a fuller picture of our environmental footprint.

Key reporting and governance mechanisms include:

- Annual Sustainability Report: Published on our website, covering Scope 1, 2, and measured Scope 3 categories, with data quality statements and year-on-year performance commentary
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Estates Management Record: Standardised sector-wide reporting of Scope 1 and 2 emissions and selected Scope 3 categories. Note that the University's own reporting uses a market-based approach to Scope 2 electricity (reflecting REGO-backed procurement), which means reported figures differ from HESA's location-based methodology, with the University's Scope 2 appearing lower as a result
- Executive-level oversight: Senior leadership team accountability for sustainability performance, with regular progress reporting to the Board of Governors and external audits commissioned through the Audit and Risk Committee
- Monthly, quarterly, 6-monthly and annual governance meeting with our service providers and primary contractors to ensure performance against agreed action plans and targets.
- Quarterly reporting reviews: Held within the directorate to ensure performance progress against sustainability objectives and targets
- Annual strategy reviews: This Decarbonisation Plan is reviewed and updated annually, with a full revision scheduled for 2027 to incorporate feasibility study outcomes, updated capital commitments, and revised Scope 3 baselines

Our strong data capture processes, with defined data sources, standardised measures, and clear ownership seek to ensure accurate reporting and support ongoing performance tracking. All sustainability reports and the associated action plans are available on the University website.

2.4 Our Partnerships

The University collaborates with a range of key regional and national organisations to advance sustainability within and beyond our Institution:

- The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) named partner; active contributor to working groups on community engagement, built environment, and industry decarbonisation

- Suffolk Climate Emergency Partnership active contributor and sub group membership to county-wide climate action
- Suffolk Sustainability Institute (SSI), the University's own research institute, a regional centre of excellence for sustainability research, knowledge exchange, and applied decarbonisation
- ECOCampus scheme to assist us in developing a robust, institution-wide environmental management framework
- Net Positive Futures to enables supply chain monitoring and supplier net-zero pathway support
- Carbon Charter: Suffolk's business sustainability network, of which the University is a panel member
- Greenest County / Sustainable Suffolk programme county-wide initiative bringing together councils, public bodies, and institutions

3. What We Have Achieved to Date

3.1 Our Baseline and Trajectory

In 2009/10, the University of Suffolk established a carbon emissions baseline of 2,704 tCO₂e across Scopes 1 and 2.

Sustained investment in energy efficiency, renewable electricity procurement, solar PV generation, and behavioural change programmes has delivered substantial reductions over the intervening years. By 2021/22, combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions had fallen to 627.2 tCO₂e a reduction of approximately 77% from the original baseline, a genuinely significant achievement for an institution of our size and profile.

It is important to note that post-pandemic campus recovery affected occupancy patterns during 2020–22, and some portion of this reduction reflects reduced campus activity; the trajectory from 2022/23 onwards therefore reflects a more operationally representative picture.

3.2 Scope 2: A Completed Transition to Renewable Electricity

The University's Scope 2 emissions, those arising from purchased grid electricity, are now effectively zero on a market basis, and this represents one of the most significant environmental achievements in our recent history. The University consumes approximately 2,491,083 kWh of electricity per annum across its estate.

Of this, 122,894 kWh is generated directly from our own campus solar PV installations across four sites: Atrium, Student Hub, and Health & Wellbeing, reducing our dependence on grid supply. The entirety of our remaining grid electricity requirement has been procured under Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certification for the past three years, guaranteeing that every unit drawn from the grid is matched by generation from certified renewable sources principally wind, hydro, and solar. On a reported market basis, our Scope 2 carbon intensity is nil. We will maintain this position for the duration of this plan through continued REGO-backed procurement and ongoing investment in on-site renewable generation.

- **Solar PV Array:** 289 panels across 4 sites, generating 122,894 kWh in 2024/25
- **Grid Electricity:** 100% REGO-backed renewable sources for three consecutive years

- **Scope 2 Position:** Zero on a market basis — achieved and sustained

3.3 Current Scope 1 Position

Our Scope 1 baseline for 2024/25 stands at 225.7 tCO₂e. These are direct emissions arising principally from the combustion of natural gas in the heating systems of three core buildings:

Building	Annual Gas Consumption	Decarbonisation Route
Waterfront	630,671 kWh/yr	Heat pump / Heat Network
Student Hub	314,642 kWh/yr	Heat pump replacement
James Hehir Building	255,162 kWh/yr	Heat pump / Heat Network
Nursery Building	315,642 kWh/ yr	Heat pump
Other	Residual	Maintenance regime & phase-down

3.4 Current Scope 3 Position

2024/25 is the first full year in which the University has captured business travel emissions, establishing our initial measured Scope 3 baseline at 232.47 tCO₂e. This is an important milestone: it gives us the data foundation needed to plan and track Scope 3 reductions toward our 2050 net zero target. However, the University recognises that this figure is incomplete. Whilst we have been capturing waste and water scopes since the Universities inception, two significant categories, staff and student commuting, and supply chain / procurement emissions have not yet been systematically captured and are not reflected in the current total.

