SRUC Climate Change Action Plan 2025 – 2030

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Section 1: Foreword

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is an institution working hard every day to share knowledge and discover solutions to the some of the world's most wicked challenges, particularly around climate change.

For SRUC to be a leader in this area – as an enterprise university at the heart of the natural economy – we must exceed the expectations of our students, clients, partners, and stakeholders to reduce our own impact on the environment.

To do this, we need a plan. A plan that will set us on course to Net Zero by 2040. A plan that will set us a path to follow while allowing us to seize opportunities, ideas, and innovations as they present themselves.

I'm delighted to introduce the second iteration of our Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). This edition goes far beyond previous plans focussed solely on carbon emissions. And while reducing our carbon emissions are still vital, we need to do more about our holistic impact on the environment.

We need to reduce the energy and water we use. We need to travel less or in a more sustainable way. We need to reuse materials where we can. And where we can't reduce or reuse, we must seek to recycle as much as possible.

These simple tenets are a challenge in an organisation of our size and diversity, but they are easy to remember and can guide us.

Through the Climate Change Action Plan, we will benefit from the positive reputation and financial savings it will create. But, most of all, the actions in the Climate Change Action Plan are simply the right things to do – for ourselves and future generations.

I would like to thank everyone in the SRUC community for helping to develop and deliver the Climate Change Action Plan – particularly the Climate Change Action Plan Group and Campus and Estates Services.

As stated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the time to act is now. This a plan not just for the whole of SRUC but for the whole planet.

Wayne Powell.

Professor Wayne Powell
Principal and Chief Executive
February 2026

Section 2: Introduction

Welcome to the second iteration of our Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) that aligns with SRUC's vision of becoming Scotland's enterprise university at the heart of the sustainable natural economy.

Our first Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) was published in 2020 and detailed seven themes with fifty-nine Climate Change Actions (CCAs) that formed the foundation of our Net Zero journey. We have achieved many of our initial Climate Change Actions (CCAs) but, as part of our continuous improvement, some existing CCAs have been revised and continue inclusion in this edition.

Our revised plan comprises of eight themes and sixty-five Climate Change Action (CCA) objectives, all focused on delivering tangible and measurable reductions in SRUC's impact on climate change. To ensure objectives are effectively implemented and we achieve KPI reduction targets, progress is reviewed on a monthly basis. In addition, to maintain full transparency of our Net Zero journey, we publish an annual Climate Change Action Plan Environmental Report.

Through SRUC's daily work underpinned by strategic science, we share responsibility for generating answers to the challenges that affect millions of people around the world. We achieve this with local-to-global reach, through collaborative partnerships working to create solutions to the challenges of climate change.

Detailed towards the end of this plan, we have included Scope Emission charts and Baseline Consumption and Emissions charts. Whilst our first milestone of a 20% reduction in emissions was delivered, it was achieved predominately through changes to the estate and reduced numbers of livestock. Therefore, it is apparent to be able to contribute significant reductions to our emissions throughout the next five years of this plan we must adapt our buildings and energy systems.

Our emission reductions will contribute to the Scottish Government's Climate Change ambitions and Scotland adopting the principles of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) **THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development**.

The solutions and ideas to help address climate change are always emerging. This plan will continue to evolve with new ingenuity, integration, and initiatives. Being open to collaborative new ideas will be vital to reducing our impact on climate change. This plan has been developed through engagement with the SRUC community, and they will continue to be an inspiration. Every choice we make matters and time is running out to act, we must now deliver our net zero commitment.

Section 3: Climate Change Action Plan

Over the period of the second iteration of this plan, SRUC has set a milestone target to reduce total carbon emissions by a further 20%, as measured from the 2024/25 revised baseline year.

This will result in an overall emission reduction of 40% from the 2014/15 baseline and will be achieved through:

- **Several initiatives, including emissions reduction strategies, outlined in the theme tables detailed below.**
- **A strategic rationalisation of the SRUC estate.**

The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) publication, *Pathways to net zero using the ISEP GHG management hierarchy,* advocates the use of a hierarchy of control for greenhouse gas emissions. This GHG hierarchy consists of the following:

Eliminate

- Influence business decisions/use to prevent GHG emissions across the lifecycle.
- Potential exists when organisations change, expand, rationalise or move business.
- Transition to new business model, alternative operation or new.

Reduce

- Real and relative (per unit) reductions in carbon and energy.
- Efficiency in operations, processes, fleet and energy management.
- Optimise approaches (e.g technology and digital as enablers).

Substitute

- Adopt renewables/low carbon technologies (on-site, transport etc).
- Reduce carbon (GHG) intensity of energy use and of energy purchased.
- Purchase inputs and services with lower embodied/embedded emissions.

Compensate

- Compensate "unavoidable" residual emissions (removals, offsets, etc).
- Investigate land management, value chains, asset sharing, carbon credits.
- Support climate action and developing carbon markets (beyond carbon neutral).

Source based on – Pathways to net zero: using the ISEP GHG management hierarchy, ISEP 2020.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an organisational approach that is very closely aligned with sustainability concept. CSR strives to embed social, environmental and ethical management.

SRUC aims to be socially responsible in our business activities, our work with our staff, students and communities and to be a sustainable, well-resourced organisation with exemplary environmental credentials.

Environmental	• Reduce Consumption • Control of Pollution • Energy and Climate Change • Biodiversity • Supply Chain Impacts
Social	• Working Conditions • Fair Wages • Diversity
Economic	• Socially and ethnically responsible investment • Fair contracts • Trading with Emerging Economies • Taxes and Subsidies

By adopting the above pathway examples, we will establish a strategic and positive approach to ensuring SRUC meets the Scottish Government's milestone net zero target by 2045.

However, there are significant barriers to achieving our next 75% reduction target. Funding applications across the sector are heavily saturated, and there is currently financial constraints available to allow provide any required match funding to access potential external funding opportunities. At the same time, continued growth in staff and student numbers, especially surrounding our evolving international recruitment and the establishment of our new veterinary school, will ultimately result in an increase to our new emissions baseline. These pressures are compounded by a broader lack of sustained financial investment, which limits the institution's ability to implement the scale of change required to meet all stated and governmental reduction targets.

Therefore, milestone target dates have been revised to the following:

- **2025 – 20% reduction (achieved)**
- **2030 – 40% reduction**
- **2035 – 75% reduction**
- **2040 – Net Zero**

Section 4: Climate Change Action Themes and Actions

In the second iteration of our Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), we have identified "Information, Digital and Services" (IDS) as a new theme plus the addition of six Climate Change Actions (CCAs) from the first edition.

Each theme contains a list of Climate Change Actions (CCAs) that has been developed to set the framework for reduction measures that requires sustained action to deliver successful results for each outlined objective. These are detailed in a series of theme tables.

SRUC Values

Climate Change Action Plan – Themes

1. Climate Adaptation and Biodiversity
2. Energy and Carbon Management
3. Information, Digital and Services (IDS)
4. Circular Economy
5. Sustainable Procurement
6. Sustainable Travel
7. Engagement and Education
8. Farming and Agriculture

Theme 1: Climate Impacts Adaptation

Adaptation

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines Adaptation as *"adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities"*.

Climate change in Scotland has already brought warmer, wetter autumns and winters and hotter, drier summers. The consequences of climate fluctuations include:

Supply Chain Risks

- **Increased risk of extreme weather events threatening the estate.**
- **Changes in heating and consumption demands leading to the need to adapt performance and design, construction, management and use of buildings and surroundings.**
- **Possible disruption of transport, energy and communications networks in Scotland and around the world, impacting markets and affecting supply chains.**
- **Global energy market impacts affecting energy supplies and energy security, and disruption to global water and food supplies.**

Reputational Risks

- **Lack of resilience in terms of supply chain risks could mean that SRUC feels the effects of a potential decrease in student enrolment and international collaboration ambitions.**
- **Lack of action and collaboration on climate change adaptation on SRUC's premises could damage the college's brand reputation for excellence in teaching and research.**

Along with action aimed at decelerating and reversing climate change, increased mitigation efforts are required surrounding building resilience against the impacts of climate change across our estate, operations, teaching and research.

While this is likely to cause disruption to business as usual, it should be recognised that in adapting to climate change, there are not only challenges, but there may be opportunities as well.

Biodiversity

During 2025, we published our new "Biodiversity Strategy", strengthening alignment with the CCAs outlined under this theme and with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **SRUC Climate Change Action Plan - Intranet - Documents - Biodiversity - All Documents**

Climate change is introducing specific challenges to managing biodiversity and landscapes. Extreme weather events can make trees and landscapes more vulnerable to damage, while changing weather patterns will alter the optimum conditions and habitats for certain species. Additionally, the spread of pests and diseases will result in damage and loss. Capital investment and proactive actions will be required to maintain our estate biodiversity, landscape value and protection of native species.

Through several training forums, including **EAUC : The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges**, it has been highlighted that the Scottish Government intends to introduce biodiversity as a formal reporting category within the annual *Public Bodies Climate Change Report*.

In this context, the delivery of our Theme 1 CCAs and the establishment of clear, quantifiable biodiversity targets aligned with anticipated Scottish Government mandatory reporting requirements will be critical. Furthermore, natural and nature-based solutions are scientifically proven to play a key role in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Our Biodiversity Strategy will therefore align closely with and support development of our Adaptation Plan, scheduled to complete during 2026.

In our first theme we have devised an ambitious programme to increase our organisation's resilience to climate change which will be taken forward by the following actions.

