



University of
Reading

**Environmental
Sustainability
Report
2022/23**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability remains one of the University of Reading's strategic drivers. We are firmly committed to embedding sustainability across all our activities – ranging from our research and teaching, to our engagement with local and global communities, to our own operations and the need to take steps to reduce our own environmental impact. Climate change is one of the biggest environmental issues facing the planet and we are proud that our university is a world leader in climate science. Tackling this threat requires us to work together and help each other understand what's happening: only then, will we find solutions. This sentiment sits behind our approach to all areas of sustainability, as demonstrated through the progress outlined in this report, and the future commitments we have made.

This annual environmental sustainability report aims to summarise progress against our key sustainability targets over the 12 months to July 2023, as well as provide a wider review of our environmental sustainability initiatives, and a look forward to the year ahead. Progress against our targets is highlighted throughout the report, with more detailed reference information on energy, carbon, water, and waste included in the appendices.

“2022/23 has again seen the University make considerable progress in improving its sustainability and reducing its carbon emissions. Highlights include reaching a 61.2% reduction in carbon emissions against baseline, achieving 4th place in the People & Planet University League, launching Our Future First sustainable behaviours programme – which included the setup of a network of sustainability champions across our Schools and Functions, embedding sustainability principles into a new business travel policy, and achieving our best-ever position in the Times Higher Education Global Impact Rankings.

However, we are not complacent and recognise that we must continue to ramp up our efforts to support the global drive to tackle climate change and the rapid decline of the natural world. As such, we have made a number of ambitious sustainability commitments for 2023/24. Our major energy-savings programme is targeting £1m of energy-saving projects to help mitigate energy costs while they are at an all-time high and support our trajectory towards our carbon targets. We are actively discussing a new ethical careers policy, and will commence works on two major heat pump projects to accelerate further decarbonisation. We embrace the challenge! ”

Dan Fernbank, Energy and Sustainability Director

Our sustainability highlights

The University of Reading prides itself on being an environmental sustainability leader, consistently delivering on its commitments to create a better future.

Our achievements so far:



NET ZERO

carbon emissions commitment by 2030



1ST in UK and Europe for responsible production and consumption (SDG12) in THE GIR¹



ZERO

direct or indirect investments in fossil fuels



In **TOP 50 UNIVERSITIES GLOBALLY** for our work in seven of the 17 SDGs² as ranked by THE GIR



4TH in latest People and Planet University League



2,076 different species identified living in the wild on Whiteknights campus



61.2%

carbon emissions reduction on 2008/09 baseline



ISO 14001/ISO 50001 integrated and certified Energy and Environmental Management System



35%

reduction in waste generated per person against 2015/16 baseline



THREE-STAR Food Made Good award



87%

sustainable travel target met



Fairtrade University **TWO-STAR** status



13 consecutive Green Flag Awards for Whiteknights campus

¹ Times Higher Education Global Impact Rankings

² United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

2.0 UPDATE ON 2022/23 TARGETS

Section	2022/23 headline targets	2022/23 target status	Details	SDGs supported
3.0 Environmental sustainability strategy PAGE 8	Publish new environmental sustainability strategy in academic year 2022/23	—	Publication delayed to 2023/24	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
5.0 Compliance and management systems PAGE 12	Transfer to new external auditor and maintain the EEMS to the ISO14001:2015 and ISO50001:2018 standard to retain certification	✓	New auditor in post and EEMS certification maintained	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
6.0 Energy and carbon PAGE 13	Achieve 5–10% energy savings to support progress towards our interim 2024 carbon reduction target	✓	Further carbon emissions reductions this year mean our emissions are now 61.2% below our 2008/09 baseline	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 13 CLIMATE ACTION
	Develop an Energy Action Plan, setting out plans for the next three years to reduce carbon emissions, energy, and utilities costs across the University	?	Original target to develop an Energy Action Plan has been replaced with updating the Net Zero Carbon plan in line with SCEF. Progress has been made towards this	
7.0 Water PAGE 17	Review and develop plan for improved building-level water metering across the estate	→	Water meter review has been completed and a plan developed, with a project commissioned to install more building-level water meters across campus, commencing 2023/24	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
	Maintain water usage at the same level as last year	—	2022/23's consumption has risen dramatically, now only 5% below the 2011/12 baseline compared with 43% in 2021/22.	
8.0 Waste and resource use PAGE 18	Continue to reduce annual total operational waste produced per person (staff and student FTE) and move the University's waste up the Waste Hierarchy	→	Waste produced per person is 35% lower than 2015/16 baseline, although this is higher than the last two years due to a rebound of on-site working following the COVID-19 pandemic	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 15 LIFE ON LAND
	Develop the three-year Delivery Plan to enact the Waste and Resource Management Strategy and monitor progress against its objectives and targets	✓	Three-year Delivery Plan produced, approved and published	
9.0 Sustainable travel PAGE 22	Produce new five-year Travel Plan, utilising the results from the 2022 Travel Survey	→	Publication delayed to 2023/24, interim one-year Travel Plan produced in the meantime	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 13 CLIMATE ACTION
	Launch trial of new Park and Ride scheme to the University	✓	Park and Ride scheme launched	
	Launch the University's new Sustainable Travel Principles, seeking to cut business travel emissions and encourage the uptake of low-carbon forms of commuter travel	✓	Sustainable Travel Principles launched and business travel policy published	
10.0 Engagement, awareness and behaviour change PAGE 24	Commence the University's sustainable behaviours programme	✓	Our Future First sustainable behaviours programme launched and network of 40 sustainability champions developed	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 4 QUALITY EDUCATION 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Section	2022/23 headline targets	2022/23 target status	Details	SDGs supported
11.0 Environmental protection and pollution prevention PAGE 26	Maintain our target of no more than three emissions/discharges incidents from University activities on a rolling three-year average	✓	No more than three environmental incidents reported in 2022/23, in line with our target	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 13 CLIMATE ACTION
12.0 Responsible procurement PAGE 29	Attain the Fairtrade Universities and College Award, which we are currently working towards	✓	Fairtrade University Two Star status awarded	1 NO POVERTY 5 GENDER EQUALITY 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
	Consider how to reduce procurement-related, scope 3 emissions, led by our Responsible Procurement Group	—	Engaged with organisations to help us better understand how to improve the capture and quality of data for our procurement-related, scope 3 emissions calculations ahead of implementing reduction initiatives	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
13.0 Conservation and biodiversity PAGE 30	Develop a new biodiversity plan for publication in 2022/23	→	Publication delayed to 2023/24, baseline study completed in 2022/23	13 CLIMATE ACTION 14 LIFE BELOW WATER 15 LIFE ON LAND
14.0 Community and community involvement PAGE 31	Hold or take part in a clean-up event in our local area	✓	Multiple staff and student litter pick events held in 2022/23	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
	Improve the capture of information on community events held, to support the future measurement and setting of annual targets to improve engagement	✓	Data now being captured on community forums and litter picks and 2023/24 targets set	
15.0 Sustainable food PAGE 32	Make progress towards target of 25% reduction in food emissions intensity (kg of CO ₂ per kg of protein-based foods purchased) by 2030, as measured by MCURC's Collective Impact Initiative Methodology	→	So far, we have achieved a substantial decline in % of beef used, and our focus now will be utilising less carbon-intensive major protein sources to reduce our food emissions in the future by following a plant-forward approach to all meals	2 ZERO HUNGER 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
	Develop a plan for reducing carbon emissions from energy used in campus catering facilities, including heating and hot water	→	A number of projects have been implemented to reduce energy use/carbon emissions within our campus catering facilities	
16.0 Education for sustainable development PAGE 34	Develop a new ESD plan for publication in 2022/23	→	Publication delayed to 2023/24, and a commitment made to develop a University-Wide Module for all students to provide a comprehensive grounding in climate and environmental sustainability	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
17.0 Ethical investment and banking PAGE 36	Review and enhance our ethical investment policy	✓	New investment policy published with additional criteria to support sustainability	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
18.0 Ethical careers and recruitment PAGE 37	Review and enhance our terms and conditions around ethics and sustainability in careers and recruitment	→	A review has been undertaken to identify the ways in which we may be able to develop our terms relating to ethics and sustainability in the future	5 GENDER EQUALITY 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Key