Work to establish a commuting baseline will begin in 2026/27 through a more detailed staff and student travel survey, the current one is poorly responded to by students, with supply chain mapping to follow. As these categories are incorporated, the reported Scope 3 baseline is expected to rise before declining as reduction measures take effect.

Scope 3 Category	tCO ₂ e (2024/25)	% of Measured	Status & Management
Business Travel	176.72	76.0%	First full year captured. Sustainable Travel Action Plan / Key Travel offsetting in place
Transmission & Distribution Losses	45.59	19.6%	Captured. Reduces naturally as national grid decarbonises

Water	6.80	2.9%	Water consumption is tracked and reported on with energy, and is to be added to the Waste Action Plan in 2026 to 2027 year.
Waste	3.14	1.3%	Captured. Managed under Waste Action Plan; 95% landfill diversion target
Commuting (staff & students)	Not yet captured	—	Baseline travel survey planned 2025/26. Expected to be material; will be incorporated into Scope 3 trajectory on completion
Supply chain / procurement	Capture underway	—	Scope mapping planned 2026/27 as part of Sustainable Procurement framework development
Measured Total (2024/25)	232.47	100%	Baseline will increase as commuting and supply chain data is incorporated

Note: Rows highlighted in amber indicate categories not yet captured in the current baseline. Their inclusion in future reporting years is a planned and deliberate expansion of our Scope 3 boundary, not a deterioration in performance. The University's Scope 3 net zero target for 2050 will be recalibrated as the full baseline becomes available.

3.5 Historical Emissions Trajectory

The historical emissions data presented here are drawn from the University's annual carbon and energy reporting. Emissions are calculated using DEFRA Carbon Conversion Factors and a market-based approach to electricity, reflecting the University's contractual use of REGO-backed electricity supplies. As noted above, this means reported Scope 2 figures differ from those published by HESA, with the University's Scope 2 appearing lower.

To achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions need to reduce by approximately 75 tCO₂e per year on average, recognising that actual year-on-year reductions will vary depending on the timing and nature of capital interventions.

Figure 3 below shows the University's historical Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions trajectory since the baseline year. This illustrates the University's long-term decarbonisation journey, demonstrating an overall reduction in emissions alongside periods of variation linked to estate investment, digital decarbonisation programmes, behavioural change, and improved space utilisation. Please note earlier comment regarding the Covid pandemic variations.

Figure 2: Historical Scope 1 & 2 Emissions Trajectory (2009/10 to 2024/25)

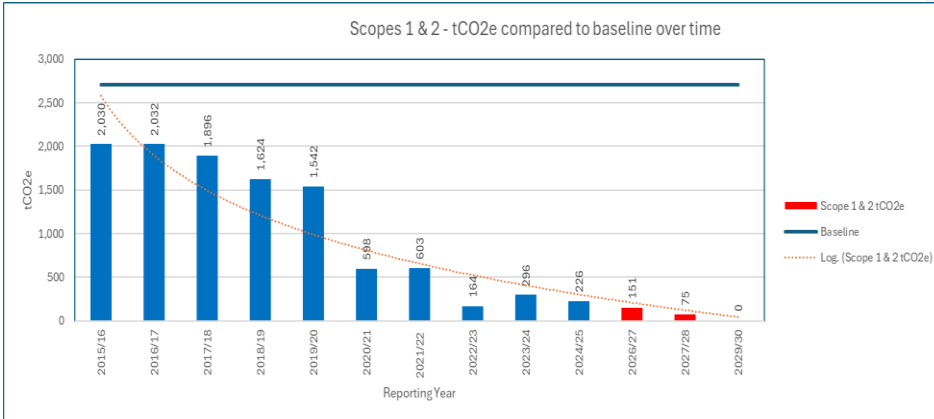
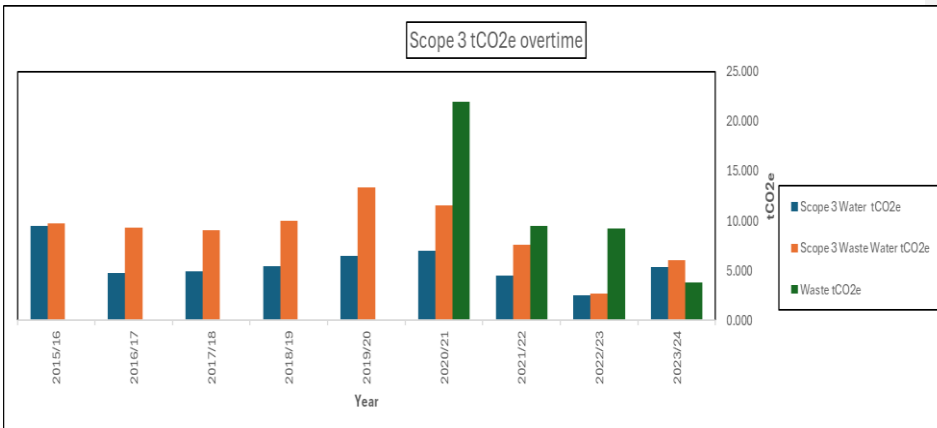