Theme 1 – Climate Impacts Adaptation – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 1.1	Develop a climate change Adaptation Plan using guidance and toolsets from Adaptation Scotland (PSCAN).	• Long-term resilience, risk reduction and financial sustainability for the organisation resulting in business operations prepared and capable to proactively manage current and future climate risks. • Ensure compliance with Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP).
CCA 1.2	Develop SRUC climate change Adaptation Risk Register system using guidance and toolsets developed by EAUC.	• Assess hazards posed by climate change and monitor and review regularly to adapt to new climate change data. • Communicate with stakeholders about climate adaptation and risks. • Engage with SRUC leadership and Board regarding estate financial implications. • Monitor and report costs associated with weather events and climate change.
CCA 1.3	Investigate a new and current purchase order software system capable of efficient information segregation.	• Monitoring and reporting the financial impacts and insurance claims resulting from extreme weather events maintenance and repairs to executive management.
CCA 1.4	Develop CES Environmental team resources to effectively execute SRUC Biodiversity Strategy and delivery of organisational core value principles.	• Ensure statutory compliance. • Execution and delivery of SRUC Biodiversity Strategy objectives.
CCA 1.5	Work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure SRUC Biodiversity Strategy core value principles are implemented.	Execute interventions to: • Monitor and manage flood risks • Improve water conservation • Heat islands cooling and heat shelters • Reduce energy consumption • Improve air quality • Improve access to green spaces • Promote nature connectiveness for health and well-being

Theme 1 – Climate Impacts Adaptation – Climate Change Actions (CCAs) (continued)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 1.6	Work with stakeholders to create opportunities for staff and students to engage with biodiversity improvements.	• Promote biodiversity awareness with staff and students.
CCA 1.7	In alignment with SRUC estate strategy implement opportunities to partner with the community, staff and students.	• Enhance staff and student environments to maximise the use of outdoor spaces.
CCA 1.8	Monitor and prepare reporting mechanisms for mandatory Scottish Government biodiversity "Public Bodies Climate Change Duties" report.	• Prepare organisation for internal and external mandatory reporting compliance.

Theme 2: Energy and Carbon Management

During 2025, we published our new "Water Management Plan", strengthening alignment with some CCAs outlined under this theme and with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **SRUC Climate Change Action Plan - Intranet - Documents - Water Management Plan - All Documents**. Supplying and distributing clean water across the estate requires substantial energy use and the associated energy related water usage demands across the estate contribute substantial carbon emissions that present opportunities for further efficiency improvements.

Through emission management we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To meet targets, energy is by far the most important area for action that we can control. While the largest share of emissions comes from our supply chain and farms, our energy and water use equated to 2,602 tCO2 during 24/25 which is around 8% of SRUC's total emissions.

Reducing our energy carbon footprint will be extremely challenging and will require innovation and capital investment. Estate building usage must be reviewed to achieve improved energy costs and consumption through initiatives such as:

- **Energy conservation measures identified through building energy audits.**
- **Control of building heating systems through upgrades to our building management system.**
- **Investment into building energy management systems.**
- **Localised maintenance measures to replace LED lighting, pipe lagging and boiler replacements etc.**
- **Carbon reduction and renewable energy projects.**
- **Benchmarking and net zero feasibility studies and associated delivery plans.**
- **Estate rationalisation.**
- **Improve meter reading throughout the estate to identify excessive water or energy consumption and implement reduction measures such i.e grey water recycling systems.**

SRUC Net Zero Vision

The Climate Change (duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 sets out that public bodies will be required to provide a target date for achieving zero direct emissions and for reduced indirect emissions within their annual reports.

This includes information on how the organisation will align spending plans and resources to deliver our emission targets and this has been effective from the report year ending 31 March 2022 onwards.

To meet this, SRUC has set a Net Zero date of 2040, which is five years ahead of the Scottish Government's target date of 2045 for compliance. This will inform subsequent benchmarking and delivery plans which will outline SRUC's pathway to Net Zero.

This would see estates, buildings and entire operations cease to generate any emissions and an objective to support this initiative has been developed within this Climate Change Action Plan (action CCA – 2.2).

The gradual decarbonisation of the electricity supply will contribute significantly. However, the reliance on fossil fuels for space heating and hot water is a more challenging area. Improving the thermal efficiency of SRUC buildings, coupled with the use of heat pumps and solar energy, is the likely way forward.

For any new buildings, a commitment to the highest efficiency standards, and renewable technologies, will help to limit expensive conversion costs in future, although initial costs will be higher. Nonetheless, given the level of change required, and the timescale, the Net Zero plan is also likely to include carbon offsetting which enables the balancing out of carbon by negative emissions such as tree planting and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage.

Sustainable Capital Investment

As part of the new build capital programme, SRUC are targeting highly efficient sustainable buildings and our RAVIC Innovation Centre Inverness achieved the RIBA 2030 standard. This standard defines eight measurable outcomes which align with key UN Sustainable Development Goals. The overarching aim of this standard is to target "Net Zero" whole life carbon emissions by 2035.

The Covid-19 pandemic proved agile and home working methods can be delivered successfully while ensuring service delivery. These initiatives, along with the rationalisation strategies, will form the basis of the emerging transformational change programme, which will deliver a leaner, fit-for-purpose estate which meets the needs and aspirations of a modern and progressive university.

Emerging transformational change strategies as outlined above will lead to the rationalisation of the estate. However, it is not clear at this stage how this will impact on the footprint area of the new estate and therefore what it will deliver in terms of carbon reductions.

As the new Estates Strategy develops this will support and align directly with our theme 2 Climate Change Action Plan objectives.

Theme 2 – Energy and Carbon Management - Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 2.1	Continued energy conservation efforts.	• Reduce carbon emissions and save on energy costs. Consider initiatives such as on and off-site renewable generation, energy efficient hand dryers, motion taps, communication campaigns, heating controls, insulation, equipment maintenance, engaging with partners.
CCA 2.2	Conduct assessments of main campus heating and energy systems.	• Identification and preparation to implement main campus renewable heating and energy solutions which will deliver net zero carbon emissions. • Target of one main campus assessment per year – deadline date of 2030. • Ensure the organisation is prepared with supporting documentation for funding application opportunities (i.e energy feasibility study reports).
CCA 2.3	ELT to establish a dedicated annual renewable energy budget.	• ELT authorisation for an annual budget to allow execution and delivery of CCA 2.2 to undertake feasibility assessments that will increase onsite estate renewable energy generation.
CCA 2.4	All new builds, innovation centres and projects to perform energy analysis prior to operation.	• Project leads are responsible for assessing energy consumption that should be included within business case submissions for ELT approval. This will prevent CES energy budget overspend and minimise energy consumption and emissions.
CCA 2.5	Upgrade SRUC houses to Energy Performance Certificates level D.	• Comply with legislation and improve energy efficiency of houses.

Theme 2 – Energy and Carbon Management - Climate Change Actions (CCAs) (continued)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 2.6	Embed the Climate Change Action Plan energy objectives across SRUC community.	Develop a pathway for facilities: • Support hybrid working to support sustainable travel and optimise building occupancy. • Reduce energy demands. • All new builds will be created with hybrid working principles to reduce space requirements and maximise efficiencies.
CCA 2.7	Develop corporate landlord space occupancy framework to drive space efficiencies by SRUC departments.	• Reduced space requirements improve efficiencies.
CCA 2.8	Develop green lease scheme for SRUC commercial tenants.	• Encourage energy efficiencies within leased premises.
CCA 2.9	Identify and install, where appropriate, sub-metering and automated meter reading, monitoring and targeting systems (investigate smart sub-meters).	• Improve baseline information and usage data which will drive energy efficiency initiatives.
CCA 2.10	Continue building management system upgrade project.	• Ensure heating control measures for optimum efficiency and improve visibility usage on central database platform.
CCA 2.11	All new-build facilities to meet minimum sustainability criteria of RIBA 30. Full consideration of increased standards should be evaluated with a view to achieving standards such as the Net Zero Public Sector Building Standard or Passivhaus.	• Ensure buildings are designed to the highest sustainability standards to minimise the environmental impact over the lifetime of the building. **Net Zero Public Sector Buildings Standard** **Passivhaus**

Theme 2 – Energy and Carbon Management - Climate Change Actions (CCAs) (continued)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 2.12	All new-build facilities will use alternative to natural gas to provide space and hot water heating.	• Ensure de-carbonisation of energy supply and that renewable technologies are explored and • implemented during the design process.
CCA 2.13	Property refurbishments and planned upgrades to implement sustainable and renewable features.	• Ensure de-carbonisation of energy use and that renewable technologies (heat pumps, solar systems, wind turbines, biomass etc) are explored and implemented during the design process.
CCA 2.14	Work with Finance and Procurement to develop an Appliance Management Plan that will target the purchase of AAA plus equipment, where possible.	• Ensure equipment sourcing aligns with energy efficiency targets.
CCA 2.15	Pursue appropriate energy funding avenues to support efficient estate energy emission reduction initiatives.	Maximise energy efficiency funding applications by ensuring: • Alignment with CCA 2.2 and funding application mandatory requirements such as feasibility study reports. • The organisation has the maximum 50% match funding requirements available.
CCA 2.16	Investigate carbon offsetting opportunities. Offsetting to meet our 2040 net zero target only allowed via credible programmes.	• Demonstrate green credentials. • Counterbalance of carbon emissions where not possible to avoid creating emissions. • Support environmental, economic and social benefits.
CCA 2.17	Implement SRUC Water Management Plan core value principles and continue to monitor water useage.	• Improve data collection. • Investigate Horticulture and Agriculture water reduction initiatives to reduce water usage and costs. • Recycling of grey water, sensor taps etc.

Theme 3: Information, Digital and Services

Climate change presents a critical and urgent challenge that requires organisations to take measurable, responsible action across all areas of operation. As part of our commitment to reducing our environmental impact, this Climate Change Action Plan recognises the significant role that information technology plays in both carbon emissions and reducing emissions.

By transitioning the storage and management of organisational systems and files to secure, energy efficient cloud environments, we aim to reduce reliance on our servers, reduce energy consumption, and minimise the carbon footprint associated with data storage and maintenance. Modern cloud infrastructure enables greater efficiency through shared resources, optimised data management, and increasing the use of renewable energy through cloud service providers.

This action represents a practical and scalable step toward embedding sustainability into our digital operations, supporting our broader emission reduction objectives while maintaining high standards of data security, accessibility, and operational resilience.

