

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT READING 2016

A five-year review





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## OUR JOURNEY

The University aspires to be a leader in reducing its impacts on the local as well as global environment, by embedding a culture of sustainability throughout its teaching, research and operations.

This is something the University believes it can achieve and over the last five years, significant progress has been made to realise our vision. Carbon emissions have been reduced by 35%, 50% of our waste is now recycled and we are seeing a year on year decline in the number of people driving to campus alone. These headline figures demonstrate the University's commitment to delivering on the promises it made when it set out on its sustainability journey but they don't tell the whole story.

Staff and students have come together across the University's three campuses to make a difference to the environment. From spending their Friday evenings at Blackout events switching lights and equipment off, taking advantage of the regular Dr Bike sessions to keep people cycling onto campus or by simply putting their waste in the correct bin, it's fair to say, every member of the University community has been involved in our journey.

This report looks back at what has been achieved across the University over the last five years. We hope it provides inspiration as we look forward to the next five years as we push ahead and realise our vision to be a leader in reducing our environmental impacts.



**WINNER**  
of 3 national energy  
efficiency awards

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The University is committed to achieving the highest standards of environmental performance. The implementation of management processes enables the University to maintain its compliance with its legal obligations and improve best practice.

- Robust Environmental Management System, certified to EcoCampus Platinum and ISO14001:2015 standards.
- One of the first UK universities to achieve the ISO50001 Energy Management certification.
- Improved operating procedures and systems to ensure compliance with over 60 pieces of environmental legislation and improve performance.

ISO 14001 

ISO 50001 

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

The University works hard to minimise the environmental impact of its waste and ensures the waste hierarchy of reduce, re-use, recycle, recover is used wherever possible..

- Achieved a recycling rate of 50% for the University's waste, with 99.9% of waste now diverted from landfill.
- Achieved 13% per capita waste reduction since 2011/12 (staff FTE and total students).
- Development of a new online waste disposal portal.
- Increased use of online re-use portal Warpit.
- Development of a five year waste strategy set to minimise the impact of waste on the environment.



Recycling rate



Waste diversion rate

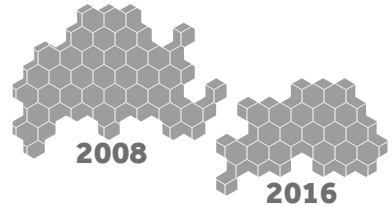


Waste reduction rate since 2011/12

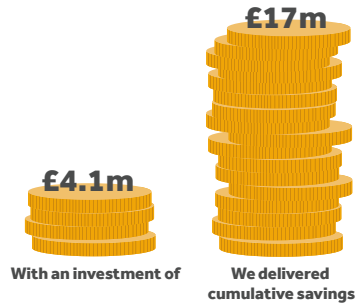
## CARBON MANAGEMENT

As a large organisation, the University has a significant carbon footprint. Carbon dioxide is a major contributor to climate change and therefore the University has a carbon management plan in place to mitigate its carbon emissions.

- 35% reduction in carbon emissions against 2008/09 baseline; compared to sector average of 12%.
- Cumulative savings delivered of £17m and 63,000 tCO<sub>2</sub> (equivalent to 13,943 UK households for a year) Energy efficiency investment of £4.1m over five-year programme.
- Winner of three national energy efficiency awards - Energy Efficiency (edie.net 2014), Facilities and Services (EAUC Green Gowns 2016), Stars of the Future (Love Energy Savings 2016), plus highly commended for five years of continuous improvement in 2015 EAUC Green Gown Awards.



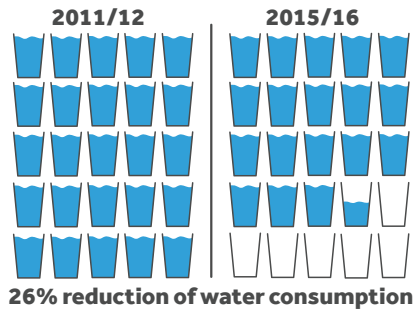
**35% carbon emission reduction by July 2016**



## WATER MANAGEMENT

The South East of England is one of the driest regions in the country. The University uses water in a responsible way ensuring leaks are identified as quickly as possible and ways of reducing water are looked at and implemented.

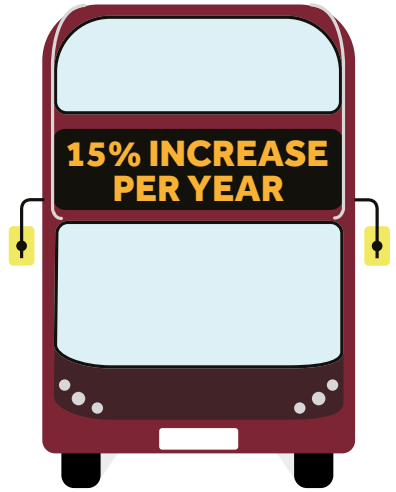
- 26% reduction by July 2016 in non-halls estate water consumption compared to 2011/12 baseline.
- Improvements in water metering to enable closer monitoring of the University's water consumption.



## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The University is committed to tackling the environmental impact of travelling to the University and whilst on University business. The University aims to make it easy for staff, students and visitors to choose sustainable modes of travel.

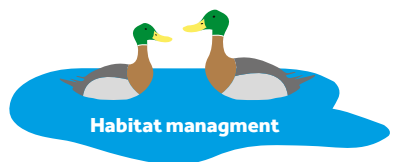
- Successful delivery of headline Travel Plan target of 1% year-on-year reduction in single occupancy car travel to our campuses since 2012.
- An average 15% year-on-year increase in bus passenger numbers on the main routes serving Whiteknights and London Road since 2012. Significant service improvements now see 6.9% of journeys to the University by bus, compared to a target of 4.5%.
- Significant cycle parking improvements, including 332 additional cycle parking spaces, more sheltered parking spaces and the introduction of gated compounds. The current cycling rate of 11.4% remains below the target 14.5%.



## BIODIVERSITY

The University's three main campuses are an integral part of making the University a naturally invigorating place to work and study. They are also home to a vast array of different species and active habitat management ensures we continue to encourage biodiversity.

- Award of Green Flag status and top University campus for Whiteknights for last five years.
- Developed habitat management plan for Whiteknights campus, Wilderness and lake edge.
- Reviewed tree safety guidance.
- Improved the green waste processing area and management of green waste materials.
- Carried out a successful trial of wild bird seed forage crop using green waste compost.



## COMMUNICATION

Staff and students have an important role to play in helping to improve environmental performance. To ensure they have the knowledge and skills to contribute, an ongoing programme of communication and engagement is run alongside capital investment projects.

- Delivery of regular 'Blackout' switch off events which attract between 80 and 100 student and staff volunteers, helping to engage them with sustainability and empowering them to take action.
- 20 active Green Impact teams across the estate, helping to champion environmental sustainability at a local level.
- Improved consultation with local users and other stakeholders regarding the design, implementation and communication of energy efficiency improvements.



**Award of Green Flag status and top University campus for Whiteknights for last 5 years.**



**Successful delivery of headline Travel Plan target of 1% year-on-year reduction in single occupancy car travel to our campuses since 2012.**



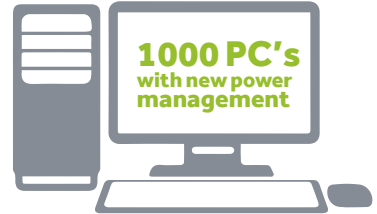
**Delivery of regular 'Blackout' switch off events which attract between 80 and 100 student and staff volunteers.**



**Significant cycle parking improvements, including 332 additional cycle parking spaces.**

## IT

- Centralised printer rollout delivering significant energy savings.
- PC power management rolled out to over 1,000 PCs and now standard for all new PC's.
- Introduction of Office 365, including Skype for Business for use as an alternative to some business travel.



## CATERING, HOTEL AND CONFERENCE SERVICES

- Sustainable Food Policy sets standards for procurement of food and drink supplies.
- 'Small Changes' programme targeting many incremental improvements across food and drink outlets
- ISO14001 Environmental Standard certified and maintained for Greenlands.



## TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The University has been at the forefront of research into sustainability and the environment for many decades. This leadership in climate and environmental science research brings with it responsibilities to show leadership in our own environmental practises. The University is proud of its achievements in this area and is committed to ensuring that we mitigate our own environmental impact. Estates and Facilities work with our academic colleagues to support them wherever possible;

- Regular promotion of work and achievements of Sustainability Services through lectures and seminars to undergraduate, postgraduate and academic staff at the University as well as assisting students with projects and dissertations.
- TSBE EngD Research Engineer based with Sustainability Services for the last three years researching effective lighting controls.





## PROCUREMENT

Everything the University purchases has an environmental impact. Procurement and Sustainability Services work closely together to ensure this is mitigated as much as possible, delivering against the University's Sustainable Procurement aims.

- Latest Procurement Maturity Assessment shows improvement in Corporate Social Responsibility score from 43% in 2012/13 to 73% in 2016/17.
- Embedded sustainable procurement into new Procurement Policy published August 2016
- Sustainable procurement training event for Procurement and Sustainability Services teams to seek opportunities for improved practices.
- Taken an active role in Southern University Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) sustainability group to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing with other universities, e.g. commodity impact analysis.
- Raising awareness of sustainable procurement issues with staff and suppliers through different channels, including procurement newsletter, revamped web pages and supplier performance reviews.