Figure 3: Historical Scope 3 Emissions Trajectory (2009/10 to 2024/25)



The University recognises that achieving net zero by 2050 will require action across all emission scopes. Accordingly, Scope 3 emissions will play an increasingly important role in future decarbonisation planning, supported by enhanced data coverage, improved supplier engagement, and targeted demand-reduction initiatives.

4. Our Strategic Approach to 2031 and Beyond

Achieving net zero emissions is one of the most significant challenges and responsibilities facing our organisation today. Our pathway is built on a clear principle: reduce emissions at source first, through efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy; use offsetting only as a responsible, time-limited bridge where capital programmes are in progress.

This Decarbonisation Plan is intentionally high-level. It is supported by four detailed action plans, the Decarbonisation Action Plan, Waste Action Plan, Habitat Action Plan, and Sustainable Travel Action Plan which set out specific interventions, timelines, responsibilities, and performance indicators.

4.1 Our Decarbonisation Flight Path: Scope 1 and 3

The University's decarbonisation trajectory is built on four reinforcing mechanisms working in combination. The chart below illustrates the full flight path from 2025 through to net zero in 2050.

<p>Mechanism 1:</p> <p>Consumption Reduction Through BMS and Behavioural Change</p>	<p>The fastest and lowest-cost reductions available to us do not require capital investment, they require better operational practice. Enhanced Building Management System (BMS) controls, already substantially upgraded, allow us to match heating output to actual occupancy rather than running at static set points. Active energy efficiency audits, will be conducted annually from 2026/27 onwards, to systematically identify waste in each building. Campus-wide behaviour change campaigns, including the bi-annual Switch It Off programme and induction-integrated sustainability training build the cultural conditions for sustained, everyday consumption reduction.</p>
<p>Mechanism 2:</p> <p>Deep Retrofit Through Capital Programmes</p>	<p>The University's approach is to treat every capital works project whether major refurbishment or significant maintenance as a decarbonisation opportunity.</p> <p>Building fabric condition surveys, now underway across all owned buildings, are identifying heat loss and air-tightness improvements that can be embedded within planned works programmes. LED lighting across the remaining estate is targeted for completion by 2027/28. Each building will be subject to a site-specific decarbonisation study to inform the sequencing and scope of interventions.</p>
<p>Mechanism 3:</p> <p>Continued Phased</p>	<p>The primary capital transformation centres on the replacement of gas boilers at Waterfront, Student Hub, and James Hehir with low-carbon alternatives, most likely air source heat pumps (ASHP), potentially supplemented by electric boilers. The sequencing of this programme will be informed by building decarbonisation studies and aligned to capital investment planning cycles, targeting full</p>

Electrification of Heat	<p>electrification of the estate’s three principal gas-consuming buildings between 2028 and 2035.</p> <p>Expansion of our existing 289-panel solar PV array is also planned, with initial assessment identifying capacity for up to 137 additional panels, providing a further estimated 33,540 kWh annually.</p>
Mechanism 4: Ipswich Heat Network Connection	<p>In March 2026, the University confirmed its Letter of Support for the Ipswich Heat Network project being developed by Suffolk County Council. Funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero through the Green Heat Network Fund, the network will generate low-carbon heat from the River Gipping. The proposed timeline anticipates the development period beginning in 2027, construction in 2028, and “heat on” in 2030.</p> <p>Connection of the Waterfront and James Hehir buildings to the network two of our three largest gas-consuming buildings would represent a transformational single-step reduction in Scope 1 emissions and potentially render significant capital expenditure on heat pump installation at those buildings unnecessary, depending on the network’s commercial and carbon terms. The two pathways are designed to complement rather than exclude each other.</p>