Theme 3 – Information, Digital and Services – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 3.1	Develop a Cloud First Policy.	• Continuation of shared services and moving to Cloud Infrastructure with the helpdesk being first example. A cloud first approach will be taken to all future systems replacements, such as QPulse, CBS and UnitE to reduce our IT carbon footprint by storing everything in the "cloud.
CCA 3.2	Organisational IT equipment and mobile phones.	• Ensure IDS implement sustainable practices where possible. An example of this is changing the mobile phone policy to encourage staff to get a longer life out of a device.
CCA 3.3	IDS Promoting Digital Sustainability.	• Promotion of digital sustainability with regular campaigns to educate staff on how to reduce the organisations digital carbon footprint. Examples include, encourage staff to delete emails and files from OneDrive and Teams. Also assisting CELT with establishing a retention policy for classroom video recordings.
CCA 3.4	Use of a visual Dashboard.	• Raise staff awareness of the usage and size of the organisation's digital storage. By communicating metrics to educate staff as to the carbon cost of storing files on the cloud.
CCA 3.5	IDS "Adaptation" resilience.	• Work with CES environmental team to ensure more climate resilient IT servers and systems.

Theme 4: Circular Economy

During 2025, we published our new "Waste Management Plan" as further alignment with the climate actions outlined under this theme and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **SRUC Climate Change Action Plan - Intranet - Documents - Waste Management Plan - All Documents.**

To drive delivery of further waste management objectives, several new CCAs have been included in this Climate Change Action Plan that will require commitment from all business operations to reduce waste production and improve recycling over the next five years.

Other challenges are envisaged surrounding the forecasted continued growth in staff and student numbers from our international student recruitment drive and the establishment of our new veterinary school. Ultimately, this will result in an increase to our emissions baseline reforecast. The yellow clinical waste category is the largest contributing factor of clinical waste emissions. As such, a key future challenge for respective departmental heads will be ensuring this waste stream is effectively controlled, with best practice consistently applied and robustly managed.

All SRUC business areas produce waste, and SRUC are legally and morally responsible for all business operational waste generated and 'zero to landfill' disposal methods. Focusing on creating a circular economy is key to reducing our environmental impact, and to ensure material and financial security in a world of depleting raw materials.

This means thorough investigations as to how we acquire our consumables and equipment, how they can be used for as long as possible, how we can extract the maximum value and, once they reach the end of their life cycle, how they can be recycled or reused.

The international EMS standard ISO14001:2015 defines **environmental aspects** as: *"element of an organisation's activities or products or services that interacts or can interact with the environment"*.

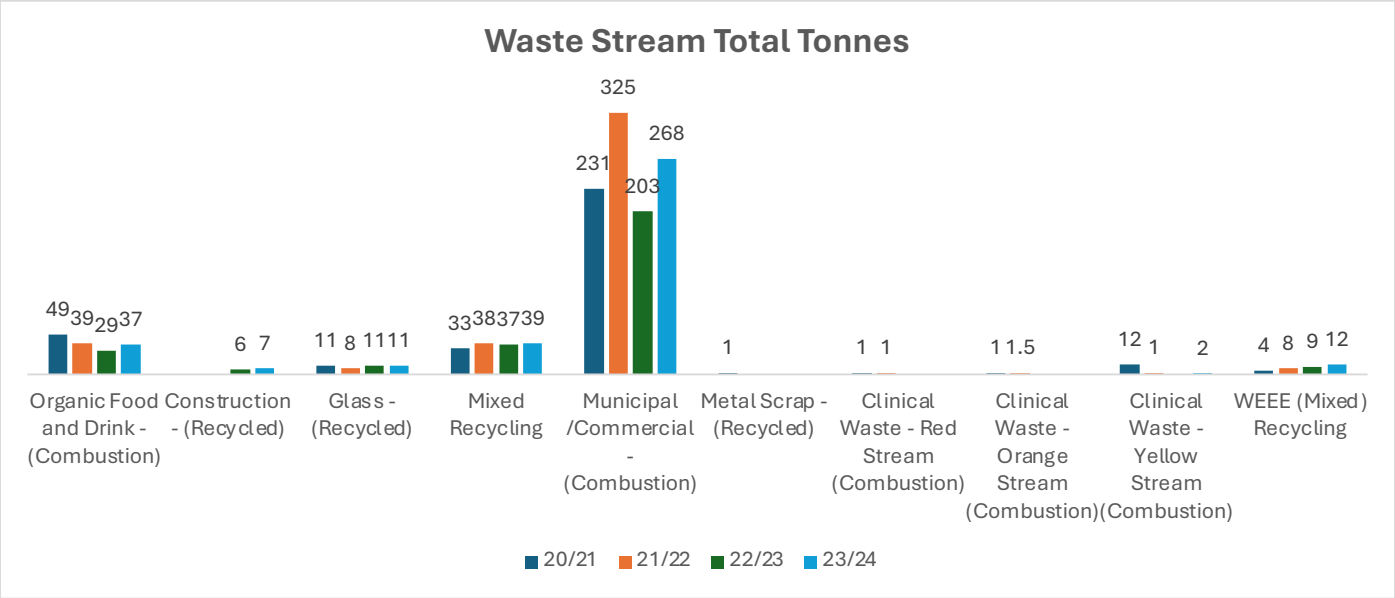
ISO14001:015 defines an **environmental impact** as *"change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organisation's environmental aspects"*.

We are aware that a significant amount of work is still required be performed in relation to our new Waste Management Plan objectives and have introduced three new key waste management compliance Climate Change Actions.

- **Departmental waste management matrixes.**
- **Departmental aspects/impacts waste management registers.**
- **Non-conformance waste management reporting system (departmental head accountability).**

Theme 4: Circular Economy – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 4.1	Work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure adherence to new Waste Management Plan.	• Reduced waste volumes • Increase proportion of recycled waste. • Investigate food waste recycling measures (Keenans etc).
CCA 4.2	Implementation of a waste management non-conformance reporting system.	• Cost reduction in waste segregation • Elimination of legacy waste stream issues and potential hazardous waste fines. • Staff awareness. • Compliance with our waste management plan and statutory waste compliance and regulations.
CCA 4.3	Implementation of departmental waste management "registers" and "matrixes" factoring the "Source", "Pathway", "Receptor" concept.	• Establish departmental waste streams and annual volumes and determine departmental management accountability. • Departmental head reviews to establish internal/external composition processes. • Organisational waste management compliance involving potential hazardous waste fines and environmental emergency response planning.
CCA 4.4	Monitor municipal waste management contract KPIs.	• Ensuring compliance, improving standards, and providing better monitoring and reporting on waste • Reduction of Single Use Plastics (SUPs)
CCA 4.5	Continued investigations to encourage the re-use of furniture, equipment etc. within SRUC.	• Ensure optimum use of equipment and assets. • Reducing waste. • Saving on replacement costs by researching refurbished items through external parties.


Waste Stream Total Tonnes
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Organic Food and Drink - (Combustion)
Construction - (Recycled)
Glass - (Recycled)
Mixed Recycling
Municipal /Commercial - (Combustion)
Metal Scrap - (Recycled)
Clinical Waste - Red Stream (Combustion)
Clinical Waste - Orange Stream (Combustion)
Clinical Waste - Yellow Stream (Combustion)
WEEE (Mixed) Recycling
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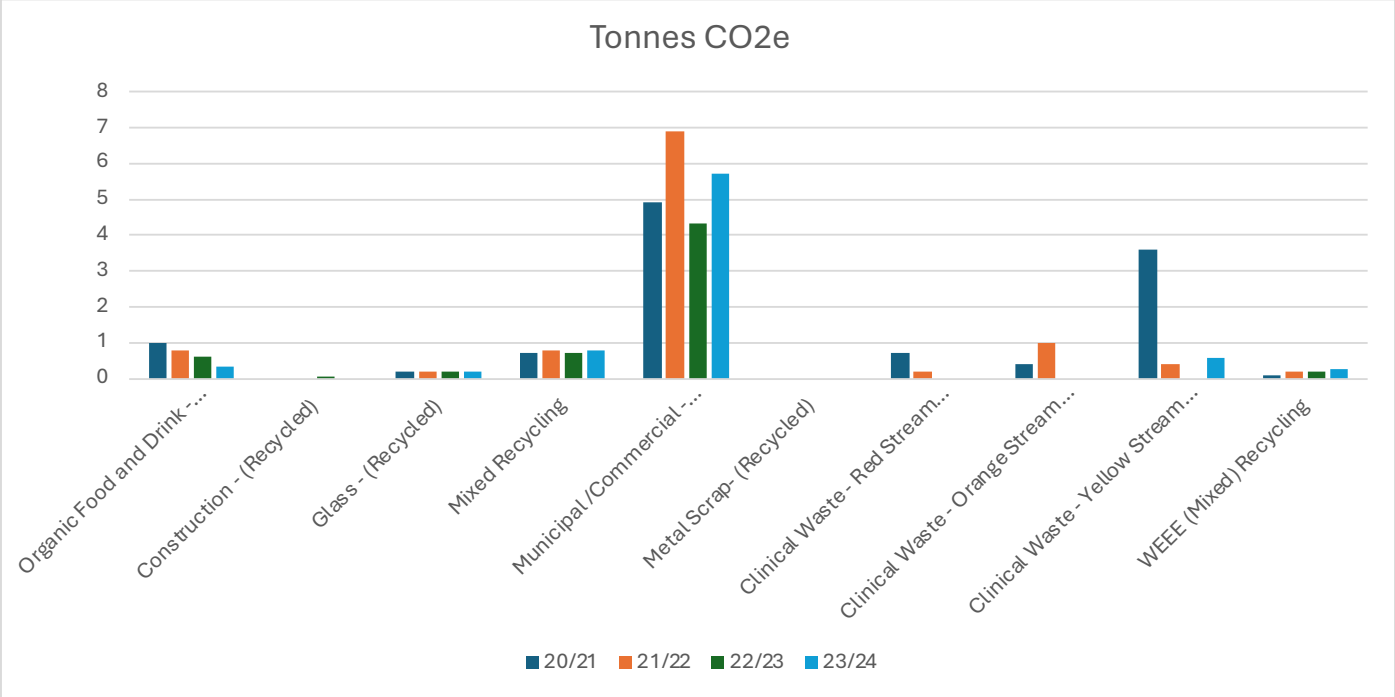
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Municipal /Commercial -...
Metal Scrap- (Recycled)
Clinical Waste - Red Stream...
Clinical Waste - Orange Stream...
Clinical Waste - Yellow Stream...
WEEE (Mixed) Recycling
20/21
21/22
22/23
23/24

Theme 5: Sustainable Procurement

Responsible purchasing can lead to environmental, ethical, social and economic benefits. Smart procurement can promote jobs and growth, encourage innovation as well as help small businesses and partner organisations to compete effectively for contracts.

