

Environmental Sustainability Report

2024/25



University of
Reading

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Introduction

Environmental sustainability is a core principle for University of Reading, with a clear commitment to embedding that principle in all that we do. Each year, the Estates Sustainability department takes stock of our progress, which is presented here for our year ending 31 July 2025.

We strive to lead by example by reducing the impact of our own operations, continuing to ensure that our research is helping to tackle some of the world’s biggest challenges, and ensuring sustainable development is fully embedded into our teaching.

This year, we have produced our first Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan, bringing together the interwoven threads of education, research and a green University, and underpinning our clear commitment to global environmental sustainability leadership. We have also published an updated Net Zero Carbon Plan, re-affirming our commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 in our core operations, as well as setting new targets covering the full breadth of carbon emissions we can influence, from the items we buy to the way our students travel.

Our defining external recognition is being named the Times and Sunday Times Sustainable University of the Year for 2025, who said Reading had “made an impressive headway towards its ambition of being one of the greenest universities in the world”.

Our carbon emissions, water consumption and waste per person have reduced again this year and our recycling rates have further improved. In our supply chain, we are one of only two UK universities to have achieved a three star University and Colleges Fairtrade award. We achieved our third consecutive top 5 ranking in the People & Planet University League, ranking fourth, while we ranked equal 50th in the world in the Times Higher Education (THE) Global Impact Rankings and 42 in the international 2025 QS Sustainability Rankings.

“There is so much to be proud of, and so much more still to be achieved. Climate change remains one of the largest global threats we face and we must continue to demonstrate leadership through our own actions, through our teaching and through our research. At a time when some organisations and some states are reigning back climate mitigation efforts, demonstrating what can be achieved, why it is needed and inspiring others to emulate that, gives us all hope for the future.”

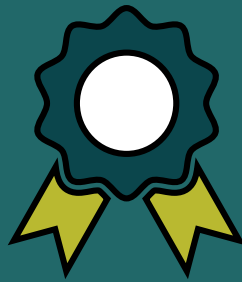
Dan Fernbank, Energy & Sustainability Director

Our sustainability highlights

The University of Reading is a leader in the field of environmental sustainability. Our achievements so far:



Sustainable University of the Year 2025 in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025.



Joint 42nd in the QS Sustainability Rankings 2025.

Awarded Fairtrade university **three-star status**.

4th in the People & Planet league 2024/25.



Joint 50th in the THE Global Impact Rankings 2025.

Winner of 15 consecutive Green Flag awards for Whiteknights campus.



3rd in the BioBlitz challenge 2025.



Top 50 in the world for our work in three of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (Times Higher Education (THE) Global Impact Rankings 2025).

63.8% carbon emissions reduction on 2008/09 baseline.

63.9% waste sent for recycling in 2024/25.

Zero direct or indirect investments in fossil fuels.

ISO14001/ISO50001 integrated and certified Energy and Environmental Management System.



Update on 2024/25 Targets

Key  No progress made towards target  Progress made towards target  Target achieved

Section	2024/25 headline targets	2024/25 target status	Details	SDGs supported
Environmental sustainability strategy	Publish environmental sustainability strategy in Autumn 2024.		Was published in July 2025 – but still within the same reporting period.	 
Compliance and management systems	Continue to maintain the EEMS to the internationally recognised ISO14001:2015 and ISO50001:2018 standards via the ISO certification which will be re-certified in March 2025.		Certification to ISO14001 and 50001 maintained.	 
	Continue with the expansion and development of the scope and context of the EEMS.		Progress made towards the expansion and development of EEMS.	 
Energy and carbon	Updating our Net Zero Carbon plan in line with the SCEF standard.		Net Zero Carbon plan revised and published.	 
	Major roof space insulation upgrades to multiple buildings.		Completed 24/25 (more work to come in 25/26).	 
	Energy reduction and space consolidation in the Maths/IT Data Centre .		Completed 24/25.	 
	LED lighting upgrades in the Carrington building.		To complete in 25/26.	 
Water	Completion of the project to connect target building–level water meters to our utilities database, following which, consumption patterns and targets for reduction can be set.		Working Progress to bring data onto our system database.	 
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.		Waste produced per person is 37% lower than 2015/16 baseline, with less than 1% of waste sent to landfill, which shows an improvement compared to last year.	 
	Continue to increase annual repair, remanufacture and reuse of items.		8.6 tonnes of furniture and other items were re-used across the year via our online Warp-it reuse platform, which was the highest figure for over 5 years.	 
	Roll-out a scheme to re-use more of the University's IT equipment as part of the Device Lifecycle programme operated by Digital Technology Services.		Digital Technology Services launched the Reuse & Recycle Service in autumn 2024 to collect and reuse more of the University's IT equipment.	
Sustainable travel	Increase the number of EV changepoints across our campuses.		EV infrastructure for both public and fleet chargers has been upgraded and expanded on all 3 campuses.	 
	Promote our Co Wheels car clubs and introduce new vehicles at key locations, including London Road campus.		Increased promotion and new EV coming in November 25.	 
	Improve cycle security storage locations.		Library cycle store upgraded with 3 new secure stores currently under construction / being built by the end of 2025.	 
Engagement, awareness and behaviour change	Improve the range of digital information available for waste and resource use and sustainable travel.		Range of digital information for waste and travel has been improved.	 
	Deliver renewed mandatory staff training sustainability module and develop other additional optional courses.		Mandatory Training Module reviewed and promoted in 24/25. Additional training options for staff also delivered by Sustainability through the Sustainability Champions Network for all staff.	 
	Broaden the different types of monthly sustainability engagement events.		Different teams and partners from across the University have delivered monthly inputs.	
Environmental protection and pollution prevention	Maintain our target of no more than 3 emissions/discharges incidents from University activities on a rolling 3-year average and annually reporting progress.		Target achieved, with two incidents from University activities in 2024/25.	 
	Continue to increase awareness of air pollution by promoting more sustainable forms of travel and being a Clean Air Day supporter.		Target achieved, regular events held to promote Clean Air and more sustainable travel modes.	 
Responsible procurement	The University is supporting the Fairtrade Foundation with their 30th anniversary celebration by attempting to take part in 30 activities during the year 2024/25.			 
	In the next year, the University plans to sign up to the Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool run by NetPositive Futures. This tool will help the us to calculate our proportion of a supplier's carbon footprint and see the supplier's bespoke action plan to help them to become a more sustainable supplier. This will lead to more accurate Scope 3 calculations.		In autumn 2024, the University of Reading signed up to the NetPositive Futures Net Zero supplier tool to obtain more accurate information about the Scope 1,2,3 emissions of our suppliers.	 
	Our Managed Print Service has been working on reducing the amount of printing devices for the upcoming contract period, which will reduce our energy and paper consumption.		DTS and Konica Monolta completed this project to reduce and relocate printers across campus.	 

Section	2024/25 headline targets	2024/25 target status	Details	SDGs supported
Conservation and biodiversity	Publication of a new Biodiversity Action Plan in 2025.		In progress but will not publish in 2025.	 
	Develop an improved online hub showcasing biodiversity activities at the University of Reading.		In progress but will look to launch in 2026.	
	Pilot the University of Reading Nature Park project with a range of local schools, which will offer them increased opportunities to access nature based learning on campus.		Pilot activity continuing. Dedicated learning garden opening in 2026.	
	Identify opportunities for improved outdoor learning for our own students and local school pupils.		Pilot activity continuing. Dedicated learning garden opening in 2026.	
Community and community involvement	Engage people across the University community to empower and inspire understanding and action on climate change and environmental sustainability.		Ongoing comms on sustainability related stories throughout the year.	 
	Work closely with partners to engage residents and the wider community around our campuses in local climate initiatives and individual behaviour change.		Continued work with local authorities on resident engagement and with partners on activities such as Reading Climate Festival.	 
	Facilitate opportunities for University expertise and learning to inform and shape local strategies for addressing the climate change and nature crises.		RBC and WBC climate strategies benefiting from UoR involvement and advice. New Climate Strategy for Reading will launch in Nov 25.	
	Continue our lead role in supporting schools nationally to improve climate education, climate action planning and enhancing biodiversity.		Over 1,100 volunteer Climate Ambassadors recruited to support schools across England.	
Sustainable food	Reducing kitchen food waste and plate waste.		Baseline currently being established.	 
	Improving seasonality of food on campus.		Additional seasonal Greengrocer appointed and feeding into kitchens.	 
	Self-generating power for our cooking.		This is part of the wider Net Zero Plans and aspirations to increasing self generation in future.	 
Education for sustainable development	Widely champion the ESD programme to staff and students, including highlighting progress across the University and specific opportunities to get involved.		Launch of new open online course, new scholarship scheme, improved RED Sustainable Action Award.	 
	Develop the new University wide module/online course on climate change and environmental sustainability.		Launched ready for this academic year.	
	Embed the Community of Practice and other support mechanisms for teaching staff.		Community of Practice established and improved training resources for staff put in place.	
	Continue to promote the RED Sustainable Action Award and seek ways to increase opportunities for students to put their learning into action.		The RED Awards have been relaunched with a points system, providing greater clarity and accessibility for students. Student numbers registering and completing the award continue to rise.	
Ethical investment and banking	Include scopes 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions from University's investment portfolio within the University current baseline.		Meetings between Finance, our fund managers, and third party advisers. Our fund managers provide 1,2 and 3 carbon emissions data. Investment emissions in our baseline are included.	 
	Work to calculate and include the carbon footprint of the University's other treasury activities within the baseline, and reduce it by the use of compliant products as they become more available.		The University remains part of the Cambridge Banking Engagement Forum. This group is working with banks and has made progress in compliant treasury products, which should be available in the medium term.	 
	Add more impact investments which directly reflect the University's net zero carbon journey.		£1.5m invested in the Hamilton Lane III fund during the year. They are a specialist firm offering access to private markets, for sustainable and ethical investment. https://www.hamiltonlane.com/en-us	
Ethical careers and recruitment	The University to announce its current position regarding the development of an ethical careers policy.		The careers Statement of Service was updated to include a statement that it reserves the right to prioritise employers who can demonstrate a genuine commitment to environmental sustainability in line with the University's strategic principles in this area.	 
	Develop the University's portfolio around future green careers to ensure links between our programmes, awards, work experience and volunteering opportunities.		The new post 'Business and Employability Manager (green careers)' was created in June and is building links and deepening existing relationships in these areas.	 
Estates development and maintenance	The potential to double glaze Whiteknights House during 2024/25 is being explored to significantly improve the efficiency of the building and comfort levels for those working from this location.		This is still an efficiency opportunity.	 
	The gas steam boilers will be removed from the Health, Life Sciences (HLS) building, with localised electric steam generations installed in their place, which will lower the building's carbon footprint.		Electric steam boilers are in place.	 

Environmental Strategic Action Plan and Rankings

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 made significant progress thanks to excellent collaboration across our community – and this has been recognised in improved performance in key external sustainability ranking schemes and sector awards.

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan is evolving to define our ambitions for the next five-year period across three themes:

Education and 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. We must support all of our students to develop an understanding of the challenges ahead and the skills, knowledge and resilience to help address them through their future careers and in their day-to-day lives and help nurture the global sustainability leaders of the future.

Research and influence

At the University of Reading, sustainability is at the core of our research mission. As a globally recognised leader in climate science, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and energy systems, our work informs policy, transforms industry practice and builds a more resilient future.

Our [Research & Innovation Strategy](#) sets out how, by 2030, we will be the go-to institution for bold, interdisciplinary solutions to the planet's most urgent environmental and societal challenges. Our research will fuel breakthrough innovations and actively drive societal and economic transformation, moving beyond influence to direct action and ensuring real, lasting change where it is needed most.

A green university

We have 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.

View our [Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan 2025–30](#).

* Reflecting our ongoing commitment to environmental excellence, the University of Reading's Whiteknights campus was awarded the Green Flag for the 15th consecutive year, recognising it as one of the UK's best managed and most accessible green spaces.

Rankings and recognition

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 were proud to have been ranked 4th out of 149 UK universities in the 2024/25 League, retaining a top-five position for the third year running. Reaching a top-five position by 2026 was a key target identified in the University's Strategic Plan.

The University of Reading was joint 42nd in the world for sustainability, according to the **QS Sustainability Rankings 2025**. Reading has risen in the international league table for a third consecutive year, up from 61 in the world last year. A total of 1,744 institutions featured in the 2025 ranking.

The University of Reading was named **Sustainable University of the Year 2025** in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025, which said Reading had “made an impressive headway towards its ambition of being one of the greenest universities in the world”.



Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 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 feature in the [Times Higher Education \(THE\) Global Impact Rankings](#), which score higher education institutions on their work towards each goal.

In 2025, the University was ranked joint 50th in the world out of 2,318 participating institutions.

9 from 973 in SDG12 – Responsible production and consumption. This was ranked on evidence including the University's Menus of Change programme, which promotes ethical food sourcing, plant-based options and food waste reduction across University catering.

76 from 1,089 in SDG13 – Climate action. Among the successes highlighted, the Climate Ambassador Scheme, which was set up by the University of Reading and expanded across the UK, connects climate experts with schools nationwide to build climate knowledge and skills in young people.

