

Climate Action Plan

2025-2030



Foreword

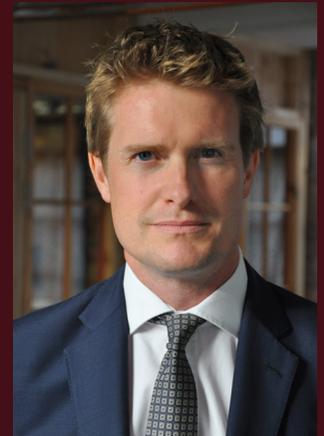
Climate breakdown now constitutes one of the most pressing challenges to museum practice. Rising temperatures, intensifying wildfires, flooding, and other climate-related hazards are reshaping the very conditions in which collections must be safeguarded. The museum environment can no longer be insulated from these wider ecological transformations.

Since the publication of our last Sustainability Plan, the acceleration of climate impacts in the UK and globally has underscored the urgency of decisive action. By 2030, we will have reached the halfway point toward our ambition of achieving net zero. This Climate Action Plan sets out the pathways by which the V&A will reduce emissions, embed sustainable practice across our operations, and strengthen the resilience of our collections.

Our approach is necessarily ambitious. We aspire not only to care for our collections in climate-responsible ways but also to demonstrate leadership in sustainable museum practice.

This work is both conservation and collaboration. It requires innovation, creativity, and partnership across disciplines and communities. In the spirit of Henry Cole's founding vision, we seek to be a learning space – open to the exchange of ideas, committed to reimagining environmental responsibility, and dedicated to inspiring audiences through art, design, and creativity to shape a more sustainable future.

Tristram Hunt
V&A Director



Introduction

This Climate Action Plan sets out our strategy for ambitious and collaborative action across all our departments. It enables us to address the challenges posed by climate change, reduce our environmental impact and contribute to global sustainability efforts.

Our vision for sustainability is to champion creativity as a force for planet-positive change.

We will do this by:

- Leading by example in sustainable and planet-positive practices
- Sparking inventive thinking, sharing new ideas, and designing with environmental responsibility at the heart
- Developing evidence-based climate friendly approaches for collection care
- Inspiring audiences to imagine and shape a better future



Imagine Gallery
Creativity starts in our imagination.

Ideas are sparked when we get curious and think "what if...?" We can imagine anything. There are no limits to where we can go, who we might be or what we can make.
Get ready to fire us your

Our net zero ambition

Our 2021 Sustainability Plan set an ambitious target, to achieve net zero by 2035. When this was set, definitions of how net zero applied to organisations was emerging.

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) provides best practice guidance for organisations looking to set ambitious carbon targets aligned with global climate goals. In 2025, SBTi published a revised draft Corporate Net Zero Standard, providing clearer, more actionable directions for organisations aiming to align their climate strategies with the science-based goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. We used this as the starting point for this Plan, and to define our target more clearly.

Our family of museums is growing and we have reflected this by updating our baseline from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This change reflects improvements in our data collection and analysis.



Photography by Hydar Dewachi

2035 carbon target

In line with the emerging best practice, our ambition is to achieve the following by 2035:

Net zero scope 1 and 2 emissions, meaning

90%

or greater reduction from our baseline for all scope 1 sources

100%

reduction for all scope 2 sources

100%

equivalent purchased removals of residual scope 1 emissions from 2035 onward

Net zero aligned scope 3 emissions, meaning

100%

of investments in a net zero aligned fund

100%

of direct suppliers committed to and progressing towards a net zero date that is no later than 2050

90%

all other scope 3 emission sources aligned to an absolute emissions reduction pathway to 90% by 2050 (i.e. a 18% reduction by 2030 and a 36% reduction by 2035)

2030 near term target

This Climate Action Plan covers actions to 2030.

By 2030

42%

reduction of scope 1 and 2 emissions

50%

of our direct suppliers, by emissions, are committed to and progressing towards a net zero date no later than 2050

18%

reduction of all other scope 3 emission sources by 18% from our baseline

50%

of investments are in net zero aligned funds

All other scope 3 sources are defined as operational waste, business travel, employee commuting, water, energy and related emissions (e.g. grid losses) and our partner sites (V&A Dundee and V&A Wedgwood Collection).



Creating our Climate Action Plan

This Plan has been co-created with stakeholders across the museum, through cross departmental workshops in key thematic areas, focussed sessions with colleagues and engagement with our Executive Board and Board of Trustees.

The development of this Plan coincided with the creation of the V&A Strategy 2026–2030, so we have reviewed and incorporated any relevant sustainability and climate related ideas from staff and volunteer consultations.

Drivers for action

The climate crisis is a global challenge that demands urgent coordinated action across all sectors of society. As we witness the impacts of climate change accelerate, the window for action is rapidly closing. We have a responsibility to act decisively and to deliver our contribution for a just transition to net zero to prevent the worst impacts for people and planet.

We are already seeing the physical impacts of climate change on our museums. In 2025, we developed a detailed climate risk assessment identifying how extreme heat, water scarcity and surface water flooding are currently impacting our operations, collections and visitors and how this may change in the future. Our next step is to develop and implement a Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Reducing our environmental impact and preparing for a changing climate go hand in hand and are essential for a resilient future.

International Drivers

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a blueprint for sustainable development, adopted by all UN member states in 2015. They recognise that ending poverty must be integrated with efforts to enhance health and education, promote equality, drive economic development, while addressing climate change and protecting our oceans and forests. Our Plan supports multiple SDGs by embedding sustainability into our operations and using our platform to inspire change.

Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is a landmark, legally binding international treaty adopted in 2015 at COP21. It commits countries to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C, while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. As part of the UK's commitment, we recognise our role in supporting global action.



Image source: un.org/sustainabledevelopment. The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States

National Drivers

UK Climate Change Act

The UK Climate Change Act (2008) legally commits the UK to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It formalised national efforts on mitigation and adaptation by establishing a framework for carbon budgeting and adaptation planning, with independent oversight by the Climate Change Committee. We have aligned our Plan with this legislation, ensuring our actions support national targets.

Greening Government Commitments (GGCs)

The GGCs are environmental targets for central government departments and public bodies, covering emissions, waste, water use, procurement and climate adaptation. They support the UK's net zero goal and are updated every five years to reflect evolving priorities. They are a key driver of our Plan, enabling alignment with national policy and accountability through regular reporting to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

London Environment Strategy

Published in 2018, the London Environment Strategy sets out the Mayor of London's vision for a greener, cleaner and more resilient city. Our London sites fall within this strategic framework, and the museum also aligns with local climate strategies from the boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham.

Measuring our greenhouse gas emissions

Our emissions are calculated in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, using carbon accounting software Normative.

For scope 1 and 2 emissions sources, we use activity based data. For scope 3, we mainly use a spend based approach. Activity data is collected for water, operational waste and some object travel and we estimate employee commuting from staff surveys.

We have excluded visitor travel as this is not mandatory under the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and object acquisitions. As objects are cultural artefacts acquired for the purpose of preservation and display, which have been created decades, hundreds or even thousands of years ago, the emissions associated with the production of these objects have been excluded. However, we do include the transportation of these objects to us.

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol groups emission sources into three scopes:

Scope 1 direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by the V&A.

Scope 2 indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy including electricity, heating and cooling.

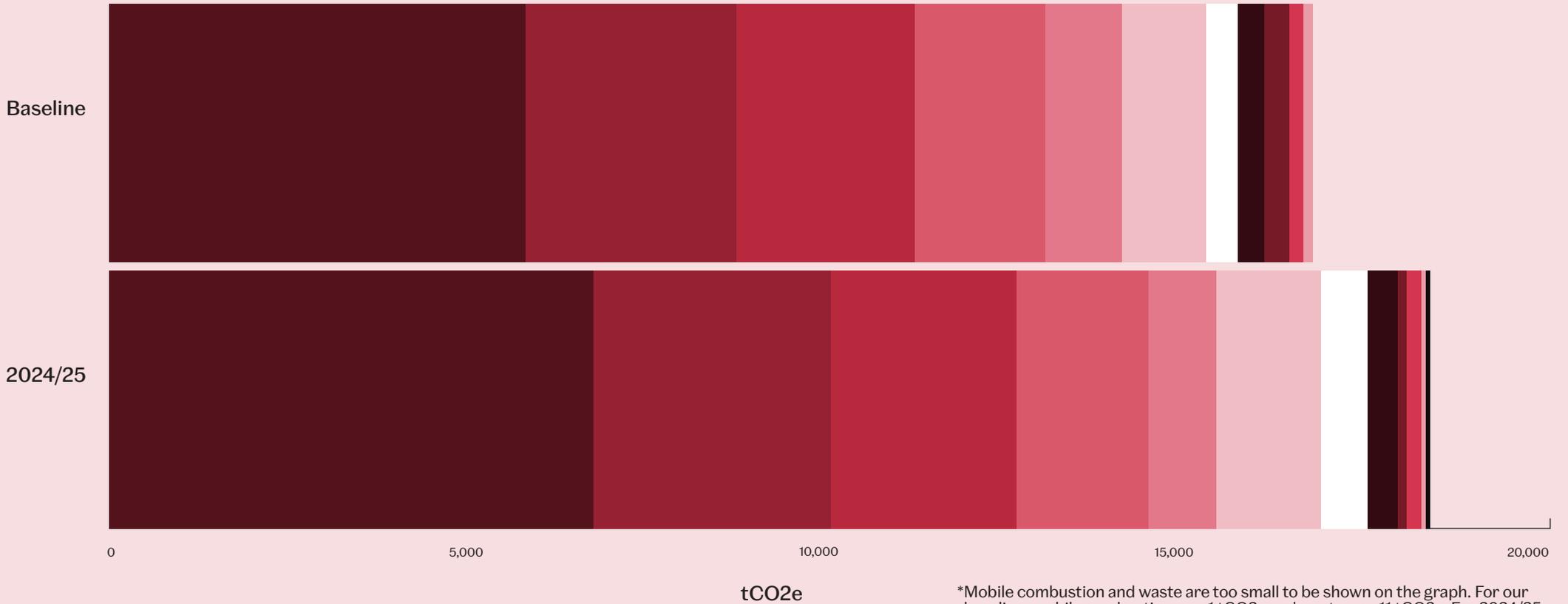
Scope 3 indirect emissions from activity not directly owned or controlled by the V&A. This includes, but is not limited to, staff and object travel, procurement of goods and services, investments, waste and water. It also includes our partner sites, V&A Wedgwood Collection and V&A Dundee.

Our emissions

Our total emissions in 2024/25 increased by 10%. This increase included reporting on fugitive gases, gases released from air conditioning units (scope 1), and V&A Wedgwood Collection (scope 3) for the first time. Growing our sites at V&A East has increased our number of staff, resulting in an increase in business travel and commuting emissions.