4.2 Capital Investment Programme

The University has undertaken detailed cost assessment of the primary capital investments required to deliver heat decarbonisation across its estate:

Building	Intervention	Estimated Cost
Waterfront	3 gas boilers → chillers/electric boilers incl. electrical upgrade	£706,000 (figure as of 2024)
Student Hub	3 gas boilers → heat pump equivalent	£617,852 (figure as of 2026)
James Hehir Building	2 gas boilers → heat pump incl. incoming line upgrade	£670,932 (figure as of 2026)
Nursery	Gas main – part of gas distribution network wall mounted boilers → heat pump equivalent	£120,000 (figure as of 2026)

Total identified capital requirement	£1.99 million (indicative)
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These figures are indicative only, funding routes are under active consideration include estate capital reserves, the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, and for Waterfront and James Hehir specifically the potential for Ipswich Heat Network connection to partially or fully substitute for on-site heat pump capital expenditure. From FY 2025/26 actual decarbonisation expenditure will be reported annually alongside carbon performance data.

4.3 Decarbonisation Milestone Table

The tables below outline the decarbonisation milestones and intervention programme from academic year 2025/26 to academic year 2030/31.

Figure 4: Scope 1 Decarbonisation Milestone Table

Year	Projected Scope 1 (tCO ₂ e)	Key Intervention	Offset Required	Cumulative Reduction from 2025
2025/26	~210	BMS optimisation; enhanced maintenance; Switch It Off campaign	Nil	7%
2026/27	~30	Replacement of nursery heating system	Nil	9%
2026/27	~188	Fabric condition surveys complete; LED programme; energy audits embedded	Nil	17%
2027/28	~165	Capital retrofit begins; solar PV expansion; Heat Network development phase	Nil	27%
2028/29	~130	First heat pump installations (James Hehir or Student Hub); F-gas phase-down begins	Nil	42%
2029/30	~90	Second major heat pump installation (Waterfront) or Heat Network construction phase	~25 (buffer)	60%
2030/31	~30	Carbon neutrality declared; offsetting covers residual gas; Heat Network "heat on" anticipated	~30	73%

Scope 3 is subject to a separate 2050 pathway and annual review. F-gas emissions are included within Scope 1 totals and tracked separately under the F-Gas Management Plan below. Projected figures will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the carbon reporting cycle.

4.4 Fluorinated Gases (F-Gas) Management and Elimination Pathway

Fluorinated gases (F-gases) primarily refrigerants used in air conditioning, cooling, and heat pump systems represent a Scope 1 emission source that, while smaller in absolute annual terms than gas heating, carries disproportionate climate impact due to the high Global Warming Potential (GWP) of refrigerants in common use. Our current refrigerant inventory, now fully assessed, includes significant quantities of R410A (GWP 2,088) across Waterfront, James Hehir, Atrium, Arts, and Health & Wellbeing buildings, together with R32 (GWP 675) and legacy R407C (GWP 1,774) units in James Hehir.

Our F-gas management pathway operates on a three-horizon approach:

- **Near term (2026–2028):** Leak prevention and minimisation of incidental release through a strengthened mandatory maintenance and inspection regime. Refrigerant top-up quantities tracked and reported annually.
- **Medium term (2028–2031):** As units reach end of serviceable life or are scheduled for replacement, all replacement specifications will require transition to lower-GWP refrigerants. Heat pump procurements will specify R32 or equivalent.
- **Longer term (2031–2035):** Elimination of all R410A systems from the estate, completing the transition to a substantially lower-GWP refrigerant inventory, aligned with tightening UK F-gas regulatory obligations.

4.5 Our Approach to Offsetting

The University of Suffolk's position on carbon offsetting is grounded in a clear principle: reducing emissions at source is always preferable to compensating for them. Offsetting is not a substitute for the structural decarbonisation of our estate; it is a responsible bridge mechanism that allows us to fulfil our carbon neutrality commitment for 2030 while the capital programmes required to eliminate our remaining gas-based emissions are completed.

