SCOTTISH COLLEGES' STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

In 2015, world leaders gathered in Paris and made a historic agreement to tackle climate change, which came to be known as the Paris Agreement, or COP21. Its central aim was to hold any increase in global average temperatures to well below 2ºC, and this set a new course for collaborative global effort on climate change.

Responding directly to stark warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Scottish Government declared a climate emergency in 2019, and pledged to speed up efforts to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Since then, Scotland's colleges and their boards have responded at individual institutional level by addressing a range of environmental issues.

Now, as Scotland looks forward to hosting the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021 (postponed from November 2020 owing to Covid-19), colleges have come together to establish and commit collaboratively to delivering on the following set of 10 key actions.

FEBRUARY 2021

10 KEY ACTIONS

Scottish colleges have come together to establish and commit collaboratively to delivering on the following set of key actions.

1. Support Scotland's efforts to achieve net-zero climate emissions by 2045 or earlier if possible, with Scotland's colleges aiming to achieve net-zero by 2040 or earlier.
2. Embed environmental sustainability in our institutional strategies and set measurable targets.
3. Address the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in our strategies.
4. Share best practice within and beyond the college/university sector.
5. Deploy our expertise and experience to combat climate change.
6. Contribute to public debate on climate change and use the power of our example to encourage others.
7. Work with Scottish industry, employers, public sector bodies and others to improve working practices and find practical solutions to climate change and to make our planet safe for future generations.
8. Encourage, where appropriate, colleges to adopt the UK HE/FE Climate Commission's 'Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges'.
9. Each college will publish action plans to address on-campus and supply chain emissions, setting out what steps they will take over a five-year horizon and beyond where possible, and what they aim to achieve to address the climate emergency.
10. Educate staff, students, employers and communities on the impact their daily lives and working practices have on the environment/climate. While working with our partners, local employers and communities to ensure everyone is aware of their personal responsibility to our planet.

OUR COMMITMENT

Scotland's college board chairs and principals recognise the urgency and extent of the climate emergency. We are committed to tackling the challenges it presents by working with staff and students, and with the Scottish Government and stakeholders, to ensure that colleges contribute to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions, and a more sustainable future for Scotland. We are committed to the Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges (Annex A)

Colleges are unique in being well placed to influence local communities. We are civic anchor points, bringing communities together by providing local hubs for people to meet and offering campus amenities that are affordable for the people in the local area. Colleges will have an important role in helping local communities to adapt to climate change, and to build their resilience around its impact.

We have a long established and successful track record in social inclusion and widening access to education. Colleges support individuals of all ages and backgrounds to gain skills and qualifications, helping the most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market – people who may not otherwise have opportunities to learn about and engage with environmental sustainability.

We will equip our students and wider communities with expertise and life skills which are essential to tackling climate change. Our students are at the heart of all that we do, and they are well placed to demonstrate our commitment to educating a next generation of leaders with knowledge and understanding of climate change issues. We are committed to working in partnership with student associations as part of the wider efforts to tackle the climate emergency on campus, as well as connecting student and staff mental health and wellbeing to our environmental work and climate change actions. Colleges are instrumental in making the link between the wellbeing of whole-college and wider communities, the environment, and climate change actions.

Our colleges play an important role in supporting lifelong learning, by providing flexible learning pathways and have the potential to reach deep into their local communities and stimulate positive change. This has never been more necessary. Across the full range of academic disciplines, Scotland's colleges have the capacity to find practical solutions to climate change.

Sustainability, including climate change is already being embedded within curricular teaching throughout Scotland's colleges. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals will be used to continue to support each college's vision to widen access to quality education, whilst also helping to encourage economic growth and reduce poverty.

To enhance professional learning in all areas of sustainability we will continue to work in partnership with expert local, national, and global organisations. We support staff to undertake their professional responsibilities, including vital industrial upskilling, and by utilising college staff's collective expertise we will allow for the Sustainable Development Goals to be further embedded in all taught areas. This will require a greater understanding of how to engage students in the importance of sustainability regardless of course subject or study mode.

Scotland's colleges will take a proactive stance on influencing the inclusion of sustainability and climate challenge as an integral part of the core curriculum within all courses. We will collaborate and work with our Awarding Bodies to ensure that focus is

brought to these vital areas for all college students throughout Scotland. This may be through the further creation of specialist units based on sustainability and through clearer focus on appropriate elements within subject based units. This will allow for dedicated time to explore and learn about a variety of environmental and human issues that will affect them as individuals, their local communities as well as the world that we all call home.

The infrastructure and physical operation of Scotland's college estates already address sustainability, and we will continue to improve and innovate in how we operate, from the way in which our buildings function, to our supply chains, and fleet. This is already making a significant contribution to clean transport, and the transition to zero emission vehicles. We are committed to creating greener, more sustainable learning environments by ensuring our college estate and investment in it is a high priority, recognising that the buildings students are educated in must be a focus of our efforts.

We will set an example by committing to meaningful emission-reduction targets, by reducing waste and maximising recycling and by addressing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in our institutional strategies. We will take a collaborative approach to addressing these challenges, working with each other, and with our partners and stakeholders, to cut our emissions further, reduce waste and promote positive behaviours in relation to environmental sustainability across our college and wider communities.

College Development Network (CDN) has established a dedicated group, the Climate Emergency Expert Group, which will allow us to work together and to go further and faster in tackling the climate emergency, while supporting the sector in delivering against these action statements. We are committed to applying those mechanisms for the benefit of all. We also explicitly endorse the determination which the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament have shown.

All policy related issues will be taken forward by Colleges Scotland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go to members of the college Climate Emergency Expert Group, college colleagues and stakeholders who have developed this document.

Special thanks to: APUC, EAUC, Dundee and Angus College, NUS Scotland, and West Lothian College.

CDN is the national agency in Scotland that supports skills and sector development across colleges and vocational learning. Our mission is to support the college and skills system in enhancing success for students, their wider communities, and regional economies. We do that by supporting the learning workforce; promoting leadership development; developing collaborative research programmes; and leading and growing the role and impact of the Climate Emergency Expert Group.

Colleges Scotland is the collective voice for the college sector in Scotland, representing its interests and ensuring that colleges are at the heart of a word class education sector that is recognised, valued and available to all. Colleges Scotland, as the membership body, represents all 26 colleges in Scotland.