Around 80% of our emissions are from purchased goods and services, investments, electricity and upstream transportation and distribution (object shipping).

- Purchased goods and services
- Investments
- Electricity
- Upstream transportation and distribution (e.g. object travel)
- Fuel and energy-related activities (e.g. grid losses)
- Heat
- Franchises (partner sites)
- Employee commuting
- Stationary combustion (e.g. boilers)
- Business travel
- Cooling
- Fugitive emissions (e.g. gases from AC units)



*Mobile combustion and waste are too small to be shown on the graph. For our baseline, mobile combustion was 1 tCO2e and waste was 11 tCO2e. For 2024/25, mobile combustion was 1 tCO2e and waste was 5 tCO2e.

Our sites

The V&A are a family of museums.

Our directly controlled sites are:

V&A South Kensington

Young V&A

V&A East Storehouse

V&A East Museum

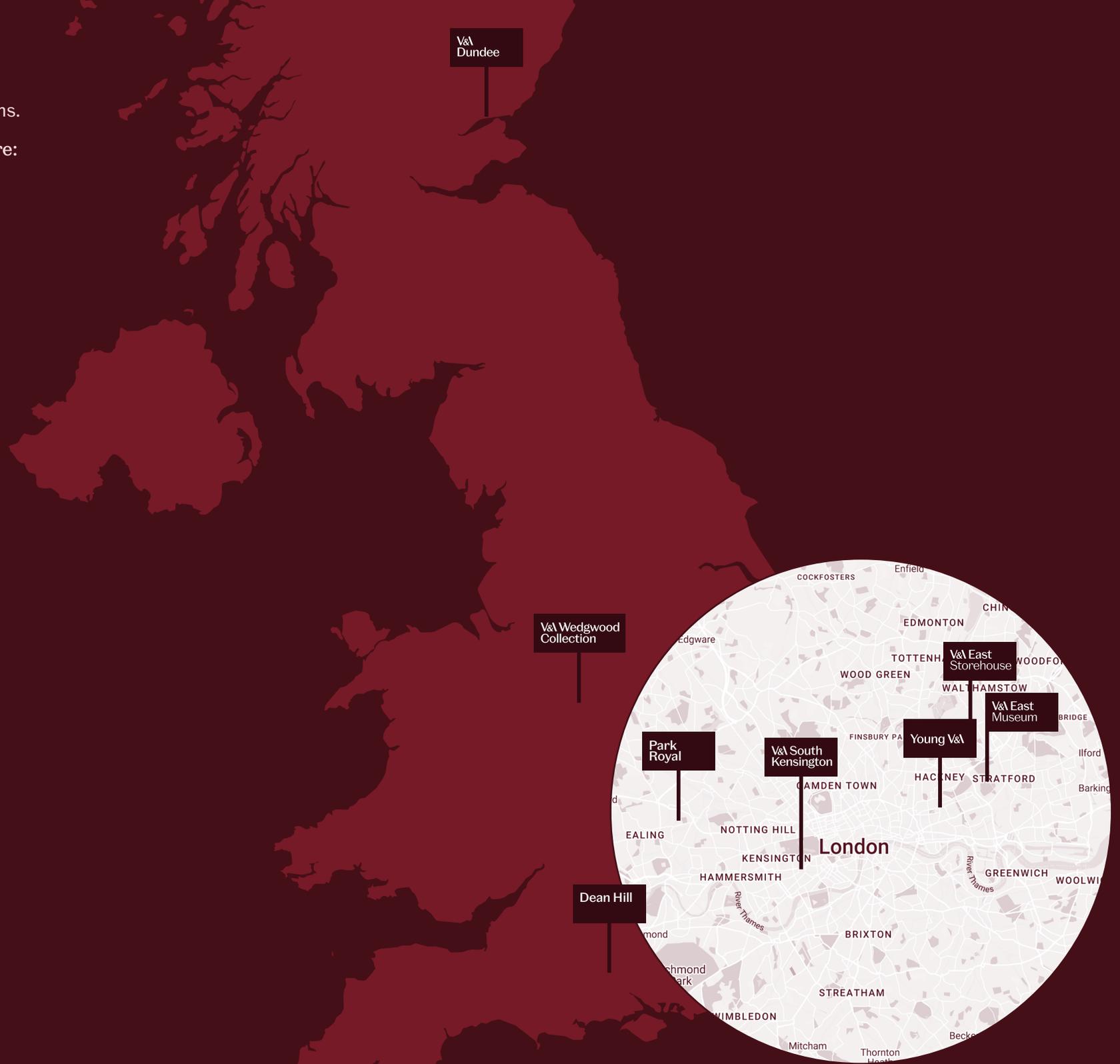
Park Royal (retail warehouse)

Dean Hill (storage facility)

Our partner sites:

V&A Wedgwood Collection

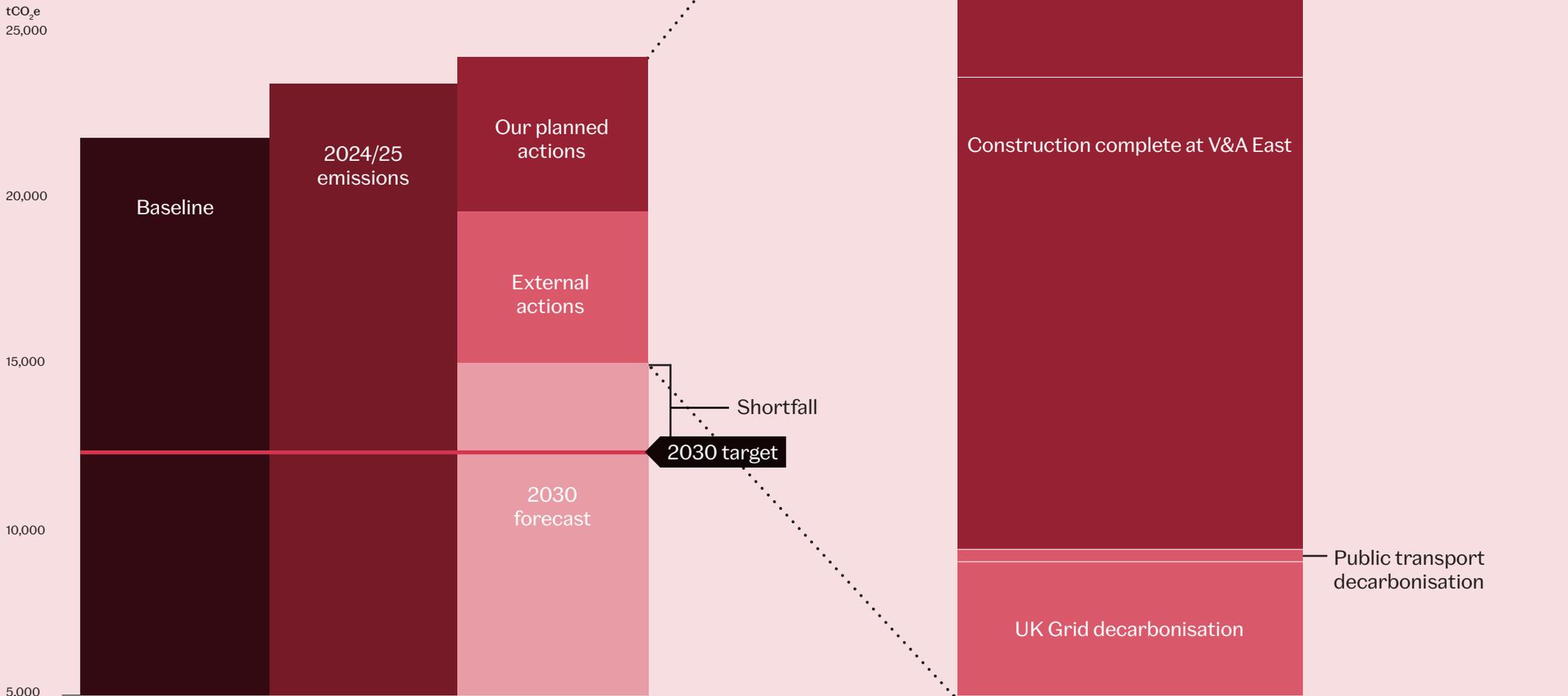
V&A Dundee



Planned changes to emissions

The graph below shows our business as usual emissions forecast against our 2030 target date. We expect emissions to change as a result of planned activity within the museum and external initiatives outside our control.

Whilst our planned actions are expected to achieve significant reductions, further action is required to achieve our ambition. These actions are detailed over the next pages.



Actions

1 Our people, programmes and partnerships

To drive positive climate action, we will need the right skills, knowledge, information and technical support. However, effective action cannot be done alone, and we will continue to foster partnerships, both nationally and internationally, including academic partnerships to help drive innovation and learning. We will collaborate with artists and makers and use our platform to champion planet positive design and creativity.

We will...

1.1 Develop our knowledge, skills and capability

Assess knowledge, skills and capability of staff to deliver a programme of activity that enables actions to be successfully implemented.

1.2 Increase communication and awareness

Develop an internal and external sustainability communications plan that shares behind-the-scenes stories, highlights good practice by artists and designers, and reports progress against the Climate Action Plan.

1.3 Implement internal behaviour change campaigns

1.4 Develop a digital and, information and communications technology workstream

Develop a plan, aligned to the Greening Government Commitments ICT strategy, to improve efficiency of the digital estate.

1.5 Continue creating museum, academic and community partnerships

Continue engaging with museums, cultural institutions, and local communities around sustainability issues and identifying key priority areas for research and innovation with academic institutions. These partnerships include, South Ken Zero Emissions Nature Positive Neighbourhood (SK ZEN+), Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Environment Forum and London Climate Ready Partnership.

1.6 Continue to embed sustainability and climate change related themes in learning programmes where appropriate

1.7 Continue engaging our audiences on sustainability and climate related themes through public programming where appropriate



Actions

2 Our buildings and collections

The long-term care for national collections will be undertaken in a climate friendly way. We will do this by moving away from fossil fuels, making sure our buildings are as efficient as possible and using a risk-based approach to collections, based on research.

We will work with district heat network operators for V&A South Kensington and V&A East to ensure networks are decarbonised in line with our net zero goal. We will also continue to work with our partner sites V&A Dundee and V&A Wedgwood Collection to ensure we work together to reduce emissions.

We will...

2.1 Work with the National History Museum to decarbonise the heat network at South Kensington

Develop and implement a decarbonisation plan for the district heat network for V&A South Kensington.

2.2 Remain engaged with heat network operator to decarbonise V&A East

2.3 Remove fossil fuel use at Young V&A

Replace the gas heating system at Young V&A with heat pumps.

2.4 Create a zero-carbon kitchen at V&A South Kensington

Replace the gas catering equipment with electric.

