

Sustainability Communication & Engagement Plan 2025-26

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Background

The University of Reading is a leading sustainable university, including being the 2025 Times/Sunday Times Sustainable University of the Year and a 4th place ranking in the People and Planet league 2024/25. Environmental sustainability is one of our four key principles in our University strategy, aspiring *“to be recognised for our world-class research in climate change and its impact on the environment and society, and be a leader in global environmental sustainability.”*

Sustainability communication and engagement is a critical piece of the puzzle that will enable us to meet our environmental objective to “Engage with staff and students as well as the wider community to raise the profile of sustainability, promote best practice and encourage actions to reduce our collective environmental impact”. The importance of behaviour change is recognised by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) who were quoted in 2022 as saying “People power is critical to meet those targets...without changes to people’s behaviours now, the target of net zero by 2050 is not achievable.”

Sustainability

It is a key thread throughout our work across the following areas: Environmental compliance, pollution prevention, energy and water consumption, resource use and waste, travel, procurement, conservation and biodiversity, and community involvement.

Purpose

This document will be used primarily by the Sustainability Team to support the University's ISO certified Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS) and will help meet the targets set out in the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan.

This document presents our overarching communication objectives, the methods we will use to communicate and what engagement activity we will deliver between August 2025 and July 2026. It also sets out how we will monitor and measure the success and impact of our C&E activities so that we can make improvements in the future.

Communication and Engagement Objectives

We will communicate with our staff, students and local community to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) **Inform.** We will increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues among departments, schools, students and staff. We will support our communication with clear information about our University sustainability ambitions, activities and achievements.
- 2) **Empower.** We will inspire our audiences to make changes ranging from personal lifestyle to supporting bigger projects. We will provide support to encourage them to have the confidence to lead future positive change.
- 3) **Together.** We will embed a culture of sustainability, ensuring that everyone feels they can bring about positive change at all levels through collaboration. We will bring the University community with us on the journey toward our sustainability goals.

These objectives underpin and inform our planned communication and engagement activities for 2025/26.

Supporters and Partners

We recognise that our department in isolation cannot achieve these objectives alone. We will harness the support of colleagues, students and our local community and stakeholders including:

- Reading Students' Union: Officer team, Advice, SLT, Marketing, Societies, Senior Student Community Coordinator, Student Voice Manager.
- External Relations Directorate: Digital team, Head of Strategic Engagement, Internal Communications Team, Events Team, Community Relations Manager.
- Student Experience and Education: Student Communications and Careers
- UPP
- Venue Reading
- Community partners and stakeholders
- University Library

Sustainability

- Chaplaincy
- MERL
- Key delivery partners, including Reading Climate Change Partnership, Reading Buses, Avanti Cycling, Reading Bike Kitchen, Reading Cycle Campaign, and Select Environmental.

Communication and Engagement Channels

This table details the ways that we communicate to ensure we reach our intended audience which are:

- Internal staff audience
- Internal student audience
- External community

Channel	Location	Audience
Sustainability social media	Facebook Instagram	Internal staff and students and external community - publicly available
Sustainability Website	Internet	Internal staff and students and external community - publicly available
Sustainability blogs	Hosted on Sustainability website	Internal staff and students and external community - publicly available
Sustainability Matters	Mailchimp - hosted on Sustainability website	Internal staff and students and external community - anybody signed up
Staff portal	University of Reading intranet	Internal - University of Reading staff
In Brief	Emailed to all University of Reading staff	Internal - University of Reading staff
Digital screens	Library, Carrington, Palmer, Reading Students Union, Catering	Internal staff and students and external community - publicly available

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Channel	Location	Audience
Department mailing lists	University of Reading staff	Internal - University of Reading staff
Student Newsletters	Emailed to all University of Reading students	Internal - University of Reading students
Student Portal and app	University of Reading intranet	Internal - University of Reading students
Essentials Pages (The Student Handbook)	University of Reading website	Internal students and external community - publicly available

Communication and Engagement Action Plan

The entirety of the Action Plan will be completed by July 2026.