36 from 1,261 in SDG10 – Reducing inequality. This ranking position reflected evidence including Reading's active diversity networks, including the BAME Network, LGBT Plus Network, Parent and Family Network, Staff Disability Network, Women@Reading group, and others aimed at supporting active participation.

Joint 39 from 2,389 in SDG17 – Partnership for the goals.



Our future commitments

- To be recognised as a leading UK university for sustainability, by consistently achieving a top-five position in People & Planet University Green League.
- 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 THE Global Impact Ranking and QS Sustainability Ranking (note these are 2030 targets, not just for the year ahead).

“We are proud to be a multi-award-winning community playing a sector-leading role in addressing climate change and environmental sustainability through our world-leading research, teaching and campus operations.”

“It is excellent to be recognised as Sustainable University of the Year, which reflects the incredible hard work of our students, colleagues and partners who together have a shared commitment to securing a better global future.”

Professor Robert Van de Noort,
Vice-Chancellor of the University of Reading



Compliance and management systems

The Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS) is a robust, strategic framework that underpins the University's commitment to environmental sustainability and regulatory compliance. By embedding sustainability into core operations, the EEMS enables continual improvement, effective risk management, and adaptation to climate challenges, while identifying opportunities for lasting positive impact.

Tracking our progress

- In March 2025, an external surveillance audit of the EEMS resulted in the assessor recommending that the University maintain its certification to both the ISO14001 and ISO50001 standards. Auditors commended the exceptional commitment of University staff to sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- The scope of the EEMS has continued to grow, with ongoing expansion into additional areas of the University estate and broadening the system's context, ensuring it remains consistent and representative of the University's diverse operations.

- Progress has been made in aligning the EEMS with the University's new high-level Environmental Strategic Action Plan. This alignment ensures a cohesive, institution-wide approach to environmental sustainability across all activities.
- The 2024/25 EEMS Management Review confirmed the system's effectiveness in embedding sustainability into daily operations and strategic decision-making. It continues to serve as a valuable framework for setting objectives, managing risks and opportunities, and monitoring performance.



Our future commitments

- The University remains dedicated to maintaining the internationally recognised ISO certifications, with re-certification scheduled for March 2026.
- Further enhancement and expansion of the EEMS will ensure it continues to evolve, remain relevant, and support the University's long-term sustainability ambitions.



Energy and carbon

In July 2025, we published an updated and more comprehensive Net Zero Carbon Plan, including for the first time our complete scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. The Plan’s updated headline targets are for the University to:

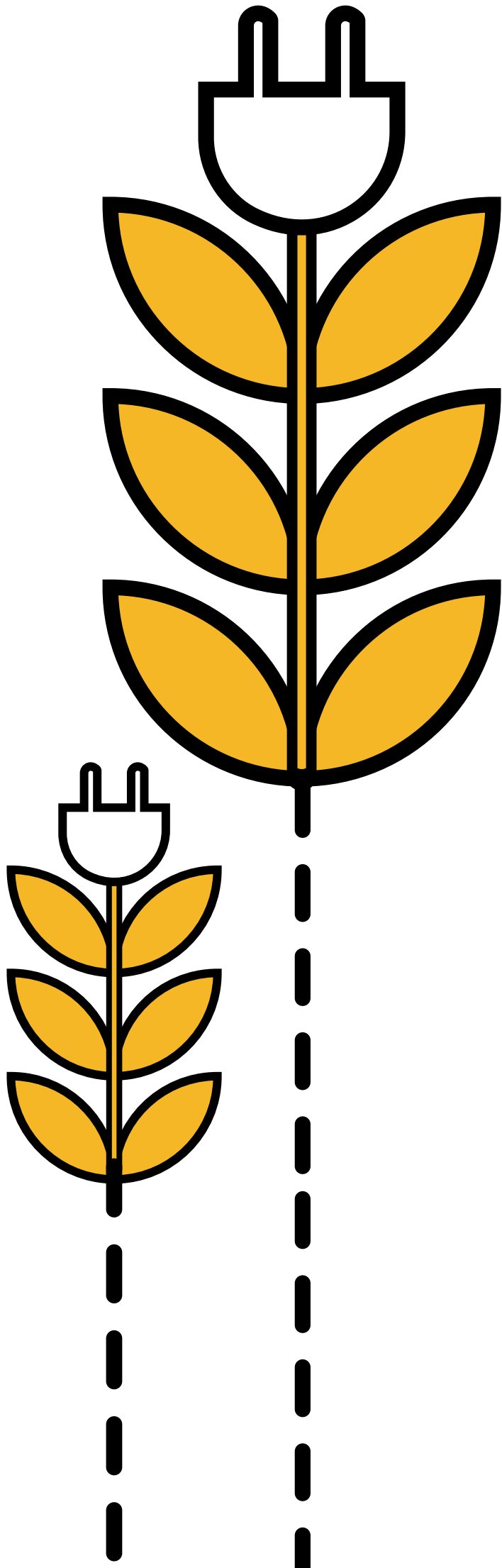
- reduce its existing carbon emissions scope to net zero by 2030 (against a 2008/09 baseline)
- reduce all scope 1 and 2 emissions to net zero by 2035 (against a 2008/09 baseline)
- reduce all scope 3 emissions by at least 40% and 70% by 2035 and 2040 respectively (against a 2023/24 baseline).

To ensure the targets stand up to scrutiny, we have sought to align with the principles of the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTI)¹ wherever possible. The Plan also brings us in line with the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) for the higher education sector, published by the EAUC² following sector consultation, including through the Platinum Jubilee Challenge in which the University participated.

Our carbon reductions now stand at 63.8% of our in-scope emissions for our 2030 target against our 2008/09 baseline (a full breakdown of our emission reductions is provided in Appendix 2), delivering cumulative savings of 159,300 tCO₂ and £57.9 million.

¹ Standard for setting emissions reduction targets in line with best-practice - <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>. We have sought to align with the updated version 2.0 standard, to ensure alignment with the latest principles.

² Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) | EAUC



University of Reading carbon emission scopes and targets

2035 & 2040 scope	2030 scope	Scope 1		2030 Net Zero	2035 Net Zero	2040 Net Zero
		Farmland & livestock				
		Volatile organic compounds				
		Scope 1				
		Gas and oil burned in UoR operated buildings – inc. generator/temp boiler fuels				
		University fleet vehicles				
		Refrigerant gases				
		Scope 2				
		Electricity used in UoR operated buildings				
		Scope 3				
Electricity T&DI						
Business travel, inc. student group travel ³						
Water						
General & construction waste						
		Scope 3		2035 -40% all scope 3	2040 -70% all scope 3	
		Purchased Goods & Services				
		Capital goods				
		Staff & student commuting				
		Working from home				
		Student start/end of term travel				
		Hotel stays				
		Investments				
		Downstream leased assets inc. on and off-campus halls ⁴				
Out of scope – non-UK operations, pensions						

³ Transmission & Distribution emissions over national grid

⁴ The University does not have any upstream leased assets

Energy

Our primary energy consumption per m² compared to the average of the previous 2 years, a key metric in our ISO50001-certified energy management system, reduced by 13.9%.

We generated over 1,000,000 kWh of electricity from our own solar panels for the first time this year, accounting for 4.5% of our total electricity consumption.

We continue to procure 100%-certified renewable electricity for our remaining grid electricity demand. When using market-based carbon accounting, our overall emission reductions stand at 73.9% below baseline.

Analysis of our Display Energy Certificates shows that 85% of our building performed better than average for the second year in a row.



Completed projects

In March 2025, we completed a major retrofit of air source heat pumps at the SportsPark, eliminating gas usage, which is expected to reduce our carbon emissions by 86 tonnes annually. This project is supported by partial funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, delivered by Salix Finance on behalf of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

We completed significant roof space insulation improvements to multiple buildings on the Whiteknights and Greenlands campuses, expected to save 137,000 kWh and 26 tCO₂ annually.

We reduced the physical space of one of our major server rooms, enabling a significant reduction in air conditioning energy demand, expected to save 150,000 kWh and 30 tCO₂ annually.

Appendix 1 (table 1) shows the full list of energy projects completed in 2024/25. Appendix 1 (table 2) shows the full list of our planned energy and carbon saving projects for 2025/26.



Our future commitments

- Work to decarbonise our Energy Centre has paused while we review the scope and approach to decarbonising heat on Whiteknights, including suitable sources of funding. The year ahead will see us actively working to revise and expand the proposed scheme and appoint a delivery partner for a more ambitious project for a fully decarbonised and expanded heat network to be delivered over the next few years.
- We plan to significantly expand our solar PV generation on Whiteknights, through more rooftop solar panels as well as car park canopies – aiming to at least double our onsite generation capacity.
- Work to optimise HVAC systems in the Health & Life Sciences and School of Art buildings are anticipated to deliver significant in-year energy and carbon savings.
- The Our Future First sustainability champions programme continues to engage staff in a range of sustainability topics, including a particular focus on energy and carbon. Further themed workshops are planned for the year ahead, and we are discussing how the champions can contribute to a wider space utilisation project. We aim to become the first fully certified Energy Conscious Organisation (EnCO) university during the year ahead.



Estate development and maintenance

A refreshed Estates Strategy was published in July, with a vision for being “The University in a Park” bringing the relationship between our buildings and beautiful parkland landscapes to life. The Strategy sets out four key drivers, to which environmental sustainability is integral:

- **Maximising assets** – improved space utilisation is crucial for a more economically and environmentally sustainable estate.
- **Growth** – future developments will ensure they are compliant with our net zero carbon and wider environmentally sustainable ambitions.
- **Risk and compliance** – our ISO14001 and ISO50001 certifications underpin strong environmental management. Delivering a net zero estate, minimising pollution and waste, encouraging reuse and sustainable travel are integral.
- **Optimising operations** – reducing waste and utilities costs are crucial to cutting estate operational costs. Infrastructure improvements will support active travel, reliable public transport links and electric vehicle charging.

Tracking our progress

- Construction is well underway of the new, environmentally conscious headquarters of the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (ECWMF), which they will own and operate on the former TOBI site.
- The URS building redevelopment is targeting ‘very good’ BREEAM status, and includes a fabric-first approach to improving energy efficiency.
- The gas steam boilers have been removed from the Health and Life Sciences building, with replacement electric boilers lowering the building’s carbon footprint.



Our future commitments

- The Space Optimisation project will better align building usage with occupation to enable significant energy efficiencies as well as wider cost reductions.
- The planned maintenance programme includes rolling upgrades for systems such as lighting and air conditioning and will factor in utilities savings in future prioritisation of work to maximise impact.
- Opportunities to phase out further gas-intensive generation plants are being explored, with the current focus on the remaining gas steam generators in Harry Nursten and the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engine in the Whiteknights Energy Centre.



Water

Monitoring the University's water consumption continues to improve, though it still presents more challenges than monitoring energy use. By their nature, water leaks can be significant, either through gradual, persistent leaks that are difficult to detect, or through major leaks that cause substantial loss. As such, our priority remains improving water metering to enable more effective monitoring and quicker responses to issues.

Tracking our progress

- We used 21% less water in 2024/25 compared to our 2011/12 baseline.
- We now have 24 Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) installed at our supply points, up from 22 in 2023/24. These provide half-hourly data on water usage and allow us to set alarms for spikes in consumption.
- A significant number of building-level meters have been connected to the University's utilities management database, enabling closer monitoring of consumption at the building level and supporting progress toward our reduction targets.
- In early 2025, the Thames Water Efficiency Team visited our sites and repaired over 150 minor leaks and drips in taps and toilets, helping to reduce water waste.



Our future commitments

- Improved water monitoring will allow us to undertake deeper analysis of consumption patterns, with reduction targets set in line with data insights.
- We will continue to work towards our target of a 45% reduction in our non-residential water consumption by July 2026.



Our sustainability and climate science research

We are part of the EU-funded HYway project, which brings together experts from 12 institutions to study the climate and environmental impacts of a hydrogen economy. Our researchers are leading the investigation into the "hydrogen budget", tracking how hydrogen enters and exits the atmosphere and assessing the associated impacts.

Read: Climate impacts of a hydrogen economy to be investigated

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, so we work proactively to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover items and materials. Sending materials to landfill is the last resort. We work closely with our main waste management contractor, Select Environmental Services, a Reading-based company, to roll out new innovations and undertake new initiatives.