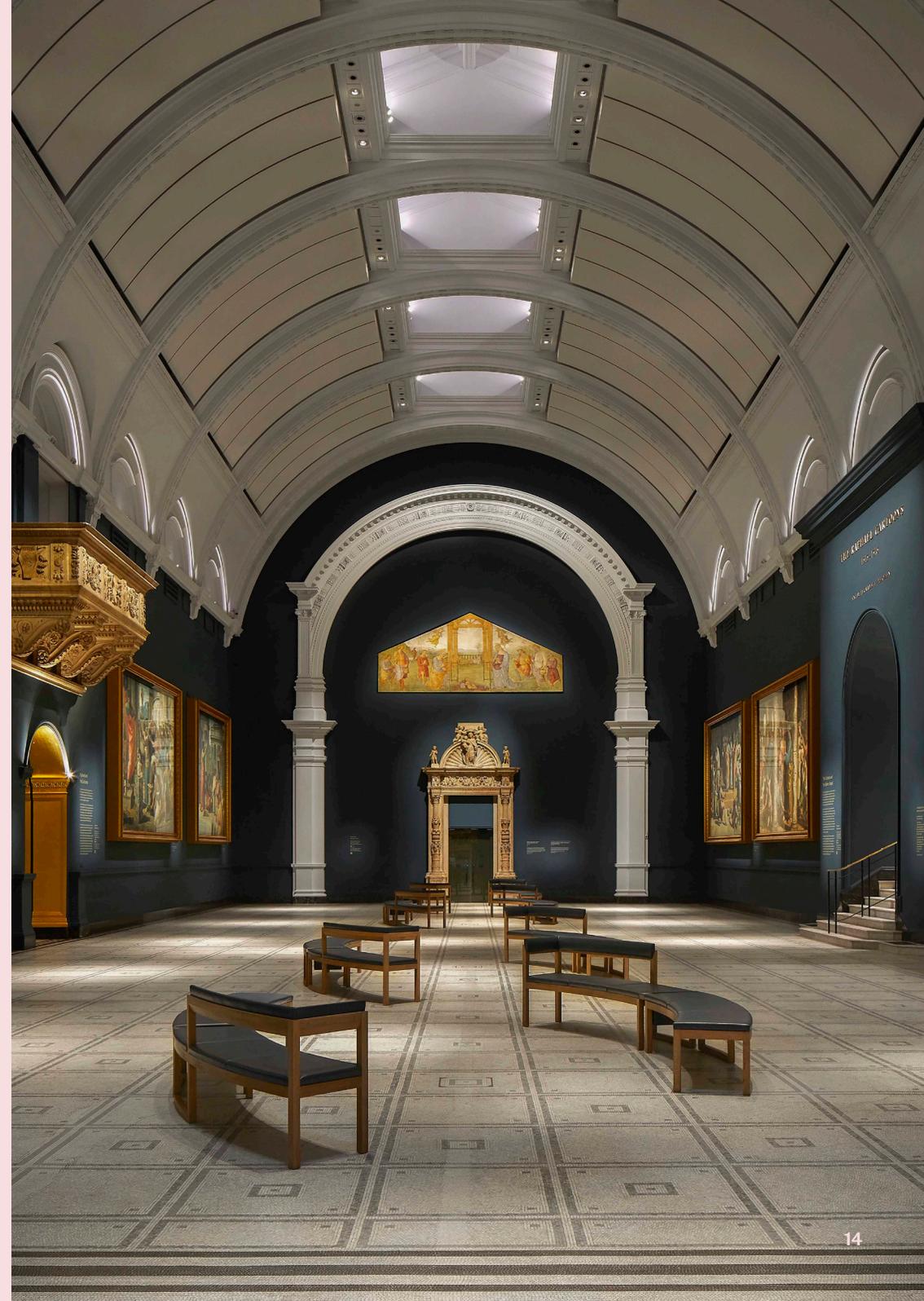
2.5. Continue to improve the energy efficiency of building systems through a programme of activity

This includes enabling dynamic temperature and humidity set points that reduce the conditioning demand whilst remaining aligned with the V&A Collections Management Environment Policy, optimisation of building management system controls and plant settings, and review opportunities to enable improved zoning of the heating system.

2.6 Supply V&A South Kensington with REGO backed zero carbon renewable electricity

Work with the Natural History Museum to ensure zero carbon renewable electricity is supplied to V&A South Kensington via the district heating system.

2.7 Develop and implement a water efficiency strategy across V&A sites



Actions

3 How we travel and transport objects

As an international museum there will always be a need to travel and transport objects. However, we recognise the need to reduce our travel emissions by moving to a zero-carbon fleet, prioritising low carbon object travel and reducing emissions from business travel.

We will...

3.1 Decarbonise the V&A fleet and transport services

Include sustainability metrics into all decisions around the future of the V&A fleet, including courier service selection and vehicle electrification for any fleet vehicles retained.

3.2 Reduce business travel emissions

Cut travel emissions by 18% by 2030.

3.3 Continue to monitor and reduce the transport emissions from couriers

Continue to implement our Courier Policy aligned to the Bizot Green Protocol.

3.4 Develop a sustainable object travel policy and guidance

Align the policy to the Bizot Green Protocol and Courier Policy.

3.5 Engage with object transportation agents regarding continuous emissions reduction

Working in partnership with suppliers to improve data capture, aligning net zero ambitions and supporting their transition to low carbon object logistics.

3.6 Improve sustainability of object crating

This includes reviewing crate specification to increase sustainability and working with supply chain to improve reusability and recyclability of crating and packing materials.