ESP is a collaboration of Scotland's colleges and industry partners established to increase Scotland's capability and capacity to deliver the right skills for the energy, engineering and construction sectors to meet industry demand. As a college sector agency, ESP works across Scotland's colleges to demonstrate a responsiveness and collective capability to provide the skills required by industry.

Annex A

Climate action roadmap for FE colleges

Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education | Nous Group

LAST UPDATED 25 JUNE 2020

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

eauc The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education

Distinction and Diversity in Higher Education GuildHE

Universities UK

nous Supporter of the Climate Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change and ecological destruction are some of the biggest challenges of our time. Colleges, like all institutions, have a responsibility to address them; and to meet the UK government's target to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

There is currently a great deal of variation in how colleges are responding to the climate crisis. Some are leaders in this area, with clear sustainability strategies. Others are approaching the issue for the first time. All have a significant opportunity, to build upon the energy of their students and their close ties to their local communities to reduce their environmental impact in innovative ways.

The Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education was established in November 2019. Its goal is to develop a strategic, sector-wide approach to tackle the climate emergency. The Commission engaged Nous Group (a management consulting firm specialising in education) to support them to develop a 'road map' for further education colleges to reach the net zero target.

This roadmap is based on a range of existing materials, including the EAUC's 'SORTED: Guide to Sustainability in Further Education', the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, the Climate Emergency Framework, and past winners of the Green Gown and AoC Beacon Awards, among others. It is also based on a workshop with FE college leaders and students, held in June 2020.

HOW TO USE THIS ROADMAP

- **The roadmap includes three 'levels'** of colleges' approaches to sustainability, organised by different levels of maturity:
  - **Emerging**: colleges just beginning to address sustainability
  - **Established:** colleges with an established approach to sustainability and structures in place to support it
  - **Leading:** colleges which are models to others on sustainability

- **Each 'level' contains a series of initiatives** colleges can implement to reach net zero emissions and improve their environmental impact.

  These **initiatives are categorised into the same categories as the EAUC's 'Sustainability Leadership Scorecard'**:
  - Leadership and Governance;
  - Learning, Teaching, and Research;
  - Estates and Operations; and
  - Partnerships and Engagement.

  We have also added another category, data collection.

- The roadmap is intended **to be used by college Principals and their leadership teams, students, and other members of the college community**. Although many of the initiatives require executive action or investment, **students should be seen as partners in developing and implementing the college's approach to sustainability**. The roadmap can also be shared by the college with other stakeholders – such as local authorities, or businesses – to explain their approach to reach net zero emissions.

- **This roadmap shows just ONE possible path to reach net zero emissions.** Because it is intended for the whole sector, it does not take into account the range of contexts colleges operate in and different opportunities. Every college's journey will look different. We encourage you to use this roadmap as a 'starter for ten' as you begin to develop your own roadmap to net zero.

- Each **initiative has both a 'cost' and 'time' rating**. Because every college is different, it is not possible to estimate this precisely. Instead, the ratings should give a sense of whether the cost and time is high/medium/low.

  As a general guide, we would estimate the following:

COST	EXPLANATION	TIME	EXPLANATION
● ○ ○	Main cost is staff time	● ○ ○	<6 months
● ● ○	Additional costs (e.g. £10-50k) and/or substantial staff time	● ● ○	6 months – 1.5 years
● ● ●	Additional costs (e.g. >£1m) and/or very substantial staff time	● ● ●	+1.5 years

- There are **many more resources** available to assist colleges in sustainability. Some of these are linked throughout this document, while others are available with the EAUC, Students Organising for Sustainability, and others. Colleges looking for inspiration should look to awards like the Green Gown and AoC Beacon, to learn from and share good practice across the sector.

KEY WORDS AND DEFINITIONS

The following table contains definitions for some of the key words used in this document

KEY WORD	DEFINITION
Climate change	Changes in the large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures. For more information on climate change and what causes it, visit the Met Office web page.
Climate emergency	The situation in which urgent action is needed to reduce or halt climate change to avoid catastrophic environmental damage, and its effects on people and communities.
Carbon footprint	The amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of an individual, organisation, or community. 'Carbon' is used as a shorthand to also include other green house gases (e.g. methane and nitrous oxide) which cause climate change.
Net zero	Achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and taken out of the atmosphere.
Biodiversity	The variety of life on Earth in all its forms and interactions. Biodiversity on earth is being lost at an alarming rate. This loss of species and natural systems threatens the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe.
Environmental sustainability	Maintaining or 'sustaining' the environment by protecting natural resources and preventing damage through climate change.
Scope 1, 2, and 3	Scope 1, 2, and 3 are different categories of emissions. Scope 1 emissions are those directly under a college's control (e.g. from cars owned by the college). Scope 2 are indirect emissions (meaning the college does not directly control them) from electricity purchased by the college. Scope 3 emissions are all other indirect emissions from activities of the college, including travel to and from college, emissions from waste and water, and emissions from investments. Scope 3 is usually the largest category of emissions.