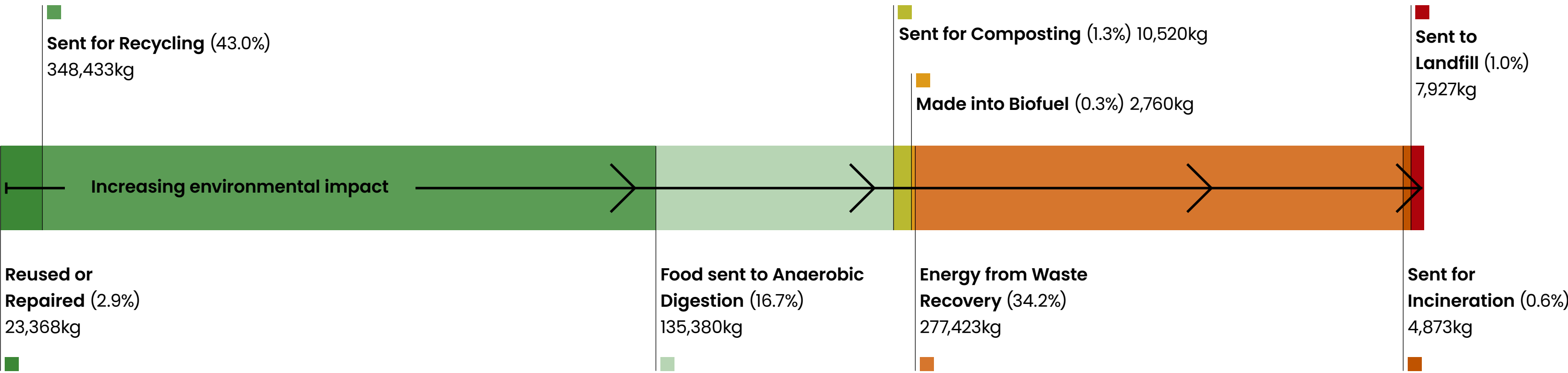
Tracking our progress

Having met the targets for 2021 to 2024 that were set out in the Waste and Resource Use Strategy (detailed in our 2023/24 Report), we have set new targets for 2024 to 2027:

- Continue to reduce total waste produced per person (full time equivalent student and staff members) from the 2022/23 level of 43.1kg.
- Increase the amount of items reused, remanufactured and repaired from the 2022/23 level of 22.1 tonnes.
- By 2027, increase the University’s annual recycling rate for operational waste to a minimum of 65% (by weight, including repair, reuse, anaerobic digestion and composting). This is eight years ahead of the government’s 65% target for the whole of England in 2035.
- Continue to send less than 1% by weight of operational waste to landfill.
- Develop the University’s procurement practices to enable further circular economy approaches to be implemented by 2027.

The graphic below shows the amount of operational waste generated across the University for each element of the Waste Hierarchy for 2024/25 (which includes clinical and hazardous waste, but not construction waste).

Operational Waste Weights 2024/25 Total Waste: 810,684 kg



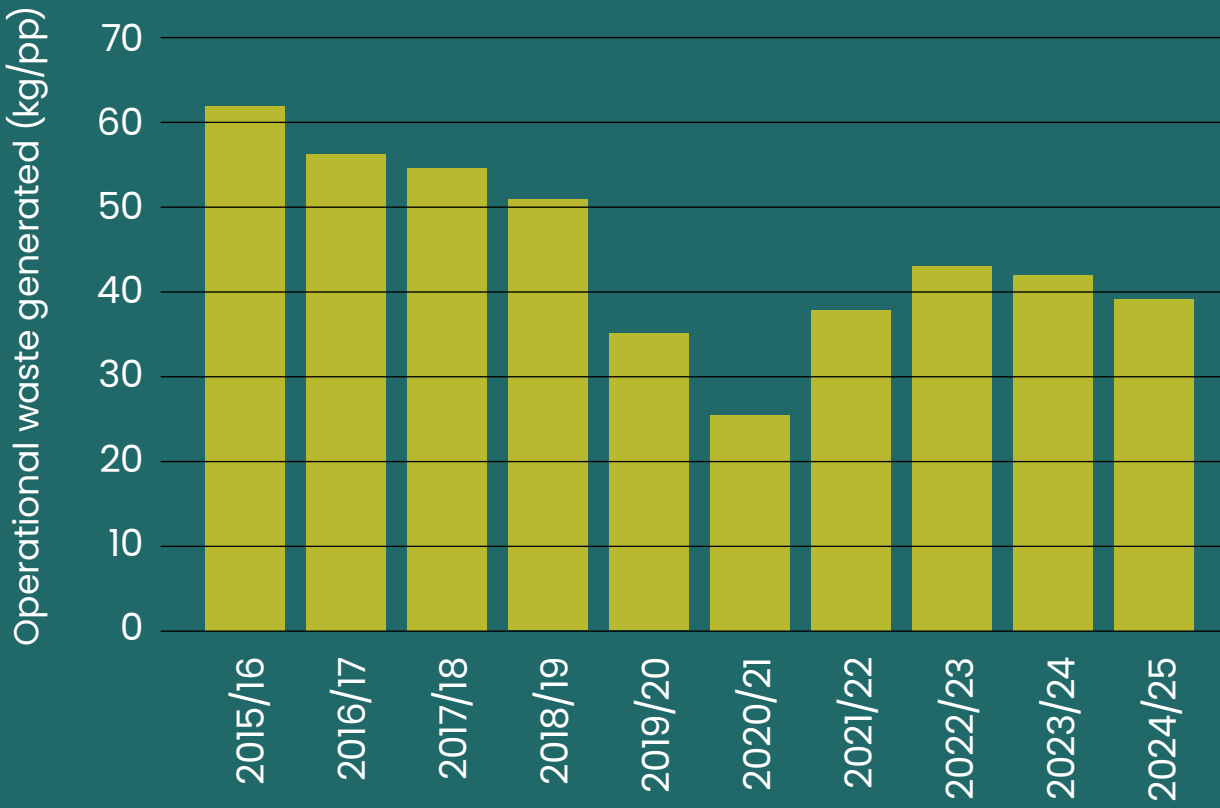
Reduce

Total operational waste produced in 2024/25 academic year was 39.1kg per person, compared to our 2015/16 baseline of 61.9kg per person, representing a 36.8% reduction. This equates to a total generation in 2024/25 of 811 tonnes of waste by around 20,700 students and staff (full-time equivalent).

The amount of waste generated per person was lower than in the previous year (42kg per person in 2023/24), and was over 11kg per person lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic (50.9kg per person in 2018/19).

The significant reduction in waste produced per person over many years shows that the University’s proactive approach to being an efficient user of resources, and preventing waste being created in the first place, is working. Reduction in waste generated is the most important element of the Waste Hierarchy.

Day-to-day operational waste produced per person per year (kg/person)



Reuse and repair

8.6 tonnes of furniture and other items were reused across the year via our online Warp-it reuse platform, which was the highest figure for over five years. These figures include IT equipment that has been reused within the University as part of the new Reuse & Recycle Service launched by the Digital Technology Services team in autumn 2024.

With a further 14.8 tonnes of additional items repaired, remanufactured or reused via other routes, this equates to a total of 23.4 tonnes in 2024/25.

Recycle

Our annual recycling rate for operational waste in 2024/25 was 63.9% by weight (including repair, reuse, anaerobic digestion and composting). This is an increase from 62.2% in the previous year.

A collection scheme for ceramics and heat-proof glass, which cannot be recycled with standard glass bottles, was implemented in 2024, enabling items from science laboratories and catering locations to be sent for recycling.

Recover

For our waste which cannot be reused, remanufactured or recycled in some way, the vast majority is sent to an energy from waste recovery plant, in which the waste is burned with the resulting steam powering a turbine. This generates electricity.

Landfill

The University has again met our annual target to send less than 1% by weight of operational waste to landfill.

Food waste management

All of the University’s catering locations have segregated food waste collection points for front-of-house and kitchen/preparation areas. Food waste recycling bins are also located in offices and academic areas across our sites. Food waste is collected by the University’s waste contractor and sent to an anaerobic digestion facility, where it is treated to generate electricity and digestate fertiliser.

More meals are now prepared from scratch on campus, which has resulted in larger quantities of vegetable peelings and off-cuts being put into the food waste stream. The University is serving more meals than ever, with catered student numbers more than doubling compared to 2018/19.

These changes have led to more food waste being collected, and segregated out of the general waste stream, than in previous years, leading to an increase in food waste collected.

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 2024/25, the University’s contractors generated approximately 2,535 tonnes of construction waste, of which 87% was sent for reuse, recycling or composting. The majority of this construction waste was generated from the internal clearance of the AMS and URS buildings.



Our sustainability and climate science research

Our EU-funded initiative is helping our students make more informed decisions about food packaging disposal on campus. The five-month programme engaged more than 100 students in sustainability activities, and research revealed promising results in improving understanding of correct waste disposal practices.

Read: Students lead the way in food packaging recycling initiative

FEATURE

Gum drop bins

The University has installed bright pink Gum Drop bins in Palmer Quad at Whiteknights to encourage responsible disposal of chewing gum.

Chewing gum is essentially flavour-enhanced plastic, which can have a high environmental impact if dropped on the floor.

The chewing gum collected in the Gum drop bins is recycled into new products such as pens, cups and even the Gum drop bins themselves!

FEATURE

IT Reuse & Recycle Service

The University’s Digital Technology Services team has rolled out a new scheme to collect and reuse more IT equipment internally within the institution, rather than sending items to be recycled after their first use.

Key to this scheme was to stop the routine shredding of hard drives, so that data wiping is undertaken instead in most instances.

Items not reused internally are either reconditioned for external reuse, or recycled if no longer fit for purpose.

Any surplus value from the sale of equipment is returned to the University for purchase of new equipment by the Device Lifecycle team.

2024/25 stats

36.8%

reduction in total waste generated per person compared to 2015/16

23.4 tonnes

of furniture and other items were reused or repaired

63.9%

Our annual recycling rate for operational waste

<1%

by weight of operational waste went to landfill

87%

of construction waste was sent for reuse, recycling or composting

Responsible procurement

The 2024/25 year has been very active for the University with regards to responsible procurement. We have continued to work with stakeholders and suppliers for the procurement of goods, works and services to support our teaching, learning and research while focusing on reducing the environmental impact of our operations and our supply chain.

Tracing our progress

- **Scope 3** – In autumn 2024, the University of Reading signed up to the NetPositive Futures Net Zero supplier tool to obtain more accurate information about the Scope 1,2,3 emissions of our suppliers, and analysis of this data has begun. We have also contributed data about our own emissions to the tool.
- **Circular economy** – We contributed to The Laboratory Sustainability Symposium in October 2024 at Imperial College London. This included suppliers, HEIs* and funders and the conversations resulted in a number of actions for the future to collaboratively improve circular economy practices, particularly in the IT and labs areas. As a member of the Circular Economy & Waste Reduction Responsible Procurement Group and the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice Discussion Group, we are also collaborating with other HEIs to put pressure on suppliers to reduce waste, offer alternative, more sustainable products, and develop guidance for sustainable procurement in grant writing. This work will continue in 2025/26.
- **Responsible consumers** – We have continued our work in 2024/25 through tendering, supplier and contract management and involvement with external organisations such as Electronics Watch, Fairtrade Foundation, Sustainable Restaurant Foundation, and NetPositive Futures to make more responsible choices. Work with UK procurement consortia and Electronics Watch has resulted in a formal response on suppliers to potential state-imposed forced labour in our supply chain which was identified in recent international investigative press reports. This collective pressure on suppliers will make a difference to international workers.
- **Policy and procedures** – The procurement policy was updated in August 2024 and our away day in May 2025 focused on areas where we can integrate responsible procurement more fully into our market engagement, tenders, evaluation and supplier reviews to reflect the commitments in the policy. Procurement also engaged in February 2025 with the University ‘Our Future First’ sustainability champions with advice about how to purchase more sustainable products.
- **Recognition** – In October 2024, the University was awarded three stars in the Food Made Good Standard by the Sustainable Restaurant Association. In June 2025 we increased our University and Colleges Fairtrade award from two to three stars – we are one of only two UK universities with this accolade.

* Higher Education Institutions
** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Health and Safety



Our future commitments

- **Scope 3** – The Supplier ESG Audit that we started in 2024/25 on suppliers with over £100k spend with the University will be expanded in 2025/26 to include more suppliers and to encourage those suppliers to contribute their data to the Net Positive Futures tool.
- **Supplier Code of Conduct** – In 2025/26 we will be updating our Supplier Code of Conduct in compliance with the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 to communicate the University’s zero-tolerance approach to fraud to all suppliers, contractors and business partners. We will also be expanding expectations of suppliers around environmental areas such as deforestation, water stress and scarcity, land use, mining, manufacturing and governance such as DE&I, H&S**, labour/wages).
- **Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice** – The University is set to become a signatory of the concordat in 2025/26. Procurement will provide internal guidance on sustainable procurement for researcher bid writing related to social value, choosing sustainable products via the new marketplace from August 2025, reuse/recycling/sharing of equipment and the role of the supplier. We will also continue to contribute to the EAUC Concordat working group and the University science school sustainability efforts to reduce duplication of effort.



Environmental protection and pollution

The University of Reading is committed to reducing our impact upon the environment, as demonstrated by being certified to ISO14001 since 2014. An integral part of this commitment is to reduce and minimise the direct environmental impact of our activities by controlling emissions, meeting our regulatory commitments, and implementing emergency response procedures to negate any effects of pollution.

We have committed to reducing environmental incidents to no more than three from University activities, on a rolling three-year average. In 2024/25 no more than two minor environmental incidents were reported that originated from University activities. These two incidents were dealt with effectively by staff, with corrective measures being identified and implemented promptly to prevent environmental damage in line with our EEMS procedures.