4.5.1 The bridging period and what it covers: Despite the substantial progress already achieved, a residual volume of Scope 1 emissions from gas heating will remain beyond 2030. Gas combustion is expected to reduce significantly through operational improvements and partial electrification between 2026 and 2030, but is not projected to reach zero until approximately 2035, when the combination of deep retrofit, heat pump installation, and potential heat network connection is complete. Between 2030 and 2035, residual gas emissions, estimated to fall from approximately 90 tCO₂e in 2030 to zero by 2035, will be offset annually using independently verified carbon credits. Once the Scope 1 pathway is fully delivered, offsetting requirements for Scope 1 and 2 will cease entirely.

Commented [TH1]: Presuming no F gas in BHN but not sure if this has been added to the F gas register due to it being a tenanted building?



4.5.2 Our offsetting provider and verification standards: For institutional carbon offsetting, the University has entered into a commercial agreement with Carbon Neutral Britain Ltd (CNB), an organisation established in England and Wales (company number 13081310). Under this agreement, residual emissions will be offset through the Carbon Neutral Britain Woodland Fund. Credits are allocated and retired by CNB in accordance with recognised Third-Party Standards including the Woodland Carbon Code, the UK government's own quality assurance standard for woodland creation projects, delivered by Scottish Forestry and internationally recognised by the International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance. Projects are independently validated and verified by organisations accredited to ISO 17029 by the UK Accreditation Service.

For business travel, our travel management partner Key Travel currently operates an integrated offsetting arrangement for booked flights and rail travel. The University is separately evaluating the use of Carbon Neutral Britain for residual vehicle travel emissions not captured within Key Travel's scheme. Details of both arrangements will be consolidated in our annual carbon footprint report.

Upon purchase of offsetting, the University will receive Carbon Neutral Britain Certification and will publish the volume of credits retired, the project portfolio reference, and the verification body in our annual Sustainability Report, consistent with our commitment to full transparency and with GHG Protocol guidance on carbon neutrality claims.

4.5.3 What Carbon Neutrality in 2030 Means in Practice: By 2030, the University will achieve net zero carbon emissions for Scope 1 and 2. All purchased electricity will continue to come from fully REGO-backed renewable sources, maintaining a market-based Scope 2 position of zero. Our on-site solar PV capacity will also increase significantly, generating more than 127,000 kWh of renewable electricity annually.

For Scope 1 emissions, measures including building management system optimisation, fabric retrofit, and phased heat pump installation will substantially reduce gas consumption from the 2025 baseline. Residual emissions are projected to fall by 60–73%, to approximately 60–90 tCO₂e by 2030.

Any remaining Scope 1 emissions will be offset through independently verified UK Woodland Carbon Code projects. Offset retirement certificates will be published annually within the Sustainability Report and made available on request.

This approach will enable the University of Suffolk to demonstrate a verified net zero position for Scope 1 and 2 emissions through a combination of emissions reduction, renewable electricity procurement, and transparent offsetting of residual emissions.

5. How are we going to achieve our target?

Achieving Net Zero is one of the most significant strategic and operational challenges facing the University. In response, we have established clear and ambitious commitments: achieving carbon neutrality for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030, and Net Zero across Scope 3 emissions by 2050. These targets reflect both our institutional responsibilities and the expectations of our students, staff, partners, and wider community.



Delivering these commitments will require coordinated action across our estates, operations, procurement, and wider value chain. To support this transition, we have developed a series of roadmaps and action plans that are publicly available on our website, that set out the priorities, timescales, and enabling measures needed to achieve sustained emissions reductions. Together, these provide a clear framework for delivery while allowing flexibility to respond to evolving technologies, policy requirements, and emerging best practice.

The following sections outline the actions planned across Scopes 1, 2, and 3. For our direct operations, this includes improving energy efficiency, investing in low-carbon technologies, and increasing the use of renewable energy. For Scope 3, our approach focuses on collaboration with suppliers, partners, and stakeholders to reduce emissions across the wider supply chain and associated activities.

These roadmaps are intended to be dynamic and responsive documents. They will continue to evolve as progress is monitored, new opportunities emerge, and our understanding develops over time. Above all, they provide a clear statement of intent, accountability, and long-term commitment to the University's transition to a low-carbon future. Through these actions, the University aims not only to reduce its environmental impact, but also to demonstrate leadership in supporting a more resilient and sustainable future for the region and beyond.

6. High-Level Roadmap: Carbon Neutrality Scopes 1 & 2

This roadmap sets out the strategic pathway through which the University will achieve carbon neutrality for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. It is designed as a high-level framework, reflecting the needs of a complex academic environment where long-term planning, robust governance, evidence-led decision-making, and stakeholder engagement are central to successful delivery.