A climate action roadmap for FE colleges

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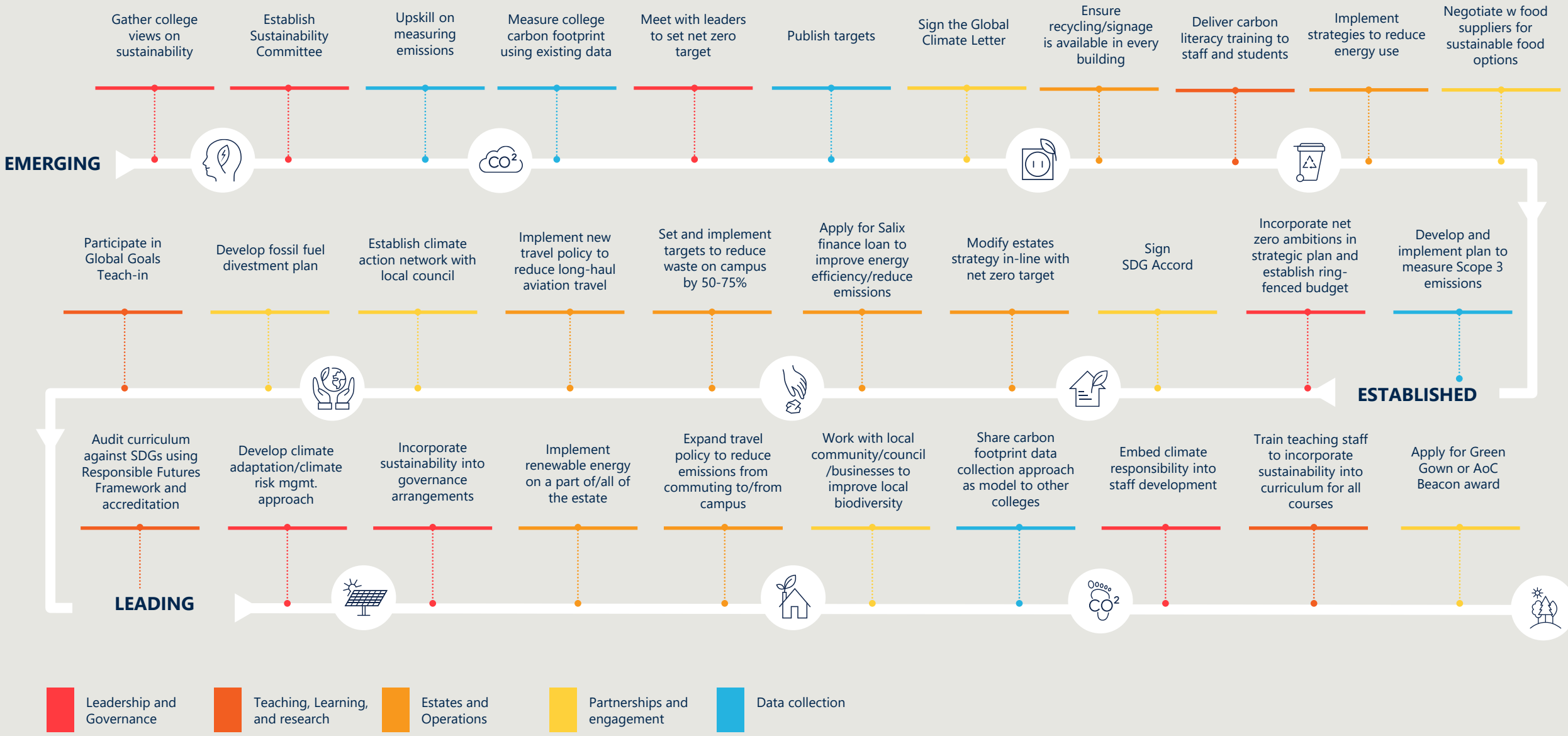
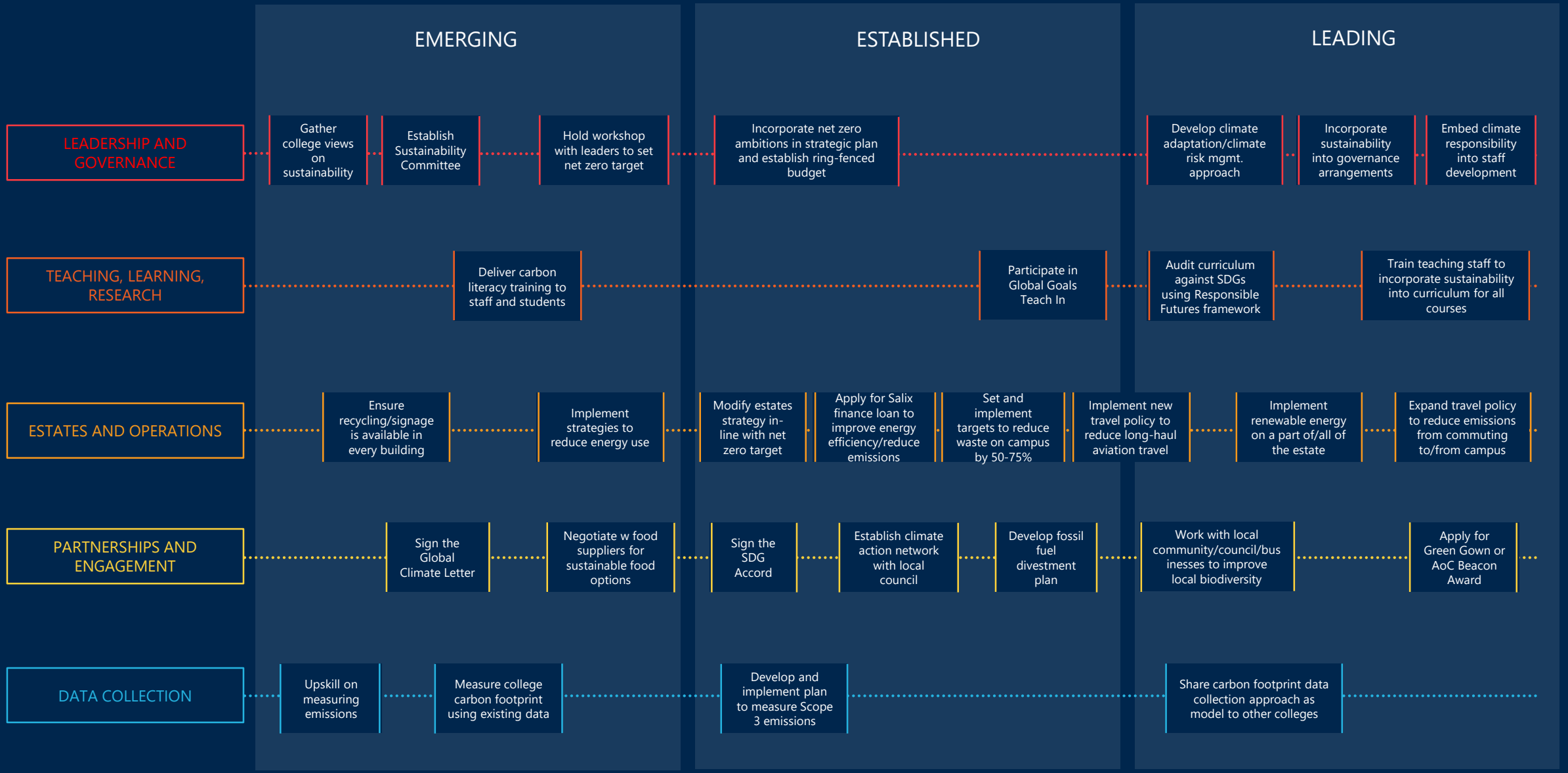
FE CLIMATE ACTION ROADMAP



