SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Executive Summary

- **The University's spend on utilities (gas, electricity and water) reached £10.2 million.**
- **Carbon emissions reduced by 25% against baseline (19,470 to 14,581tCO_2e).**
- **Savings of £360k were made during the year via improved control of heating and ventilation systems.**
- **First major solar power installation – a 728kw array installed on the Surrey Sports Park.**
- **Water consumption fell by 6% against baseline year.**
- **61% of university generated waste was recycled.**
- **The University ranked 191st or within the top 10% of all universities taking part in the Times Higher Impact ranking.**
- **Plans are now in are in place for delivering sustainability improvements for Net Zero Carbon reduction, procurement, water, biodiversity, catering, waste management, scope 3 carbon emissions, climate resilience and pollution prevention.**

Utility Budget

The utility budget (electricity, gas, water and fuel oil) has increased dramatically over the last five years. In 2019/20 it was £7.6 million, in comparison to 2024/25 where it was £10.2 million. This reflects the price of energy and water on the open market.

The continued delivery of the Net Zero Carbon plan is key to reducing risk and exposure to external geopolitical cost drivers, by reducing the amount of utilities the University needs to procure. The impact of the Ukraine war in 2023/24 on prices pushed the budget to £15 million.

The University continues to buy energy via The Energy Consortium – a sector-based not-for-profit broker. This saved the University circa £400,000 compared to buying on the open market on its own. In addition, the sustainability team checks all invoices for incorrect billing and during the year secured almost £50,000 in avoided costs.

Energy and Carbon

The University has a target to achieve Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2030, against a baseline year of 2017/18.

Carbon Emissions (scope 1 and 2) tCO2e:

2017/18 baseline	2023/24 emissions	2024/25 emissions	Reduction against baseline
19,470	15,625	14,581	25%

Carbon emissions have fallen against baseline by 25% (last year the reduction was 19%). This is a function of decarbonisation of the grid, the reduction in on-site activity post Covid and implementation of demand management measures.

Carbon emissions have also fallen between 2023/24 and 2024/25 by almost 7%.

The University's NZC 8-point plan can be seen in Figure 1. The percentages noted against each point show their contribution to achieving NZC.

Delivery of the University's NZC 8-point plan has progressed building on reported actions in 2023/24. Three significant developments have been undertaken:

1) Work on reducing energy demand by improving building services controls and behavioural engagements, leading to an estimated £360,000 worth of savings, reducing carbon emissions by 460 tco2e. Energy reduction projects include improving operation of the combined heat and power units, hot water control during holidays and night setback for ventilation.

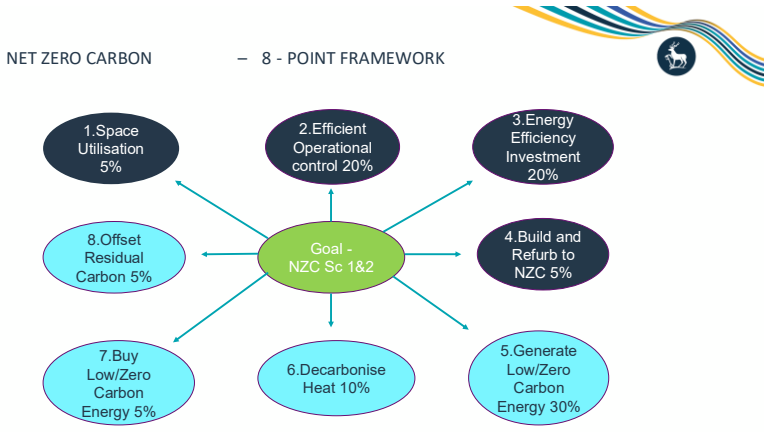
2) Installation of a 728kW solar PV array on Surrey Sports Park.

3) Planning permission for a 12MW solar farm at Blackwell Farm, with an expected operation date of 2027.

During 2025/26 further solar projects on car parks and roof tops are planned, including a 3MW solar array on Stag Hill car park.

The University's energy partnership with Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) was reconfirmed during the year. With the help of SSE the University is hoping to accelerate delivery of its NZC plan, particularly looking at how to reduce demand, improve energy efficiency, increase energy supply from renewables and decarbonise its heat infrastructure.