6.1 Heat and Cooling Decarbonisation Pathway (2026–2030)

Objective:

Transition the University away from fossil fuel-based heating and cooling systems and establish a resilient, low-carbon energy infrastructure that supports long-term academic, operational, and research priorities.

This phase represents a major stage in the University's transition towards carbon neutrality. It focuses on the systematic decarbonisation of heating and cooling across the estate, the expansion of renewable energy generation, and the integration of low-carbon design standards within future capital investment programmes.

The programme will also support the reduction of F-gases associated with heating and cooling systems, ensuring ongoing regulatory compliance while exploring lower-carbon alternatives as part of the wider decarbonisation strategy.



These actions directly address the University's principal sources of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, as outlined in Appendix A: Emissions Profile (Scopes 1 and 2). Continued development of the BMS will play a key role in improving operational control, reducing energy demand, and supporting further reductions in carbon emissions across the estate.

Key Outcomes

- A phased transition from natural gas, high global warming potential gases, and other fossil fuel systems to low- and zero-carbon heating and cooling technologies, informed by site-specific decarbonisation studies.
- Expansion of on-site renewable energy generation, including additional solar PV, solar thermal, and battery storage, to reduce grid dependency and strengthen energy resilience. As a significant energy user, the University also recognises its role in supporting wider energy security and grid stability.
- Consistent application of low-carbon design principles across all new developments, refurbishments, and major maintenance programmes.
- A future-ready estate aligned with the University's sustainability commitments, academic priorities, and evolving sector expectations.

Core Pathway Components

- Replacement of gas boilers and other high-emission plant with heat pumps and equivalent low-carbon technologies.
- Integration of renewable energy generation and supporting infrastructure into long-term estate planning, including solar, storage, and wider electrification opportunities.
- Adoption of net zero-aligned design standards and whole-life carbon requirements across all major capital and small works projects.
- Long-term financial planning to support sustained investment in low-carbon infrastructure and estate transformation.
- Procurement frameworks that prioritise lifecycle carbon reduction, circular economy principles, and long-term environmental value within purchasing and contractor decisions.

6.2 Optimisation Pathway (2026–2030)

Objective:

Strengthen the foundations for decarbonisation by improving operational performance across the estate.



This phase focuses on establishing the foundations required for long-term transformation, including developing sustainability awareness and literacy, embedding responsible resource use across the campus, and ensuring that existing buildings and operational systems perform as efficiently and effectively as possible

Key Outcomes

- Increased awareness and understanding of the University's sustainability commitments across staff and students.
- Improved energy and resource efficiency through enhanced operational management and system optimisation.
- Stronger engagement and collaboration across academic departments, professional services, the Students' Union, and the wider student community.
- Increased visibility of environmental performance data to encourage transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making.
- Establishment of baseline operational efficiencies that support emissions reduction and help minimise future capital investment requirements.
- Improved institutional readiness for future regulatory, funding, and sector sustainability requirements.

Core Pathway Components

- Institution-wide behaviour change and sustainability engagement programmes.
- Development of sustainability champions and collaborative initiatives across staff, students, and the Students' Union.
- Optimisation of existing building systems, controls, and operational performance.
- Continued monitoring, metering, and performance analysis to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.
- Strengthening waste prevention, reuse, and resource efficiency practices across the estate.
- Promotion and support of low-carbon and sustainable travel options within the University community.
- Embedding sustainability considerations within operational policies, procedures, and staff and student induction activities.
- Regular communication and reporting on environmental performance to support engagement and shared accountability.

6.3. Governance & Continuous Improvement Pathway (2026–2030)

Objective:

Provide strong institutional leadership, strategic financial planning, and robust performance oversight to guide the University's transition to net zero.

Sector Context

Sustained progress towards net zero depends on transparent governance, consistent performance monitoring, and clear alignment with academic values, including stewardship, evidence-based decision-making, and collaborative leadership. It also requires accountability at all levels of the institution, ensuring that delivery is embedded within both strategic and operational decision-making.

Key Outcomes

- Carbon and sustainability considerations embedded within strategic planning, financial decision-making, estates development, and procurement processes.
- Clear governance structures linking Executive leadership, academic schools, professional services, Estates, and student representation, ensuring shared ownership of delivery.
- Regular monitoring, benchmarking, and review cycles to ensure the roadmap remains adaptive, evidence-based, and aligned with sector best practice.
- Strengthened accountability through defined roles and responsibilities for carbon reduction delivery across the institution.
- Established long-term funding and investment mechanisms to support sustained delivery of net zero commitments.
- Improved transparency through consistent reporting of progress, risks, and performance against targets.