CLIMATE ACTION ROADMAP ACTIVITIES BY AREA



Emerging

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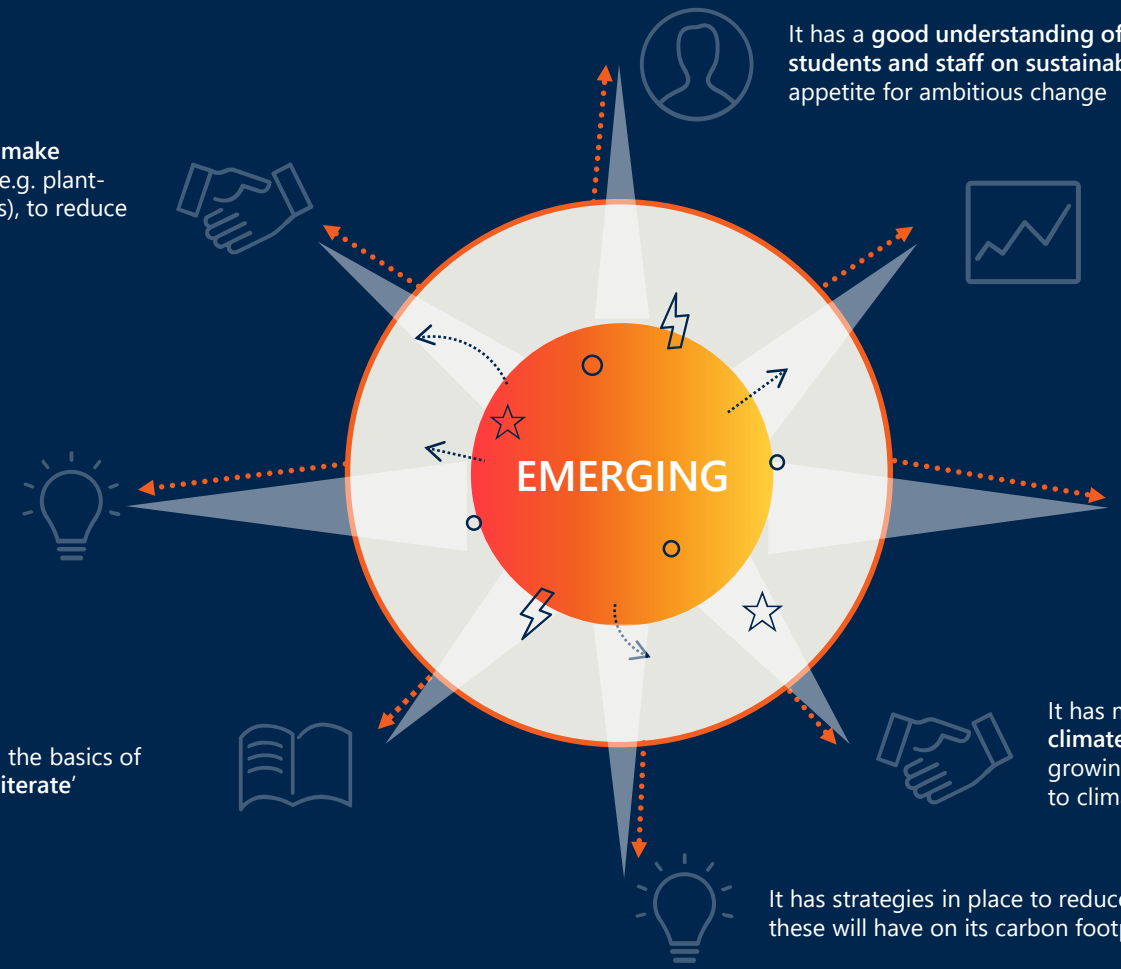
WHAT DOES AN ‘EMERGING’ COLLEGE LOOK LIKE?



It has a **good understanding of the views of its students and staff on sustainability** and their appetite for ambitious change

Understands the different types of GHG emissions and what contributes to its carbon footprint

Has a good (if not perfect) **understanding of its current carbon footprint, at least from Scope 1 and Scope 2** emissions.

It **has a net zero target** (e.g. by 2050) and 2-3 interim targets (e.g. 80% reduction by 2040).

It has made a **public statement recognising the climate emergency** and played its part adding to the growing pressure on government to act in response to climate change

It has strategies in place to reduce energy use and understands what impact these will have on its carbon footprint

Its students and staff understand the basics of climate change and are ‘**carbon literate**’

It is **possible to recycle** in every building

It is **possible for students and staff to make sustainable food choices on campus** (e.g. plant-based food, food with fewer food miles), to reduce their personal environmental impact

EMERGING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (1)

Leadership and Governance

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
Gather college's views on climate change and sustainability. • Develop and distribute a short online survey to students and staff to gather their views on sustainability and assess their ambition for action in the college. • Include questions like 'how important is sustainability for you?', and 'in what ways would you like to see the college respond to climate change?'	Understanding the appetite for action to combat climate change among the college community will help to build the case for change	 Staff time is involved in designing, distributing, and analysing the survey	 ~2 months
Establish a Sustainability Committee/Group: • Establish a group of roughly 10 people who meet regularly, with responsibility for delivering sustainability initiatives. • The group should include students and staff, including a member of the college's leadership team	This group will give a face to, and help to drive forward the sustainability agenda in the college. Including a member of the leadership team will ensure the group has clout. Including students will make sure it is representative of the whole community.	 Only cost is staff time involved in the committee	 ~1 month
Meet with college leaders to set net-zero targets and sustainability ambitions • Hold meeting/workshop with Sustainability Committee, senior leadership team, and governors to discuss level of ambition for net zero and sustainability targets • Set net zero target (e.g. 2050, or more ambitious and earlier?) • Set interim targets (e.g. 50% reduction by 2030)	College leaders will ultimately be responsible for delivering on these targets, so it is important they are involved in setting them. Having an explicit discussion about the level of ambition, and how quickly the college can achieve net zero, will help to ensure initiatives are practical and appropriate to the college's context.	 Staff time being involved in the workshop	 ~1 month (including preparation and holding the meeting)
Publish targets • Based on the results of the workshop, share the college's net zero target and interim targets (e.g. net zero by 2040, 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025) with the wider college community • Publish targets on college website	Publishing targets signals the college's sustainability ambitions to the whole community, including partners and external stakeholders. It should also help to hold the college to account.	 Staff time (e.g. marketing/communications team/individual)	 ~1 week (working between sustainability committee and communications person/team)

EMERGING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (2)