— No progress made towards target

→ Progress made towards target

✓ Target achieved

? Target amended

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Our Strategic Plan

The University Strategic Plan sets out our commitment to play our part in tackling climate change and be recognised as a University that leads on global environmental sustainability. Since launching this strategy in 2020, we have progressed ambitious plans across key areas of our teaching, research impact, and operations, working towards being known as one of the 'greenest' universities. We have made significant progress thanks to excellent collaboration across our community – and that has already been recognised in improved performance in key external sustainability ranking schemes.

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan is currently being updated to set out our ambitions for the next three-year period across three themes:



Education & Engagement

The University can influence societal changes by engaging, enabling, and equipping all members of its community – staff, students and alumni – as leaders, decision-makers, consumers, parents, and citizens. For the next generations of students, in particular, the impacts of the changing climate and further decline in the natural world will be their lived reality. We must support all of our students to develop both an understanding of the challenges ahead, and the skills and knowledge required to address them in their future careers and day-to-day lives.



Research & Influence

The University already makes a hugely significant contribution to our understanding of the climate and environment, including through our world-leading climate research, and our strengths in agriculture, food, health, the built environment, and business. We must work to support and increase our impact and ability to create meaningful change. We must also fulfil our duty as a 'University for Reading', working closely with our neighbours and partners, and playing a lead role in supporting Reading and the Thames Valley towards a resilient, sustainable future.



A Green University

We have already made sector-leading progress in reducing our carbon emissions and minimising our waste, and we are increasingly applying our own research expertise to how we manage our operations. How the University manages operations and business activities, conducts teaching and research, and works with partners around the globe, will all help to ensure our community continues working together to deliver a better future.

Reading in top five green universities in the UK

People & Planet's University League is an independent league table of UK universities ranked by environmental and ethical performance, compiled annually by the UK's largest student campaigning network, People & Planet.

We are proud to have been ranked in the top tier as a 'first class' university, ranking 4th out of 153 UK universities in the 2022/23 League.

Achieving a top five position by 2026 was a key target identified in the University's Strategic Plan; our strong progress towards environmental sustainability ambitions enabled us to reach this target several years early.

Read more at peopleandplanet.org/university-league

Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for ensuring a more sustainable future for people and planet, spanning society, economy, and the natural world. The Goals set the agenda for sustainable development to 2030.

The University of Reading actively contributes towards all 17 SDGs. We also participate in the Times Higher Education (THE) Global Impact Rankings, which scores higher education institutions on their work towards each goal.

In 2023, the University was ranked at joint 61st in the world out of 1,625 participating institutions – an improvement on our position of 101–200 in 2022.

This position puts Reading as the 15th-highest ranked among UK institutions (of the 57 that submitted themselves for inclusion).

Reading was the second-highest performing university in the world – and the best in the UK and Europe – for its contribution to supporting SDG12 – Responsible Production and Consumption.

Overall, we achieved top 50 global positions in seven of the 17 SDG categories:

Global top 50 rankings in seven of the 17 SDG categories

- SDG1 – No poverty (45 out of 876)
- SDG2 – Zero hunger (joint 22 out of 647)
- SDG8 – Decent work and economic growth (joint 41 out of 960)
- SDG10 – Reducing inequality (30 out of 901)
- SDG12 – Responsible production and consumption (2 out of 674)
- SDG13 – Climate action (10 out of 735)
- SDG15 – Life on land (8 out of 586)

“I am particularly proud that this latest ranking recognises our efforts around environmental sustainability, a core part of the University of Reading mission. Our research, education and action on climate change, responsible resource use, and support for the natural world have been ranked among the best globally. We want to be one of the greenest universities in the world, and this achievement shows how the world is increasingly agreeing with us.”

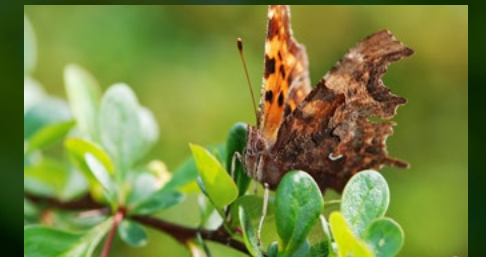
Professor Robert Van de Noort

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Reading

Read more at timeshighereducation.com/impactrankings

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Through world-leading research and innovation, the University is supporting efforts to help people and countries adapt to the impacts of climate change around the world.



