Climate Strategy Statement

The University of Exeter's Strategy 2030 outlines how we will use the power of our education and research to create a sustainable, healthy and socially just future, setting out our vision to use our strong interdisciplinary culture to lead meaningful action against the climate emergency and ecological crisis. Our response has been world-leading, through leadership of the crucial annual Global Carbon Budget, the influential Global Tipping Points reports, the Parliamentarians Guide to Climate Change and significant work with external organisations to chart the way forward to net zero. We are home to more of the world's most influential climate scientists than any other university and our global leadership in this has been recognised by the Times Higher Education Award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Leadership'.

At Exeter we lead by example. Our world-leading academics are creating change across the planet, and also across our own campuses, building on their research to drive our own sustainability commitments, just as they have driven the commitments of organisations around the world.

Six years ago we declared a climate emergency and set a strategic goal to reach net zero carbon. Since then our academics have played a vital role in ensuring that our work towards achieving net zero remains grounded in the most current and robust climate science.

Now we are relaunching our climate strategy, following the lead they have set, with a clear focus on reducing our emissions rather than offsetting them.

A two-year review, undertaken by a group of world-leading scientists and chaired by Professor Peter Cox CBE, Professor of Climate System Dynamics, concluded that at this time offsetting schemes lack the credibility, permanence and verifiability essential for genuine emissions cuts. Their recommendation was to remove offsetting from the University's current approach to net zero, concluding that by focusing on real reductions in emissions, rather than uncertain offsets, the University would uphold integrity in its approach to climate action. Meanwhile our academics are pioneering innovative and responsible carbon dioxide removal (CDR) methods to raise global standards of credibility and accountability, with the aim of enabling credible offsetting in the future.

Developed with the University's Advocate Climate Taskforce (ACT) and Climate and Environmental Crisis (CEC) Board, each comprising experts and professionals from a wide range of fields, and refined through extensive internal and external consultation, the University's new Climate Strategy places direct emissions reduction at its heart and, using the latest climate science, realigns our net zero target to 2050 across all scopes. This

reaffirms our commitment to climate leadership, sets out the rationale behind our targets and timelines, and drives us forward in the journey toward scientifically robust solutions.

The University has set a clear institutional strategy to meet the challenges of the climate crisis, and we recognise that our ambitious goals can only be achieved with the support of our staff, students and wider stakeholders. Jo Chamberlain, Director of Sustainability, emphasises that "every decision - individual and organisational - moves action towards or away from the University's strategic goals, and so our whole institutional approach includes developing a Culture Change Programme that aligns values, behaviours and ways of working with our ambitions."

Our green transition is already delivering results, both locally and globally through cutting edge research, operational changes and community engagement. We continue to invest in renewable energy to power our campuses, including the installation of solar panels which, will generate 15% of the University's annual electricity requirements and save 840 tonnes of CO_2 each year. We are installing a 1 MW wind turbine to power our Penryn campus, with ambitious plans to maximise our use of low carbon energy in Cornwall.

We are leading on net zero not just at home, but also around the world, as we continue through our research and our partnerships to find solutions and to advocate for robust, science-led approaches to carbon removal. Earlier this year a group of over 20 scientists, including one from Exeter, urged the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), who help businesses align their emission reductions with the Paris Agreement, to remove offsetting as a cost-effective solution to reducing carbon, insisting that companies are delaying the foundational changes required to achieve meaningful results.

In order to ensure that our world-leading expertise is harnessed , Green Futures Solutions, our groundbreaking business support initiative, aims to help global organisations to play their own part in delivering a greener, healthier and fairer future, connecting them to 1500 climate and sustainability experts, researchers and professionals, who have worked on groundbreaking solutions such as Ocean-based CO_2 removal through the SeaCURE project, the Floating Offshore Windfarm (FLOW) aimed to advance the potential of wind energy, and understanding the impacts of deforestation and degradation in ecosystems like the Amazon and Borneo.

"We remain fully committed to our sustainability and climate ambitions," states Professor Lisa Roberts, President and Vice-Chancellor, "We are privileged that our world-leading climate scientists are advising us on our strategy and actions, giving us complete confidence that our net zero target is grounded in the latest research, and aligned with a rigorous, science-based approach. Achieving our goals will rely on the individual

contributions we all have to make. That collective commitment across our community reinforces our belief that Together, we create the possible."

The Climate Strategy is underpinned by detailed action plans across all faculties and professional services, each developed collaboratively by respective Sustainability Committees, reporting on progress annually to the Advocate Climate Taskforce, alongside several Task and Finish Groups made up from experts within the University. This complete framework supports the delivery of the reduction pathway, ensuring progress against our targets is measured and managed year on year.

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