Data collection

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
Upskill on measuring emissions/carbon footprint • Sustainability team and others learn about how to measure carbon footprint, including Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. • Use resources like Greenhouse Gas Protocol guidance, and guidance from EAUC on measuring Scope 3 emissions in HEI context. • Connect with other colleges (e.g. leading colleges) to learn from others in the sector • Sustainability committee share their knowledge with others	Measuring an institution's carbon footprint can be tricky. Take the time to first learn how to do this, drawing on external resources. Educating others will help reporting to be more effective	 Staff time to upskill and share resources	 ~1 month
Measure college carbon footprint using existing data • Sustainability team collect available data to measure College's carbon footprint. • Aim to measure Scope 1 and Scope 2. Try to estimate Scope 3, if possible • Use freely available existing tool to measure and project emissions, such as Carbon Footprint and Project Register Tool.	Even if the college has patchy data, it is important to measure it current carbon footprint as accurately as possible, to establish a baseline and inform your net zero targets. This should also reveal gaps in the college's current data collection.	 Staff time involved in collecting data/measuring	 ~2-3 months

Teaching, learning, and research

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
Deliver carbon literacy training to all staff and students • Design and deliver 1-day carbon literacy training to all staff and students with support from the Carbon Literacy Project (which offers a day's worth of training on climate change, carbon footprints, and other environmental issues)	The college community must have a good understanding of climate change, what causes it, and how it is likely to affect them if they are to take action in response. The Carbon Literacy project delivers this foundational understanding and shows individuals actions they can take to reduce their individual environmental impact.	 There is a cost involved in the Carbon Literacy Project certifying/delivering training for the college. For more information contact info@carbonliteracy.com	 ~2 months to arrange and then deliver training

EMERGING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (3)

Estates and Operations

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Implement strategies to reduce energy use • Identify opportunities to *reduce* energy use (e.g. by doing an energy walk-around, different heating and cooling timers, campaigning to switch-off lights). • Draw on free and publicly available resources/guidance, such as the Carbon Trust's guide to energy saving • Report to the college community how much energy has been saved and the impact on the college's carbon footprint	There are likely to be several, low or no-cost initiatives the college can implement to reduce its energy use before it begins to explore higher cost options to increase energy efficiency and eventually explore renewable energy. Focusing on these 'quick wins' first will reduce the college's carbon footprint straight away and build momentum for future initiatives.	 Staff time involved in designing and implementing initiatives	 It may take longer than 6 months to design and implement these initiatives and report on their results
Ensure recycling, food waste, and signage is available in every college building • Check recycling bins and food waste bins (where possible) are available in every college building with signs showing people how to recycle/dispose of food waste	Having the right bins available and guidance for what to put in them will help to divert more of the college's waste away from landfill, reducing emissions from landfill and the pollution the college creates. It will also educate students about recycling and encourage positive behaviour towards waste.	 Cost of additional bins, collection points (if needed) and signs	 ~2 months

Partnerships and Engagement

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Negotiate with campus food suppliers to supply sustainable food options • Understand how sustainable are the food options on your campus (consider number of vegetarian/vegan options available, food miles, and seasonality) • Develop a set of criteria for more sustainable food. Check for resources and information on Sustain. • Procurement team and sustainability committee negotiate with food suppliers to ensure more sustainable options are available, based on criteria	A significant proportion of carbon emissions come from food we produce, eat, and waste; and some foods – like beef, lamb, cheese, and chocolate[1] – have higher carbon footprints than others. Other factors, like how far away food comes from and whether it is in season, also affect its environmental impact. Offering sustainable food options allows students and staff the choice to reduce their personal environmental impact and contributes to positive behaviour change across the college.	 Cost should be borne by the supplier and consumers	 3-6 months to negotiate change and implement

(1) Poore, J., & Nemecek, T. (2018). Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. Science, 360(6392), 987-992

EMERGING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (4)

Partnerships and Engagement

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Sign the Global Climate Letter • College Principal sign the Global Climate Letter on behalf of the college – a letter from universities declaring a climate emergency, in recognition of the drastic societal changes that must occur to respond to climate change	Demonstrate the college's commitment to climate action and increase the growing pressure on governments to act in response to climate change. The letter is linked to the SDG Accord, and recognises the important role of education in responding to climate change.	 No cost	

Established

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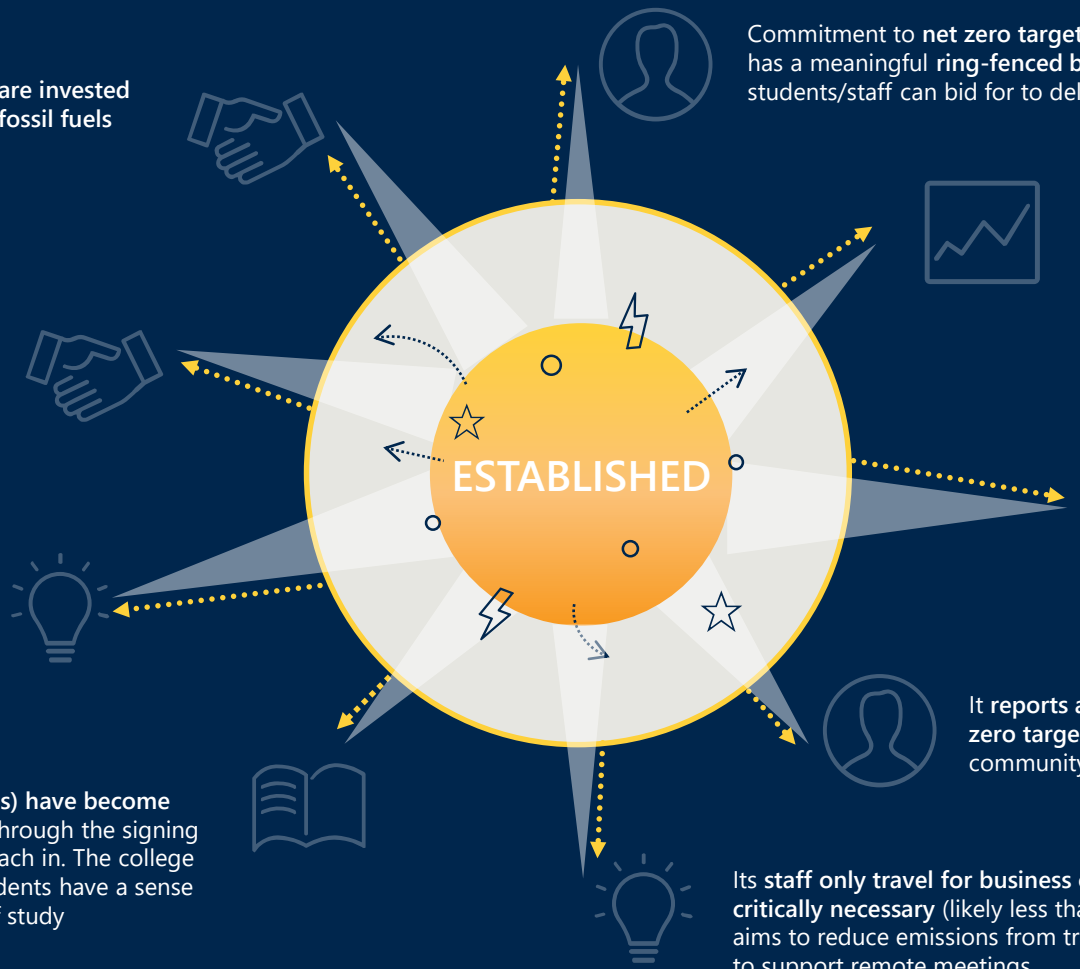
WHAT DOES AN ‘ESTABLISHED’ COLLEGE LOOK LIKE?