Leading the way on climate science

- The climate stripes, developed by Professor Ed Hawkins, were used in the Sixth Assessment Report produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a stark reminder of the consequences of failing to act on climate change.
- The Walker Institute led our involvement at COP27, hosting a major side event on water security risks.
- We've shown that transitioning to a hydrogen-based economy could reduce carbon emissions by up to 99% (when replacing fossil fuels) but that vulnerable landscapes are less able to suck carbon out of the atmosphere due to rising temperatures, deforestation and farming, undermining the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Developing sustainable agricultural solutions

- Our research has shown that agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate impacts. For example, declining spring hay yields – of up to 50% by 2080 – could impact the resilience of farming businesses, and over one-fifth of the UK may have suitable weather by 2050 to grow Chardonnay grapes, expanding our domestic wine industry.
- We've shown how farms could boost food production if they planted trees and insect-friendly flowers between and alongside their crops. We're also looking at the problem of dairy cow heat stress to ensure sustainable milk production and improve cow welfare.
- We've come together with 15 other universities to form the Agricultural Universities Council (AUC) to turn innovation in agricultural research into practical farming outcomes to benefit farmers, people and wildlife across the UK.

Creating sustainable future foods

- We're working to revolutionise British diets by encouraging consumers and food producers to switch to bread containing healthier and less environmentally damaging faba beans (commonly known as broad beans). We've also shown that younger people are significantly more likely to consider eating sustainable protein sources such as lab-grown meat or insects.
- We're running a major project to provide citizens of culturally diverse disadvantaged communities with choice and agency over the food they consume. We're teaching children how to recognise and recycle different types of containers and wrappings.

Reducing air pollution

- We're helping local communities to breathe healthier air by equipping schools and families with tools and skills to identify and tackle air pollution and working with Reading Council to deliver an interactive schools education programme to increase awareness and encourage behaviour change.



Changing UK energy use

- We're leading a key theme in the new £15m Energy Demand Centre, aiming to change the way the UK uses energy and move energy demand loads to help meet its net zero target by 2050.

Addressing water sustainability

- Our research ranges from identifying how climate change intensifies the world's water cycle, leading to more extreme wet and dry periods, to show how social inequalities are driving urban water crises more than environmental factors.
- We've developed a new way to measure ocean carbon from satellite images and our first-of-its-kind research on releasing electric charge into fog to influence the behaviour of water drops could one day help provide enough water for the global population.

Tackling biodiversity loss

- We announced a new research collaboration with Kew Gardens to develop nature-based solutions to tackle biodiversity loss.
- We've shown that a shortage of basic botany skills is hampering environmental improvements. We're educating the public about the vital importance of hedgerows to support biodiversity and counter climate change.
- We've shown that supporting and enhancing pollinators could help stabilise crop production, reducing uncertainty that causes food price spikes, but that warmer springs are causing British bees to wake up earlier, threatening the pollination of crops such as apples and pears.

5.0 COMPLIANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS) is a structured framework which drives and supports our obligations and ambitions to reduce our environmental impacts. By embedding sustainability into key business processes, the system enables the University to demonstrate effective continual improvement of its environmental performance.

Tracking our progress

- In March 2023, the recertification of the management system took place and resulted in the EEMS being certified for the next three years, with surveillance audits taking place annually.
- The March 2023 audit was completed by a new certification body and new auditors who assessed the University over nine days. The auditors were extremely impressed with the level of commitment that University staff showed to sustainability and environmental protection.

- Our 2022/23 management review concluded that the EEMS continues to help embed sustainability into everyday practices and decision making, and successfully gives a framework to set objectives, identify opportunities and risks, and monitor progress via internal audits and management reviews.

Our future commitments

- Continue to maintain the EEMS to the internationally recognised ISO14001:2015 and ISO50001:2018 standards.

6.0 ENERGY AND CARBON

In 2022, the University's Estates function published a new Estates Strategy, which firmly embeds our commitment to becoming a Net Zero Carbon university by 2030 into our development plans. This will require significant investment, with expectations that some of this will be secured from grant funding. Already, £3.1m has been secured this year for two major decarbonisation projects.

We continue to lead the way in reducing emissions, with 61% reductions of our in-scope emissions now achieved against our 2008/09 baseline (see Appendix 3 for scope details). From analysis of higher education sector records from 2021/22, the University ranked as having made the largest reductions of any research-intensive university³.

We were pleased to be one of 21 higher and further education institutes invited to take part in the Royal Anniversary Trust's Platinum Jubilee Challenge, culminating in an ambitious roadmap for carbon reduction in the tertiary education sector. This includes a new Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF), which we will be seeking to report against moving forward. Work continues to align with this standard and has highlighted the need to treat our halls of residence emissions differently, which are run by a third party, UPP⁴.

³ Source: HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) Estates Management Records hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/estates/environmental – comparison of scope 1 and 2 emissions 2021/22 to 2005 baseline

⁴ These emissions have always been treated as scope 1 & 2 but will be more accurately reported as scope 3 emissions going forwards

Tracking our progress

Recent progress

- We have now surpassed our interim target of 57.5% reduction against baseline by July 2024, with emissions standing at 61.2% below baseline. These figures are based on geographical carbon accounting.
- Business travel emissions remain below pre-pandemic levels, and rather than returning to a business-as-usual scenario, the University has made bold new commitments to permanently reduce travel emissions: targets of 30% and 50% against 2018/19 levels targeted by 2026 and 2030 respectively.
- Our 'scope 1 and 2' emissions are 58.7% below baseline, a further reduction, partly as a result of the major Salix grant-funded projects implemented in 2021, but also because of the corrected treatment of emissions from our halls which are now treated as scope 3 emissions. Our baseline has also been updated to reflect this change to ensure we are making a like-for-like comparison.
- The new Health and Life Sciences (HLS) building is not currently performing as anticipated from an energy perspective, so an 'as-built' energy model of the building has been built to help understand how we can improve this situation, with a plan of action now due for implementation.
- 3.6% of our renewable electricity was self-generated in 2022/23, from our own onsite solar panels. Appendix 2 shows the emissions we avoided through our own renewable generation of power. We continue to procure 100%-certified renewable electricity for our remaining electricity demand. When using market-based carbon accounting, our overall emission reductions stand at 72.2% below baseline.
- We have now saved circa £45.1m cumulatively since 2009 as a result of our carbon management programme, compared to a business-as-usual scenario.
- A full breakdown of our emissions, with a comparison against baseline and last year, can be found in Appendix 3. Appendix 4 shows our emissions for those areas excluded from the scope of our Net Zero Carbon target.

Energy

- Overall, energy reductions of 4.3% were achieved in 2022/23, a little below the target range of 5%–10%, but still significant.
- Analysis of our Display Energy Certificates (DECs) indicated that 83% of our assessed buildings perform better than average from an energy perspective, which is down on the previous year, partly due to re-opening after COVID-19, but also because of the poor energy performance of the HLS building (one of only two buildings rated 'G').