**73%**

**Latest Procurement Maturity Assessment shows improvement in Corporate Social Responsibility score from 43% in 2012/13 to 73% in 2016/17.**



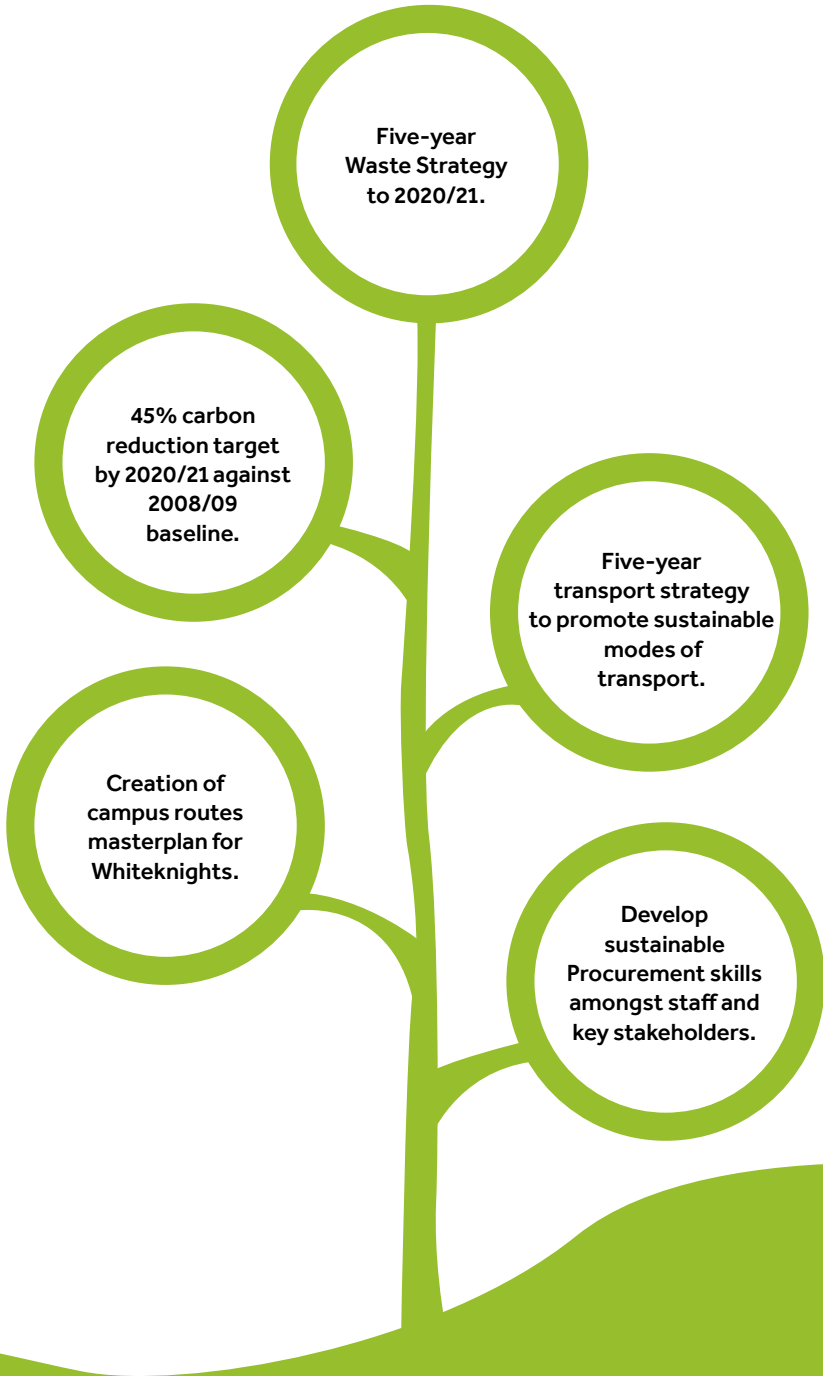
**Introduction of Office 365, including Skype for Business for use as an alternative to some business travel.**



**Sustainable Food Policy sets standards for procurement of food and drink supplies.**


## THE FUTURE

- Development of five-year waste strategy to 2020/21 to identify suitable targets and initiatives for waste reduction, reuse and recycling improvements.
- Progression of next five-year carbon management plan; with a 45% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target against 2008/09 baseline.
- Establishing five year targets and an associated investment plan for water reduction to 2020/21.
- Development of a five-year travel plan and transport strategy to identify suitable targets for all modes of transport, for commuting and for business travel, and the associated initiatives required to meet these targets.
- Creation of campus routes masterplan for Whiteknights, ensuring that planned route improvements are holistic, identifying a programme of improvements and taking account of the capital development programme.
- Development of new communication strategy and launch of a new website providing information on buildings' environmental performance in a simple and engaging format.
- Review and update habitat management plans and establish a second wild bird forage crop.
- Develop sustainable procurement skills amongst staff and key stakeholders.
- Investigate the feasibility of the conversion of catering delivery van fleet from diesel to electric.
- Discussions between academic and Estates colleagues regarding increased opportunities for collaborative working; including encouraging and supporting dissertation topics of potential relevance to the University's estate.





## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT READING A FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

 For more information, please contact:

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