Activity	Purpose and objectives (Focus area)	Details (specific information, key messages and call to action)	Dates	Measure of Success	Owner	Budget	Target audience
Welcome Week and Student Inductions	To inform students about the University's goals and highlight the things they can do to be more sustainable at the University. Focus on re-use of resources, bus services and safer cycling, including bike lock sale. Promote sustainability website, social media and Sustainability Matters newsletter. To empower students to make a difference, report issues, and highlight improvements through personal lifestyle and supporting bigger projects. Focus on events where students can get involved and have the confidence to lead future positive change. Having a presence at these events will demonstrate to new students that the University are committed the Environmental Sustainability and that there are options for then to get involved and change their habits.	In-person presence at Welcome fairs – including IoE and University Life, and Sustainability Campus Tour.	Sept 2025	High level of engagements from students.	Yasmin Noor	£200	All students – focusing on new students.
		Sustainability information within Welcome Booklet for all new students.	2025/26	Increase in number of student Sustainability Matters newsletter sign-ups by 50-100 from 431.	Rachel Alipour		
		Sustainability section within all online student newsletters.	2025/26	Increase in number of social media followers on Instagram by 50 from 1,142.	Phoebe Homer		
		Sustainability sections on Essentials pages.	2025/26	Sign-ups and attendance to the Sustainability Campus Tour - A guide to your Sustainable University.	Phoebe Homer		
		Participate in Student Engagement Group with UPP and Partners to build sustainability into student events.	2025/26		Yasmin Noor		
Policy, Reporting and Targets	The Strategic Action Plan aims to set out our next steps as we work to maximise our influence and impact to help achieve environmental sustainability, and sustainable development more widely, across three areas. The annual sustainability report aims to summarise the progress made from August 2024 to July 2025 across a range of different areas of sustainability, provides a review of the targets we have been working towards over the past 12 months, and highlights how research undertaken at the University aligns to our key sustainability themes. To be recognised as a leading UK University for sustainability, by consistently achieving a top 10 position in People & Planet University League (currently 4th).	Launch of Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan which sets out our next steps across three areas: Education & Engagement, Research & Influence, and A Green University.	Sept 2025	Successful publication of Plan	Dylan Parkes	£1,800	All staff and students, external community
		Publication of Annual Environmental Sustainability Report 2024/25.	Oct 2025	Successful publication of Report Associated news article(s) published	Yasmin Noor		
		Compilation of information and updating the website for the People and Planet league 2025/26.	Spring 2026	Information available for P&P assessors to assist with the maintaining top 10 People & Planet University League	Yasmin Noor	£1,000	

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	To be recognised globally as a leading university for climate and sustainability by consistently achieving top 25 positions in global sustainability rankings, such as THE Global Impact Ranking (currently 50th) and QS Sustainability Ranking (currently joint 42nd).	Complete return for THE Global Impact Rankings.	Oct 2025	Information submitted in time to assist with the submission of the relevant rankings, to assist with the objective to be top 25 Globally.	Sustainability Team		
		Complete return for QS rankings.	Apr 2026	Information submitted in time to assist with the submission to QS Ranking. Assisting with the objective to be Top 25 globally QS Sustainability Rankings	Yasmin Noor		
Staff Training and Inductions	To raise awareness of the overarching sustainability policies and procedures, highlight the achievements, and communicate the University's goals. To inform staff of the University's sustainability goals, and how they can get involved with sustainability and make a difference themselves.	The University runs monthly central induction training sessions for new starters, which is attended by the Sustainability Team for a 15 minute face to face slot to present on sustainability at the University. During these sessions we take questions and listen to the sustainability ideas from new staff members.	Monthly 2025/26		Sustainability Staff		New staff
		All staff must complete mandatory 25 minute online training every 3 years which includes the University's sustainability vision, sustainable Travel, energy and water, waste, sustainable procurement, Environmental and Energy Management System (EEMS), and how to get involved. Additional courses can also be found on the website. Quarterly completion data will be received and forwarded to Sustainability Champions as a way to encourage Schools and Directorates to increase their mandatory sustainability training completion rates. Additional training is provided and managed as part of the EEMS.	2025/26 - training completed every 3 years, completion rates sent to champions quarterly	Improved completion rates across all Schools and Directorates - quarterly results received	Anna Glue / Yasmin Noor Articulate Licence	£810	All staff - new and current