Projects

- Design of air source heat pump retrofits to the SportsPark is complete, with implementation planned for 2023/24. The work is partly funded from a £865,000 grant from DESNZ's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 3b, run by Salix Finance.
- Designs for the introduction of a 1 MWth water source heat pump are well underway, with borehole drilling planned to commence in early 2023/24. The construction is supported by a £2.2m grant from DESNZ's Green Heat Network Fund and will run over two years.
- Insulation of the Edith Morley building loft space delivered measured savings of 167,000kWh and 30 tCO₂, comparing favourably against targeted savings of 118,000 kWh and 22 tCO₂ per annum.
- Savings from recent major projects have now been measured, including the £1.6m Salix-funded lighting upgrades delivering 1,093,000 kWh savings per annum, against a target of 890,000 kWh. This equates to 255 tCO₂ savings per year and £276,000 at 2022/23 prices.
- A full list of energy projects completed in 2022/23 can be found in Appendix 5.



FEATURE:

LEAF awards for our labs

Our science schools have been taking strides to improve sustainability and reduce their environmental impact by aligning with the UCL Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF). As noted by UCL, *'Laboratory-based research is essential for advancing society but it is also extremely energy and resource-intensive.'* The LEAF standard helps identify actions that can be taken to reduce resource, energy, carbon and water use in laboratories, with either a Bronze, Silver, or Gold level awarded depending on how many sustainability actions are taken.

We now have 54 users registered with the online tool, 15 labs awarded Bronze level, and two labs Silver level. Work is ongoing in this area to increase the number of certified labs and improve our award classifications over time.

“LEAF gives us a structured format to implement sustainable practices in our laboratories. Not only does it demonstrate simple actions we can take to reduce energy, waste, and ultimately carbon, but it also stimulates conversation, ideas and sharing, all with sustainability in mind.”

Scott O'Brien,
Associate Director of Operations

Our future commitments

- Update our Net Zero Carbon plan in line with the new SCEF standard in the coming year; providing a timely opportunity to review our ongoing pathway to Net Zero.
- Implement the SportsPark air source heat pump retrofit, targeting annual savings of 489,735 kWh and 121 tCO₂.
- Begin installation of the Whiteknights Energy Centre water source heat pump.
- Target £1m of energy-saving projects in 2023/24 alone (a full list of which can be found in Appendix 5), to support progress towards our carbon reduction trajectory while also recognising the University is facing its highest-ever energy costs in 2023/24.

7.0 WATER

Water is a precious resource required to sustain life. Many areas of the world are already severely impacted by water shortages and others are likely to become affected as changes to the climate occur. Taking steps to manage and conserve water use is, therefore, critically important.

Tracking our progress

- Having seen significant reductions in water consumption over a number of years, 2022/23's consumption has risen dramatically, now only 5% below the 2011/12 baseline compared with 43% in 2021/22.
- The reasons for this are currently unclear, beyond an obvious return to normal operations following COVID shutdowns. However, consumption levels at both Whiteknights and London Road campuses suggest there may be issues with underground leaks.
- Understanding our water consumption is hampered by relatively poor metering, which is already identified as a focus of attention.
- We have rolled out AMR (automatic meter readers) on 17 of our largest supply points, with four installations outstanding. This enables us to access half-hourly data on our water supplies and set up alarms to warn of spikes in consumption.
- We suspect that there may be an underground water leak around the soon-to-be decommissioned TOB1 building, which is currently under investigation. We anticipate that this building's demolition will result in a significant drop in our overall water consumption in 2023/24, and the diversion of remaining supplies in that area may well help resolve any leaks.
- Water consumption at our London Road campus is also far higher than anticipated, which again is the subject of active investigations, both on site and with our water suppliers.
- Further improvements to metering over time will help us understand such issues much better and respond more quickly to potential problems – particularly to improve building-by-building metering which remains poor.

Our future commitments

- Complete the installation of AMR on our remaining large supply points.
- Investigate the high water consumption at TOB1 supply point and London Road.
- Progress a project commissioned to install more building-level water meters across campus, commencing in 2023/24.

8.0 WASTE AND RESOURCE USE

The University's Waste and Resource Use Strategy, spanning 2021 to 2030, is focused on responsible resource use and sustainable waste management. We are dedicated to embedding the concept of the 'Waste Hierarchy' into our day-to-day operations and aim to be an efficient user of resources and prevent waste being created in the first place; we reduce, re-use, recycle and recover items and materials, and sending materials to landfill is considered a last resort. We work closely with our main waste management contractor, Select Environmental Services, a local, Reading-based company, to roll-out new innovations and undertake new initiatives.

Tracking our progress

FEATURE:

Ranked 1st in UK and Europe for responsible consumption and production

We are proud to have been ranked first in the UK and Europe for championing responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) amongst universities participating in the Times Higher Education (THE) Global Impact Rankings 2023. These rankings map how universities around the world are committing to the United Nations' 17 SDGs, which are a global call-to-action to tackle some of today's biggest global issues – such as poverty, climate change, and inequality. We also placed second out of 674 worldwide institutions who were ranked against SDG 12.

The ranking for SDG 12 focuses on the efficient use of resources, minimising waste produced, research on responsible consumption and production, having policies in place for sourcing ethical goods and for measuring and managing waste, and the publication of a sustainability report.

- A new three-year Waste and Resource Use Delivery Plan was written and approved by the Environmental Sustainability Committee in 2022/23. Its purpose is to enact the Waste and Resource Use Strategy and monitor progress against objectives and targets.

- The graphic below shows the amount of operational waste generated for each element of the Waste Hierarchy for 2022/23.

Operational Waste Weights 2022/23

Waste Hierarchy element	Overall Weight (kg)	Overall percentage	Increasing environmental impact →
Reused or Repaired	22,115	2.8%	
Sent for Recycling	378,281	47.1%	
Food to Anaerobic Digestion	90,953	11.3%	
Sent for Composting	8,840	1.1%	
Made into Biofuel	2,776	0.3%	
Energy from Waste Recovery	284,716	35.4%	
Sent for Incineration	6,490	0.8%	
Sent to Landfill	9,315	1.2%	
Total Waste	803,486	100.0%	



Reduce

- Total operational waste produced in the 2022/23 academic year was 40.6kg per person, compared to our 2015/16 baseline of 61.9kg per person, representing a 35% reduction. This equates to a total generation of 803 tonnes of waste by around 19,800 students and staff (full-time equivalent).