Environmental auditing

During 2024/25, the Sustainability team conducted a comprehensive programme of internal audits to ensure that procedures are effective and environmental compliance is maintained across a range of departments and schools. For example, these audits have supported and verified that our maintenance team’s scheduled tasks, including inspections of oil tanks, boilers, and refrigeration equipment, are compliant with current statutory requirements.

Emergency response

A complete review of the University of Reading’s environmental emergency response was conducted during 2024/25. This included a thorough review of all spill kits and emergency response measures managed by Estates. This has resulted in better placement of kits in strategic risk locations, alongside the purchase of new equipment. First responder spill training is scheduled in Autumn 2025 for all new staff to ensure that there are a range of trained people who can respond to environmental incidents.

Clean Air Day supporter

The University of Reading is a committed Clean Air Day supporter. The University held an On Your Bike and Clean Air event in October 2024 which encouraged people to try out cycling, provided free bike maintenance, and a sale of recycled, second-hand bikes. The event was supported by Reading Cycle Campaign to spread further awareness of different cycle routes across the town.

The University held its annual Green Festival in November 2024, a well-attended event that offered a range of different activities to support the promotion of sustainable travel and cleaner air. This included: a meditative nature walk, a Reading Buses event to promote bus services in the town, and a large second-hand bike sale. There was an engaging workshop looking at the amount of carbon stored in different trees on campus, and the relationship between emissions, fuel types, and different lengths of car journey.



Our future commitments

- We seek to maintain our target of no more than three emissions/discharges incidents from University activities on a rolling three year average. We will report on our progress against this target annually.
- We will continue to promote clean air through a range of different events highlighting sustainable travel modes, working with local stakeholders and community.



Our sustainability and climate science research

Our researchers are developing a new framework for monitoring insects, alongside partners including the Zoological Society of London. By integrating multiple data types, the new approach aims to build a better understanding of insect populations and how we can conserve them.

Read: Some insects are declining – what’s happening to the 99%?



Sustainable travel

The 2024/25 academic year marked the first full year of delivery for the University of Reading’s Five-Year Travel Plan (2024–2029), which sets measurable targets to increase sustainable mode share across commuter travel, business travel, fleet operations and visitor/delivery travel. Delivery has been led by the Sustainable Travel Officer in collaboration with Estates, Campus Services, Reading Students’ Union (RSU), Reading Buses and local partners. This year’s work combined infrastructure upgrades, service enhancements and behaviour-change initiatives to make travelling to, from and between campuses greener, easier and more affordable.

Participation in staff travel benefits reached its highest level since the pandemic. Cycle to Work saw 68 participants, up 15% on 2023/24, while Bus to Work and Rail Season Ticket Loan usage also grew. These schemes remain a key tool in encouraging low-carbon commuting and will be promoted further next year.

Public transport connectivity was significantly enhanced with the launch of the “White Knight” 20 bus service in September 2024, providing a fast, direct link between Whiteknights campus and Reading town centre every 15 minutes during term time. The service has been well received, with strong uptake from staff and students, contributing to over 1.9 million bus journeys made to and from campus this year. The free MereOak Park & Ride service continues to be popular, reducing parking pressure on campus, while use of the Great Western Railway visitor rail discount portal increased fivefold following expanded promotion and inclusion in Offer Holder Day communications.

A major achievement this year was the expansion and upgrade of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across all three campuses. New public chargers were installed at Whiteknights Car Park 1A and London Road, while units at the SportsPark and Greenlands were replaced. All chargers now operate under a single provider (Amp EV), offering a more reliable and user-friendly system, with public access available via the Amp EV app or QR codes on each unit. Fleet and operational charging points were upgraded at Car Park 5, the Estates Compound, RSU Yard, and Security Car Park, with staff and fleet vehicles continuing to use RFID access. Early data indicates year-on-year growth in public recharges, with demand expected to increase further as additional chargers are introduced in 2025/26.

Cycling infrastructure was also strengthened with the opening of the new secure cycle shelter next to the Library, providing covered, well-lit and secure parking at the heart of Whiteknights campus. Two further shelters are planned for Whiteknights in 2025/26 to continue supporting growth in active travel.

Cycle safety and engagement programmes remained popular. More than 60 training sessions were delivered during the year, including Learn to Ride, Road Confidence, and “Rusty Rider” sessions, helping staff and students build confidence and develop skills for on-road cycling. Weekly Dr Bike maintenance sessions supported over 200 participants, while six Reading Bicycle Kitchen pop-ups provided additional low-cost repairs and maintenance guidance. Demand for the Unicycle hire scheme remained extremely high, with all bikes hired out within the first week of term and a waiting list maintained throughout the year.

For more information, see the [Travel Plan Annual Report 2024-25](#).



Our future commitments

- Focus on embedding the upgraded EV charging network, installing two additional secure shelters at Whiteknights, and further developing active travel infrastructure.
- Planning will also begin for the December 2025 travel survey, which will provide the first opportunity to measure progress against the Five-Year Travel Plan.
- Collaboration with Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Reading Buses, GWR, Co-Wheels and Avanti Cycling will continue to encourage greener, healthier and more affordable travel choices for staff, students and visitors.

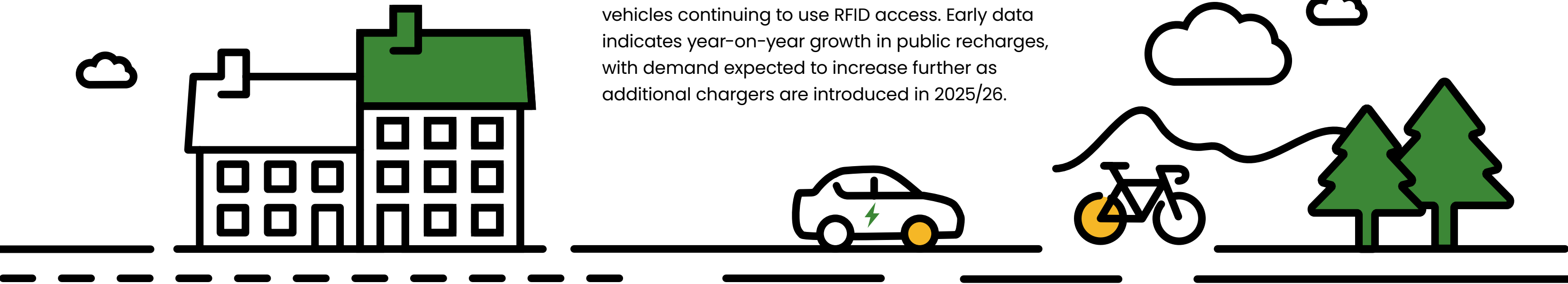


Our sustainability and climate science research

Our researchers are highlighting the impact that climate change is having on the aviation industry. We have found that rising temperatures will lead to increased turbulence at typical aircraft cruising altitudes, while hotter, less dense air could force airlines to reduce passenger numbers, making flights more expensive.

Read: Holiday flights could carry fewer passengers as world warms

Read: Turbulent flights to continue as warming world shakes skies



Engagement, awareness and behaviour change

Our aim is to create a culture of sustainability where sustainable behaviours are the norm and easy for everyone in our community to implement. Creating a sustainable culture requires us to engage with colleagues to raise awareness and encourage action, and to lead by example.

2024/25 highlights

- Green Festival is our annual highlight for engaging with staff and students about sustainability, with varied events and topics covered to ensure there is something for everyone. For 2024, these included an introduction to carbon literacy, sustainable crafting sessions, talk on the carbon intensity of

food, a conversation cafe on transport and the environment, a film screening of 'Six inches of soil', the inspiring story of British farmers standing up against the industrial food system and transforming the way they produce food, a litter pick, quiz, and more.

- As a supporter of Clean Air Day, we held 'On Your Bike' day which included a large second-hand bike sale, bike checks/maintenance, Reading Buses promotion, and Reading Cycle Campaign.
- We hosted many 'Smile with Sustainability' events in the library including an interactive waste game to learn how to correctly segregate waste, fairtrade quiz, and promotion of Reading Experience and Development (RED) Sustainable Action Award for students.



Our Future First

Our sustainable behaviours engagement programme, Our Future First, created a network of sustainability champions across all schools and directorates in 2023. Our champions work to inspire others; influence departmental decisions to factor in sustainability; act as our 'eyes and ears' across campus to identify opportunities for improvement; and share ideas, listen, and learn from each other – all of which supports our vision of embedding sustainability into our everyday actions, decision making, and culture.

Key activities for the programme over the last year include:

- quarterly network meetings to share ideas, discuss challenges, and update on progress;
- a business travel carbon budgets workshop to discuss sustainable best practices for business travel;
- a science schools sustainability workshop, focused on labs and how to overcome barriers to sustainability opportunities. This has resulted in establishing a 'sustainable labs' working group to take idea forward and engage with stakeholders to overcome barriers identified.

Upcoming plans for 2025/26 include:

- a sustainable events workshop to review the environmental impacts of events and how to minimise these, the output of which will be used to update our sustainable events guide.
- exploration of how we can extend the programme to include student sustainability champions in the future.
- quarterly themed 'Learn with Sustainability' sessions open to everyone in the University.
- running of specific sustainability campaigns with champions, to encourage colleagues to participate for collective action.





Our sustainability and climate science research

We are leading an initiative research how to make clean heating more accessible to communities, especially in deprived areas. As part of a £5.7m net zero project, it explores how to expand decarbonised heat networks across Reading by using major institutions – such as hospitals and council buildings – as foundation points to reach surrounding neighbourhoods, particularly those areas facing fuel poverty.

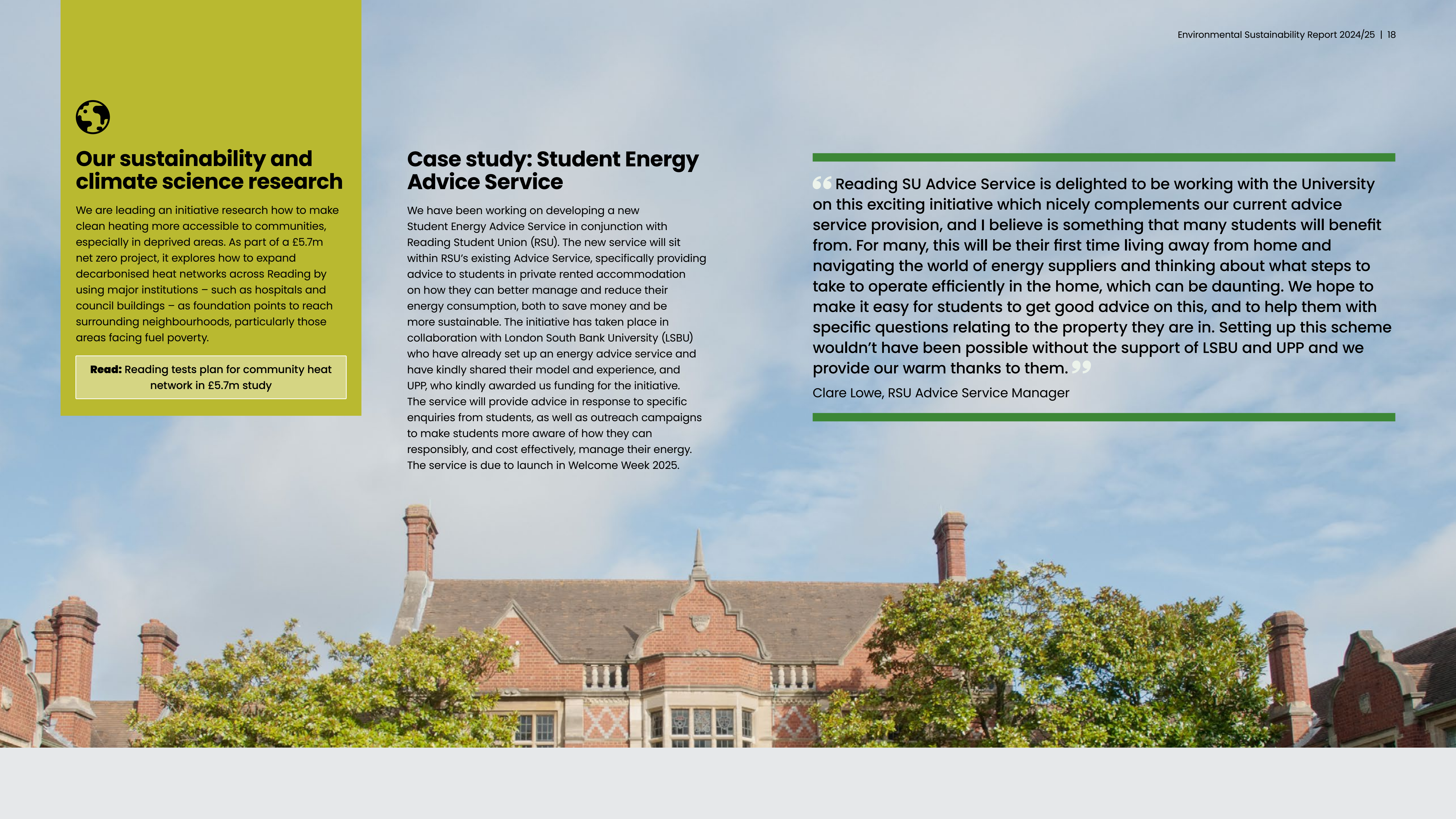
Read: Reading tests plan for community heat network in £5.7m study

Case study: Student Energy Advice Service

We have been working on developing a new Student Energy Advice Service in conjunction with Reading Student Union (RSU). The new service will sit within RSU's existing Advice Service, specifically providing advice to students in private rented accommodation on how they can better manage and reduce their energy consumption, both to save money and be more sustainable. The initiative has taken place in collaboration with London South Bank University (LSBU) who have already set up an energy advice service and have kindly shared their model and experience, and UPP, who kindly awarded us funding for the initiative. The service will provide advice in response to specific enquiries from students, as well as outreach campaigns to make students more aware of how they can responsibly, and cost effectively, manage their energy. The service is due to launch in Welcome Week 2025.