Figure 1



Net Zero actions 2025

NZC Area	Goal	Targets	Actions	Progress 2025

1. Optimising Space Utilisation	Match space demand to actual usage, minimising wasted heating, cooling, and lighting.	- Space utilisation improved by 10% by 2027. - 5% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2028.	- Implement AI-driven smart scheduling system by end 2026. - Conduct live space audits annually from 2025. - Adapt and review space norms for different space types by 2027.	- Space Utilisation plan drafted. - Audits undertaken in some buildings.
2. Efficient Operational Control	Reduce energy waste by optimising controls for HVAC and lighting systems.	- 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2027.	- Establish internal Carbon Reduction Team by 2024. - Deploy BEMS with AI-based predictive control by end 2026.	- Carbon Reduction team established
3. Energy Efficiency Investments	Retrofit inefficient buildings with latest energy-efficient technologies.	- 20% carbon emissions reduction by 2030. - Complete major energy efficiency measures by 2028.	- Audit top 20 carbon-emitting buildings by 2026. - Prioritise LED lighting, insulation, HVAC upgrades by 2028. - Replace inefficient lab equipment from 2025 onwards.	- Auditing of first 2 buildings underway. - Plan in place to speed auditing up with help energy partner. - plan for lab equipment replacement being developed.
4. Building to NZC Standards	Ensure all new buildings and refurbishments achieve zero carbon standards.	- All capital projects aligned with NZC principles by 2026. - 5% reduction in emissions by 2030.	- Apply BREEAM 'Excellent' or equivalent standards from 2024. - Incorporate whole-life carbon accounting by 2027. - Include NZC principles in all LTM funded projects.	- no BREEAM scale projects undertaken. - sustainable construction guidelines in place.
5. Self-Generated Renewable Energy (Solar PV)	Generate substantial energy from on-site renewables, mainly solar PV.	- 30% carbon emissions reduction by 2029.	- Accelerate feasibility studies for solar PV by 2026. - Identify battery and thermal storage opportunities. - Develop microgrid for main campuses by 2030.	- 3mw car park array tender complete. - project board being set up for solar projects.

			- Investigate wind, heat, hydrogen, biogas feasibility.	
6. Decarbonising Heat	Replace gas boilers with electric heat pumps and other low-carbon alternatives.	- 10% carbon emissions reduction by 2030. - Transition 50% of campus heating to electric by 2029.	- Complete heat load map and digital twin by 2026. - Create route map for boiler decarbonisation by 2027. - Implement heat pumps, electric boilers, solar thermal by 2027.	- Digital twin model to be developed during 2026.
7. Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)	Secure renewable energy from off-site sources via long-term contracts.	- 100% certified renewable energy procurement by 2030.	- Partner with energy brokers for cPPA from 2026. - Explore biogas availability by 2029.	No action.
8. Carbon Offsetting	Offset remaining carbon emissions after reduction efforts.	- Offset remaining emissions (approx. 5%) by 2030.	- Invest in certified gold-standard offset schemes focused on biodiversity and nature-based solutions.	EAUC gold scheme to be joined in 2026.

A Scope 3 Carbon Reduction plan was approved during 2025, aiming to reduce carbon emissions within the supply chain by working its supply chain.

A copy of the plan can be seen at surrey.ac.uk/sustainability/estates-and-operations/energy.

A Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan was approved which focuses on how to mitigate the impacts and risks of actual climate change, such as higher summer temperatures and more frequent storm events.

The Climate Adaptation plan will be a key document in addressing the financial risks related to climate change, particularly around insurance costs. Storm damage and flooding mitigation will be needed over the coming years, and the adaptation plan will set out how to address these challenges.

A copy of the plan can be seen at surrey.ac.uk/sustainability/estates-and-operations/energy.

Water Consumption

2022/23 baseline	2023/24	2024/25

395,374 m^3	376,814 m^3	370,864 m^3

During 2023/24 a large meter at the Manor Park site was found to be faulty and was fixed. This identified that previous consumption baseline data has been unreliable. As a result, the baseline was reset using the new metered data and 2022/23 data

Water consumption has fallen over the last year by 1.5% and against baseline by 6% primarily due to fixing water leaks and identifying and fixing where water is being wasted from leaking taps, showers and urinals.

A new water reduction plan has been approved which sets a reduction target of 30% by 2030. This is focused on leak and wastage reduction, replacing old water using equipment with more efficient technologies and behavioural change activities.

The Stag Hill borehole continues to operate, though the University has been asked by the Environment Agency to reduce the amount of water extracted.