- The amount of waste generated per person was higher than in the two previous years, due to a rebound of on-site working following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the amount was still 10kg per person lower than in 2018/19.
- The reduction in waste produced reflects key initiatives undertaken to reduce single-use items, to improve the re-distribution of unwanted furniture and equipment, and to reduce packaging waste.



Reuse and repair

- 6.3 tonnes of furniture and other items were reused across the year via our online Warp-it reuse platform, with a further 15.8 tonnes of additional items repaired, re-manufactured or reused via other routes, equating to a total of 22.1 tonnes in 2022/23.
- Over five tonnes of wooden pallets have been collected and sent for reuse or remanufacturing as part of a collection scheme put into place across the University.

Recycle

- Our annual recycling rate for operational waste is currently 62% by weight (including repair, reuse, anaerobic digestion and composting).
- A collection and recycling scheme for drink cartons (e.g. Tetra Pak®) was implemented in 2023, enabling cartons from catering facilities to be sent for recycling.

Recover

- The vast majority of waste that cannot be reused or recycled in some way is sent to an energy-from-waste recovery plant, where waste is burned and the resulting steam powers a turbine to generate electricity.

Landfill

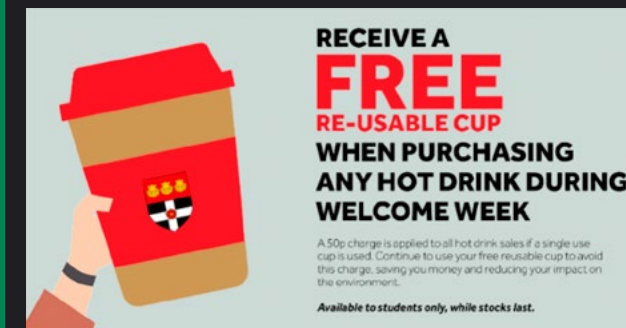
- In 2022/23, 98.8% of the University's operational waste was diverted from landfill, an increase against 98.3% last year. This takes us closer to our 2024 target to reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 1%.

Construction waste

- Due to the variability in quantities and types of construction waste from year to year in line with major project schedules, information is collated and classified independently from the University's operational waste. In 2022/23, the University's contractors generated 389 tonnes of construction waste. Of this amount, 78% was sent for reuse, recycling or composting, compared to 64% last year.

CASE STUDY

Cup tax reduces paper cup use



The University's hospitality team increased the cup tax on single-use paper cups to 50p in September 2022. Since then, 60% of hot drinks from University cafes have been served in reusable cups or ceramic mugs – equating to 125,000 drinks not served in paper cups. The surplus funds generated via the cup tax go to fund the distribution of reusable cups to new students.

CASE STUDY

Carton recycling scheme

Cartons used for drinks and other liquids, such as Tetra Pak®, are made from laminated layers of cardboard, plastic, and sometimes metal film. They cannot be recycled alongside cardboard or plastic bottles, so cannot be added to mixed recycling collections. A collection scheme was launched in 2023 to enable cartons from the University's catering facilities to be segregated and sent to a specialist recycling plant.

Our future commitments

- Continue to reduce the amount of operational waste produced annually per person (staff and student FTE) and move the University's waste up the Waste Hierarchy.
- Continue to increase annual repair, remanufacture and reuse of items.
- Roll-out a trial for collecting and recycling expanded polystyrene (EPS).



9.0 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

We aim to reduce the environmental impact of all travel associated with the University. This includes encouraging alternative modes of transport for commuting to our campuses, as well as a reduction in business travel emissions by reducing the number of flights related to University business travel.

Tracking our progress

- An interim, one-year Travel Plan was produced for 2022/23, ahead of our new five-year travel plan due to be produced in 2023/24.
- There was a 20% year-on-year increase in the number of people using the 21 and 19 bus services, indicating the positive impact of local and government incentives.
- The University's cycling initiatives continue to be popular. Our low-cost bike hire scheme, Unicycle, attracted 60 hires – the highest level recorded. Dr Bike sessions continue to have enduring appeal, with over 200 people making use of the service this year.
- The demand for our electric vehicle (EV) charge points has remained as high as levels recorded in 2020/21, demonstrating the consistent level of demand from EV owners.
- We developed a partnership with GWR to offer discounted train fares for people attending our Visit, Open and Graduation days.

CASE STUDY

Launch of the Park and Ride service

Our 2022 Staff and Student Travel Survey revealed strong interest in the provision of a Park and Ride (P&R) service to Whiteknights campus. As a result, we have been working with Reading Buses and the Royal Berkshire NHS Trust to offer a P&R service to the University. In autumn 2022, a trial was launched enabling University staff to use the nearby Christchurch Green stop as part of the existing NHS staff shuttle which provides a direct service from Mere oak P&R (junction 11 of the M4).

Following the successful trial, the offer was expanded in January 2023 to include our student community. Co-ordinated publicity and leafleting initiatives were conducted to increase awareness, leading to a large increase in usage and a core group of ongoing users. There will be further promotion of the service in autumn 2023, alongside work to investigate whether the service can be brought directly onto Whiteknights campus in a bid to broaden its appeal.

CASE STUDY

New Travel Policy

We are committed to reducing carbon emissions from business travel, adopting a new Travel Policy which sets out criteria to ensure staff consider the carbon impact of all their business travel decisions, embed the business travel hierarchy to prioritise lower carbon modes of travel wherever possible, and take measures to reduce business flights. As such, the policy does not allow air travel within mainland UK – or to any destination that can be reached within eight hours from London St Pancras – and requires that any flights taken are economy class.

Our future commitments

- Devise a new five-year Travel Plan, utilising the results of 2022 and 2024 travel surveys.
- Improve secure cycle storage.
- Install EV charging points and new car-sharing Co Wheels facility at London Road campus.

10.0 ENGAGEMENT, AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Raising awareness, and engaging and empowering behaviour change, is critical to embedding sustainability principles into our community and culture. The following section summarises the significant activity we have undertaken in this area.

Tracking our progress

- Over 580 staff joined us for the Show Your Stripes engagement day. This showcased how the University is lowering its environmental impact and the role individuals can play. Highlights included: engaging conversations about sustainability, the climate stripes being projected onto the White Cliffs of Dover, and a lecture offering practical tips about greening our homes.
- Hundreds of staff and students joined us for our annual sustainability celebration, Green Festival, which comprised a range of events and activities including: a 'play your emissions right' game to win free travel with Reading Buses, advice about how to be save money and be more sustainable, and a community litter pick by staff and students.
- All staff now receive an in-person, 15-minute introduction to sustainability as part of their induction process to encourage new staff members to embed sustainable actions into their home and work lives, and provide an opportunity to engage and ask questions. This is in addition to the mandatory eLearning module which already forms part of new staff inductions.