SRUC will embed sustainable procurement across all our activities, with the objective of being innovative and transformational when sourcing goods and services. This will contribute to Scotland's wider sustainable economy and the transition to a circular economy. Within this plan we will continue to develop processes that ensures sustainability is fully considered in all stages of procurement.

Theme 5 – Sustainable Procurement – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 5.1	Implement circularity principles in tenders where the whole life cost of the goods and services purchased is given full consideration.	• Ensuring we leave a positive legacy for future generations in the form of high-quality materials and resources that offer the maximum opportunity for recycling while minimising waste.
CCA 5.2	Develop sustainable design principles for new build contracts.	• Ensure new assets are designed to align with Net Zero carbon emissions targets thereby complying with legislation and reducing on-going energy costs.
CCA 5.3	Seek out opportunities to collaborate with other organisations within FE, HE and the wider Public Sector.	• To enhance procurement activities by sharing knowledge of best practice and lessons learned while partnering on tenders to achieve benefits, of scale and reduce the cost of tendering.
CCA 5.4	Develop a carbon reduction "Purchasing Guideline" for a range of goods and services that are procured on a regular basis.	• To assist organisational decision making by promoting options that will reduce overall environmental impact, and support climate action goals.
CCA 5.5	Incorporate carbon reduction as a key component of contract management throughout the life of contracts.	• To drive environmental performance improvements, encourage suppliers to adopt greener practices, and align procurement activities with climate action goals and organisational emission reductions.

Theme 6: Sustainable Travel

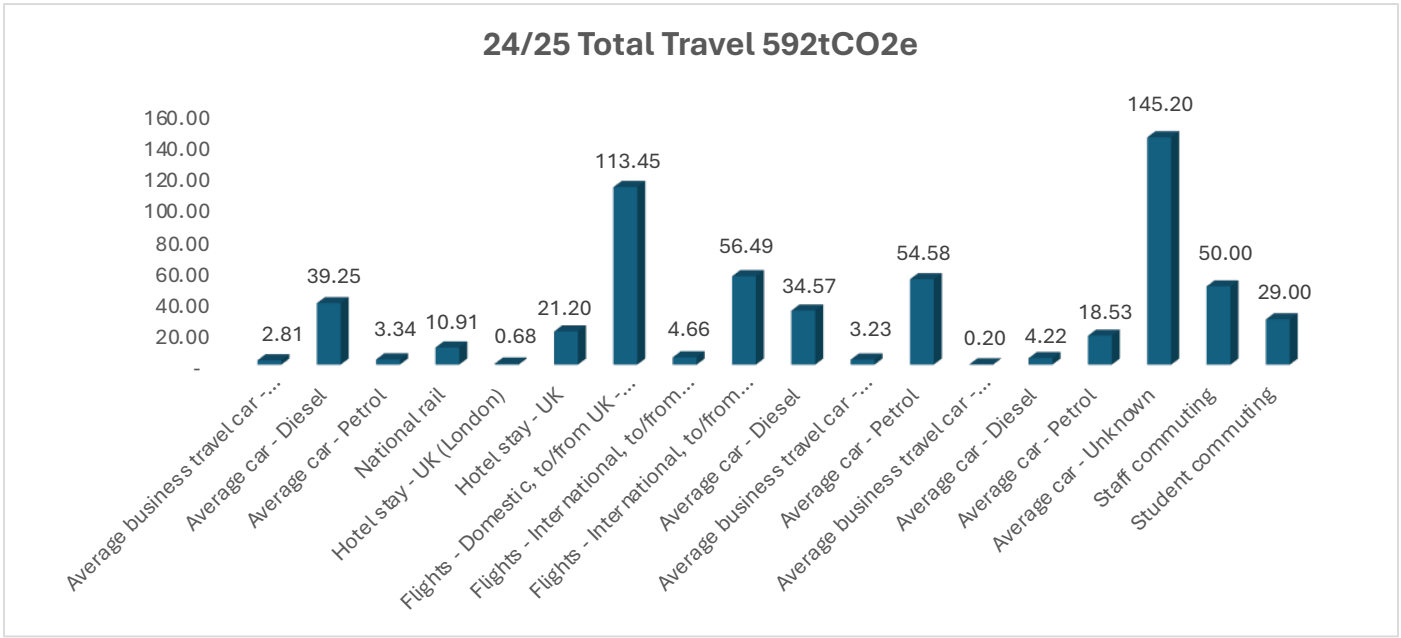
During 2024, we published our new "Sustainable Travel Framework" as further alignment and with the climate actions outlined in this theme and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, we partnered with "TravelKnowHowScotland" to compose main campus Active Travel Plans **SRUC Climate Change Action Plan - Intranet - Sustainable Travel Framework and Active Travel Plans - All Documents.**

Sustainable travel involves the promotion and implementation of low and zero carbon modes of transport. The most recent figures (2022) highlight transport accounts for 32% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and 39% of transport emissions come from cars. **Travel less by car | Net Zero Nation.**

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan outlines that petrol and diesel cars and vans will be phased out by 2032, and no new petrol or diesel cars will be sold after 2030. All new cars and vans will need to be 100% zero emissions by 2035 **Phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 and support for zero emission vehicle (ZEV) transition - GOV.UK** with Scotland's major cities having introduced low emission zones to keep city centre air pollution levels to a minimum whilst promoting public transport.

The decarbonisation of road transport means SRUC must continue to action low-carbon travel that considers staff and student commuting, promotion of active travel, reducing business travel, implementing travel incentives, decarbonisation of our vehicle fleet and, the implementation of our EV Strategy through investment and promotion of electric vehicles (EV) transition and associated EV charging infrastructure.

Additional benefits from the provision of more sustainable travel options include reductions in local air pollution and congestion, more healthy lifestyles and improved staff wellbeing. SRUC will continue to be a proficient organisation capable to fully operate under flexible working conditions that contribute to reducing our travel emissions and estate car parking demands.