“Reading SU Advice Service is delighted to be working with the University on this exciting initiative which nicely complements our current advice service provision, and I believe is something that many students will benefit from. For many, this will be their first time living away from home and navigating the world of energy suppliers and thinking about what steps to take to operate efficiently in the home, which can be daunting. We hope to make it easy for students to get good advice on this, and to help them with specific questions relating to the property they are in. Setting up this scheme wouldn't have been possible without the support of LSBU and UPP and we provide our warm thanks to them.”

Clare Lowe, RSU Advice Service Manager





Our sustainability and climate science research

Our agricultural scientists co-authored a new guide, "Tree Species Guide for UK Agroforestry Systems", published by Forest Research, to help UK farmers reap the benefits of agroforestry – a type of sustainable farming that involves planting trees and shrubs among crops or livestock.

Read: Tree species guide unlocks benefits for UK farmers

We are leading the €6.5 million EU-funded VALOR project, which brings together interdisciplinary researchers, policymakers, and businesses to investigate how declining populations of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators could impact food systems and communities across Europe.

Read: Major new project to assess impact of pollinator decline

Conservation and biodiversity

The University is committed to protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of our campuses and land and engaging students, staff, and the local community in order to educate and communicate the importance of biodiversity.

Tracking our progress

- Following the results of a comprehensive baseline ecological assessment of our Whiteknights campus, the University is in the process of creating and reviewing a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), to initially focus on our main UK campuses. The BAP will detail the opportunities, goals, and targets to improve biodiversity on our UK campuses for the years ahead.
- We are proud to have won our 15th consecutive Green Flag Award, recognising our Whiteknights campus as one of Britain's top green spaces, which welcomes thousands of visitors each year including schools and other community groups, as well as the general public.
- Specific enhancement activities completed on campus in 2024/25 included;
 - Extension of last year's Wilderness scrapes and wetland works.
 - Clearance of invasive species (Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron) within the Wilderness and overplanting of over 400 native tree and shrub species along with seeding of wildflower seed mix suitable for woodland environment.
 - Creation of a thicket boundary between the Wilderness and Harris Garden using over 500 native tree and shrub species.
 - Using green waste compost to create a bank on the edge of Car Park 13 which has been over planted with over 250 native tree and shrub species.
 - Creation of a hedge and thicket plantings at the top of Car Park 2 and Park Wash over 400 native tree and shrub species planted into a thick layer or green waste compost.
 - Removal of invasive species (Cherry Laurel) at Bridges Hall and over seed with wildflower mix.
 - Removal of declining amenity shrub plantings at Earley Gate and over seeding with wildflower mix to create approximately 100m² of road verge and meadow areas.
 - Change a derelict basketball court into approximately 500m² of meadow area using green waste compost.
 - Removal of invasive species from woodland areas at Fox Hill house and Fox Hill drive to create hedge boundary and glade planting next to Fox Hill House using 150 native tree and shrub species along with seeding of wildflower seed mix suitable for woodland environment.
 - Planting over 30 standard trees using a mixture of native and exotic species some new to the University.





Our future commitments

- Launch Biodiversity Action Plan (phase 1) setting enhancement opportunities across UK campuses and community engagement in biodiversity.
- Develop an improved online hub showcasing biodiversity activities at the University.
- Launch improved scheme offering outdoor learning opportunities to local education settings, aligned with the National Education Nature Park, across our estate.
- Launch a dedicated Learning Garden supporting outdoor learning for our own students and local schools and colleges, showcasing education around climate change and environmental sustainability.
- Develop plan to anticipate and mitigate future risks to business continuity and business activities from evolving climate change impacts, including extreme weather events.

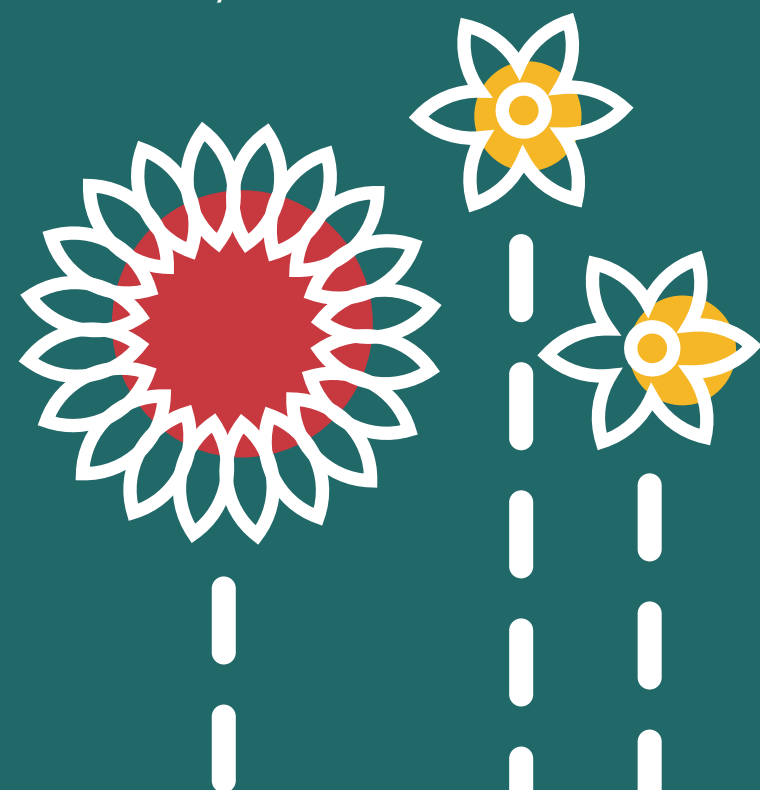


Our sustainability and climate science research

We've discovered that planting strips of wildflowers in apple orchards creates a home for helpful insects like ladybirds that eat harmful pests, thus boosting biodiversity, reducing the need for chemical sprays, and saving farmers money.

Read: Flower strips could save apple farmers pest control costs

- Throughout early 2025, staff and students from across the University took part in the ICA Biodiversity Challenge. This challenge saw ICA member campuses from across Europe monitor biodiversity, in the form of a BioBlitz, and record as many species on campus as they could. The University of Reading placed 3rd in the challenge, recording 1,334 species, including 640 plant species. In 2026, we hope to run a larger BioBlitz that allows staff, students, and local residents to participate, as part of our Centenary celebrations. BioBlitz activities have been kindly supported by the Friends of the University of Reading.
- The University of Reading Nature Park project is looking to offer local schools increased opportunities to access nature-based learning on campus, as well as elsewhere on our estate, aligned with the National Education Nature Park initiative. In 2024/25, the University of Reading Nature Park began its pilot phase, with schools being invited onto campus to help create and shape the project, with an intended full launch in March 2026 in line with the University's centenary.
- Alongside local schools, a number of outdoor learning spaces have been created on the University-owned Langley Mead reserve. The site has a wildlife pond, bee mounds, and habitat boxes for birds and hedgehogs to promote and enhance local biodiversity.
- Plans were approved by Wokingham Borough Council for the Natural History Museum development at the University of Reading-owned Thames Valley Science Park. The new state-of-the-art science and digitisation centre will enable major international scientific collaboration, generate big data, and support the application of cutting-edge analysis of the world's most significant natural history collection. Over 27 million specimens, as well as over 5,500 metres of accompanying Natural History Museum Library material, will be rehoused in the largest collections move for the Museum since the 1880s. By 2031, the centre will be fully operational, equipped with cutting-edge laboratories, workspace for Museum scientists, and purpose-built storage for 28 million specimens.
- A purpose-built herbarium at Thames Valley Science Park will become home to around 8.5 million items owned by Kew Gardens. This site will provide research, education, and collaboration facilities which will allow Kew to continue their critical work to address the biodiversity and climate crises.





Our sustainability and climate science research

We are participating in a groundbreaking £6.5 million consortium – the ‘Land Use for Net Zero’ (LUNZ) Hub – aiming to understand the impact of changing land use in order to reach net zero by 2050.

Read: £6.5 million for net zero farming research

Our chemists have created a new type of adhesive that can be cleanly removed from plastic bottles and packaging before disposal, helping to improve the quality of recycled plastic so it is more useful in its next life.

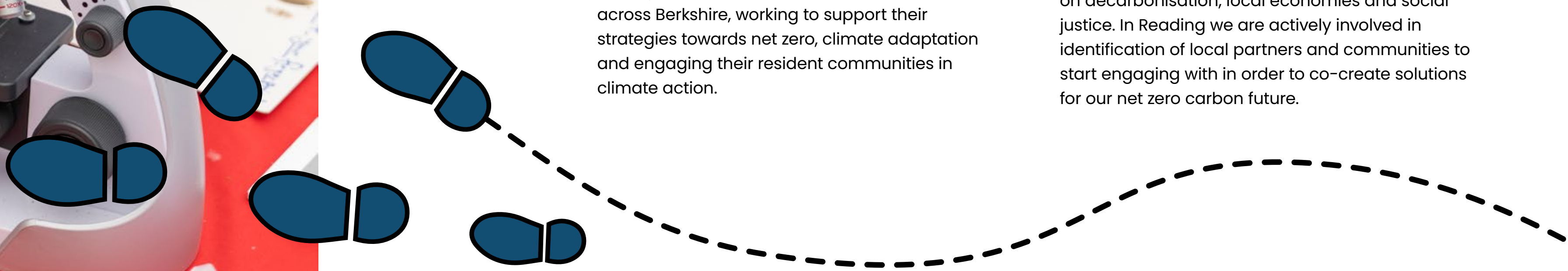
Read: Plastic bottles easier to recycle with new degradable glue

Community and community involvement

We are committed to creating a University for Reading by working together with local partners to benefit the lives of our local community in Reading, Wokingham and the Thames Valley. The University is working to engage our whole community, locally and globally, to empower and inspire greater commitment and action to address climate change, working towards a more sustainable future for us all.

Tracking our progress

- As a lead partner in the Reading Climate Change Partnership, we helped deliver a ‘Year of Climate Engagement’ over 2024/25. This involved workshops, facilitated discussions, surveys and activities with stakeholder groups across the local community to gather their insights, suggestions and hopes that will shape the climate priorities for a refreshed Reading Climate Emergency Strategy launching in 2025.
- The University engaged with Wokingham Borough Council and other local authorities across Berkshire, working to support their strategies towards net zero, climate adaptation and engaging their resident communities in climate action.
- The University played a lead role in delivering the two weeks of events for Reading Climate Festival in June 2025. Events led by the University focused on enabling householders to green their home, a public lecture on how the legal system can tackle climate misinformation, school events on climate action planning and improving air quality, and the Reading Community Energy Summit.
- We ran the Community Fair for students during Welcome Week, which enabled them to connect, engage and volunteer with local organisations that have a focus on environmental sustainability. Our staff volunteering scheme enables staff to take up to two days’ paid leave to support good causes through volunteering their time, many with a sustainability focus.
- The University is contributing to the JUST-Systems project, which is aiming to develop an integrated set of systems approaches that position people at the centre of the transition to net zero and empower them to accelerate action on decarbonisation, local economies and social justice. In Reading we are actively involved in identification of local partners and communities to start engaging with in order to co-create solutions for our net zero carbon future.



- Show Your Stripes Day on 21 June is our annual global campaign to raise awareness of the urgency for climate change action, represented by the climate warming stripes developed by Professor Ed Hawkins MBE. This year, organisations taking part included the Formula E racing team Envision, Henley Women's Regatta, the London to Brighton EV (Electric Vehicle) Rally, and London Climate Action Week.
- The Climate Ambassadors programme, created by the University of Reading and funded by the government, links experts working on climate and sustainability with education professionals to provide them with free advice on making a climate action plan. The programme recently welcomed its 1,000th climate ambassador, Stephen Morgan MP. This programme has already engaged with more than 1,600 education settings in England.
- The University welcomed a number of local schools to participate in outdoor learning activities through our University of Reading Nature Park pilot project, aligned with the DfE's National Education Nature Park. We announced that the UoR Nature Park will also feature a newly created dedicated Learning Garden on our main campus, launching as part of our centenary celebrations in 2026.
- New outdoor classrooms at two Shinfield primary schools were officially opened in November to coincide with Outdoor Classroom Day. These were provided by the University, working in collaboration with the schools and children, to ensure that the sites best met their needs.