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Green Festival	To engage with our University community to promote, educate and celebrate sustainable actions. To promote environmentally friendly actions and advice that help save money as well as emissions. To work with the community to champion environmental sustainability through practical action, and inspire behavioural change.	Deliver a programme of events which will inform and empower staff, students and local community to take positive sustainable steps. Utilise a range of different modes of communication to maximise engagement. Work with partners across the University to put on a range of events across many areas of business, particularly the Sustainability Champions. Work with supporters to promote the festival widely across our community.	11-13 Nov 2025	Deliver range of 10-20 different events Aim for 500 - 1000 people to engage with the festival	Yasmin Noor / Sustainability Team / Energy Team All engagement staff - Reading Students Union, Community Engagement, Sustainability Champions All comms staff - Student Comms Team, Internal Staff Comms	£2000	All staff, students and external community
Smile with Sustainability	To provide an opportunity for staff and students to engage with our team, find out more about what we are working on, give feedback and provide new ideas.	Deliver programme of regular themed sustainability events in the Library Foyer ranging from promoting sustainable travel options, to resource use. Work with Sustainability Champions to deliver some of the Smile with Sustainability sessions.	2025/26	Aim for 100+ people to engage in the sessions	Yasmin Noor / Sustainability Team / Energy Team	£500	All staff and students
Our Future First	As part of the Net Zero Carbon Plan, the aim of OFF is to encourage, empower and enable others to take action and support the creation of a culture of sustainability by being open to change, collaborate, lead by example, continually improve, and empower others. To integrate the people/behaviour aspects into technical and other energy measures to significantly increase energy savings along with reduced carbon emissions and costs through becoming EnCO (Energy Conscious Organisation) certified.	This Comms Plan will support OFF by embedding Our Future First messaging into comms to encourage others to take action and report successes. Co-ordinate energy saving campaigns throughout Christmas 2025 and Easter 2026 shutdowns, and promote heating and cooling policies. Run quarterly Sustainability Champions meetings, as well as Learning With Sustainability sessions throughout the year each focussing on different sustainability related themes. Complete EnCO training and become EnCO certified.	2025/26	Attain EnCO certification Deliver four Learning with Sustainability sessions	Luke Cantellow / Jo Merry Luke Cantellow / Yasmin Noor Jo Merry Jo Merry	(£4,000)* (£1500)*	All staff and students All staff and students Sustainability Champions and all staff All staff

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Travel Survey	To outline the University's commitment to changing the travel behaviour of our staff, student and visitor communities. The biennial travel survey aims to gather feedback, ensuring the Travel Plan 2024-2029 remains responsive to the needs of staff and students. To provide the opportunity for staff and students to give their own opinions on what they would like to see improved, any measures or incentives that they feel should be introduced, and give feedback on existing provision, measures or incentives.	Set up of survey details to be arranged by RC in advance of BW return. Space at library booked by YN to promote during survey period. Pushed through all appropriate channels – potentially arrange flyers / posters with QR codes also. Once the survey has ended / been analysed, publish and promote results report – to be completed by BW early 2026.	1 st - 13 th Dec 2025	To at least maintain the percentage response rate of staff of 30.7% and students of 3.0%	Rebecca Ching / Beth Wilson	All staff and students
EASIT	To promote EASIT as a reward / car share platform in place of doingUoRbit. Staff are able to sign up for the car share platform for free, and pay for a membership card to gain access to a range of incentives / sustainable travel discounts.	Targeted staff comms and collaboration with internal comms. To promote as two separate angles - one for the rewards / benefits programme, and another to push the car share platform. Web page content to be updated in line with this. EASIT to provide monthly data on sign-ups so that we can gauge effectiveness.	2025/26	Increased number of staff sign-ups	Rebecca Ching / Beth Wilson	All staff
Food Waste Recycling	To promote the use of the new food waste bins and ensure people know the process as well as the reason why. This will aim to help increase recycling rates as well.	Promote the new food waste service through website updates, a blog post, at a Smile with Sustainability session, through both the staff and student Sustainability Matters newsletter, and social media.	15 th - 20 th Sep 2025	Increased recycling rate	Paul Taylor / Yasmin Noor	All staff and students
Switch Off Campaigns	To promote energy conservation and sustainability by encouraging students and staff to switch off non-essential electrical devices before leaving for the holiday break. To reduce the University's carbon footprint and energy bills during periods of low campus occupancy.	Targeted staff and student comms through website updates, a blog post, the Sustainability Matters newsletter, and social media.	15 th - 19 th Dec 2025 23 rd - 27 th Mar 2026	To increase the amount of energy saved through the campaign	Luke Cantellow / Yasmin Noor	All staff and students

