

Strategic Enabler Framework - Sustainability



Policy and Procedure	Strategic Enabler Framework - Sustainability
Date Reviewed	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2030

The Board of Management (or any person/group with delegated authority from the Board) reserves the right to amend this document at any time should the need arise following consultation with employee representatives.

Sustainability Enabling Framework

Supporting the delivery of the College Strategy 2030 and its associated sub-strategies

Sustainability Enabler – Purpose and Scope

Sustainability is a core strategic enabler underpinning delivery of the College Strategy 2030 and its supporting sub-strategies. The Sustainability Enabling Framework defines the capabilities, governance and commitments through which the College will deliver its statutory responsibilities, reduce environmental impact, build resilience and contribute to a just transition for learners, communities and the regional economy.

The framework is intentionally cross-cutting. It does not operate as a standalone programme or action plan; rather, it provides a shared sustainability foundation that informs decision-making, investment, curriculum, estates, partnerships and governance activities across the organisation. Through this framework, sustainability becomes a defining characteristic of how the College educates, operates and leads as a public body and anchor institution.

How the Sustainability Enabler Is Intended to Be Used

The Sustainability Enabling Framework is designed to be used as a strategic reference and alignment tool across planning, delivery and assurance.

Specifically, it:

- Provides a consistent sustainability narrative for all supporting strategies
- Supports prioritisation and investment decisions, particularly in estates/infrastructure, finance and curriculum
- Ensures sustainability is embedded within governance and risk management, rather than treated as peripheral activity
- Enables transparent reporting and accountability against statutory and sector expectations

The framework is not time-bound in operational detail. Delivery actions, projects and timelines are progressed through existing sustainability action plans, estates/infrastructure programmes, curriculum planning cycles and statutory reporting mechanisms.

Relationship to Supporting Strategies and Delivery Plans

Sustainability is embedded across all supporting strategies within the College Strategy 2030 suite. Each strategy draws on the Sustainability Enabling Framework to articulate how sustainability supports delivery of its objectives.

Delivery of sustainability commitments will be progressed through:

- Supporting strategies and associated operational action plans
- Estates and infrastructure programmes
- Curriculum planning, review and quality enhancement processes
- Financial planning and investment appraisal
- Annual statutory reporting, including Public Bodies Climate Change Duties submissions

This approach ensures sustainability is mainstreamed across organisational activity, rather than delivered through isolated initiatives.

Performance, KPIs and Accountability

Sustainability carries explicit statutory reporting obligations. The Sustainability Enabling Framework therefore defines high-level, measurable commitments aligned to national policy, public body duties and institutional priorities.

Detailed performance monitoring, baselines and year-on-year targets are reported through:

- Public Bodies Climate Change Duties reports
- Finance & Resources Committee reporting
- Audit & Risk Committee scrutiny
- Board of Management assurance

Accountability for delivery sits with the relevant strategy owners, operational leads and governance committees, while this framework provides the strategic structure and consistency for assurance.

Governance, Risk and Assurance

Sustainability is embedded within the College's governance and risk management framework.

Oversight includes:

- Board-level accountability for sustainability performance
- Audit & Risk Committee scrutiny of climate-related and environmental risks
- Finance & Resources Committee oversight of estates/infrastructure, utilities, capital investment and carbon impact
- Integration of environmental and sustainability risks within the Strategic College Risk Register and Risk Appetite Framework

Sustainability governance will evolve in line with statutory requirements, sector guidance and emerging best practice.

Review and Evolution

The Sustainability Enabling Framework will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with the College Strategy 2030, statutory obligations and sector expectations. Reviews will focus on capability relevance, governance effectiveness and assurance robustness, rather than short-term delivery detail.

Sustainability Enablers – Strategic Pillars

Pillar 1: Net Zero & Carbon Reduction

Strategic Intent

Deliver a finance-aware pathway toward net zero greenhouse gas emissions, integrating estates, operations, procurement, capital planning and behaviour change.

This pillar directly supports statutory Net Zero targets, Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, Scottish Funding Council/Scottish Government expectations and Strategic Plan 2030 ambitions.

Current Position (Baseline) – Evidence of Delivery

The College has established a strong mitigation foundation through operational, capital and behavioural interventions.

- Carbon Baseline & Reporting Discipline
- Annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties reporting
- Scope 1 and 2 emissions tracking with expanding Scope 3 inclusion
- Regular environmental updates to Finance & Resources Committee
- Estates water efficiency measures
- Campus-wide LED lighting upgrades
- Renewable feasibility studies
- Energy efficiency audits to energy performance
- Circular Economy & Resource Reduction
- Expansion of internal reuse before procurement
- Expansion of supporting community partners in relation to circular economy
- Engagement with key suppliers (including waste and catering partners) to improve sustainability performance
- Behavioural Change Measures
- Hybrid working model reducing commuting emissions
- Active travel promotion initiatives & extensive investment in campus cycling resources and infrastructure.