Water Reduction Action Plan				
Action	**Target Date**	**Measure**	**Outcome**	**Status**
Monitor and measure water consumption monthly, ensuring meters are reading correctly, replacing where necessary.	**July 2026.**	**% of all meters read and correct.**	**Full, verifiable data set.**	**90%.**
Identify any gaps in data and install water sub-meters, identify where smart water meters could be installed.	**July 2026.**	**% of gaps not rectified.**	**Full, verifiable data set.**	**80%.**
Identify significant and abnormal water use including leaks and take mitigating actions to reduce consumption.	**July 2026 Ongoing monthly after 2026.**	**% of abnormal reading investigated and corrected.**	**To ensure consumption does not increase.**	**100%.**
Improve the water efficiency of existing buildings and facilities with a targeted capital programme of works. Audit and develop business cases.	**Audit by July 2025. Develop business cases for 2025/26.**	**% of project identified, implemented.**	**Water reduction.**	**Auditing started 2025.**
Investigate and develop opportunities for rainwater / grey water harvesting based on a whole life costing approach – set out business case for projects.	**Audit by July 2027.**	**% of projects implemented.**	**Water reduction.**	**No action.**
Minimise the use of water through best practice maintenance & cleaning routines	**Identify measures by July**	**List of measures identified and planned for**	**Water reduction.**	**No action.**

	2025.	**delivery.**		
Review 30% target in light of water reduction audits and re-set target, to include milestones. Set targets for residential and academic/admin building stock.	**Review target and set milestones by July 2026.**	**New targets in place.**	**Realistic target set.**	**No action.**
Achieve the highest practicable water efficiency standards in the development of the Estate; with a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' as a minimum for new builds with an aspiration of 'Excellent'.	**Standard agreed.**	**% of projects reaching agreed standard.**	**Water reduction.**	**No projects undertaken.**
Introduce standards for low water consumption equipment as part of procurement processes.	**Identify and agree standards by July 2027.**	**Standards included in procurement processes.**	**Water reduction.**	**Review underway into equipment on the market including taps, showers, urinals and toilets.**
Engage with University of Surrey students and staff to inspire them to take actions to reduce water consumption.	**Run campaigns, annually from August 2025.**	**Water reduction achieved.**	**Water reduction.**	**No action.**
Collaborate with University of Surrey academics on water efficiency research projects.	**July 2025.**	**Activity case studies.**	**Water reduction projects.**	**Work started with behaviour change team and tourism academics.**
Communicate with staff and students to encourage water saving behaviour.	**Campaigns to be run from 2025 onwards.**	**No. of Communications noted.**	**Awareness raised.**	**Program of activities planned for 2026.**

Waste and re-use

Surrey diverts 100% of its waste from landfill, by reusing, recycling and recovering (via energy from waste plants). With our partner Chambers, the University aims to increase the utility of its waste by moving it up the waste hierarchy from disposal and 'energy from waste', to reduction, reuse and recycling. This year has seen a reduction in the total amount of waste produced at the University, a 7% drop on last year. Also seen has been a drop in energy from waste which indicates a move up the waste hierarchy. During 2025 new legislation has seen a revision in how waste is separated, leading to the introduction of a 4-bin approach: mixed dry recycling, food waste, glass and all other wastes.

Waste disposal

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Tonnes of waste collected	1,321.14	1,230.29	1,276.07	1,190.61
Dry recyclable %	61%	58%	58%	61%
Energy from waste %	37%	37%	37%	34%
Food waste %	2%	5%*	5%	5%
Percentage diverted from landfill	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Food waste data was not available for a number of months due to a change in contract to Chambers.

Due to change in waste data provision from the University's contractor, a simplified table of waste data is now shown above.

A new waste management plan has been developed during 2024/25 and will be reported on in the next annual report.

A copy of the waste plan can be seen at surrey.ac.uk/sustainability/estates-and-operations/waste-management.

Sustainability Strategy

The University is integrating sustainability into all activity, from its operations and community engagement to its teaching and research. This process has started with the inclusion of sustainability objectives within the University's eight governing policies.

Operations have been the first main policy to include sustainability objectives and set out delivery plans which include KPIs, targets and timelines for delivery.

During 2025/26 all policies will include sustainability and have delivery plans for these objectives.