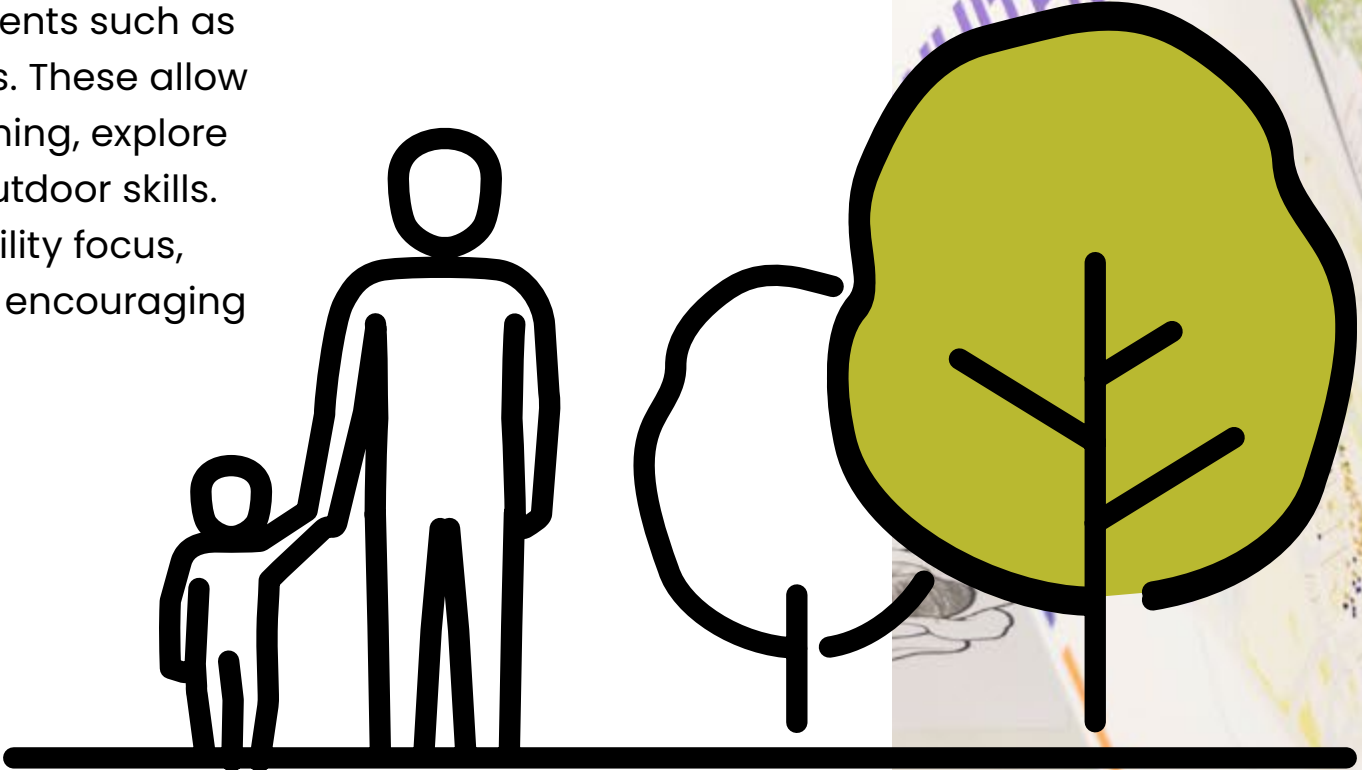
- A new meadow classroom has been created at Langley Mead – this features a new pond, access bridge for pond dipping and new wildlife habitats. The classroom is for use by Shinfield St Mary's C.E. Junior School and members of the public. Shinfield Infant and Nursery School has access to a woodland classroom with new habitats for wildlife.
- We celebrated National Meadows Day in July at Langley Mead, owned and managed by the University of Reading. Local community members were able to learn about the restoration of Langley Mead, participate in a guided walk, and learn more about the wide range of plants and wildlife that can be found on the nature reserve.

Museums and collections

The University of Reading has a range of nationally and internationally significant museums and collections, which are visited by over 50,000 people every year and tens of thousands more online. They are strongly committed to sustainability and this can be seen throughout their work. For example, they regularly run family events such as Friday Fledglings and Green Explorers. These allow young children to enjoy outdoor learning, explore the natural environment and build outdoor skills. Their events have a strong sustainability focus, minimising waste, reusing items and encouraging sustainable travel modes.

Our future commitments

- Engage people across the University community to empower and inspire understanding and action on climate change and environmental sustainability.
- Work closely with partners to engage residents and the wider community around our campuses in local climate initiatives and individual behaviour change.
- Facilitate opportunities for University expertise and learning to inform and shape local strategies for addressing the climate and nature crises.
- Continue our lead role in supporting schools nationally to improve climate education, climate action planning and enhancing biodiversity.



Sustainable food

We grow, teach, research, and cook food, with a strong emphasis on improving access to nutritious food, sustainable food systems, and adapting to the challenges of our changing climate. Our food activities are integrated: our dining halls are used as Living Labs to test ideas, our farms produce ingredients for our kitchens, and our academic expertise informs our approach to menus.

- The Clever Cuisine Meal System is the UK market leader in providing students with food that is both nutritious and delicious, holding a maximum three-star accreditation from the Sustainable Restaurant Association, all while ensuring high levels of student satisfaction. Our long-term goal is for the majority of students to choose to eat with us each day, allowing us to continue to lower the price of food in real terms through better economies of scale.
- Social Meal Credits have been introduced to our purchasing agreements allowing our suppliers to support students in hardship through the donation of meals, on top of the support the University already provides. Our local and regional supplier base continues to grow with Langridge Organic and the South Devon Chilli Farm being notable additions.
- Our work across academia and the provision of food is nationally and internationally recognised, with Reading being the first UK member of Menus of Change Universities Research Collaborative (MCURC), a grouping of around 70 research-intensive universities across the world. Dr Charlotte Mills co-chairs the Education working group within MCURC and Matt Tebbit, our Director of

Dining Services, sits on the Advisory Council. Matt also is a Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Sustainability Group for The Universities Caterer's Organisation, covering £170 million of public procurement for food, applying Reading's expertise in sustainability and food systems to hundreds of universities, colleges, schools, and NHS Trusts.

- Raising the Pulse, a multi-year, multi-disciplinary research study looking at adding pulses to bread to improve both social and environment sustainability, saw teams across the University – from Farms to Food Sciences to Catering – collaborate.
- Park Eat, our largest site for food and drink, is now fossil fuel-free, with all cooking and heating powered solely by electricity. Our expertise in this area is being applied to the University Street Food Market, where we are supporting traders switching from gas to electric, as well as introducing the disposable packaging tax to encourage customers to bring their own containers. Two electric mobile kitchens have been added to the Catering operation, allowing us to begin phasing out BBQs, eliminate gas usage, and better manage food waste through being able to prepare/cook as needed.
- Our work around waste reduction has advanced. We received an award for our chocolate brownie made from coffee grounds from the Culinary Institute of America, following our commitment to use all edible food and food waste. We have also introduced pre- and post-consumer food and waste logging at logging at the Square to provide further insights.



Our future commitments

- Lower waste per meal served.
- Increase legumes and vegetables per meal served.
- Reduce the amount of single use items in use.



Our sustainability and climate science research

Our Raising the Pulse project – part of the UKRI Transforming UK Food System programme – is encouraging consumers to incorporate more nutrient-rich, climate-friendly pulses into their diets. Faba bean flours can be used as a partial substitute for wheat in white bread, improving both its nutritional and environmental value.

Read: Time to 'Raise the Pulse' of the UK diet

We are part of a multi-partner consortium working on the EU-funded PLANTOMYC project, which aims to develop innovative meat substitutes by combining plant-based ingredients with fungal biomass to create healthy and tasty food with minimal environmental footprint.

Visit: The PLANTOMYC project





Our sustainability and climate science research

We are helping to build resilience in the UK food system, working closely with government and major industry partners to ensure ongoing provision of healthy fruit and vegetables in the face of threats such as climate change, economic shocks, and pollinator loss.

Visit: The UK Fruit and Veg Resilience

Our multi-million-pound PROMOTE project (Progressing Earth System Modelling for Tipping Point Early Warning Systems) is focusing on improving scientists' ability to assess the risk and consequences of crossing tipping points in the North Atlantic and Greenland.

Read: Climate tipping points risks to be tested by next-gen models

Education for sustainable development (ESD)

As we prepare to celebrate our centenary in 2026, we are not only reflecting on our past but looking towards the future. Ours is a global, shared future in which we equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to help build a sustainable future for all.

The University Strategy sets out our ambition to embed environmental sustainability across both our curriculum and staff training programmes.

In evolving our University-wide framework for ESD, we are working towards:

- Ensuring that ESD is the business of all subjects at the University, experienced in a way that is authentic to the discipline. This will be done by underpinning approaches to ESD with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the overarching framework, though with special recognition of the University's expertise in Climate Action (SDG13) and environmental sustainability (where appropriate).
- Ensuring that a bespoke online course is developed and made available to provide a comprehensive grounding in climate and environmental sustainability for all students.
- This new online course, Advocating for a Better Planet, will be launched in Autumn 2025.



Our future commitments

- Embedding Education for Sustainable Development – developing a refreshed action plan and objectives during 2025/26.
- Launch the new University-wide module/online course on climate change and environmental sustainability, aiming for 500 students completing it in 2025/26.
- Deliver the ‘Global Sustainability Leaders’ scholarship programme with up to 300 scholars in 2025/26, including accessing a comprehensive new learning and development programme.
- As part of the Campus Landscaping capital estates project, launch new outdoor learning space in 2026 and monitor usage to set baseline and 2030 target.
- Enhance student opportunities to thrive in a green economy – develop our offering around future green skills and jobs, linking our programmes, careers support, student awards, work experience, and volunteering opportunities.



Our sustainability and climate science research

Our scientists are exploring whether releasing electric charge into clouds could help increase their reflectivity, as part of a £50 million government-funded programme investigating the science behind proposals for cooling the Earth.

Read: Electric cloud research joins UK climate cooling programme

Tracking our progress

- The Academic Development and Enhancement Team continued to provide support to academic schools as they engaged in ESD in the redesign and refresh of their programmes. This included initiation of a Community of Practice and development of comprehensive training materials showcasing best practice across the University.
- Developed throughout 2024/25, Advocating for a Better Planet is a new flagship online short course exclusively for all University of Reading students, launching in October 2025. The short course (approx. 6–9 hours of learning) explores the concept of advocacy, drawing on contributions from staff, students, and alumni from across the University. It will guide students through using a life-centred design toolkit to research and plan an action to help address a sustainability or climate emergency issue of their choice.
- In early 2025, the University of Reading launched the Global Sustainability Leaders Scholarship programme. This significant investment over the next five years will see up to 400 scholarships per year, each offering £6,000 per year of study, to high performing undergraduates across all disciplines who show a commitment to becoming future sustainability leaders. In addition to funding, a comprehensive programme of additional learning and experience opportunities will be offered to scholars, developing a strong grounding in sustainability issues and developing core competencies and skills to enable them to be sustainability change makers in whatever industry or field they pursue.
- In addition, we have recently approved funding for a new outdoor teaching space to be implemented on the main University campus, which will launch in 2026 as part of celebrations to mark our centenary. The University of Reading Nature Park will include a dedicated learning garden themed around climate and environmental sustainability issues, including specific research activities. The garden will benefit our own students as well as visiting groups from local schools and colleges, ensuring learners of all ages can access nature-based learning at the University.
- The University widely promoted the RED Sustainable Action Award, which is dedicated to encouraging learning, action, and advocacy for sustainability, open to all students and with an expanded portfolio of projects in which to participate. Our Careers and Employability team led the first RED Sustainable Action Conference aimed at students working towards this award, and featuring guest speakers from a range of environmental organisations.
- The Careers and Employability team’s expertise in this area was recognised by winning the ‘Green Careers Award’ at the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services Awards 2025.
- The University is working with Reading Students Union (RSU) to embed an annual student-led event called Student Sustainability Summit, providing opportunities for students to work together on sustainability issues, showcase their activities, and welcome a range of expert speakers.



Ethical investment and banking

The University reviewed its Investment Policy in June 2025, as it does every year. This year the representative of Reading Students’ Union who sits on Reading’s Investments and Development Committee reached out to the student body to get their feedback on the details of the policy, and what we exclude. the feedback indicated that Reading students are broadly in agreement with the policy. The University examined some of their newer concerns, such as the ethics of modern weight loss drugs. This feedback ensures the University listens to new issues as they arise.

The University significantly expanded the Investment Policy to clarify its investment aims, and how it uses the portfolios to support academic activity and the University’s wider strategy, which includes community engagement. It was also the first full year of exclusion of the biggest fossil fuel funders as identified in the BOCC data set. This had no material adverse impact on the University’s financial returns.

The University also amended its policy to create a much clearer means for non-student stakeholders, such as staff members, to raise concerns with Investments and Development Committee.

In terms of banking, the University successfully re-tendered to renew £50m of debt. As part of the process, the University explored whether a “green” loan with sustainability-linked KPIs would be appropriate. These loans would have a reduced margin if the University hit certain targets. While we did not in the end proceed with such a loan, the University learned a lot from the process. In the future, when more workable and robust schemes become commonplace, Reading will revisit the issue of linking borrowing to sustainability performance.