Case Study – Circular Economy in Action

Furniture redistribution initiatives during the clear-out of West Campus reduced waste

disposal, delivered carbon savings and supported community partners, demonstrating alignment between environmental and social value objectives.

Recognition & External Validation

'Cycle Friendly Campus' Accreditation of all three campuses from Cycling Scotland

Formal signatory to Race to Zero for Universities & Colleges

2030 Commitments

By 2030 the College will:

- 1.1. Maintain a clear, evidenced trajectory aligned with Scotland's statutory 2045 Net Zero target.
- 1.2. Deliver phased decarbonisation of heat and energy systems, subject to external capital funding availability.
- 1.3. Expand Scope 3 emissions measurement, including supply chain and commuting emissions.
- 1.4. Embed carbon literacy within leadership and estates decision-making.
- 1.5. Where estates rationalisation affects emissions in the short term, mitigation planning will ensure long-term trajectory alignment.

Pillar 2: Climate Adaptation & Resilience

Strategic Intent

Strengthen institutional resilience to physical and transitional climate risks and safeguard delivery of Strategic Plan 2030 ambitions.

Current Position – Evidence of Delivery

Climate adaptation is integrated within governance and risk systems.

- Climate Risk Register & Governance Integration
- Formal Climate Risk Register identifying potential risks to campus infrastructure & services due to predicted climate change impacts in Glasgow
- Integration within College Strategic Risk Register
- Environmental & Sustainability risk appetite defined as 'Cautious'
- Committee Oversight
- Risk Management Committee oversight of climate adaptation actions
- Estates & Infrastructure Resilience
- Cladding project will ensure future climate resilience
- Drainage and flood risk monitoring
- Maintenance planning aligned with severe weather scenarios
- IT and business continuity planning reflecting climate risk

Case Study – Climate Adaptation Infrastructure

With Glasgow City Council funding, the College installed a rainwater harvesting and

storage system at Easterhouse Campus. This system provides a sustainable water source to the newly established Easterhouse Learning Garden in times of drought and improves the campus's climate adaptation capacity.

Statutory Reporting

Annual adaptation reporting through Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report submission

These actions demonstrate adaptation maturity beyond minimum compliance.

2030 Commitments

By 2030 the College will:

- 2.1. Maintain and annually review a comprehensive Climate Risk Register aligned to national adaptation priorities.
- 2.2. Integrate climate risk assessment into all major estates and capital investment decisions.
- 2.3. Strengthen infrastructure resilience to flooding, extreme weather and overheating risks.
- 2.4. Embed climate scenario consideration within business continuity and disaster recovery planning.
- 2.5. Enhance supply chain and service resilience through procurement and partnership engagement.
- 2.6. Adaptation maturity will be reviewed against recognised public sector capability frameworks to ensure continuous improvement.

Pillar 3: Nature & Biodiversity

Strategic Intent

Enhance biodiversity across campuses and integrate nature-positive principles within estates, learning and community engagement.

Current Position – Evidence of Delivery

Biodiversity is embedded within campus operations and student engagement.

- Development of Biodiversity Action Plan guiding habitat enhancement priorities
- Participation in SOS-UK Nature Friendly Grounds Pilot Programme
- Habitat Enhancements
- Tree and pollinator-friendly planting initiatives
- Wildlife-supporting features and biodiversity zones
- Hedgehog Friendly Campus Bronze Award achievement
- Community & Student Engagement

- East End Community Garden development
- Easterhouse Climate Engagement Learning Garden development
- Student-led biodiversity initiatives

Case Study – Engagement with Nature

The Easterhouse Climate Engagement Learning Garden operates as both biodiversity enhancement and a learning environment, providing opportunities for Support for Learning Students to develop and maintain a biologically diverse green space as well as for staff and all students to enjoy wellbeing through time in nature.

These actions demonstrate integration of biodiversity within estates and curriculum.

2030 Commitments

By 2030 the College will:

- 3.1. Establish and maintain biodiversity baseline metrics across all campuses.
- 3.2. Deliver measurable habitat enhancement projects aligned to Biodiversity Action Plan priorities.
- 3.3. Embed biodiversity principles within estates maintenance and grounds contracts.
- 3.4. Expand curriculum-linked biodiversity and nature-based learning opportunities.
- 3.5. Strengthen partnerships to enhance biodiversity impact beyond campus boundaries.
- 3.6. Nature-positive planning will be integrated within estates rationalisation and future campus development decisions.