Time Higher Education Impact Rankings

In recognition of our contributions to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we were ranked within the top 200 in the world (191st) down from 86th and top 40 in the UK (38th) by the *Times Higher Education Impact Rankings*. This equates to being in the top 10% of universities in the world. More universities took part in the ranking this year – 2,318, up from 1,963 in 2024 – with competition increasing. The ranking is also becoming harder, with our overall score being 87.5 - down from 90.2 the previous year.

A structured focus on how to improve scores is being delivered over the next two years, and will include a focus on the sustainability elements of the QS ranking and People and Planet (green) league.

Engagement and Behaviour Change

The Sustainability team has developed a sustainability engagement plan during 2024/25 which will be reported on in subsequent sustainability annual reports.

A copy of the plan can be seen at surrey.ac.uk/sustainability/engagement.

Green Impact is a departmental scheme where staff take sustainable actions. Since the programme started in October 2023, a total of 25 teams across the University have implemented 785 actions. In 2025, 18 teams implemented a total of 363 actions. Eleven of those teams achieved either participation, bronze, silver, gold or platinum certification.

LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework) continues to roll out across the University. A total of 34 labs have signed up, with 22 labs achieving bronze standard and four others silver. LEAF aims to make lab areas more sustainable, reducing their carbon emissions, waste creation and improving management systems.

Sustainability Week – a week of sustainability activity took place, engaging and encouraging staff and students to take sustainable action on campus and at home. Events included a clothes swap in collaboration with CloSH app, biodiversity walks on campus, Sustainable Development Goals workshops run by the Institute for Sustainability, and litter picks organised by University societies and clubs. In total, 33 events were run with over 300 people involved.

Sustainability assemblies – these run each term and offer opportunities for staff and students to be actively involved in sustainability actions. This year, sustainable inductions for staff and students, plus the University's newly launched Sustainable Procurement Plan, were discussed.

Student projects – the Sustainability Mark launched. The mark is a sustainable awards scheme for societies and clubs, run in collaboration with Surrey's Students' Union. In total, 27 societies and clubs took part in the scheme, with 14 achieving a Sustainability Mark award.

Student-led projects were supported, including the community garden, sustainable crochet workshops and upcycling activities.

Surrey students also got involved with the London university hackathons. These cross-university events, organised by Climate Jams, encouraged students to collaborate and develop innovative solutions to tackle the 'big sustainability problems', including e-waste and food waste.

Other sustainable development activity

Procurement – the University's Procurement Team released their Sustainable Procurement Plan. The plan sets out the ways the team are already working towards embedding sustainability across our supply chain and maps out actions needed for future improvement. Sustainability impact

assessments for commodities have been launched to reduce cost, social and environmental risk. The University has signed up to a supplier engagement tool that has identified 40 key suppliers it wants to work with to improve their sustainability, reducing carbon emissions and wider sustainability impacts.

The University continues to follow the Government's flexible framework on sustainable procurement (scored out of five). During 2024/25 the University reached level 2, with an aim to achieve level 4 by 2025/26.

Area of concern	Action	Sub-actions	Target completion date	Current position 2024/25	Benefits
People	1.Provide sustainable procurement training to all staff involved in purchasing, according to job role **(Objective 6.3)**	Select appropriate training material for each level of staff	Procurement team Summer 2025	Training provided to procurement team	Staff have skills necessary to make sustainable choices – emission reduction
		Distribute the training via online platform	Buyers Summer 2026	Agreed to host training on procurement website	
		Include sustainable procurement training in inductions for relevant staff	All staff Summer 2027	N/A	
	2.Embed sustainable procurement into hiring, appraisals, and performance objectives **(Objective 6.3)**	List sustainable procurement credentials as desirable in purchasing staff	To be included Autumn 2025	Agreed to include in appraisals	Attract staff with sustainable procurement (SP) experience and credentials
		Create incentives for success in sustainable procurement	Summer 2027	N/A	Greater resources devoted to SP
Procurement Process	3.Create and distribute impact assessments for key commodity areas **(Objectives 6.3,6.4,6.6,6.7)**	Host Sustainable Impact Assessments (SIAs) on an online platform Inform and encourage use by relevant staff	Summer 2025	SIA's created, to be hosted on procurement website	Specific information available for SP in all purchasing
	4.Implement asset management for key commodity areas **(Objectives 6.1,6.6)**	Includes IT equipment, capital lab equipment, AV equipment.	Summer 2027	No current asset register	Allow use of Product Carbon Footprints (PCFs) and reduction in buying