Actions

4 Exhibitions and displays

We will continue to improve the sustainability in exhibition and displays design, build and delivery through our Exhibitions Working Group. We're committed to increasing reuse, ensuring materials stay in circulation for longer and making sure paints and finishes are environmentally responsible.

We will...

4.1 Develop and implement sustainable exhibition design guidance and principles

Draw on international best practice and engage with exhibition design and build contractors where applicable.

4.2 Develop a system that maximises re-use of exhibition build materials

This work includes expanding and managing storage capacity and piloting a digital platform to track and enable the reuse of equipment and materials. It also involves collaborating with museum and gallery partners to assess material flows and explore the feasibility of a materials reuse hub.

4.3 Develop a streamlined methodology to measure and report the carbon impact of all major exhibitions



Actions

5 How we buy and sell

Our ambition is to align our supply chain to global climate goals. From the goods and services we buy, to the food and drink we serve in our cafes and the products we sell in our shops, we want to ensure they are environmentally and socially responsible.

We will...

5.1 Work in partnership with our direct suppliers to ensure they are committed to net zero by 2050

By 2030, 50% of our direct suppliers, by emissions, are committed to and progressing towards a net zero date that is no later than 2050.

5.2 Develop and implement a procurement toolkit and guidance

This includes both small spend and spend over £50k to provide consistency as to how sustainability is embedded into all procurement decisions.

5.3 Improve scope 3 carbon accounting data to move towards supplier and activity-based data

This includes training and guidance for suppliers to enable them to provide consistent and improved sustainability data throughout the contract term and enables monitoring of supplier progress against their net zero commitments.

5.4 Develop, disseminate and implement a sustainable catering policy

5.5 Develop and implement sustainable retail guidelines

Set out expectations (including both carbon and broader environmental and social requirements) for retail procurement decisions.



Actions

We will strive for year-on-year improvements in waste management, reduce single use items and cut food waste.

6 Waste and circular economy

We will...

6.1 Reduce total waste and recycling volumes

Cut carbon emissions from waste and recycling by 18% by 2030.

6.2 Establish and implement a sustainable waste and circular economy policy

Outline priorities for recycling, reuse and reducing single use plastics in cafes, retail and back of house areas.

6.3 Conduct an annual waste audit

Monitor progress against all waste related actions, and to identify opportunities for improvement through an annual audit.

6.4 Monitor and reduce food waste across all museum operations

Implementing sustainability in catering contracts, including (but not limited to) food waste tracking and insights, and developing community food partnerships to redistribute surplus food.