Commitment to **net zero target/sustainability is reflected in strategic plan** and it has a meaningful **ring-fenced budget** to deliver on it (which includes funds students/staff can bid for to deliver sustainability projects)

Has a **strong and precise idea of its carbon footprint**, inclu**ding its Scope 3 emissions**, and ongoing mechanisms in place to collect the data to measure it

It has undertaken/is currently undertaking an **ambitious project to reduce emissions from its buildings with the help of a Salix Finance loan**

It **reports annually on its progress on meeting its net zero targets** and interim targets, to the college community and the public

Its **staff only travel for business on long-haul airplane flights when it is critically necessary** (likely less than once a year), under a travel policy that aims to reduce emissions from travel. It has **invested in video-conferencing** to support remote meetings

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become ‘part of the conversation’ at the college**, through the signing of the SDG Accord and the Global Goals teach in. The college community are aware of the SDGs and students have a sense of how they might apply to their subject of study

Its **10-year estates strategy reflects its commitment to its net zero targets**, including an ambition to optimise the use of the estate (rather than build new buildings), refurbish buildings to improve their efficiency, and applying BREEAM standards to new buildings

It has established relationships with the local community and council with a **shared aim to combat climate change locally**

It **understands what parts of it investment portfolio are invested in fossil fuel companies**. It has a **plan to divest from fossil fuels** and achieve a green investment portfolio

ESTABLISHED COLLEGES INITIATIVES (1)

Leadership and Governance

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Incorporate environmental ambitions into strategic plan and establish ring-fenced budget • At the next review of the college's institutional strategy/strategic plan, revise the strategy in-line with the college's environmental targets • Based on the college's net-zero target, establish a ring-fenced budget to implement strategies to reduce the college's carbon footprint and improve its environmental impact • Include a part of this budget that students/staff can bid for to fund specific sustainability projects (with measurable environmental impact)	There is a risk that environmental ambitions are superseded by other strategic goals if they are not incorporated into the strategy. Strategies to reduce the college's carbon footprint through energy reduction/efficiency/renewables may bring cost savings to the college, but also require an up-front investment. Ring-fencing a budget will protect the funds needed to implement these initiatives	 This cost will depend on how much of your budget/surplus you are prepared to dedicate to sustainability. This should match your level of ambition.	 ~3-6 months to adjust strategy and negotiate budget
Establish reporting schedule against net zero targets • Establish a schedule (likely annual, but possibly more frequently) to report publicly on the college's progress in reducing its carbon footprint/progress to net zero • Reporting does not have to be complex – a simple, up-to-date page on the college's website is enough to have an impact	Establishing a rhythm of reporting will help to hold the college to account on reaching its environmental targets and also advertise its successes to the community/wider sector	 Low cost if the college continues to measure its carbon footprint on an ongoing basis	N/A - ongoing

Data collection

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Develop and implement plan to measure Scope 3 emissions • Develop plan to collect data on/estimate Scope 3 emissions • Use resources like Greenhouse Gas Protocol guidance, and guidance from EAUC on measuring Scope 3 emissions in HEI context.	The majority of a college's emissions will be in Scope 3 – emissions controlled by others and produced by things the college does/consumes (e.g. goods and services, travel, waste disposal, investments, staff and student commuting). It is not possible to achieve net zero without measuring Scope 3 emissions and finding opportunities to reduce them	 Cost involved in additional data collection, management, and reporting. Up-front investment of time to fairly estimate Scope 3 emissions.	 This could take time, depending on the quality of the college's data and time taken to establish a baseline

ESTABLISHED COLLEGES INITIATIVES (2)

Teaching, Learning, and Research

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Participate in the Global Goals Teach In • Participate in the Global Goals Teach In: an annual week-long campaign delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability that asks college teachers (and university lecturers) to embed the sustainable development goals into their teaching for a week	This week-long exercise will increase students' understanding of sustainable development. It will also pave the way for sustainability being embedded across the curriculum. This is a good opportunity to engage with Students Organising for Sustainability, which are a leading voice on incorporating the SDGs into college and university education.	 No additional teaching cost	 Some time needed for teachers to upskill on the SDGs
Audit college curriculum against the SDGs • Assemble a team of teaching staff from across the college to audit the college's curriculum against the Sustainable Development goals	Understanding where the sustainability goals are already reflected in the curriculum – and what the gaps and opportunities are – is the first step towards offering students an educational offer informed by the SDGs	 More substantial staff time commitment	 Audit is likely to be time-consuming, depending on college's size

Estates and operations

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Apply for a Salix Finance loan for financial support to improve energy efficiency on the estate • Salix Finance provides interest-free Government funding (£842m) to the public sector to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and lower emissions. • It has helped several colleges - e.g. Lincoln College Group loaned £704,849 to substantially reduce carbon emissions by completing LED lighting upgrades across campuses (see case study here) • Exploring options to increase *efficiency* is based on the assumption the college has already tried to *reduce* its energy use	Salix finance provides the resources to implement ambitious energy efficiency and carbon reduction campaigns that can be paid back over time with money saved on electricity costs. Over 100 different energy-efficiency technologies are available for Salix interest-free financing	 Cost of developing the loan application and paying back overtime (depending on gap between cash saved from energy efficiency and loan)	 ~1 month to make application/business case and pay-back period up to 5 years

ESTABLISHED COLLEGES INITIATIVES (3)