Pillar 4: Learning for Sustainability & Green Skills

Strategic Intent

Equip learners with knowledge and skills required for a just transition and embed Learning for Sustainability across curriculum.

Current Position – Evidence of Delivery

Sustainability and green skills are increasingly embedded within provision.

- Learning for Sustainability embedded across numerous curriculum areas, with opportunities for improvement being identified through EAUC Pilot Programme
- Sustainable coursework recognised with International and UK & Ireland Green Gown Award in Next Generation Learning and Skills.
- Delivery of low-carbon construction and retrofit training
- Employer partnerships shaping green pathways
- Students for People & Planet student group leading events and projects

- Green Week and sustainability engagement initiatives
- BaxterStorey (external catering provider) delivers sustainable food campaigns, promoting lower-carbon food choices and sustainable consumption on campus
- Established Student Association Food & Clothing Bank

Case Study – Fighting Fast Fashion

Beginning with the Green Gown Award-winning work of the Fashion Department to upcycle garments and expanding to the Student Association Clothing Bank and Support for Learning upcycled textile crafts; sustainability education can drive behavioural change and external recognition.

These actions show sustainability embedded within learning and student experience.

2030 Commitments

By 2030 the College will:

- 4.1. Embed Learning for Sustainability principles across all curriculum areas.
- 4.2. Ensure all learners can articulate how their programme relates to sustainability and the transition to net zero.
- 4.3. Expand green skills pathways aligned to regional labour market demand.
- 4.4. Integrate sustainability competencies within curriculum review and quality processes.
- 4.5. Strengthen employer partnerships to co-design provision supporting low-carbon sectors.
- 4.6. Sustainability will be embedded within curriculum planning cycles, validation processes and programme review documentation.
- 4.7. Align sustainability learning activities with regional and national skills development priorities

Pillar 5: Governance, Reporting & Institutional Leadership

Strategic Intent

Embed sustainability within governance, risk and performance management systems.

Current Position – Evidence of Delivery

- Sustainability is embedded within core governance structures.
- Board & Committee Oversight
- Sustainability reported regularly to Finance & Resources Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee scrutiny of environmental risks
- Environmental & Sustainability category within Risk Appetite framework
- Climate risks embedded within College Strategic Risk Register
- Transparency & Recognition
- Annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report submission

- Green Gown Award recognition

Case Study – Governance Mainstreaming

Embedding sustainability within Finance & Resources Committee reporting integrated environmental performance into mainstream financial governance.

These measures demonstrate sustainability as a core governance priority.

2030 Commitments

By 2030 the College will:

- Maintain clear Board-level accountability for sustainability performance.
- Align financial planning and capital investment decisions with climate and sustainability objectives.
- Strengthen institutional influence as a regional anchor organisation promoting sustainable practice.
- Sustainability governance will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with evolving statutory and sector expectations.

Mapping Enabling Pillars to Sub-Strategies

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy – Sustainability Enablement

Sustainability enables delivery of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy by embedding Learning for Sustainability and green skills across curriculum design, learning activities and assessment practices. Learners are supported to understand the environmental, social and economic context of their vocational and academic pathways, and to develop the knowledge, skills and values required for a just transition.

Nature-based learning and sustainability-focused curriculum activity further enhance learner engagement, relevance and employability.

Supporting sustainability commitments:

- 3.4** Expand curriculum-linked biodiversity and nature-based learning opportunities
- 4.1** Embed Learning for Sustainability principles across all curriculum areas
- 4.2** Ensure learners can articulate how their programme relates to sustainability and the transition to net zero
- 4.4** Integrate sustainability competencies within curriculum review and quality processes

Student Experience Strategy – Sustainability Enablement

Sustainability enables an inclusive, engaging and values-led student experience by supporting wellbeing, belonging and active participation in climate, nature and sustainability initiatives. Campus biodiversity projects, sustainability-focused volunteering and learner-led action provide opportunities for students to contribute meaningfully to their environment and communities. Access to inclusive green spaces and sustainability-aligned student support initiatives further enhance equity and wellbeing.