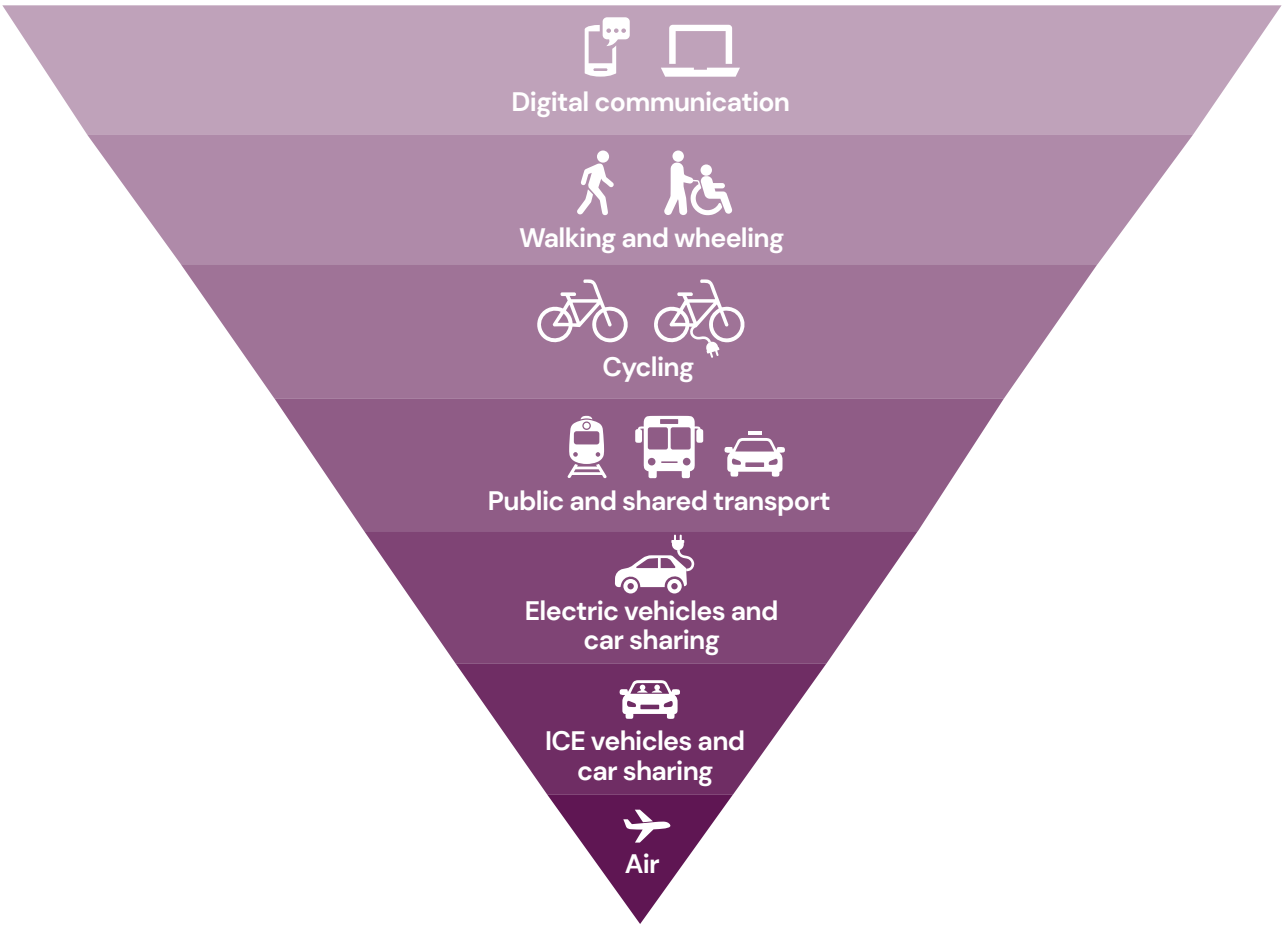


Section 6 – Sustainable Travel – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 6.1	Continued implementation of SRUC Sustainable Travel Framework.	• Cost savings and emission reduction targets by means of organisational investment.
CCA 6.2	Monitor business travel usage data.	• Continue reporting travel emissions. Encourage the use of technology such as Teams rather than travel.
CCA 6.3	Execute EV Strategy to implement EV charging infrastructure across the organisation for staff, students and visitors.	• Support SRUC for transition to low/no • carbon modes of transport. Communicate with executive management regarding capital investment.
CCA 6.4	Increase EV fleet with the aim of decarbonising the fleet by 2035.	• Help meet national targets set out by the Climate Change Plan (RPP3).
CCA 6.5	Increase access to pool and electric bikes, cycle hire schemes, bike hubs and other associated active travel schemes.	• Reduced emissions and costs associated with business travel and commuting. Improvement in staff/student wellbeing.
CCA 6.6	Monitor staff and student commuting emissions via travel survey.	• Completion of reporting requirements (home-working emissions to be estimated). Achieve emission reductions.
CCA 6.7	Investigate and collaborate with local councils, partnerships and other stakeholder to develop sustainable transport networks.	• Develop and improve local sustainable travel infrastructures and cycle routes. Investigate local bus companies to change bus times or route changes.

Section 6 – Sustainable Travel – Climate Change Actions (CCAs) (continued)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 6.8	Continue to improve facilities which support active travel.	• Consider shower upgrades to encourage staff and student uptake. Increase active travel participation and reduce local emissions.
CCA 6.9	Investigate salary sacrifice schemes for EVs and bus/ train season passes.	• Encourage the transition from individual car • use to more sustainable travel options (i.e cycle to work and car share schemes, including car sharing parking bays).
CCA 6.10	Explore and implement sustainable methods for travel to campus.	• To reduce scope emissions created by • staff and student commuting and reduce estate car parking demands. Consider promotion and maintaining hybrid working conditions to help reduce demands.



Theme 7: Engagement and Education

During 2024, we implemented a mandatory staff environmental awareness e-learning course to drive positive behavioural change as further alignment with our climate change action objectives and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Climate change is widely recognised as one of the most significant challenges facing the world today. As an educational institution, SRUC acknowledges its responsibility to educate students and support staff in understanding the causes, impacts, and responses to climate change, particularly in relation to future generations.

SRUC has committed to embedding climate change and sustainability principles across learning, teaching, research, and operational activities. Staff and students play a vital role in delivering this commitment, and their active engagement is essential to the success of our Climate Change Action Plan.

Climate change and sustainability concepts are incorporated within curricula across all subject areas at SRUC. SRUC intentions are to share best practices, monitor progression, and enhance the integration of climate change education across programmes.

Engaging widely with internal stakeholders will support increased awareness of sustainability challenges, encourage collaboration, and empower staff and students to contribute to meaningful climate action. Through education, participation, and continuous improvement, SRUC aims to equip its learning community with the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to address the challenges of climate change.

Theme 7 - Education and Engagement – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 7.1	Continue staff and student sustainable awareness and positive behavioural change campaigns.	• Publish climate change communication campaigns to encourage a culture of green thinking.
CCA 7.2	Promote climate change-related activities including sustainability concepts in learning, teaching and research activities.	• Continue discussions regarding SEEDABLE framework delivery to drive competency-based approach to education that embeds sustainability, enterprise, equality and diversity that are enabled through active and blended learning.
CCA 7.3	Make SRUC environmental data available to students and researchers for use in Academia.	• Cross SRUC cohesion and opportunities for innovation.
CCA 7.4	Promote the development of student climate change projects by working with Academia to provide opportunities for students.	• Reduce impact of climate change and (working in collaboration with Theme 1 objectives) investigate regional initiatives and funding opportunities that will result in further sustainable learning opportunities with lecturers and curriculum.
CCA 7.5	Implementation of an organisational "Environmental Legal Register".	• CES environmental team to engage with SRUC community to ensure staff are aware of organisational environmental compliance, strategies, frameworks and management plans.
CCA 7.6	Environmental team and Health and Safety consultants to collaborate to establish organisational "Emergency Response Plans".	• Identify and prepare the organisation with estate HS&E emergency plans. Ensure environmental legal compliance. Communicate emergency plans to respective departmental heads. Identify and implement staff competency training, inventory of site materials and emergency spill kits i.e. chemical and water pollution control.

Theme 8: Farming and Agriculture

Climate change presents a profound challenge to global food systems, land use, and rural economies. As an institution specialising in land-based education, research, and practice, SRUC recognises both its responsibility and its opportunity to lead by example in addressing the climate impacts of farming and agriculture. Through innovation, education, and practical action, SRUC is committed to supporting the transition to more resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable agricultural systems.

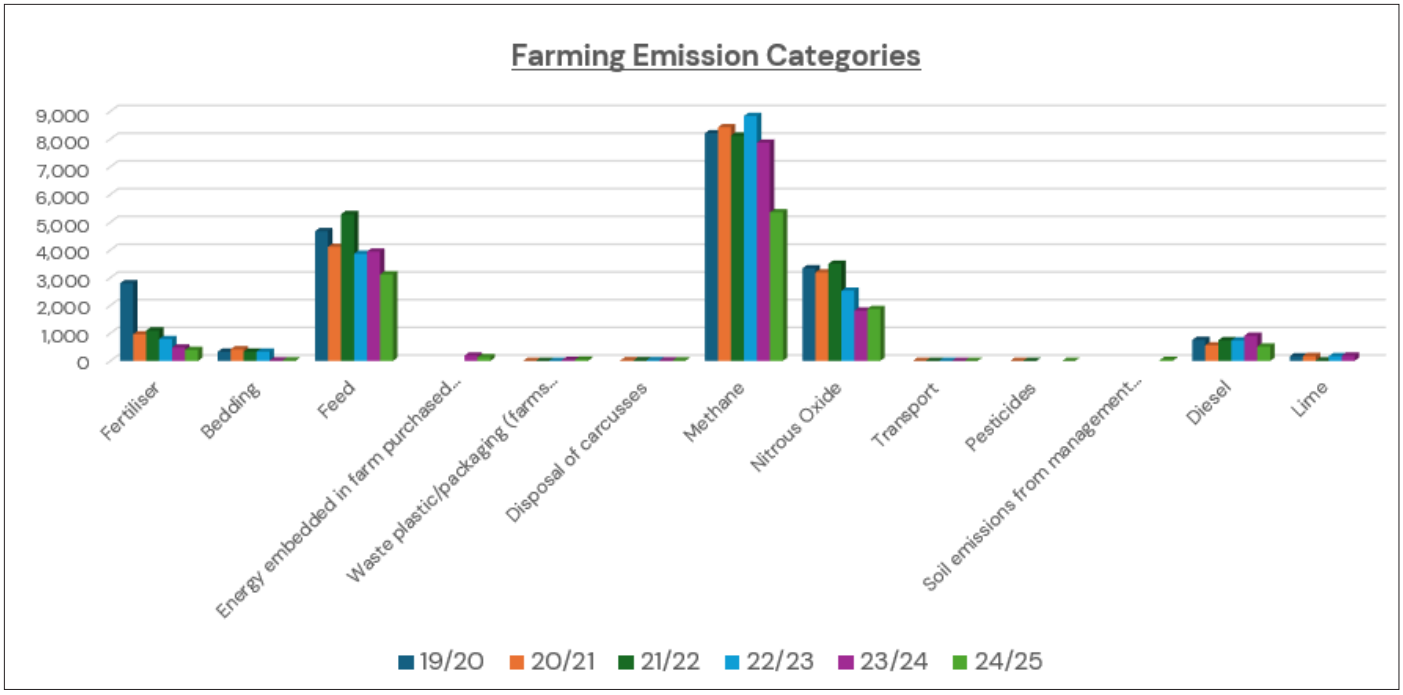
Unlike many other academic institutions, SRUC operates several working farms that include livestock and diverse agricultural systems. These activities result in embedded carbon emissions associated with food production, land management, and research operations. At the same time, they provide a unique and valuable platform for demonstrating real-world climate solutions.