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Energy Saving Comms	To promote energy literacy and help staff and students understand their role in energy consumption and conservation. To highlight progress toward energy goals, and celebrate milestones and projects that reduce the carbon footprint.	Staff and student comms through website updates, a blog post, the Sustainability Matters newsletter, and social media.	6 th - 10 th April 2026	Increase in engagement with energy related comms	Yasmin Noor / Lynne Moore		All staff and students
Energy Advice Service	This service will be run by the RSU's existing student advice service and will offer Students Advice on saving energy in their accommodation. To promote the Energy Advice Service to students.	Website updates, a blog post, the Sustainability Matters newsletter, and social media.	TBC	Number of enquiries that the service receives.	Yasmin Noor / Lynne Moore	£14k - UPP Foundation	UoR Students
Water Efficiency Comms	To educate staff and students about the importance of water conservation, as well as highlight the University's water usage and how individual behaviours contribute to it. To highlight progress toward water usage goals, and celebrate milestones and projects that reduce water usage.	Staff and student comms through website updates, a blog post, the Sustainability Matters newsletter, and social media.	20 th - 24 th October 2025	Increase in engagement with water related comms	Yasmin Noor / Lynne Moore		All staff and students
LEAF Framework in Laboratories	To help provide a structured approach to improve sustainability within research environments. To support laboratories to take meaningful steps to lower their energy use, cut down on waste, and embed environmentally responsible practices into their daily operations - all while maintaining, and often enhancing, the quality of research outputs.	Create publicly available resources for staff wanting to get involved with the framework - Switch Off stickers. Provide support by visiting laboratories for auditing to validate responses to the criteria.	2025/26	Update the information on the website Increase in engagement with the page Publish resources on the website	Scott O'Brien/ Anna Glue / Yasmin Noor		Laboratory Staff
Lectures and Tours for Student	To provide input to different academic modules in the form of lectures and tours for students. To provide tangible, real-world examples that promote interdisciplinary awareness, enhance academic engagement, and reinforce the university's role within sustainability. To integrate sustainable thinking into diverse academic disciplines.	Deliver lectures and tours to students as part of various academic modules.	2025/26	Deliver 10+ lectures and tours to students	Yasmin Noor to co-ordinate, Sustainability Team to deliver		All students

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Sustainability Website	To serve as a central communication hub with a primary purpose of informing, engaging and connecting with students, staff and the external community. To provide accessible, up to date information and to increase online presence and long term engagement.	Ensure the website is up to date, provide accessible information, fix broken links and remove outdated information, add meta titles/descriptions, use keywords, and add alt text to all images. Therefore, making the content accessible, improving user experience, improving the SEO and supporting better website performance.	2025/26	Update website to align with and support institution-wide sustainability goals	Yasmin Noor	All staff, students and external community - publicly available
Sustainability Matters Newsletter	To increase engagement and interaction, effective content distribution and sharing, faster and easier communication with others, boosting organic visibility and outreach, and increasing website traffic. To have direct communication with everybody signed up to the newsletter and educate our audience about sustainability and current events.	Create clear, visually engaging content on a consistent schedule, featuring a variety of topics such as news, tips, events, and more.	2025/26 - every two months	Increase the percentage of open rates and click rates for both staff and student newsletter by 5-10% each. Increase the number of staff and student newsletter signups by 5-10% from 611 and 431 respectively.	Yasmin Noor Mailchimp account	All staff, students and external community - anybody signed up
Sustainability Blogs	To educate and raise awareness, promote university initiatives, encourage engagement and action, build a knowledge sharing culture, and document progress and success.	Publish a variety of blogs covering a range of topics/sustainability issues to educate and raise awareness, promote university initiatives, encourage engagement and action, knowledge share, document progress and success, and call to action. Include updates and promotions of various projects across sustainability such as recycling facilities and Warp It for resource use, recycling and waste. Energy and carbon updates include SportsPark air source heat pump, Energy centre water source heat pump and other decarbonisation projects. Travel updates include travel offers, alternatives to travel, and cycle safety.	2025/26 - twice a month	Publish two blogs a month.	Yasmin Noor Yasmin Noor / Sustainability Team / Energy Team	All staff, students and external community - publicly available
Sustainability Social Media	To increase engagement and interaction, effective content distribution and sharing, faster and easier communication with others, boosting organic visibility and outreach, and increasing website traffic.	Create engaging, audience focussed content to increase engagement, interaction and create faster and easier communication.	2025/26	Increased engagement through likes, comments, replies and poll/quiz participation Increase Instagram following by 5-10%	Yasmin Noor, CANVA	All staff, students and external community - publicly available