CASE STUDY

Sustainability Listens at UoR

In 2023, Sustainability Services established a series of regular engagement events called 'Sustainability Listens at UoR'. These events have covered a range of topics, such as: Easter shutdown messaging, a 'Sustainability Mastermind' event, and a celebration of Clean Air Day. These provide opportunities for engagement, feedback, and sign-ups to initiatives, as well as greatly increasing our visibility within the University community.

Our future commitments

- Increase sustainability presence during Welcome Week by taking part in additional events this year.
- Increase the scope of student sustainability inductions.
- During term time, run quarterly in-person Sustainability Champion meetings and regular themed drop-in clinics for Our Future First.

FEATURE:

Our Future First

In 2022/23, we launched Our Future First, a major new sustainable behaviours programme that encourages everyone to do their bit to help the planet. We want everyone to work together to show that collective action can make a significant contribution to our sustainability ambition of becoming one of the greenest universities in the world. Sustainability Champions have been established across the University's schools and functions to help empower colleagues, giving them the confidence and knowledge to make more sustainable choices and include sustainability in operational decisions.



“ We are excited to have launched the Our Future First programme to support our vision of embedding sustainability into our everyday actions, decision making and culture. We thank all of our Sustainability Champions for participating in some great workshops and discussions, culminating in more than 120 sustainability ideas. We now look forward to implementing a range of projects as a result. ”

Jo Merry, Energy Officer

“ The Our Future First initiative and the role of the Sustainability Champions was really appealing: something that was institutionally supported, collectively responsible and highly proactive, and where the results are immediate, tangible and visible. The engagement and feedback from colleagues has been incredible and created a community of collaborative solution-seekers and innovative idea-creators across all our sites. ”

Victoria Stevens, Lead Sustainability Champion

11.0 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND POLLUTION PREVENTION

Pollution of the air, land and water can occur through 'emissions and discharges' which refers to the liquid effluent, solid waste and airborne matter that is a by-product of our activities, and which may be harmful to the environment, wildlife and/or human health. We take steps to minimise the risk of pollution from our activities by controlling emissions, meeting regulatory standards, and implementing emergency response procedures, as well as prohibiting certain activities, eliminating hazardous substances in favour of less harmful alternatives, and amending processes.

Tracking our progress

- No more than three environmental incidents were reported in 2022/23, in line with our target. Where incidents occurred, corrective and preventative measures have been implemented to prevent recurrence.
- The Emissions and Discharges Plan was reviewed and re-published in June 2023.
- All Estates, Maintenance and Grounds staff received environmental training in December 2022.

- A thorough survey of the Whiteknights drainage infrastructure took place, providing useful information, identifying additional interceptors, and setting out additional mitigation measures required to protect the lake. A priority plan is being rolled out by Building Maintenance over the next five years.
- The programme to inspect and maintain interceptors continues.
- We continue to support Clean Air Day, the UK's largest air pollution campaign. As an official supporter, we hosted celebrations in June in collaboration with a number of community partners to increase awareness around the need to minimise air pollution.

Our future commitments

- Seek to maintain our target of no more than three emissions/discharge incidents from University activities on a rolling three-year average, and annually report progress against this.
- Continue to increase awareness of air pollution though continuing to be a Clean Air Day supporter.

12.0 RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

The University procures a wide range of goods and services essential for campus operations, research advancement, and enhanced learning practices. We recognise that the environmental impact of our supply chain is a part of our own environmental impact, and we have a duty to positively influence this.

Our Responsible Procurement Group has established SMART objectives to support year-on-year progress in embedding sustainability into the services, products and contracts that we procure.

Tracking our progress

- We have recently been awarded Fairtrade University Two Star status, underlining our commitment to support, promote and improve understanding of Fairtrade.
- Our supplier Code of Conduct was updated to include additional requirements of suppliers in the Human Rights and Modern Slavery and Environmental Compliance sections.
- We ran a house lager tender in 2022/23 which successfully introduced beers from breweries in the Berkshire area, thereby supporting local business and reducing our carbon miles.

- We have switched suppliers for branded merchandise purchases in favour of suppliers who have clear sustainability and ethical sourcing policies to match the University's ethos on responsible procurement.
- The University's Finance Systems team have an agreement with one of the financial services suppliers to offset each international students' first flight to the UK when their student fees payment was made via the supplier. Over 2022/23, the contract has offset 713 tonnes of carbon.
- In 2022/23, we agreed a proposal to collaborate with our IT disposal contractor for the reuse and resale of IT equipment, incorporating a circular economy approach.
- Through our membership with the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC), we continue to support Electronics Watch to promote safe, equitable, sustainable, and ethical workplaces in our electronics goods supply chain.

Our future commitments

- Work with SUPC members via the Supply Chain Climate Action Planning and Implementation Sub group to investigate more ways to reduce our supply chain carbon footprint.
- Join celebrations for the Fairtrade Foundation's 30th birthday by aiming to complete 30 tasks to support Fairtrade during the 2023/24 academic year.

13.0 CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

Our main Whiteknights campus comprises 130 hectares of woodland, biodiverse grassland and a lake. Over many years, staff and students have built up records of more than 2,000 species found living on campus – from tiny mosses to huge trees, and insects to mammals. We are working to enhance and conserve the biodiversity of the green spaces on our campuses. Further development of our biodiversity action plan has taken place in 2022/23 and this will be published in 2023/24.

Tracking our progress

- A baseline audit of biodiversity across our main UK campuses was commissioned and completed to identify opportunities for improvement, which will inform the further development of our biodiversity action plan.
- In 2022/23, we joined the Nature Positive Universities Alliance, pledging to work towards a global 'nature positive' goal to halt, prevent and reverse nature loss through addressing our own impacts and restoring ecosystems harmed by our activities.

- We are supporting the Department for Education's National Education Nature Park scheme which will create a virtual park to enable young people to see how actions can be taken to improve biodiversity. We will be developing an improved scheme for local schools to access learning experiences on our estate, which will be promoted on the platform.
- The School of Biological Sciences has been working to incorporate more University sites in planned field teaching in 2024. These activities will enhance our data collection on biodiversity, supporting our action plan in the future.
- We are proud to have recently been awarded our 13th consecutive Green Flag Award.

Our future commitments

- Publication of a new biodiversity action plan in 2023/24.