Estates and operations

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Set and implement target to reduce waste in the college by 50-75% • Collect data on the college's use and waste of plastic and paper to develop strategy to reduce waste. • Consider the waste hierarchy: prevention, reusing, recycling, disposal • Set targets to reduce waste; proportion of products re-used; proportion of products recycled; and proportion of products diverted from landfill • Aim to reduce waste on campus by 50-75%	Everything the college consumes has an environmental impact, creates greenhouse gases in production, and uses finite natural resources. As waste breaks down in landfill it produces gases that play a part in climate change. Reducing the college's consumption of materials is the first step to reduce this impact, followed by reusing materials as much as possible, and avoiding sending waste to landfill.	 Costs associated with strategies to reduce waste	 Time taken to introduce new strategies to reduce waste and to encourage behaviour change
Modify estates strategy in-line with net zero targets • Sustainability committee work with estates director/estates team to modify the college's estates plan in-line with net zero targets. • This may include introducing space optimisation measures to avoid building new buildings; implementing refurbishment measures to improve energy/water/waste efficiency; making sure new buildings are BREEAM standard 'excellent'	Optimising the college's estate (rather than building new buildings) and improving the efficiency of existing buildings through refurbishment is a powerful way to reduce the college's carbon footprint. Incorporating sustainability into the estates strategy will decisions about the future of the estate and investment take into account the college's net zero targets	 Optimising space on campus can save cost; but sustainable refurbishment requires investment.	
Implement new travel policy to reduce emissions from long-haul travel • Implement new travel policy that aims to reduce long-haul airplane travel and conduct long-distance business virtually by default • Invest in video-conferencing facility for all staff and students (e.g. Zoom licenses) if this has not happened already • For long-haul business travel that must go ahead, managers to approve it using a framework like that developed by the Tyndall Centre (including encouraging train/bus travel)	Long-haul airplane travel drives up the college's Scope 3 emissions significantly, but it can often be avoided by meeting over video-conference, or if travel is critical, taking lower-carbon modes of travel like the train.	 Cost saving from less and cheaper travel	 The college may pilot the new policy in one area first before expanding it to the whole college

ESTABLISHED COLLEGES INITIATIVES (4)

Partnerships and Engagement

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Sign the SDG Accord • College Principal sign the SDG Accord on behalf of the College • Identify staff member (e.g. member of Sustainability Committee) to be responsible for reporting (2020 reporting template available here)	The SDG Accord recognises the critical role of education in advancing the SDGs. Institutions that sign make a commitment to embed the goals in teaching, learning, research, and operations. The SDG Accord provides a framework for action on sustainability throughout the college.	 Only cost is staff time in reporting	
Establish climate action network with local council • Contact local council/local community organisations to establish a local climate action network, which can implement initiatives across the region to combat climate change/OR join existing network that already exists • Draw on resources from the Place-Based Climate Action Network and learn from other established networks	Colleges can increase their impact by partnering with local councils in their region and working with local communities (e.g. implementing bike lanes throughout a city; organising direct-from-farm vegetable schemes)	 Low cost to establish network	 Less than 6 months to establish network; implementing initiatives will take longer
Develop fossil fuels divestment plan • Review the college's investment portfolio to check whether it has any direct investments in fossil fuels • Contact the college's pension fund for advice on whether pensions are invested in fossil fuels • Develop plan to divest from fossil fuels over 3-5 year period/or update responsible investment policy	The college's investments form part of its Scope 3 emissions. Developing a plan to develop a green investment portfolio/green pensions is a step towards net zero. The college would also join the growing divestment movement, which aims to divert funds away from fossil fuel companies and encourage them to transform their business models.	 Cost involved in implementing divestment plan, less in developing plan	 How long the plan takes to develop and implement will depend on the complexity of the college's finances/the level of current investment in fossil fuels

Leading

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WHAT DOES A ‘LEADING’ COLLEGE LOOK LIKE?

Sustainability is at the heart of its decision-making and its **leaders are actively working towards delivering its net zero target. Sustainability is a part of induction, CPD, and job descriptions** – making it integral to the college’s workforce.

It has **delivered on its interim carbon emissions reduction targets** (e.g. 30% reduction by 2023; 40% reduction by 2025)

Sustainability is a part of every course at the college, integrated into the curriculum. It is accredited with Responsible Futures.

It is **powered by majority renewable energy sources** and it has radically reduced the emissions produced by energy used on campus

Students and staff travel to the college in low-carbon ways – they walk, ride bikes, take public transport, and participate in car-sharing schemes

The **campus and the region surrounding it are richly biodiverse**, with a variety of habitats, including wild spaces

It has a **plan in place to adapt to and mitigate climate-related risk** (e.g. risk from flooding on the estate)

All **food consumed on campus is sustainable**, mainly plant-based, and locally and ethically sourced

The college is **well known for its performance on sustainability** (through awards like the Green Gown and the AoC Beacon Awards) and attracts students for this reason

The college is a model to other colleges seeking to combat climate change and it **shares resources and lessons (e.g. data collection methodology) with others in the sector**

LEADING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (1)

Leadership and Governance

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Incorporate sustainability into all governance arrangements • Make clear leaders' accountability for delivering on sustainability agenda • Make the sustainability agenda a part of executive group and governing board arrangements – e.g. a standing agenda item is how the college is delivering on its net zero target/environmental objectives.	Being explicit about leaders' accountability for sustainability in the college will future-proof the college against a change in leadership or change in priorities. Incorporating sustainability into key governance meetings will ensure the issue and progress on targets is front of mind for these groups	 Low cost	N/A - ongoing
Develop climate change adaptation/risk strategy • Assess the risks of climate change to the college (e.g. heatwaves, flooding) and incorporate these risk explicitly into the college's risk management plan • Draw on guidance developed by the EAUC and AECOM on how universities and colleges should adapt to a changing climate	The effects of climate change – particularly severe weather events like flooding and heatwaves – pose threats to almost everything colleges do (teaching, recruitment, their supply chains, infrastructure). Colleges should incorporate these risks into their normal risk management approaches.	 There may be costs involved in additional risk management approaches/mitigations	 How long this takes may depend on the complexity of climate-related risk to the college (e.g. susceptibility to floods)
Incorporate climate responsibility and sustainability into staff development • Work with college HR team/representative to incorporate climate responsibility and sustainability into staff development practices, including induction, CPD, and possibly promotion and award structures • Consider incorporating sustainability as a standard item on job descriptions – for example, knowledge about and commitment to the SDGs	Incorporating sustainability into the college's staff development practices is an opportunity to make it a key part of the workforce. It will also help teaching staff to become better teachers of sustainability and ensure that sustainability initiatives in the college are more likely to 'stick'	 Staff time associated with updating standard induction and other procedures	 Changes to staff development practices and the workforce will take some time, as people adapt. Changes to pay and reward structures, for example, require careful change management.