*Net Zero Carbon Budget

Impact

Measured through: Sustainability website hits, Sustainability Matters newsletter opens / clicks, social media reach and followers, events attendance, lectures delivered, staff and student portal data collection of hits. These are reported quarterly to Sustainability team meetings.

Communication and Engagement Calendar

This calendar is a visual representation of the comms and events the Sustainability Team will be doing across the year, the first being an overall look across the year, followed by a more detailed calendar split into Semester 1 and Semester 2. This will ensure strategic delivery through consistent messaging, cross-team coordination, proactive planning, efficient resource use, and effective tracking for continuous improvements.



Semester 1:**September 2025**

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1 IOE UNIVERSITY LIFE FAIR	2	3	4	5
8 IOE UNIVERSITY LIFE FAIR	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT COMMS (FOOD WASTE RECYCLING)				
22	23	24	25	26
← WELCOME WEEK UNIVERSITY LIFE FAIR SUSTAINABILITY CAMPUS TOUR SMPCS MARKETPLACE →				
29	30			

October 2025

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1 DR BIKE	2	3
		8 ON YOUR BIKE DAY	9	10
		15 DR BIKE	16	17
		22 DR BIKE	23	24
← SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT COMMS WATER EFFICIENCY →				
27	28	29 DR BIKE	30	31 SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

November 2025

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
3	4	5 DR BIKE	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
← GREEN FESTIVAL →				
17	18	19 DR BIKE	20	21
24	25	26 DR BIKE	27	28 SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

December 2025

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3 DR BIKE	4	5
← TRAVEL SURVEY →				
8	9	10 DR BIKE	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
← SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT COMMS (CHRISTMAS SWITCH OFF) →				
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

January 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14 DR BIKE	15 CENTRAL INDUCTION	16
19	20	21 DR BIKE	22	23
26	27	28 DR BIKE	29	30

- Welcome Week
- Smile With Sustainability
- Our Future First
- Sustainability Matters
- Green Festival
- Dr Bike
- Travel Survey
- On Your Bike Day
- Central Induction
- All Staff Talk
- IOE University Life Fair
- Sustainability Project Comms

Semester 2:**February 2026**

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2	3	4 DR BIKE	5	6
9	10	11 DR BIKE	12 CENTRAL INDUCTION	13
16	17	18 DR BIKE	19	20
23	24	25 ON YOUR BIKE DAY	26	27 SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

March 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2	3	4 DR BIKE	5	6
9	10	11 DR BIKE	12 CENTRAL INDUCTION	13
16	17	18 DR BIKE	19	20
23	24	25 DR BIKE	26	27
← SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT COMMS (EASTER SWITCH OFF) →				
30	31			

April 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
← SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT COMMS ENERGY SAVING →				
13	14	15 DR BIKE	16 CENTRAL INDUCTION	17
20	21	22 ON YOUR BIKE DAY	23	24 SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS
27	28	29 DR BIKE	30	31

May 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1
4	5	6 DR BIKE	7	8
11	12	13 DR BIKE	14	15
18	19	20 CENTRAL INDUCTION	21	22
25	26	27 DR BIKE	28	29

June 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3 DR BIKE	4	5
8	9	10 DR BIKE	11	12
15	16	17	18 CENTRAL INDUCTION	19
22	23	24	25	26 SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS
29	30			

- Welcome Week
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- Sustainability Project Comms

Version Control

Version	Keeper	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval date
1.0	Sustainability Team	Annually	Dan Fernbank	18/07/2025