Supporting sustainability commitments:

- 3.2** Deliver measurable habitat enhancement projects aligned to Biodiversity Action Plan priorities
- 3.4** Expand curriculum-linked biodiversity and nature-based learning opportunities
- 4.2** Increase learner awareness of sustainability relevance within their programme
- 4.3** Expand green skills pathways aligned to regional labour market demand

People & Culture Strategy – Sustainability Enablement

Sustainability enables the People & Culture Strategy by embedding environmental responsibility, climate awareness and sustainable practice within leadership, staff development and organisational culture. Climate risk, sustainability performance and ethical decision-making are integrated into governance, professional learning and risk management frameworks, supporting workforce capability, wellbeing and organisational resilience.

Supporting sustainability commitments:

- 2.1** Maintain and annually review a comprehensive Climate Risk Register
- 2.4** Embed climate scenario consideration within business continuity and disaster recovery planning
- 4.5** Offer annual sustainability-focused Continuous Professional Development opportunities to all staff
- 5.1** Maintain clear Board-level accountability for sustainability performance
- 5.4** Review sustainability governance annually to ensure continued alignment with statutory and sector expectations

Infrastructure Strategy – Sustainability Enablement

Sustainability is central to the Infrastructure Strategy through delivery of a structured pathway toward net zero, climate-resilient estates and nature-positive campus environments. Decarbonisation, adaptation planning and biodiversity enhancement are embedded within estates management, capital investment and asset planning, ensuring infrastructure decisions align with statutory duties, financial sustainability and long-term resilience.

Supporting sustainability commitments:

- 1.1** Maintain a clear emissions reduction trajectory aligned to Scotland's Net Zero targets
- 1.2** Deliver phased decarbonisation of heat and energy systems, subject to funding
- 1.5** Ensure all major capital projects include carbon and lifecycle impact assessment
- 2.2** Integrate climate risk assessment into all major estates and capital investment decisions
- 3.1** Establish and maintain biodiversity baseline metrics across all campuses

Finance & Growth Strategy – Sustainability Enablement

Sustainability enables the Finance & Growth Strategy by ensuring that financial planning, investment decisions and growth ambitions are aligned with climate responsibility and long-term resilience. Carbon impact, climate risk and whole-life cost considerations are embedded within capital and procurement decisions, supporting value for money, risk mitigation and access to external funding opportunities.

Supporting sustainability commitments:

- 1.3** Expand Scope 3 emissions measurement, including procurement and commuting
- 1.5** Embed carbon impact and lifecycle consideration in all major capital and investment approvals
- 2.2** Integrate climate risk assessment into financial and capital decision-making
- 5.2** Align financial planning and capital investment with sustainability and climate objectives

External Engagement Strategy – Sustainability Enablement

Sustainability enables external engagement by positioning the College as a trusted regional anchor institution contributing to climate action, biodiversity enhancement, green skills development and a just transition. Through employer collaboration, community initiatives and participation in national programmes, the College supports local resilience, regional economic transformation and civic leadership, reinforcing public value and partnership strength.

Supporting sustainability commitments:

- 3.5** Strengthen partnerships to enhance biodiversity impact beyond campus boundaries
- 4.3** Expand green skills pathways aligned to employer and regional demand
- 4.6** Strengthen employer partnerships to co-design low-carbon and green skills provision
- 5.3** Strengthen institutional influence as a regional anchor organisation promoting sustainable practice

Strategic Risks & Dependencies

Delivery of this Sustainability Strategic Enabler is influenced by a number of external and internal dependencies. Recognising these risks strengthens realism and governance maturity.

Financial & Capital Funding Constraints

Delivery of estates decarbonisation measures, renewable heat transition and major infrastructure upgrades is dependent on:

- Availability of Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council capital funding
- Access to competitive decarbonisation grant schemes
- Wider public sector financial settlements

Where funding is constrained, the College will prioritise high-impact, low-cost interventions and maintain trajectory planning for future capital opportunities.

Estates Developments and Operational Change

Changes to campus footprint, space utilisation and service delivery models may influence emissions trajectories in the short term. Estates utilisation decisions will therefore incorporate carbon and resilience assessments to avoid unintended long-term impacts, as part of the College's sustainable growth ambitions

Regulatory & Policy Change

Evolving national policy, reporting requirements and sector expectations may alter performance metrics or compliance thresholds. The College will maintain annual review cycles to ensure continued alignment.

Supply Chain & Market Dependencies

Progress toward net zero and adaptation resilience is partially dependent on:

- Decarbonisation of the national electricity grid
- Availability of low-carbon construction materials and technologies
- Supplier readiness to provide emissions data

Procurement processes will increasingly incorporate sustainability criteria to mitigate this risk.

Workforce & Capacity

Embedding sustainability across curriculum, estates and governance requires sustained staff capability and leadership focus. Competing operational pressures may limit capacity; therefore sustainability responsibilities will be integrated within existing roles and governance structures.