14.0 COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We actively work in partnership with our local community to make an impactful contribution to improving the town and surrounding areas. Environmental sustainability is one of the key focus areas for our local community engagement and activities. Our focus provides balance on engaging with communities across both Reading and Wokingham and a broad range of diverse communities within those areas.

- We partnered with Let's Go Zero to develop a national school's day of action on 21 June to align with our Show Your Stripes Day, which included promotion of a resource pack containing learning materials relating to climate conversations.
- We have been working to improve our capture of information during community events to support the future setting of annual targets to improve community engagement on environmental sustainability.

Tracking our progress

- This year, our Community Forum included discussions on our climate and sustainability work with members of our local community, focusing on how we can work more effectively with local organisations who share our commitment.
- We held a number of litter picks in 2022/23 with staff and student volunteers, helping to clean up the local area.
- We jointly chair the Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP), working collaboratively with the group to develop a new roadmap for Reading to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.
- In March 2023, we brought together a group of schools from the local area to take part in a tailored workshop designed to support them in becoming among the first in the country to develop school Climate Action Plans.

Our future commitments

- Develop a clear community engagement plan relating to climate environmental sustainability.
- Establish a Wokingham Strategic Partnership Board with Wokingham Borough Council in 2023/24, with environmental sustainability and climate change as a key workstream.
- Play a lead role in elevating local and global engagement initiatives such as Reading Climate Festival and Show Your Stripes Day.
- Work with local voluntary groups to facilitate increased student and community volunteering to support environmental sustainability.



FEATURE:

Reading Climate Festival

We played a lead role in delivering Reading Climate Festival in 2023, which saw 13,000 people participating in the Festival events

including visiting Gaia in Reading Town Hall, marking a significant increase in the scale and reach of this annual event. University led events attracted speakers including Sir Alok Sharma MP and broadcast meteorologist Laura Tobin.

15.0 SUSTAINABLE FOOD

We are committed to sustainability in all aspects of food and drink-related activities, showcasing this commitment through our farms, The National Fruit Collection, our teaching and research in agriculture and food sciences, and within our substantial in-house catering and external hospitality offerings. Considerable strides have been taken to integrate sustainability principles and reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from our food operations this year, encompassing a wide array of innovative approaches.

Tracking our progress

- After committing last year to a target of 25% reduction in food emissions intensity by 2030 as part of Menus of Change Universities Research Collaborative (MCURC), we established our baseline carbon intensity at 8.8kg of CO₂ per kilo of food purchased for all food, and at 4.35kg of CO₂ per kilo of food for protein only, following the agreed MCURC "Collective Impact Initiative Methodology". So far, we have achieved a substantial decline in % of beef used, and our focus now will be utilising less carbon-intensive major protein sources to reduce our food emissions in the future, by following a plant-forward approach to all meals.
- We have partnered with food service giant, Brakes, in the development of the UK's first fully electric refrigerated foodservice delivery vehicle, which is adorned in the blue and red climate stripes.
- Continuing our efforts to decarbonise our catering operations and reduce energy consumption as far as possible, we have:
 - rolled out individual appliance metering systems to give full visibility of our catering operations, leading to more targeted energy reduction projects
 - upgraded both our Park Eat and Eat at the Square lighting systems to LEDs, saving around 90% of the lighting energy consumption in these sites
 - begun feasibility studies into decarbonising our heating and hot water supplies in several of our kitchen and dining areas.

Our future commitments

- Develop a plan for reducing carbon emissions from energy used in campus catering facilities, including heating and hot water.
- Aim for 80% of our Campus Catering van fleet to be electrically powered in the next year.
- Implement our Digital Dining platform, which will allow us to label planet-friendly options to our consumers (and highlight ones to avoid).



CASE STUDY

Energy monitoring at Park Eat

This year, we installed two sophisticated energy monitoring systems in our Park Eat restaurant as a pilot study to harness the benefits of highly granular energy consumption data on an individual appliance level. In line with our commitments to disclose our emissions, we publish the data live on our website. Using this measured data, we were able to determine our replacement bottle fridges delivered 77% energy and carbon savings. We also use the connectivity of our smart plug sockets to automatically power down all unnecessary appliances overnight, saving 27% from our

overnight baseload consumption.

16.0 EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

As an educational establishment, we recognise our responsibility to equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to help develop sustainable practices in the future. We seek to do so by embedding environmental sustainability into our curriculum, as well as our staff training programmes.

Our goals are:

- that all graduates of the University will have a fundamental understanding of the concepts related to sustainable development
- that our students are enabled and empowered to positively contribute to sustainability problem-solving in their lives, professions, and communities.

Further development of our plan for ESD has been undertaken in 2022/23 and the new plan will be published in 2023/24.

Tracking our progress

- At the start of the 2022/23 academic year, we launched the RED Sustainable Action Award. Open to all students, the Award encourages learning, action and advocacy for sustainability and welcomes participation in its expanded portfolio of projects.
- In September 2022, our Teaching and Learning Festival provided opportunities to discuss ideas closely linked to sustainable development, including presentations from staff detailing the ways in which they had embedded ESD in their programmes.
- In the spring term of 2023, Reading Students' Union held its first Student Sustainability Summit which saw students, staff and alumni from a range of disciplines present their research on topics associated with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- The Institute of Education applied its Climate Education and Sustainability Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Framework to all initial teacher training programmes as part of the National Climate Education Action Plan, empowering trainees to incorporate climate and sustainability education across all levels and subjects.
- In addition to the optional 'Science of Climate Change' meteorology module, which is open to students of all disciplines, many of our other schools have also developed modules on environmental sustainability.
- We continue to offer a bursary that students can apply for as part of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP), which includes a number of environment-related research projects.

Our future commitments

- Publication of an ESD action plan in 2023/24.
- Review of existing modules to determine how to implement the development of a bespoke University-Wide Module (UWM) which will provide a comprehensive grounding in climate and environmental sustainability for all students.



17.0 ETHICAL INVESTMENT AND BANKING

We recognise the need to ensure that our financial practices are conducted transparently, and in an economically viable and socially responsible manner. Our responsible investment principles have been integrated into our main investment policy and our responsible banking policy forms part of our main treasury policy, ensuring that these principles are incorporated into our decision making in these areas. We continue to review and strengthen our policies over time, where possible.