Our expected impact on emissions

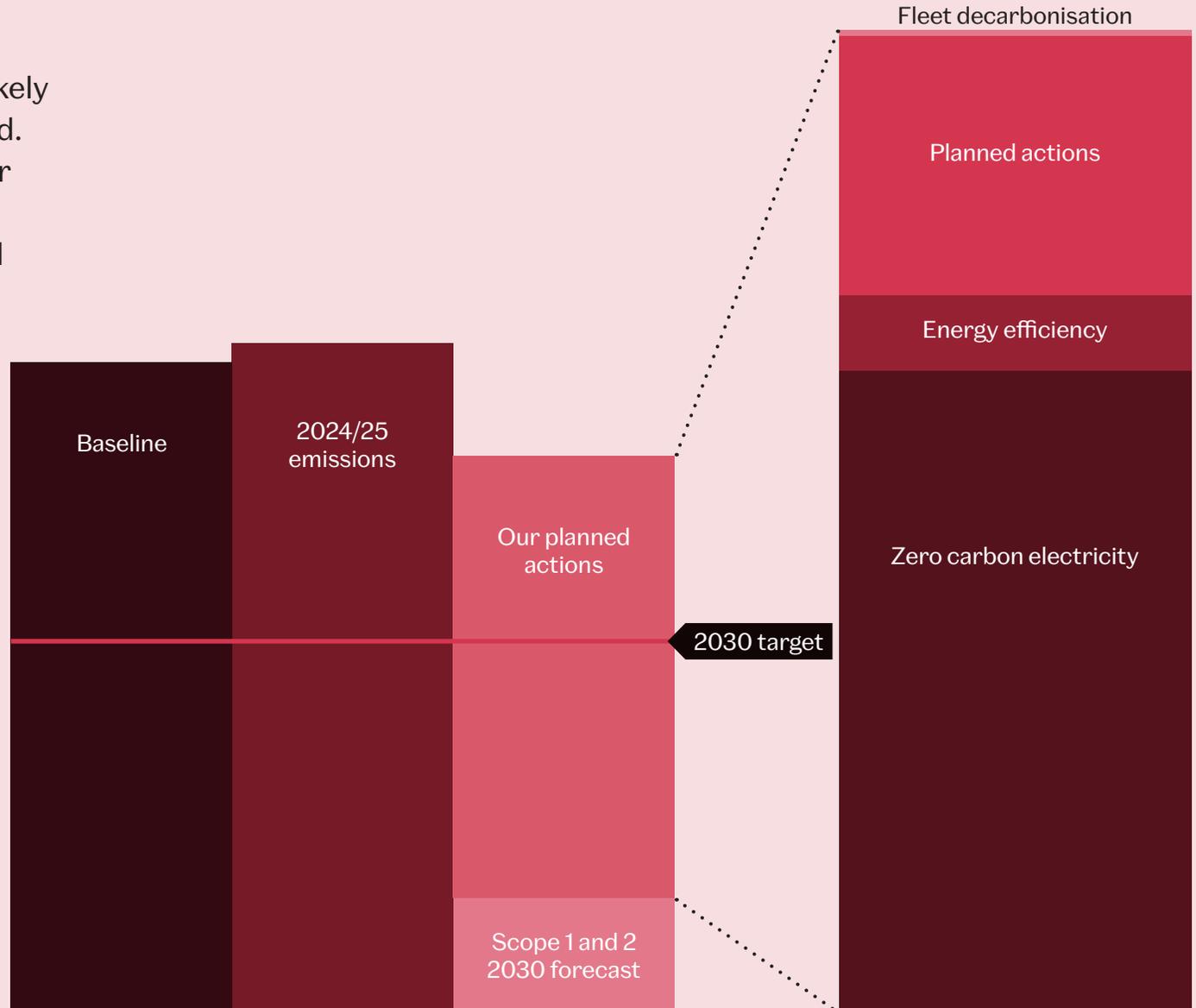
Scope 1 and 2

The graph below shows how emissions are likely to change if our actions are fully implemented. We have grouped actions and estimated their impact based on stakeholder engagement, technical reports and assumptions informed by publicly available industry data.

Achieving our targets for scope 1 and 2 emissions has four key dependencies:

- Buying zero-carbon electricity at South Kensington
- Working with the Natural History Museum to decarbonise heat at V&A South Kensington
- Energy efficiency programme across the estate
- Successful implementation of the our planned actions

If actions are fully implemented, we expect to achieve our scope 1 and 2 carbon targets by 2035 and our 2030 near term target.



Scope 3 emissions

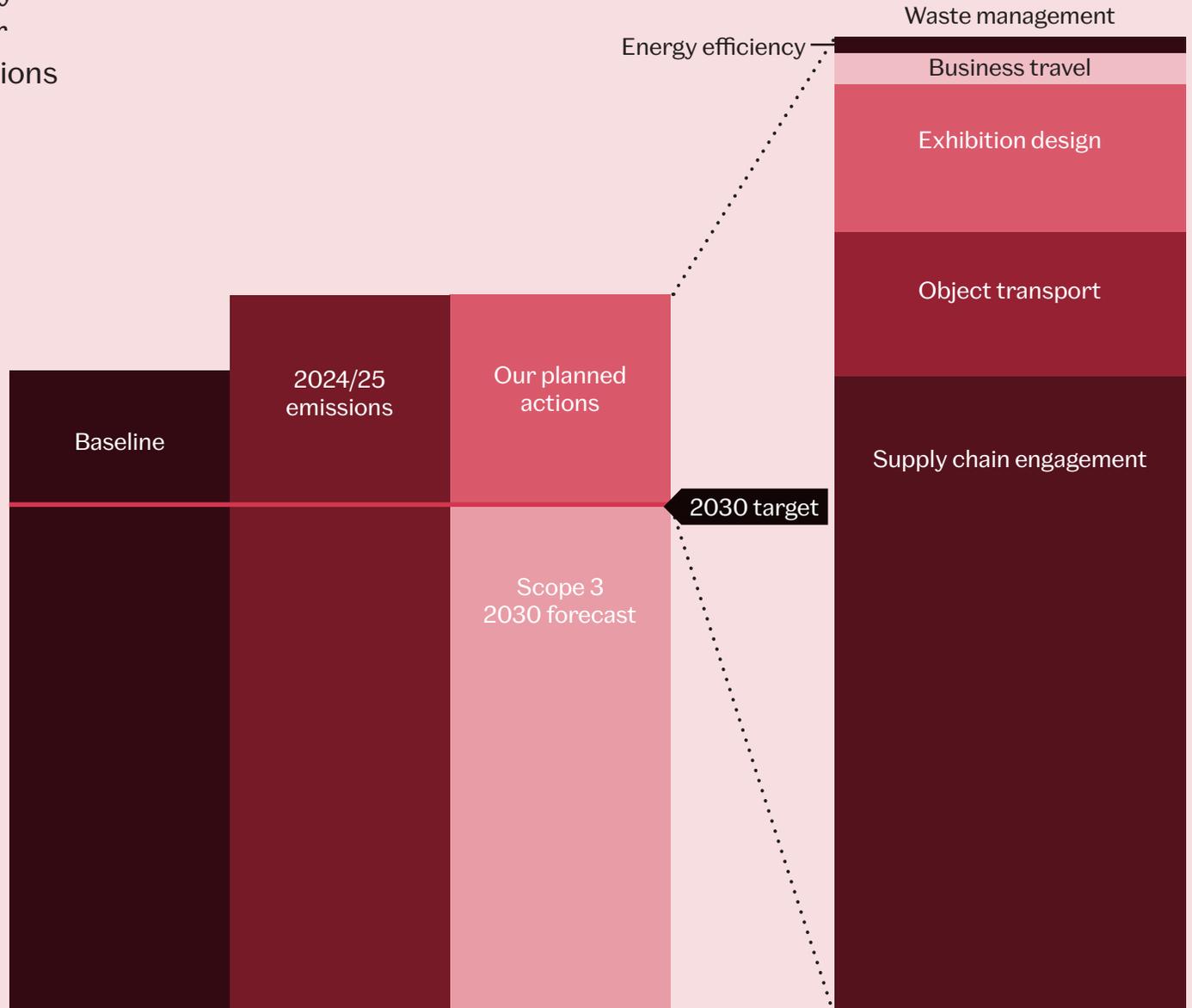
The graph below shows how the planned actions could help in reducing scope 3 emissions.