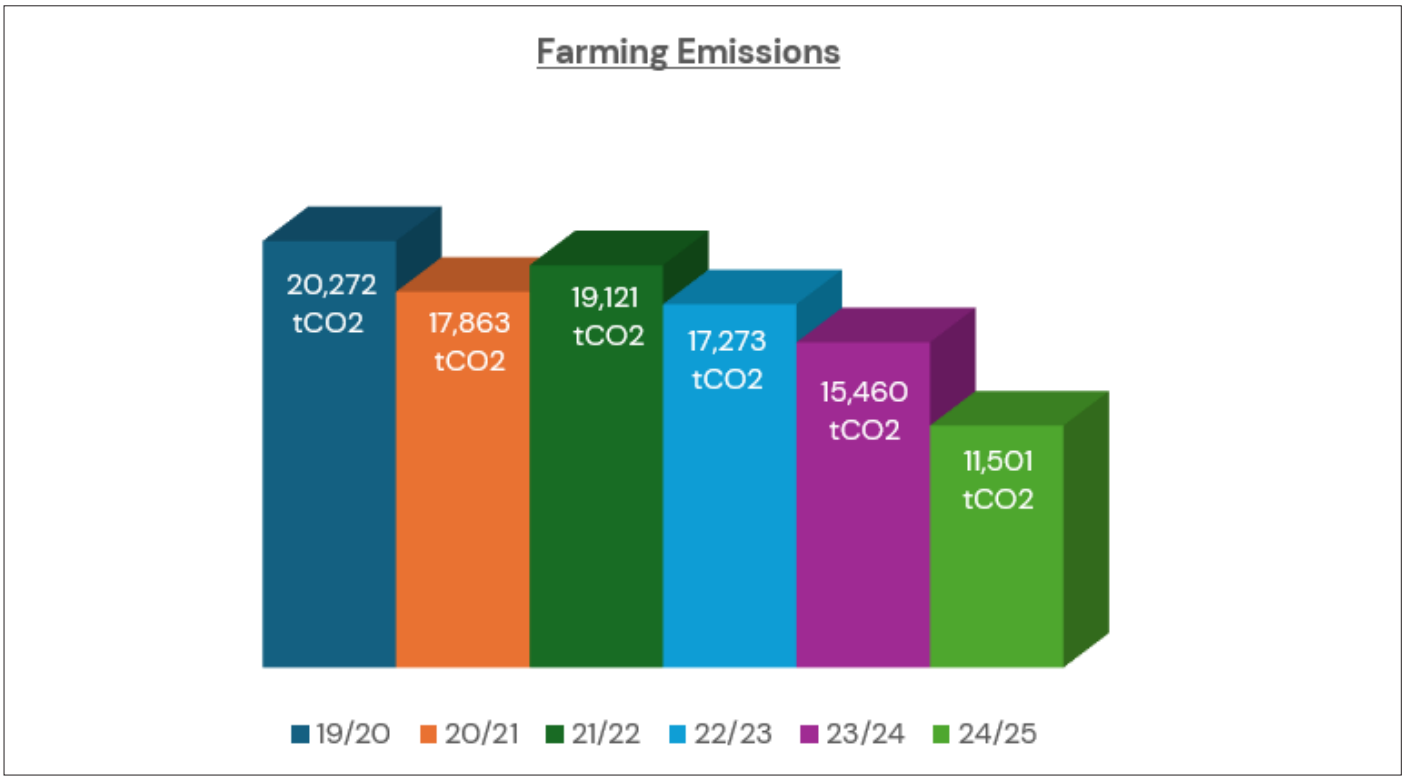
SRUC's farms support academic teaching and applied research across a wide range of sectors, including dairy, beef and sheep production, arable and crop systems, organic farming, and conservation management. These systems allow SRUC to explore the complex interactions between productivity, environmental stewardship, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Theme 8 details objectives that account to manage and reduce emissions from our farming activities while maintaining high standards of education, research, and animal welfare. SRUC recognises the importance of evidence-based approaches, innovation, and collaboration with staff, students, and external partners. By integrating climate action into agricultural practice and learning, SRUC aims to contribute meaningfully to national and global climate objectives while preparing future generations to lead with sustainable farming practises.

SRUC Farms emission figures have been developed and are now included within our annual reporting.

This added 11,501 tCO2 to SRUC's annual headline emissions. Farms are reviewing the strategic direction of their business operating model and the impacts this will have on emissions sources and reduction metrics. As such, detailed scoping analysis will be undertaken to develop robust and meaningful emission targets which aligns with SRUC's ambitions to lead by example and to exceed stakeholder expectations which reduces our overall environmental impact on the planet. SRUC will continue to seek to reduce all categories of greenhouse gas emissions from farms as described under Theme 8.


Farming Emission Categories
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
Fertiliser
Bedding
Feed
Energy embedded in farm purchased...
Waste plastic/packaging (farms...
Disposal of carcusses
Methane
Nitrous Oxide
Transport
Pesticides
Soil emissions from management...
Diesel
Lime
19/20
20/21
21/22
22/23
23/24
24/25


Farming Emissions
20,272 tCO2
17,863 tCO2
19,121 tCO2
17,273 tCO2
15,460 tCO2
11,501 tCO2
19/20
20/21
21/22
22/23
23/24
24/25

Theme 8 – Farming and Agriculture – Climate Change Actions (CCAs)

Ref no	Action	Objective/Benefit
CCA 8.1	Model soya reduction in pigs and poultry diets.	• Reduce emissions associated with farm animal feed.
CCA 8.2	Review farms estate.	• Review estate which meets strategic and operational requirements to deliver reductions in emissions (farming and energy) and potential for sequestration. Use Agrecalc reports for guidance.
CCA 8.3	Water management.	• Investigate what farm locations could host a bore hole system, reduce waste by reporting and repairing water leaks, and explore rain harvesting for non-drinking farm activities.
CCA 8.4	Investigate potential for heat recovery at Barony dairy farm.	• Cooling is required to reduce milk temperature to 4°C. Explore how the heat could be recovered during the cooling process.
CCA 8.5	Farm circularity.	• Explore technologies that can improve circularity on SRUC farms.
CCA 8.6	Farm waste.	• Perform internal audits of farm waste management to ensure satisfactory recycling practices are in place where possible.
CCA 8.7	Farm fuels.	• Explore alternatives to diesel for farm vehicles and machinery.
CCA 8.8	Farm environmental compliance.	• Work with new H&S consultancy agency regarding external farm audits to understand compliance gaps.

Section 5: Governance, Monitoring and Reporting

Progress to achieving our Climate Change Action Plan objectives requires strong leadership and sustained commitment from the entire SRUC community.

This includes consistent adherence to internal environmental strategies, frameworks, and management plans, which collectively support and strengthen the quality and performance of both our internal and external annual environmental reports.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of our Climate Change Action Plan, climate initiatives, and environmental performance will be aligned to support statutory annual reporting requirements set by the Scottish Government. As part of the Climate Change (2009) Scotland Act we will continue to submit our annual Public Bodies Climate Change Report in compliance with climate change duties.

In addition, internal Climate Change Action Plan environmental reports are submitted to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the SRUC Board annually.

The specific actions in our second edition Climate Change Action Plan are set out to cover a further five-year period, after which the document will undergo further review processes.

Owing to the rapidly evolving nature of Climate Change knowledge and information, as well as changes in government policy and legislation, it is acknowledged that elements of this plan will always require flexibility and continuous improvement.

Section 6: Context Drivers for Climate Change

The International Panel for Climate Change in its "Global Warming of 1.5°C Special Report" Global Warming of 1.5 °C –, highlighted that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require "net zero" carbon emissions by around 2050.

The panel recognises that any additional warming above 1.5°C would significantly worsen the risk of drought, floods, extreme heat, and poverty for hundreds of millions of people around the world.

These climate change challenges provide us with a unique opportunity to lead by example and demonstrate what meaningful climate action looks like by achieving the objectives set out in this plan.

Reputational Context

As a world-leading institution, SRUC should be seen as a leader and innovator in sustainability across all its activities. Successfully and vigorously addressing climate change can only enhance our environmental reputation as a leader in the sector.

Legislative Context

The need for climate action has never been clearer. In April 2019 the Scottish Government declared a climate emergency, highlighting that nothing short of transformational change was now needed to address climate change. This led to the introduction of Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets), (Scotland) Act 2019, which establishes a legally binding net zero target by 2045 for Scotland. Furthermore, it sets the following interim targets for delivery from baseline 1990 levels:

- **75% reduction by 2030**
- **90% reduction by 2040**
- **100% reduction by 2045 (net Zero)**

As major employers and procurers of goods and services, public bodies are expected to lead by example in combating climate change. Climate change regulations place duties on public bodies to:

- **Contribute to carbon emissions reduction targets**
- **Contribute to climate change adaptation**
- **Act sustainably**

Other inter-related contextual drivers for reducing carbon emissions include:

- **SRUC has committed to the University Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCfS) agreement which is entered into by universities and colleges across Scotland to support the Scottish Government achieving its carbon reduction targets.**
- **The Climate Change (duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 requires Scottish public bodies to prepare annual reports on compliance regarding their climate change duties and Net Zero targets.**
- **Financial drivers to reduce rising energy, water, waste and travel costs.**

Section 7: New Emission Baseline Projection

In this second edition of our Climate Change Action Plan, a revised baseline has been adopted using historical reported information from our Climate Change Public Bodies Report.

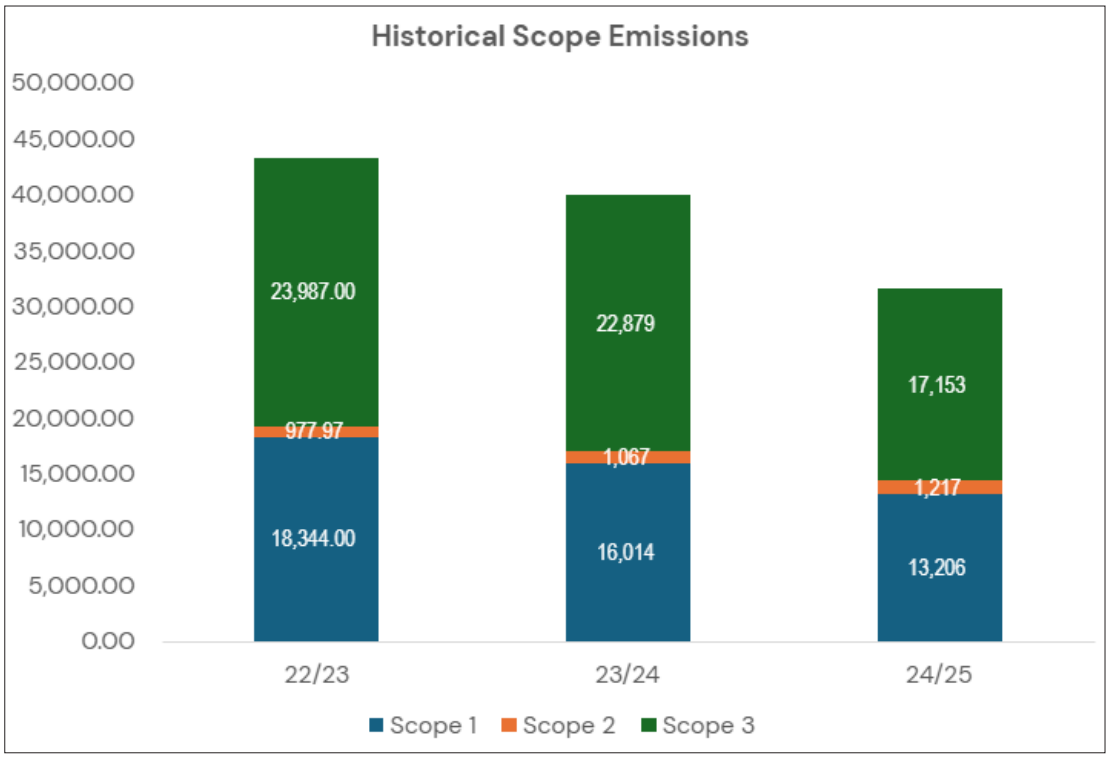
Our revised baseline will be used to monitor and verify progress against the plan's objectives.