LEADING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (2)

Data collection

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Share data collection methodology with other colleges • Share data collection methodology – particularly approach to measuring Scope 3 emissions – with other colleges in the 'emerging' or 'established' phases. E.g. share spreadsheets/examples of data-collection processes.	Sharing this methodology as a model to other colleges will help them to measure their own carbon footprints more accurately, particularly more complex aspects like Scope 3 emissions	 Very low cost.	 Some time may be needed in explaining the methodology to other colleges (e.g. a webinar)

Teaching, Learning, and Research

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Audit college curriculum against the SDGs using Responsible Futures Framework and accreditation • Assemble a team of teaching staff and students from across the college to audit the college's curriculum against the Sustainable Development goals • Engage with Responsible Futures, run by Students Organising for Sustainability, to conduct the curriculum audit, drawing on the Responsible Futures Criteria (although note that these expand beyond just teaching and learning) • Gain accreditation with Responsible Futures	Understanding where the sustainability goals are already reflected in the curriculum – and what the gaps and opportunities are – is the first step towards offering students an educational offer informed by the SDGs Responsible Futures offers a comprehensive approach to reviewing the college's teaching and operations against the SDGs, and can give the college accreditation. This signals to the college's community and external stakeholders how seriously it takes sustainable development. Also, it gives students an opportunity to be closely involved in sustainability at the college.	 More substantial staff time commitment Cost of first-year accreditation with Responsible futures is £1,600.	 Audit is likely to be time-consuming, depending on college's size

LEADING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (3)

Teaching, Learning, and Research

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Train all teaching staff in climate change/environmental issues and support them to incorporate the SDGs into the curriculum • Train teaching staff in climate change and the SDGs and run a short programme supporting them to incorporate sustainability into their curricula • Draw on data collected in the audit of the curriculum against the SDGs • Draw on resources such as Learning for Sustainability Scotland's College Learning for Sustainability Champions programme, a free 10-week programme in which a 'champion' from each department learns how to embed sustainability in their curriculum, and shares the lessons with other staff and students. • Draw on resources such as College Education for Sustainable Development Workbooks, which provide guidance on how to incorporate sustainability into specific subjects, like hairdressing, or construction	Incorporating sustainability *into* students' core curriculums will help them to understand its importance and how sustainability is connected to almost everything we do. This is likely to be more meaningful and enduring than one-off modules on issues like climate change. Teaching staff are best placed to incorporate sustainability into their curriculum – for example, in methods of sustainable construction, or sustainable materials – and should be given the license to think creatively about how to educate students in these issues.	● ● ○ Some cost associated with training all teaching staff and time taken for those staff to modify curriculums	● ● ● Time taken to modify curriculum – it may take 18 months or more to incorporate sustainability into every course's curriculum

Estates and operations

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Implement renewable energy on a part of/all of the Estate • Switch to green electricity tariff – check they are a REGO certified providers • Consider project to implement on-site renewable generation (e.g. University of Lancaster's wind turbine generates 15% of campus electricity) • Consider direct power purchase agreement of renewable energy, potentially in partnership with other colleges (e.g. 20 universities, including Newcastle, Exeter, and Aberystwyth cut £50m deal in 2019 for 10 years of direct wind energy)	Renewable energy (such as solar, wind, hydro, and biomass energy) produce no green house gas emissions and in some cases can reduce air pollution. Renewable electricity is also often cheaper than electricity from fossil fuels, particularly on-site renewable generation, which will eventually cover the initial costs of installation. Installing renewable energy will help the college to further reduce its carbon footprint, once it has explored opportunities to reduce its energy use and become more energy efficient.	● ● ● There are costs associated with installation; although renewable energy may offer cost savings	● ● ● Switching the whole college to renewable energy may take more than 1.5 years, depending on its size and the complexity of installation

LEADING COLLEGES INITIATIVES (4)

Estates and operations

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Expand travel policy to reduce emissions from commuting • Set a target to reduce carbon footprint of staff and student travel to and from the college (e.g. 75% reduction) • Implement a range of initiatives to support low-carbon travel (e.g.: shuttle bus from town centre, bike storage, car sharing scheme, bike hire and repair scheme, walk-a-thon, etc)	Colleges can reduce their Scope 3 emissions and work towards their net zero target by reducing emissions from people commuting to and from college. Initiatives like cycling and walking schemes can also help to improve mental health and wellbeing.	 Potential cost associated with subsidising bikes or building additional bike lanes/bike storage in college	 Travel policy will not take long to amend but behaviour change will take time

Partnerships and Engagement

INITIATIVE	WHY DO IT?	HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?	HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?
Partner with local community/council/businesses to improve local biodiversity • Partner with local businesses and draw on local climate action network to implement local biodiversity strategy (e.g. bee highways, re-wilding areas around campus/owned by local communities). • If appropriate, draw on students to implement biodiversity initiatives as learning activities • Draw on guidance produced by EAUC to Biodiversity on Campus	The loss of biodiversity – the variety of natural species on earth – threatens natural ecosystems we depend on for food, water, and protection against climate change. Colleges have a responsibility to protect and foster these natural ecosystems in their natural environments; by partnering with their local community, they can do so over a greater area. Strategies to enhance biodiversity also offer teaching opportunities (e.g. through planting new green spaces).	 Likely to be cost involved in implementing biodiversity initiatives (e.g. planting new wild flower meadow)	 Time taken will vary based on size of the college/level of ambition of biodiversity initiatives
Apply for a Green Gown or AoC Beacon Award • Apply for a Green Gown Award, which recognise exceptional sustainability initiatives in colleges and universities. • AND/OR apply for an AoC Beacon Award, such as the 'Education for Sustainable Development' award, which recognises excellence in embedding the SDGs in all aspects of college teaching, learning, and operations. • Either Sustainability Committee or people involved in specific college sustainability project apply for the award	Applying for a Green Gown Award or an AoC Beacon Award is an opportunity for a leading college to showcase its performance on sustainability – the awards are well known in the UK and increasingly internationally. The award could increase the college's profile and encourage more students to attend, and it also provides an opportunity to learn from other colleges' sustainability projects and performance.	 Staff time involved in applying for the award	 Less than 1 month

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