Our future commitments

- Review opportunities for using sustainable treasury deposit products, as they are developed.
- Review the University’s Investment Policy to reflect global developments.
- Consider more effective ways of reporting on our fossil fuel-free commitments.

Ethical careers and recruitment

We are committed to ensuring that our students and graduates are prepared for, and empowered to pursue, their chosen future careers. This must be balanced with our ethical and sustainability commitments and is an ongoing area of work for the University.

Progress/key achievements

- The Careers Service Statement of Service, now states that we reserve ‘the right to prioritise employers who can demonstrate a genuine commitment to environmental sustainability in line with the University’s strategic principles in this area.’
- In June 2025, the Careers team received the AGCAS Green Careers Award for its progress and ongoing commitment to promoting sustainable career pathways. Examples included the RED Sustainable Action Award; the annual Science, Health and Environment fair; working with the UN SDGs in curricular careers and employability sessions; and collecting and promoting employers’ sustainability credentials.



Our future commitments

- We look forward to welcoming the first cohort of Global Sustainability Leadership Scholars – supporting their career development through a range of practical opportunities with diverse organisations and connecting them with local employers. This work will be driven by the new Business and Employability Manager (Green Careers) in collaboration with colleagues across the central and Henley Business School careers teams.



Our sustainability and climate science research

We run the UK’s largest-ever fruit tree monitoring project, FruitWatch, now in its fourth year, which records the flowering dates of different fruit trees to help understand the impact that climate change is having on pollination and fruit production.

Read: Public match experts in blossom 2025

Sustainable labs

Progress so far: The University continues to promote sustainability within laboratory environments, aligning with its broader institutional climate goals. Over the past year, the University has significantly expanded its engagement with the **Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF)**. LEAF provides a practical structure for improving sustainability in labs, focusing on energy efficiency, waste reduction and responsible resource use.

To date, over 102 labs across multiple departments have signed up or participated in LEAF, with six achieving Silver accreditation and 27 achieving Bronze. These labs implemented impactful changes, such as reducing fume cupboard sash heights, optimising freezer temperatures, and rationalising single-use plastics, all contributing to meaningful carbon and cost savings.

Staff from the Technical Services team have been instrumental in delivering LEAF by supporting and actively engaging with sustainable lab practices across the campus through administering LEAF, changing lab practices and offering guidance to lab managers.



Our future commitments

- The University remains committed to embedding sustainability at every level of research activity, and sustainable lab practices will continue to be a key part of this story. Looking ahead, the University has set an ambitious goal: to ensure all laboratories achieve at least Bronze LEAF accreditation by autumn 2030.
- As a further commitment to embedding sustainability in research, the University is set to become a signatory of the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice in 2025/26. The Concordat outlines six priority areas, including leadership, infrastructure, procurement and emissions. To meet these commitments, we will strengthen governance through the Environmental Sustainability Committee, embed sustainability in research strategy, support researchers with sustainable procurement, enhance monitoring and promote reuse and shared resources. Continued work on LEAF accreditation and travel guidance will support implementation.



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Appendix 1: Completed and planned energy, carbon and water projects 2024/25

Table 1 – Completed energy, carbon and water projects 2024/25

Project Ref	Project description	Building(s)	Est kWh savings	Est tCO ₂ savings	Est annual savings	2024/25 Total Spend inc VAT	Notes
UoR156	SportsPark – heat pump installation	SportsPark	457,254	78	£49,690	£1,714,926	Continued from 2023/24
UoR136c	Data Centre partition	Maths/IT	150,000	30	£35,000	£121,869	
UoR165	Heat decarbonisation consultancy	Multiple	n/a	n/a	n/a	£45,360	
UoR054d	Metering – testing/replacement and expansion	Multiple	n/a	n/a	n/a	£49,511	
UoR164	Harry Nursten steam de-gassing – design	Harry Nursten	n/a	n/a	n/a	£22,908	Feasibility & design
UoR167	Health & Life Science energy optimisation	Health & Life Sciences	n/a	n/a	n/a	£37,669	Works ongoing
UoR161	Health & Life Science steam boiler degassing	Health & Life Sciences	189,756	15	£–	£1,025,369	Maintenance-funded
UoR169	Loft space insulation rollout	Multiple	137,467	26	£12,372	£139,155	
UoR035q	Carrington lighting replacement	Carrington	n/a	n/a	n/a	£81,400	Works ongoing
UoR155d	Sewer heat/flow monitoring	Multiple	n/a	n/a	n/a	£23,347	
TBC	Review operation & performance of eTRV system	Greenlands Main House	n/a	n/a	n/a	£7,128	Ongoing
TBC	Additional water AMR	Arbofield Hall Farm, East Lodge	n/a	n/a	n/a	£2,500	
UoR035r	LED lighting – Harry Pitt, Allen Lab, Library	Harry Pitt, Allen Lab, Library	16,586	4	£3,856	£95,660	
					TOTAL:	£3,366,801	

Table 2 – Planned new energy, carbon and water projects 2025/26

Project Ref	Project description	Building(s)	Est kWh savings	Est tCO ₂ savings	Est annual savings	2024/25 Total Spend inc VAT
TBC	Heat decarbonisation & renewables consultancy	Multiple	n/a	n/a	n/a	£260,000
UoR054d	Sub-metering testing, repair & expansion	Multiple	n/a	n/a	n/a	£33,000
UoR164	Harry Nursden steam de-gassing	Harry Nursden	TBC	TBC	TBC	£150,000
UoR167	Health & Life Science energy optimisation	Health & Life Sciences	TBC	TBC	TBC	£–
UoR169	Loft space insulation rollout	Greenlands – multiple	27,493	5	£2,166	£20,000
UoR169	Loft space insulation survey further buildings	Multiple	n/a	n/a	n/a	£25,000
UoR035q	Carrington lighting replacement	Carrington	40,000	8	£10,000	£5,000
TBC	Review operation & energy performance of eTRV system	Greenlands Main House	n/a	n/a	n/a	£10,000
TBC	Switch off CHP	Energy Centre	TBC	515	–£31,130	£–
UoR035s	Lighting controls and behaviour change campaign	Multiple	25,099	5	£6,275	£20,000
UoR172a	Smart Plugs expansion	TBC	11,716	1	£970	£20,000
UoR186	Review of overnight baseload consumptions	Multiple	46,411	10	£10,169	£20,000
UoR179	Replacement of small boilers with heat pumps (Boiler Upgrade Scheme)	Multiple	60,950	11	£695	£100,000
UoR180	Intelligent boiler load controls	Multiple	42,000	8	£3,310	£25,000
UoR044k	Whiteknights solar PV expansion	Multiple	900,000	176	£78,930	£–
UoR181	Load shifting trial	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	£–
TBC	Art building optimisation	Art	TBC	TBC	TBC	£25,057
UoR035s	Lighting as a service	Multiple	17,431	3	0	£–
UoR174	Energy efficient filters	Multiple	TBC	TBC	TBC	
UoR182	Temperature limiting TRV covers	Low cost	59,904	11	£4,720	

Appendix 2: Emissions + energy + water breakdown vs baseline and last year

Emissions breakdown compared with baseline and last year (tCO₂)

Table 3 – Emissions by source

Emissions Source	2008–09	2023–24	2024–25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Electricity (generation)	16,367	3,971	3,994	1% ⬆️	75% ⬇️
Electricity (transmission)	1,273	344	353	3% ⬆️	72% ⬇️
Natural gas ¹	9,249	6,043	5,195	14% ⬇️	44% ⬇️
Burning Oil ¹	1,544	465	415	11% ⬇️	73% ⬇️
Business travel ²	9,081	2,832	3,340	18% ⬆️	63% ⬇️
Vehicle fleet ³	138	240	249	4% ⬆️	81% ⬆️
Refrigerants	207	74	131	77% ⬆️	37% ⬇️
General waste	220	10	10	1% ⬇️	96% ⬇️
Construction waste	6	38	32	14% ⬇️	426% ⬆️
Water	711	139	106	24% ⬇️	85% ⬇️
Student group travel	739	701	550	22% ⬇️	26% ⬇️
Generator/temp boiler fuel	83	83	TBC	TBC% ⬇️	TBC% ⬇️
Total	39,618	14,939	14,375	4% ⬇️	64% ⬇️

Overall emissions in 2024/25 saw a slight decline compared to 2023/24, primarily due to reductions in natural gas and oil consumption. However, emissions from business travel continued to show an upward trend.

¹ Gas and oil emissions are degree day adjusted to enable comparison across different financial years.
² Business travel includes radiative forcing for air travel.
³ Some fleet emissions have previously been included within business travel, which has been corrected.

Figure 1 – Annual emissions by source

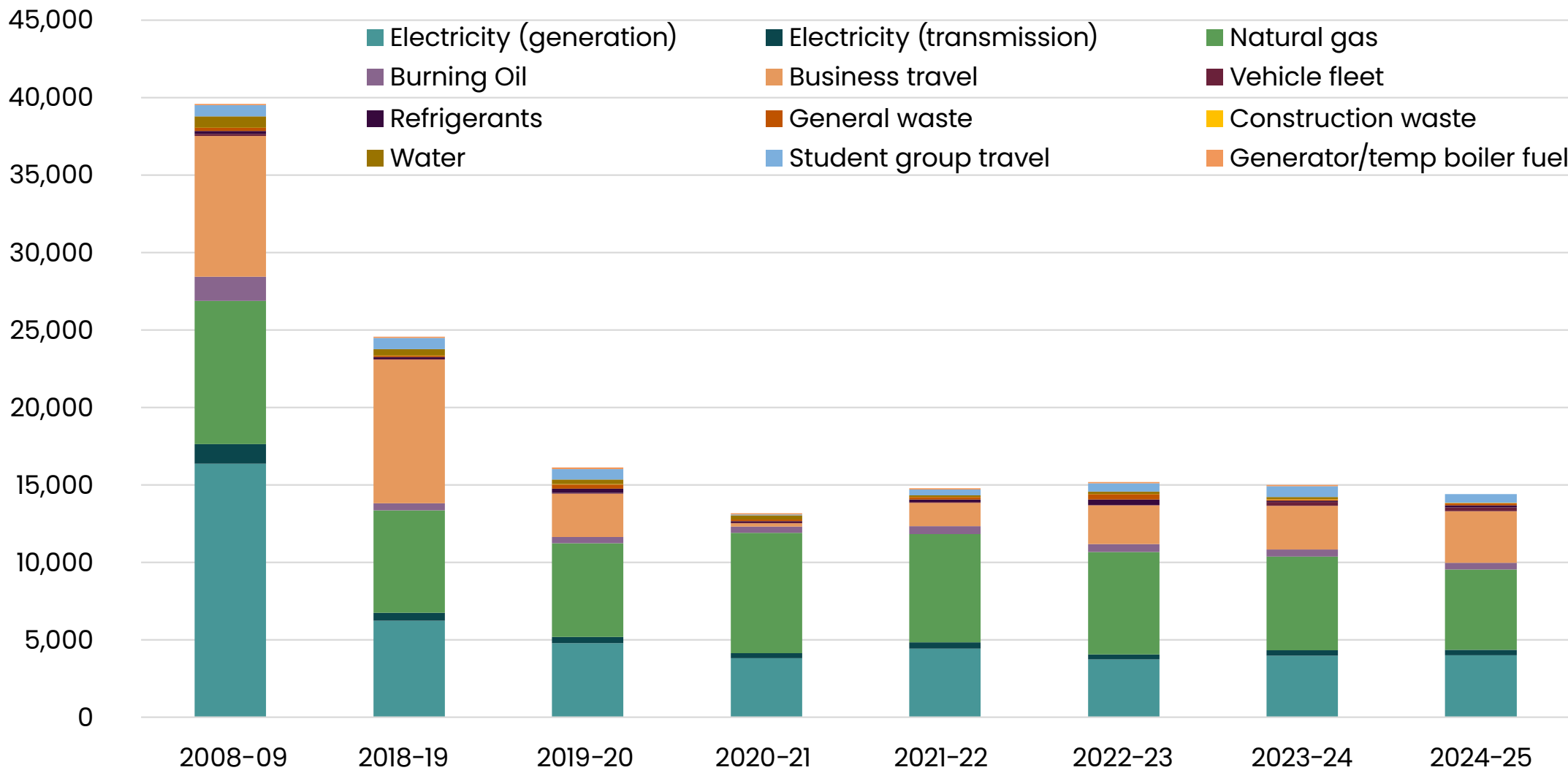


Table 4 – Emissions by scope

Emissions Source	2008–09	2023–24	2024–25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Scope 1	11,221	6,905	5,990	13% ⬇️	47% ⬇️
Scope 2	16,367	3,971	3,994	1% ⬆️	76% ⬇️
Scope 3	12,030	4,063	4,391	8% ⬆️	64% ⬇️
Total	39,618	14,939	14,375	4% ⬇️	64% ⬇️

Energy breakdown compared with baseline and last year (kWh)

Table 5 – Delivered Energy (including self-generation)

Energy Source	2008–09	2023–24	2024–25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Electricity	32,992,429	19,994,672	20,338,398	2% ⬆️	-38% ⬇️
Natural gas ¹	50,274,695	33,031,984	28,404,333	-14% ⬇️	-44% ⬇️
Burning Oil ¹	5,584,336	1,886,216	1,682,449	11% ⬇️	-70% ⬇️

¹ Gas and oil emissions are degree day adjusted to enable comparison across different financial years .