With a wider view than just carbon, we will continue reporting our use of water, travel and other emissions which contribute to climate change.

Emissions by Scope

Scope 1, 2 and 3 are different categories of emissions.

Scope 1 – direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by the organisation (e.g. gas heating systems, fleet leased and owned vehicles).
Scope 2 – indirect emissions, meaning the organisation does not directly control them (e.g purchased electricity).
Scope 3 – all other indirect emissions from company activities (e.g production of purchased goods, supply chain transportation, staff and student travel and waste disposal).



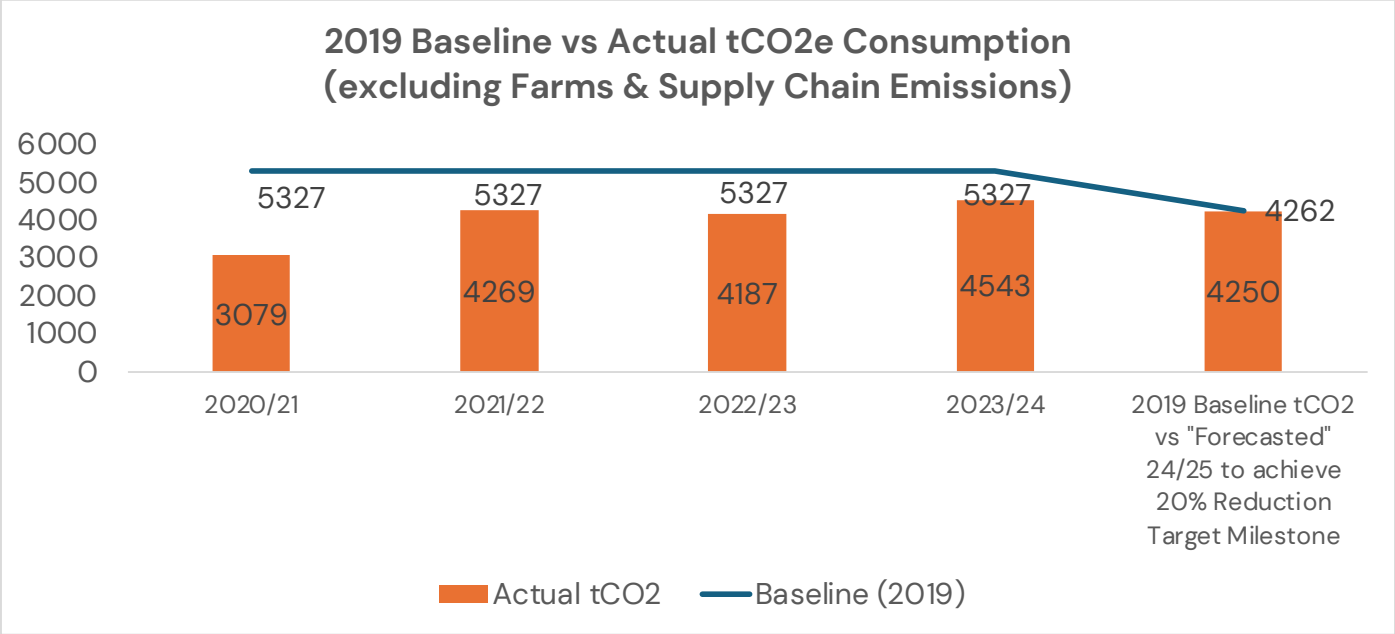
Baseline Consumption and Emissions

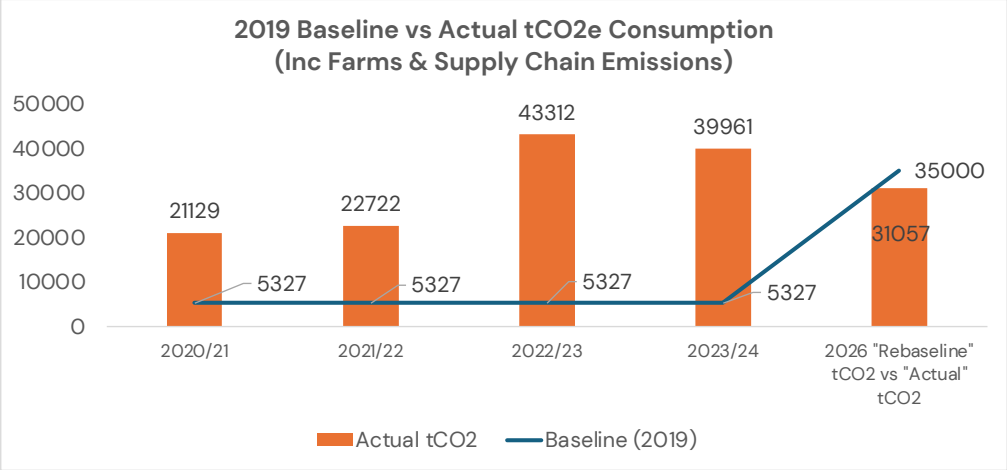
The below graphs demonstrate SRUC delivery from our first edition Climate Change Action Plan of a 20% reduction milestone target in our carbon emissions. However, SRUC's 2019 – tCO2 baseline was established prior to Farm and Supply Chain inclusion with further government category reporting requirements also becoming implemented, as outlined below.

- **2020/2021 – Farm emissions**
- **2022/2023 – Supply Chain emissions**
- **2023/2024 – Staff and Student commuting emissions**
- **2024/2025 – Hotel Stays and Student relocation**

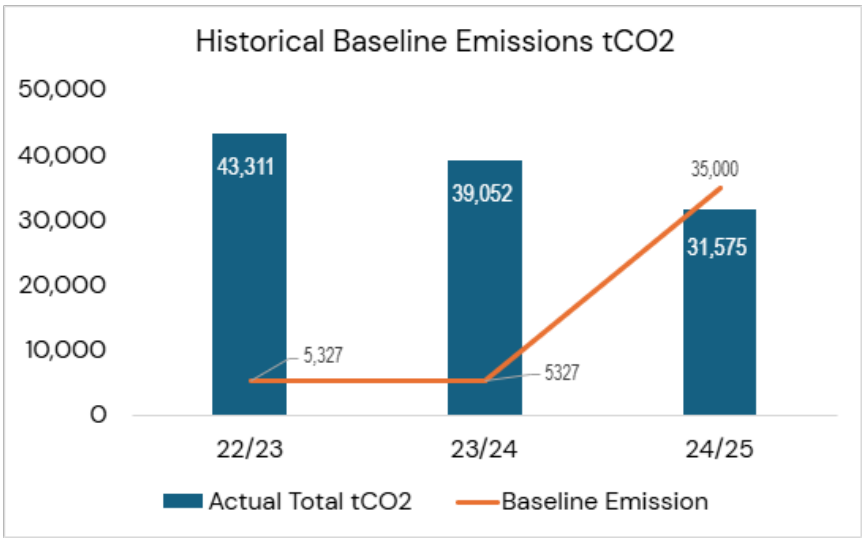
During 2025, re-baselining of our total tCO2 was conducted to include the above categories. Factoring the new baseline figure, SRUC still achieved its first milestone of a 20% reduction in emissions from the 2019 baseline (predominately achieved through changes to the estate and reduced numbers of livestock).

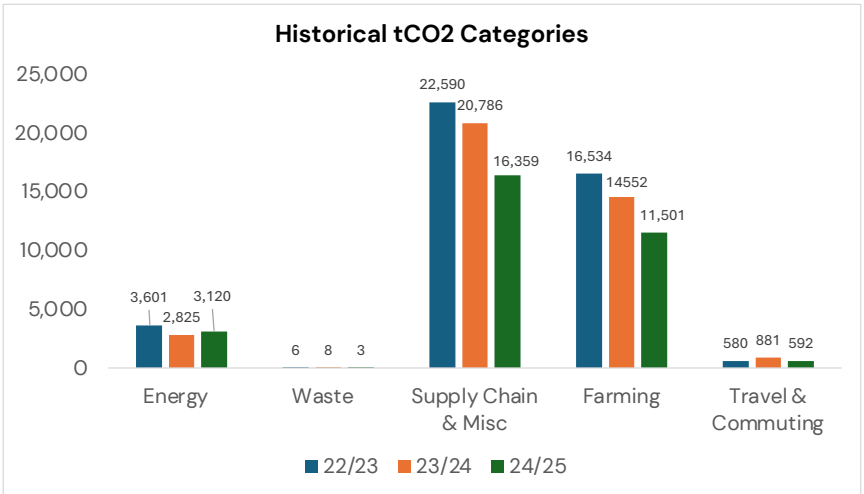
During 2026, due to the reduction in our estate and livestock, emissions were re-baselined again.