Core Pathway Components

- Carbon-inclusive procurement, budgeting, and financial planning embedded within institutional governance and decision-making frameworks.
- Annual reporting, strategy review cycles, and independent assurance of progress against carbon and sustainability targets.
- Continuous improvement frameworks covering energy, waste, transport, digital infrastructure, and wider operational performance.
- Dedicated capital and revenue investment planning to support long-term net zero delivery and estate transformation.
- Formal integration of climate risk and adaptation considerations into governance and planning processes to support institutional resilience.

- Strengthened data governance and carbon accounting systems to ensure accuracy, consistency, and auditability of emissions reporting.
- Structured engagement with academic expertise and research capability to support evidence-led policy development and innovation in delivery approaches.

Summary

This roadmap provides a high-level strategic framework for achieving carbon neutrality in Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. It sets out a sequenced approach structured around two interconnected pathways: short-term operational optimisation to improve efficiency and embed sustainable behaviours, and long-term system transformation focused on the decarbonisation of heat and power systems. These are supported by cross-cutting governance, monitoring, and investment planning that enables delivery, ensures accountability, and maintains alignment with the University's wider strategic priorities.

6.4 High-Level Roadmap to Achieving Net Zero Scope 3 Emissions by 2050

Scope 3 emissions represent the University's largest and most complex source of emissions, spanning procurement and supply chains, staff and student commuting, business travel, waste, water, capital projects, leased assets, and investments. This roadmap sets out a structured long-term pathway towards achieving Net Zero Scope 3 emissions by 2050. It recognises that delivery will depend on sustained collaboration, system-wide change across value chains, and the progressive transformation of how the University procures, operates, builds, and partners over time.

6.4.1 Foundations & Engagement Pathway

Objective

Build the institutional culture, partnerships, data systems, and collaborative mechanisms needed to manage Scope 3 emissions effectively.

Scope 3 decarbonisation depends on cross-institutional collaboration across academic departments, research groups, suppliers, students, and external partners. Early action should prioritise engagement, data improvement, and embedding sustainability into core university functions.

Key Outcomes

- Embed low-carbon and ethical standards across procurement, supported by circular economy principles (reduce, reuse, repair, and responsible material selection).
- Apply low-carbon design principles and material efficiency standards across all new builds and major refurbishments.
- Reduce business travel emissions and support low-emission commuting through expanded sustainable travel options and behavioural change.



- Strengthen awareness and shared responsibility for Scope 3 impacts across staff, students, and partners.
- Collaborate with suppliers and sector partners to pilot, test, and scale Scope 3 reduction solutions.

6.4.2 Supply Chain & Consumption Transformation Pathway

Objective

Deliver sustained reductions in Scope 3 emissions through transformation of procurement, construction, ICT, and consumption patterns.

In a university setting, Scope 3 emissions are primarily driven by procurement, construction, and ICT. This transformation pathway will continue in reshaping our purchasing behaviour, strengthening supplier requirements, and embedding circular economy principles across operations and estates.

Key Outcomes

- Lower-carbon procurement embedded across all departments through the Institutional Procurement Policy
- Strong supplier standards, reporting, and accountability mechanisms through monthly, quarterly and annual contract meetings for service providers and participation in Net Positive Futures.
- Reduced emissions from construction and refurbishment projects in line with the Sustainability in Construction Policy
- Reduced overall waste generation and water consumption

Core Pathway Components

- Integration of lifecycle carbon assessment into procurement and capital planning
- Development of preferred low-carbon supplier frameworks and procurement lists
- Adoption of circular economy practices (reuse, remanufacture, repair, refurbishment)
- Collaboration with contractors to reduce embodied carbon in capital projects

6.4.3 Travel, Mobility & Engagement Transformation Pathway

Objective:

Transition to low-carbon mobility for commuting, business travel, and campus transport, supported by cultural change and infrastructure development.

This pathway sets out the vision for how we will reshape the way our organisation moves, connects and collaborates and is reflected through our Sustainable Travel Plan and our Sustainable Travel Action Plan. This phase focuses on long-term modal shift and structural change.

Key Outcomes

- Reduced reliance on high-carbon modes of travel for staff and students.
- A modernised, low-carbon campus-mobility ecosystem.
- Clearer expectations and policies for academic and business related travel.
- Evidence-based travel-carbon reporting built into research funding and academic planning.