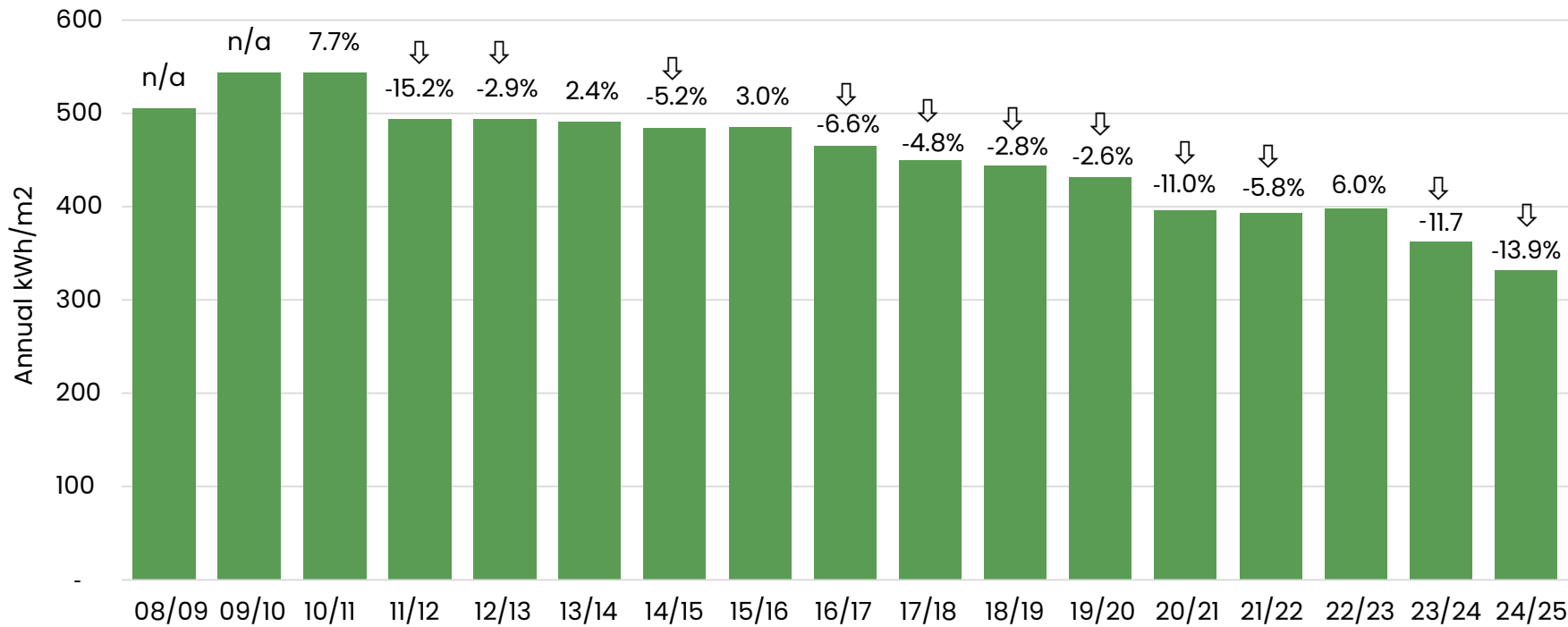
In 2024/25, electricity consumption increased slightly, primarily due to the installation of air source heat pumps (ASHP) at the Sports Park and the electrification of steam generators at the Health and Life Sciences building. Consequently, gas usage declined further this year as a direct result of these changes.

Primary Energy

To allow for continued effective consumption monitoring, electricity, oil and gas use have been considered based on their primary source. Acknowledging the illogic of simply adding kWh consumption of these different utilities together; primary conversion factors were applied to arrive at the energy at source for each utility.

To monitor ongoing progress in energy consumption, we normalised usage based on weather (heating degree days) and floor area (m²), and factored in the effects of efficiency and transmission losses for each utility. As shown in the figure below, our primary energy consumption has decreased by 13.9% compared to 2023/24 and is now 34.2% lower than the baseline year.

Figure 2 – Normalised primary energy use per m²



Water use compared with baseline and last year (m³)

Table 6 – Annual non-residential water consumption

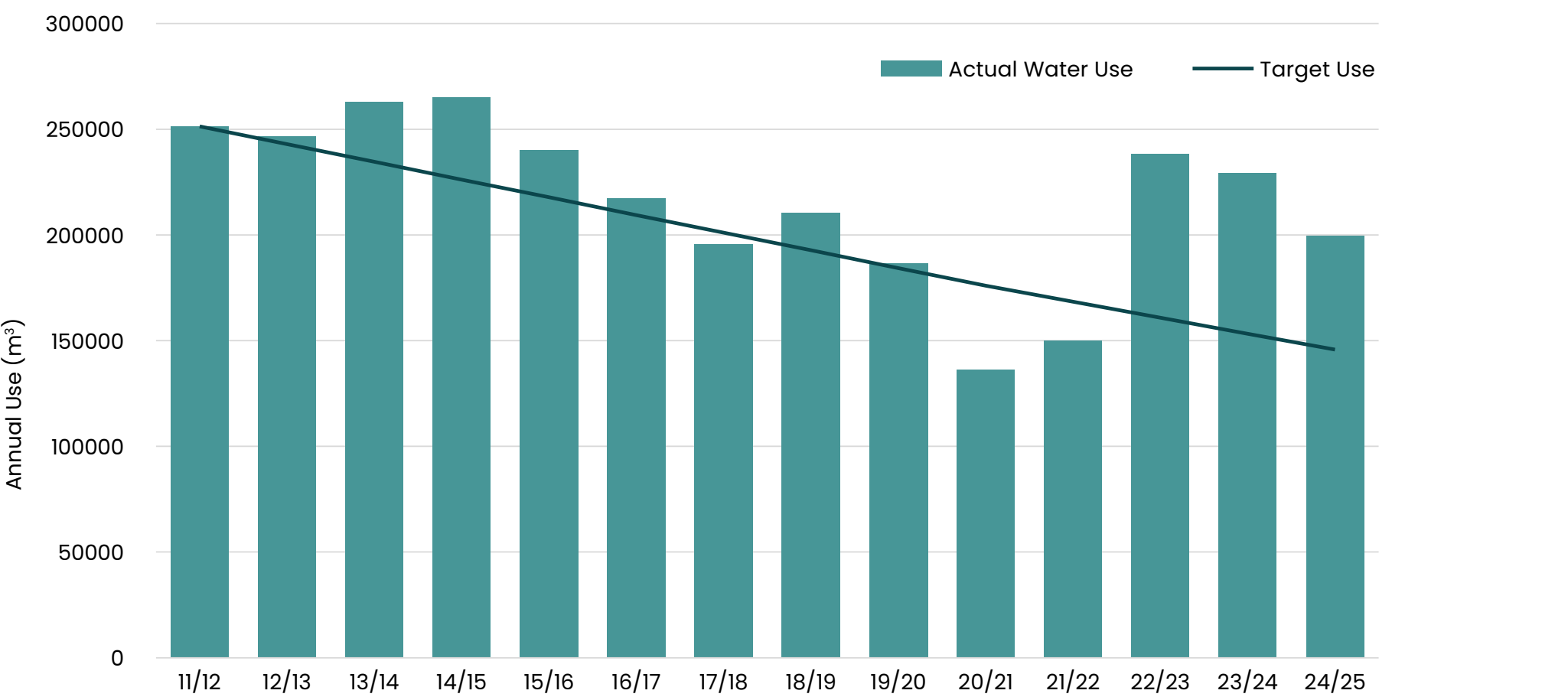
	2011–12	2023–24	2024–25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Use – excluding Halls (m³)	251,341	229,273	199,389	-13% ⬇️	-21% ⬇️

Grey and rainwater reuse systems are installed in the University’s Berrybrook and Health and Life Sciences buildings, which help reduce demand from the mains water supplies.

Table 7 – Annual grey and rainwater reuse

	2011–12	2023–24	2024–25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Water reuse systems (m³)	-	456	741	63% ⬆️	N/A

Figure 3 – Annual water use



Appendix 3: Additional emissions 2035 + 2040 scope

Our carbon reporting now covers the full scope of our carbon emissions, aligning our reporting with the voluntary Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) convened by the EAUC and developed by and for the higher education sector. Our Net Zero Carbon Plan also sets reduction targets for all scopes and aligns as far as possible with the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).

Table 8 – Emissions within scope of the 2035 and 2040 carbon reduction targets

Emissions (tCO ₂)	Baseline year	Baseline tCO ₂	2024/25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Scope 1					
Land & livestock ¹	2023/24	6,764	TBC	n/a	n/a
VOCs ²	2023/24	42	42	0%	0%
Scope 3					
Purchased goods & services ⁹	2023/24	48,932	TBC	n/a	n/a
Capital goods ⁹	2023/24	2,395	TBC	n/a	n/a
Hotels ¹¹	2023/24	440	TBC	n/a	n/a
Employee commuting ⁶	2023/24	2,479	2,479	0%	0%
Staff home working ⁸	2023/24	466	466	0%	0%
Student commuting ⁶	2023/24	5,234	5,234	0%	0%
Student start/end term travel ⁷	2023/24	9,517	TBC	n/a	n/a
Off-site Halls of residence ³	2023/24	1,499	TBC	n/a	n/a
Other buildings not UoR operated ⁴	2023/24	2,277	2,309	1%	1%
Land leased for tenants own buildings ⁵	2023/24	1,575	1,575	0%	0%
Investments ¹⁰	2023/24	4,950	TBC	n/a	n/a

Reported scope 3 emissions now cover all 15 categories of emissions in line with the International Greenhouse Gas Protocol. The University has no Upstream Leased Assets

Table 9 – Out of scope emissions reported for information

Emissions (tCO ₂)	Baseline year	Baseline tCO ₂	2024/25	% change since last year	% change since baseline
Pensions ¹²	2023/24	100,244	TBC	n/a	n/a

¹ Covers campus grounds and farmland owned and operated by the University.

² Applying rules of thumb to a range of identified VOC-emitting products.

³ Utilities supplies for offsite halls of residence are not under the University's supply arrangements, but this data is published in the interests of transparency.

⁴ Prior to 2016, emissions for buildings fed from University supplies but not operated by the University were reported in the University's scope. Re-scoping and re-baselining took place in 2015/16 to address this. In 2023/24, emissions from buildings not fed from University supplies have also been included for the first time. NB: the University does not pay utilities costs for staff accommodation (so no separate reporting is required).

⁵ These figures are currently estimated and will be improved over time through annual sustainability questionnaires to tenants.

⁶ Employee/ student commuting figures are based on 2024 Travel Survey data.

⁷ The University undertook a first estimate of these emissions in 2021/22. For 2023/24 a new tool, developed by the University of Aberdeen and EAUC Scotland, was used for the calculation. The "Domestic and International Student Relocation Travel Emissions Calculator Tool" utilises student domicile data and university-specific travel assumptions to estimate the distance travelled from each country's capital to the institution, along with the associated emissions.

⁸ Staff Home Working estimated from 2024 Travel Survey responses on the assumption that staff were working at home on days when they did not work on campus. Greenhouse gas emission factors are those published by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (previously Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy), electricity plus heating.

⁹ Based on data provided by SUPC using the HESCET tool, which includes Upstream Transportation and Distribution emissions. Waste, water and hotels are removed to avoid double-counting. Capital goods (construction) will vary significantly year-on-year.

¹⁰ Scope 1 & 2 emissions relating to investments. NB: bank holdings could not be disaggregated between scope 1 & 2 and scope 3 and are therefore all included as scope 1 & 2.

¹¹ Based on data provided by SUPC using the HESCET tool on purchased goods and services.

¹² Indicative figures are presented here for transparency, but they are not currently viewed as being within the University's own scope 1–3 carbon footprint.

Appendix 4: Avoided emissions through renewable generation

Table 10 – Low and zero carbon electricity generation (kWh)

	2008/09	2023/24	2024/25	% change since last year
Solar PV	0	862,199	1,046,004	21% 
CHP	0	3,489,201	2,692,618	23% 
Total	0	4,351,400	3,738,622	14% 

Table 11 – Low carbon heat generation (kWh)

Ground Source Heat Pumps

	2008/09	2023/24	2024/25	% change since last year
Carrington	0	115,610	TBC	

Table 12 – Other renewable energy systems on campus

The following additional energy systems are installed, but are not fully metered:

Location	Energy system
Enterprise Centre	Solar thermal
Park Eat	Air Source Heat Pump
Chancellors	Air Source Heat Pump
Berrybrook	Air Source Heat Pump
Bourne	Air Source Heat Pump
Sports Park	Air Source Heat Pump



Environmental Sustainability Report

2024/25



 For more information, please contact:

Sustainability Services

sustainability@reading.ac.uk

 UniRdgSus

 uor_sustainability

reading.ac.uk/sustainability