Tracking our progress

- We divested from fossil fuels in 2020 and remain committed to making no direct or indirect investments in fossil fuels in the future.
- In line with our commitment last year, a new policy was published in February 2023, incorporating the following changes:
 - Commitment that any future investments in energy assets will be in renewable energy, low-carbon energy, community renewable energy, or renewable energy projects on campus.
 - Commitment to screen out all corporations complicit in the violation of international law, alongside the exclusions and tolerances already committed to.
- In recognition of the importance of engaging with key stakeholders within our community regarding our investment decisions:
 - Inclusion of an ex-officio right of attendance for the Reading Students' Union within Investment Committee's terms of reference.
 - Publication on the University website of relevant minutes from Investment Committee (redacted where necessary for commercially sensitive issues) as part of our commitment to report annually to the wider University community on how we are approaching responsible investment, and request feedback.

Our future commitments

- Continue to monitor other areas of concern as they develop, such as the border industry, and consider imposing exclusions in these areas (as committed to within our investment policy).

18.0 ETHICAL CAREERS AND RECRUITMENT

One of our key roles as a university is to prepare students and graduates for their future jobs – and encourage freedom in developing their career paths. We will continue to support a wide range of career pathways, while also considering how this interacts with our ethical and sustainability commitments.

Tracking our progress

- A review has been undertaken to identify the ways in which we may be able to develop our terms relating to ethics and sustainability in the future.
- This has led to detailed discussions about how we can best strike an appropriate balance between continuing to support our students in all career pathways they may wish to explore while also ensuring sustainability leadership.
- The University is actively considering its current position regarding the development of an ethical careers policy.

Our future commitments

- Develop an ethical careers policy.

19.0 ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Sustainability is a core part of the Estates function. Our Estates Strategy recognises that sustainability initiatives are most powerful when delivered synergistically for the greatest overall benefit, by jointly delivering positive social benefit, lower environmental impact and income growth. The Strategy is built on this philosophy, recognising crossover and overlap with other strategic drivers.

Tracking our progress

- Our new Estates Strategy was published in 2022/23, with sustainability identified as one of five strategic drivers.
- Our commitment to becoming net zero carbon by 2030 is intrinsically linked with the new Estates Strategy, requiring significant infrastructure changes to deliver this goal. Within the Strategy, significant spending has been identified for capital projects required to deliver on our net zero carbon commitment, not least projects to move towards decarbonisation of our heating systems.

- The Estates five-year plan commits to progressing our environmental sustainability aspirations, including increasing the biodiversity of our landscape, and advancing our decarbonisation, travel and waste and resource use plans.
- In 2023, we enhanced our environmental construction and refurbishment target, with all new and refurbished buildings across all three teaching campuses targeting a BREEAM 'excellent' rating.

Our future commitments

- Commence two major heat de-carbonisation projects in 2023/24.
- Meet BREEAM excellent standards on our next major refurbishment project – the URS building, with completion due in 2026/27.



20.0 2023/24 TARGETS

Section	2022/23 headline targets	SDGs supported
3.0 Environmental sustainability strategy	Publish updated Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan in 2023/24	 
5.0 Compliance and management systems	Continue to maintain the EEMS to the internationally recognised ISO14001:2015 and ISO50001:2018 standards	 
6.0 Energy and carbon	Update our Net Zero Carbon plan in line with the new SCEF standard Implement the SportsPark air source heat pump retrofit Begin installation of the Whiteknights Energy Centre water source heat pump Target £1m of energy-saving projects in 2023/24	   
7.0 Water	Progress project which has been commissioned to install more building-level water meters across campus, commencing in 2023/24	 
8.0 Waste and resource use	Continue to reduce the amount of operational waste produced annually per person (staff and student FTE) and move the University's waste up the Waste Hierarchy Continue to increase annual repair, remanufacture and re-use of items Roll-out a trial for collecting and recycling expanded polystyrene (EPS)	   
9.0 Sustainable travel	Devise a new five-year Travel Plan, utilising the results of 2022 and 2024 travel surveys Improve secure cycle storage Install EV charging points and new car-sharing Co Wheels facility at London Road campus	   
10.0 Engagement, awareness and behaviour change	Increase sustainability presence during Welcome Week by taking part in additional events this year Increase the scope of student sustainability inductions During term time, run quarterly, in-person Sustainability Champion meetings and regular themed drop-in clinics for Our Future First	    
11.0 Environmental protection and pollution prevention	Seek to maintain our target of no more than three emissions/discharge incidents from University activities on a rolling three-year average and annually report progress against this Continue to increase awareness of air pollution through continuing to be a Clean Air Day Supporter	 


Section	2022/23 headline targets	SDGs supported
12.0 Responsible procurement	Consider how to reduce procurement-related, scope 3 emissions, led by our Responsible Procurement Group Join celebrations for the Fairtrade Foundation's 30th birthday by aiming to complete 30 tasks to support fairtrade during the 23/24 academic year	     
13.0 Conservation and biodiversity	Publication of new biodiversity action plan in 2023/24	  
14.0 Community and community involvement	Develop a clear community engagement plan relating to climate and environmental sustainability Establish a Wokingham Strategic Partnership Board with Wokingham Borough Council in 2023/24, with environmental sustainability and climate change as a key workstream Play a lead role in elevating local and global engagement initiatives such as Reading Climate Festival and Show Your Stripes Day Work with local voluntary groups to facilitate increased student and community volunteering to support environmental sustainability	   
15.0 Sustainable food	Develop a plan for reducing carbon emissions from energy used in campus catering facilities, including heating and hot water Aim for 80% of our Campus Catering van fleet to be electrically powered in the next year Implement our Digital Dining platform, which will allow us to label planet friendly options to our consumers (and highlight ones to avoid)	  
16.0 Education for sustainable development	Publication of an ESD action plan in 2023/24 Review of existing modules to determine how to implement the development of a bespoke University-Wide Module (UWM) which will provide a comprehensive grounding in climate and environmental sustainability for all students	 
17.0 Ethical investment and banking	Continue to monitor other areas of concern as they develop, such as the border industry, and consider imposing exclusions in these areas	   
18.0 Ethical careers	Develop an ethical careers policy	   
19.0 Estate development and maintenance	Commence two major heat de-carbonisation projects in 2023/24 Meet BREEAM excellent standards on our next major refurbishment project – the URS building, with completion due in 2026/27	   

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CARBON MANAGEMENT SCOPE
APPENDIX 2: COMPLETED AND PLANNED ENERGY, CARBON AND WATER PROJECTS AND BUDGET
APPENDIX 3: EMISSIONS-ENERGY BREAKDOWN VS BASELINE AND LAST YEAR
APPENDIX 4: ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-SCOPE EMISSIONS
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Environmental Sustainability Report 2022/23

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