Our new baseline details are SRUC's benchmark for our second Climate Change Action Plan edition with the 75% reduction in emissions requiring Executive Leadership Team (ELT) financial investment. Therefore, due to the organisational financial recovery programme, the 75% reduction milestone has been extended from 2030 to 2035.

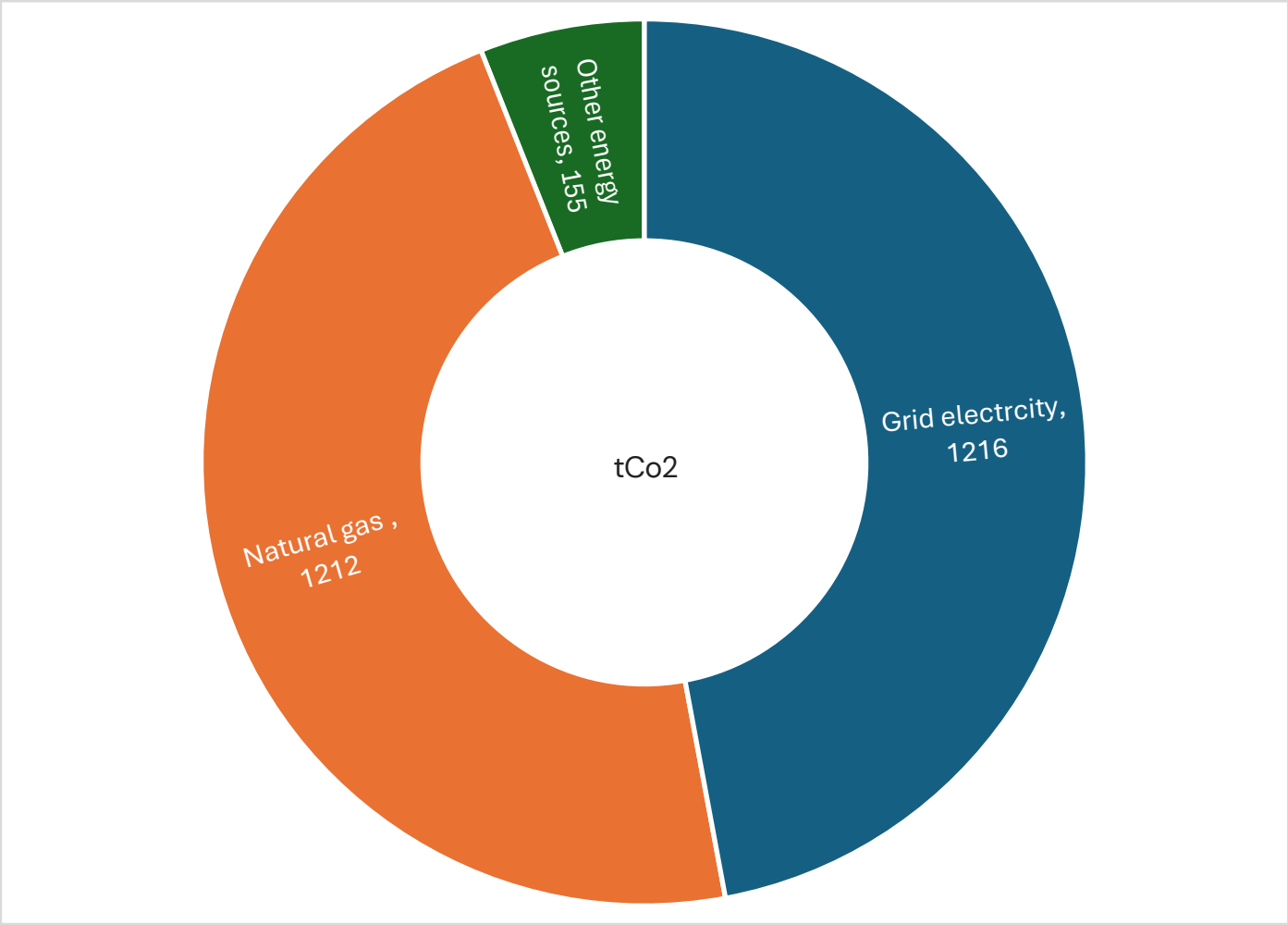




Section 8: Developing Pathways to Net Zero

Estate Energy Demands

The UK government strategy is to decarbonise UK electricity systems by 2035. This forecast would see our estate energy carbon emissions reduce by almost half. Reductions in our estate energy demands are fundamental to delivering a credible Net Zero journey and our reliance on UK electricity system infrastructure is not a sustainable pathway in reducing our consumption of fossil fuels. It is recognised significant capital investment is required for the transition from the reliance on fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, but deliverability constraints estate ambitions.



Section 9: Communication and Engagement

Everyone working or studying with SRUC has a role to play in successful delivery of this plan. The second edition of our Climate Change Action Plan was created through a thorough review process with respective departments and colleagues.

We will continue to engage with our staff and students to demonstrate the progress being made under each theme of this Climate Change Action Plan. This is vital to embed positive actions, encourage positive behavioural change and, to mitigate against climate change within our culture and values.

Not all solutions will be known until we see the technology of tomorrow, we will maintain open and honest dialogue to encourage innovation and the sharing of solutions to the faced challenges.

Throughout the delivery of our Climate Change Action Plan, we will always look to be receptive to new ideas and opportunities from our colleagues and students and to involve them in our collective decision making. We also share success stories to highlight the work taking place across SRUC to mitigate against climate change within our Annual Climate Change Action Plan Environmental Report **Campus and Estates - Intranet Hub - Documents - Annual Environmental CCAP Reports - All Documents.**

Appendix 1: The Global Impact of Farm Emissions

According to 2024 figures, agriculture accounts for an estimated 12% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions – **(Agri-climate report 2024 - GOV.UK)** – although inclusion of global land-use changes for animal feed would fluctuate this figure.

However, the characteristics of key agricultural greenhouse gases are very different. Methane and nitrous oxide both occur at low levels due to natural environmental processes (unlike CO2 from burning fossil fuels), and emissions caused by agriculture are hard to quantify accurately.

Both gases are much more powerful greenhouse gases than CO2. Methane breaks down relatively quickly in the environment, so methane is much less potent than carbon dioxide. Nitrous oxide is less prevalent than methane but persists for much longer. Although less powerful, CO2 may be recycled by plants and animals repeatedly but effectively remains in the atmosphere or ocean until captured and stored, for instance in new and permanent forest, timber buildings, or rocks.

The overall balance of emissions from agriculture is derived from a combination of the ability of the different gases to trap heat, their persistence, and their concentration. Over the 100-year timescale used to measure Global Warming Potential (GWP), and discounting effects of land use changes, methane (CH4) is seen as the most significant gas in UK agriculture, followed by nitrous oxide (N2O), then CO2. **https://data.gov.uk/dataset/9568363e-57e5-4c33-9e00-31dc528fcc5a/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics.**

Appendix 2: The SRUC Estate

The college merger during 2012 resulted in SRUC inheriting an excessive, geographically spread estate, with inefficiencies in operational delivery, space utilisation and flexibility. In addition, the estate has suffered from a significant lack of operational lifecycle maintenance and capital investment, which has led to the gradual deterioration of the estate.

The estate strategy 2018–23 takes account of current failings, and outlines opportunities for a rationalised, fit-for-purpose estate, which focuses on key themes such as agile working, space culture, the use of technology to enable our buildings to operate intelligently and flexible/connected spaces, which will transform the way we operate.

SRUC has a diverse and geographically spread estate which comprises a footprint area of 175,000 m^2 GIA (1 April 2020) as outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3: SRUC Occupied Floor area m^2.

Campuses	
Barony	7080
Oatridge	6753
KB	9129
Craibstone	11271 includes animal care unit
Elmwood	1945 includes horti unit
Residences	
Domestic Properties	1880
Oatridge Student Halls	4510
Barony Student Halls	1024
Other	
AISC	2130
SNEC	4706

Disposal of facilities at our Craibstone campus, as part of the CALA land drawdown deal, reduced our estate footprint by 19,000m^2 GIA, which is an 11.1% reduction in footprint area.

However, capital investment took place to build a new Rural Veterinary Hub in Inverness. In addition, business cases were approved as part of the Dairy Nexus project at Barony and our new School of Veterinary Science at Craibstone. Future ongoing disposals and new-build projects will be reconciled against existing carbon emission metrics.

Appendix 3: First Edition Climate Change Action Plan - 2022-2025 Significant Achievements

Published key environmental documentation

- EV Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Water Management Plan
- Sustainable Travel Framework
- Waste Management Plan
- Barony Net Zero Feasibility Study

Environmental awards finalists and winners

- Green Gown Awards - Finalists
- Green Awards UK – Finalists
- Scottish Green Apple and Scottish National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards – Environmental Excellence - Winners

Projects and Investigations

- Two years of meetings and site visits of TECA Energy Centre and District Infrastructure - FES Group Ltd with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Heat and Power.
- Implemented two staff and student travel surveys.
- Collaborated with the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme.
- Collaborated with Scottish Water regarding Oatridge residency water conservation project.
- Collaborated with Scottish Water regarding three main campus water efficiency audits.
- Initiated two main campus building insulation studies.
- Commenced a main campus Building Management System (BMS) upgrade project.
- Composed mandatory staff Environmental Awareness E-Learning Course.
- Investigated and implement schemes to reduce over 80,000 SUPs across main campus canteens.
- Collaborated with Apache Tree Grant Programme regarding Barony woodland restoration project.
- Achieved over £10k of funding from the Tree Council and Abrdn Investment Charitable Fund for delivery of tree planting schemes at Craibstone and Tulloch Farms.
- Improvements to bicycle shelters and maintenance equipment provision at our main campuses to support active and sustainable travel choices.
- Achieved Cycling Friendly Campus award for Craibstone and Edinburgh campuses.