Our scope 3 target is based on aligning supply chain activity with global climate goals rather than focussing on absolute emissions reductions made by our suppliers, which can be difficult to measure.

The impact of these actions are expected to achieve a 90% emissions reduction by 2050.

Achieving our targets for scope 3 emissions has four key dependencies:

- Supply chain decarbonisation, including working with sustainable suppliers
- Embedding circular principles into temporary exhibition design
- Decarbonising object travel to our sites
- Successful implementation of the planned actions



Delivering on our Plan

Our actions require collaborative, and in many cases, transformative action across the museum. These actions have been identified through extensive stakeholder engagement and require cross-functional collaboration.

Managing this programme of activity requires robust governance, to make sure decision making, reporting and accountability enable effective delivery against targets.



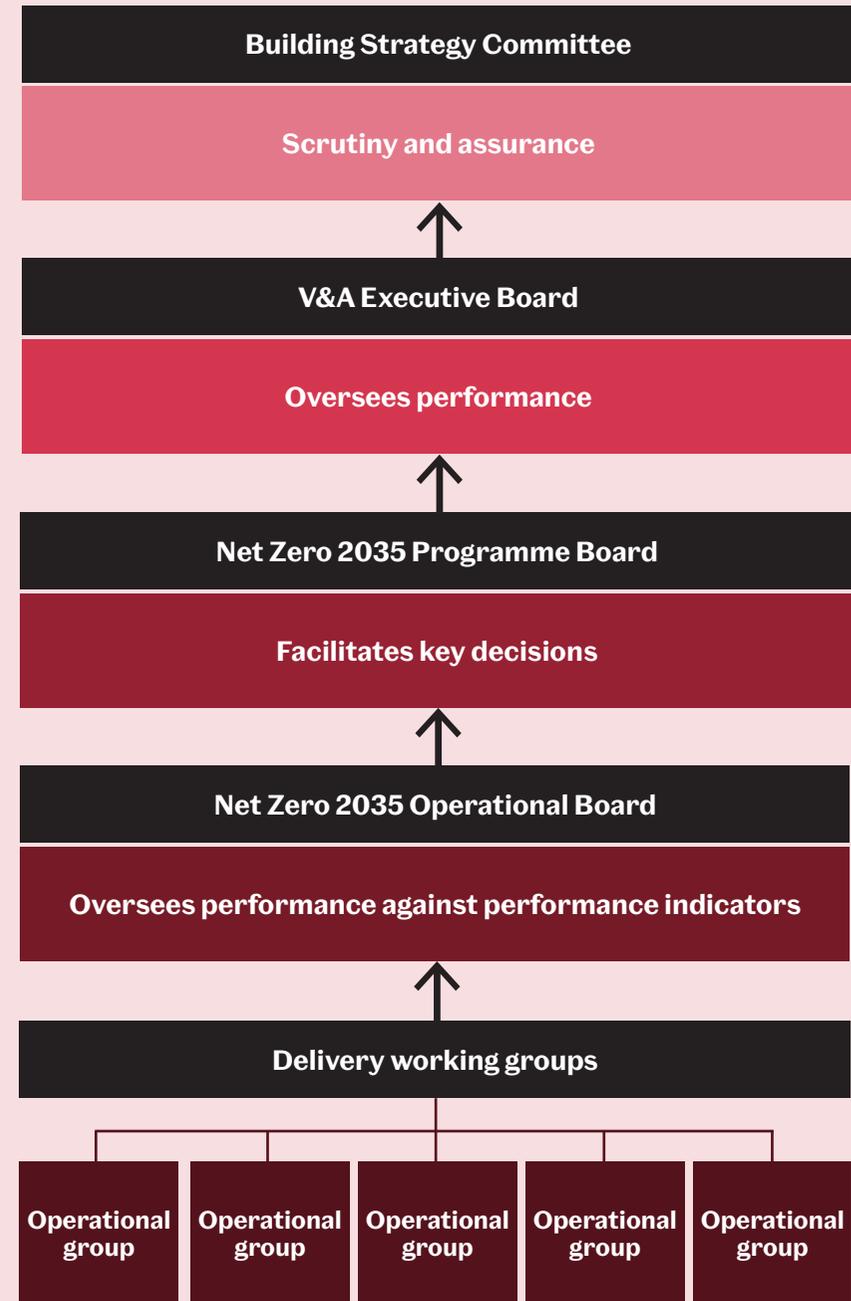
Our Net Zero 2035 programme is overseen by the Executive Board and Building Strategy Committee. Delivery is driven through the Net Zero 2035 Operational Board and working groups.

The Net Zero Operational Board is responsible for collating updates from specific delivery working groups, such as the Exhibitions Working Group and Bizot Working Group, and teams managing performance against sustainability related performance indicators. The Operational Board reports progress to the Programme Board for key decision making.

Our Sustainability team sits at the heart of this governance framework, chairing the Net Zero Operational and Programme Boards, and is a hub of knowledge and expertise to support delivery and best practice.

Establishing new, and consolidating existing, delivery working groups will support this reporting structure to facilitate cross functional collaboration and implementation.

An annual delivery plan will underpin the Climate Action Plan and progress will be reported on our website each year.



Our Climate Action Plan has been designed to be viewed digitally, and uses a colour palette which reduces energy use when viewed online. Please think twice before printing.

The logo for V&A, featuring the letters 'V' and 'A' in a large, white, serif font, with an ampersand '&' in a smaller, white, serif font positioned between them. The logo is set against a dark blue background.