Core Pathway Components

- Sustainable travel frameworks for research, conferences, and academic mobility.
- Improved active-travel and public-transport infrastructure.
- Exploration of zero-emission fleet and shared-vehicle options.
- Carbon-tracking built into travel booking systems.
- Development of virtual and hybrid alternatives where appropriate.

6.4.4 Long-Term Decarbonisation, Partnership & Innovation Pathway

Objective

Deliver the final phase of Scope 3 decarbonisation through systems-level collaboration, innovation, and long-term institutional transformation.

The final stages of Scope 3 reduction rely on sustained innovation, deep cross-sector partnerships, and long-term shifts in institutional operations and investment decisions. This phase reflects the period in which emerging technologies mature, and sector-wide transformation enables deeper, structural decarbonisation.

Key Outcomes

- Full decarbonisation across remaining high-impact Scope 3 categories where feasible

- Strong, enduring partnerships with suppliers, local authorities, regional networks, and sector bodies
- Embedding of sustainability across academic research, investment strategy, and capital planning
- Established governance mechanisms for managing and mitigating residual emissions

Core Pathway Components

- Development of innovation partnerships with suppliers, research groups, and industry collaborators
- Implementation of long-term sustainable investment and financing frameworks
- Full lifecycle carbon integration across all capital development and major infrastructure projects
- Continuous improvement of digital carbon accounting, reporting systems, and decision-support dashboards
- Development of a robust residual emissions strategy aligned with sector best practice and emerging standards

7. Monitoring, Review & Reporting Framework

Progress towards our overarching objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050 is monitored through an integrated framework covering Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions, supported by robust data systems, performance indicators, and formal governance and assurance processes. This framework ensures that carbon reduction activity across all operational areas is measurable, transparent, and aligned with institutional strategy, national reporting requirements, and external best practice.

Institutional performance is tracked through a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) covering all three emission scopes. These are underpinned by structured data collection systems, internal carbon accounting processes, and enhanced data analytics. Reporting is aligned with Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) requirements, alongside internal sustainability metrics that monitor performance across estates, procurement, energy, travel, waste, and wider Scope 3 categories.

Each of the university's thematic action plans, including decarbonisation, sustainable travel, waste reduction, and habitats contains its own defined KPIs. These are reviewed on an annual basis to assess progress against targets, identify emerging risks, and refine delivery actions where necessary.

Sustainability performance is overseen through established governance structures, including quarterly Estates and sustainability performance meetings, where key KPIs are audited, reviewed and progress is assessed against institutional targets. Contractor and supply chain performance is managed through formal contract management processes, including regular review meetings and engagement through the Net Positive Futures



framework. Sustainability and climate requirements are embedded within all procurement activity, ensuring compliance with the university's Procurement Policy and mandatory tender conditions.

A consolidated view of sustainability and carbon performance is reported annually through the Sustainability Report and the Financial Annual Report, which are presented to the Board and governing body. This is supported by regular reporting to senior leadership through established internal committees, ensuring that performance against carbon targets is embedded within strategic decision-making processes.

External assurance is provided through recognised third-party certification schemes, and audits including EcoCampus, alongside independent oversight by the Audit and Risk Committee. These mechanisms provide additional scrutiny of data quality, compliance, and reporting transparency. Where appropriate, external benchmarking and verification are also used to strengthen confidence in reported performance and support continuous improvement.

Collectively, these mechanisms provide an integrated system for monitoring performance across Scopes 1, 2 and 3, ensuring that progress towards carbon neutrality by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050 is consistently tracked, independently assured, and transparently reported. This framework supports early identification of underperformance, enables evidence-based decision-making, and ensures clear accountability across all levels of the institution.

8. Conclusion

This Decarbonisation Plan sets the direction for the University of Suffolk's next phase of decarbonisation, moving from foundational progress into sustained delivery and long-term transformation. The focus now is on implementation, ensuring that planned interventions are delivered effectively, investment is aligned to strategic priorities, and performance is consistently monitored and improved over time.

The University recognises that the pathway to net zero will continue to evolve. Advances in technology, changes in policy, and the expansion of Scope 3 data will all shape how this plan is delivered in practice. Maintaining flexibility within a clear strategic framework will be essential to ensure that progress remains both credible and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

As a civic university, our role extends beyond the management of our own estate. Through partnership, research, and engagement, we will contribute to wider regional and sector-wide decarbonisation efforts, supporting collective progress towards a low-carbon future.

This plan therefore represents not an end point, but a structured commitment to action, accountability, and continuous improvement over the years ahead.