	5.Explore options for inter and intra university equipment sharing **(Objective 6.7)**	Options include Warp-it and Cambridge equipment sharing database	Summer 2026	N/A	Reduction in buying and waste
	6.Adopt lifecycle thinking, whole-life costing and value for money principles **(Objectives 6.1,6.4)**		Summer 2027	Principles included in plan	Reduced emissions and cost over time
	7.Create sustainability specifications for relevant goods **(Objectives 6.1,6.2,6.4)**	Carbon product footprint where available Efficiency of goods using energy e.g. white goods & IT Given percentage of recycled or recyclable material for wood, plastic, metal products Construction and refurbishment done according to BREEAM standards	Summer 2028	No current specifications for commodities Specification for construction in place	Restricts choice to ensure low carbon options in high impact areas Reduction in energy & water use
Suppliers	8.Formulate supplier engagement programme, targeting key suppliers to provide data and improve their processes. **(Objective 6.2)**	Filter suppliers by materiality and actionability Contact suppliers to communicate standards, join NetPositive or request data according to supplier size and type	Start 2025, with on-going delivery by 2030	Suppliers filtered by commodity, impact and size List of priority suppliers not on tool created	Improve supplier relationships and availability of low carbon goods Improvement of current contracts over time
	9.Map supply chains for highest impact suppliers		Summer 2025	No supply chains mapped	More accurate data

(Objective 6.1)				
10.Implement sustainability requirements into new contracts **(Objectives 6.2,6.4)**	Require signup to NetPositive Require carbon reporting Require commitment to reduction in emissions Compare sustainability credentials of new potential suppliers	From summer 2025	Brief mention of sustainability in contracts	Ensures SP early in purchasing reducing emissions
11.Agree sustainability KPIs with key suppliers who meet materiality and actionability criteria **(Objective 6.2)**	Set reduction targets for supplied goods & services	Summer 2028	No KPI's or targets set	Reduction in emissions over time

Biodiversity – a baseline study was commissioned and completed during the year. It sets out over 350 biodiversity credits associated with 12 different habitats: from grassland and woodland to aquatic and amenity. Our aquatic habitats are home to multiple flora and fauna, including moorhens, geese, toads, smooth newts, carp, perch, blackworms and copepods. During 2025/26 activities include measures to encourage swifts, water-borne species and invertebrates like stag beetles.

Action	Timescale	Measure /Target	Outcome	Progress 2025
Fact finding project to improve our biodiversity. This has included feedback from key stakeholders from students, Senior leaders, Middle line managers, Heads of dept, Staff members, Experts, and General public.	**Active 2 year**	**Plan produced**	**Delivery habitat improvement with the local nature recovery strategy**	**Work with Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) has started the process. Also consulting with university ecologists.**
Produce University Biodiversity land management plan	**1 year**	**Plan produced**	**Delivery habitat improvement with the local nature recovery strategy**	**Plan writing in progress.**

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) baseline Survey by SWT	**1 year**	**Survey issued to university**	**Have a independent baseline data of the estate**	**Baseline completed.**
Assess SWT findings and their suggested recommendations	**2 years**	**Implement their suggestions**	**Better biodiversity**	**Review underway.**
Set biodiversity realistic targets	**3 years**	**Hit targets**	**Better biodiversity**	**n/a**
Investigate Local Nature Recovery Strategy	**2 years**	**Review**	**Align ourselves with a local strategy.**	**n/a**
Align with Local Nature Recovery Strategy with best practice.	**3 years**	**Adjust biodiversity plan**	**Align ourselves with a local strategy.**	**n/a**
Improve our knowledge base	**2 years**	**More educated team**	**Toolbox team membership Biodiversity talks**	**n/a**
Produce an invasive species list	**1 year**	**Produce list**	**Action mitigation**	**Complete.**
Produce IUCN red list of threatened species.	**1 year**	**Produce list**	**Amended plan**	**Added to plan.**
Investigate technical advice note from nature conservation compliance	**3 years**	**Review**	**Add to management plan**	**n/a**
Come up with a communication plan	**1 year**	**Set up communication platform**	**Implantation Media X Facebook. Instagram.**	**In progress.**
Investigate reporting to an advisor group	**2 years**	**Wider advice pool of knowledge**	**Set up advisor group**	**Advisory group set-up.**

Catering – the University's Catering Team achieved three stars in the Sustainable Restaurant Association's Food Made Good accreditation – the highest possible rating. The University's ethical and sustainable catering plan has been updated, mapping out how we will continue to reduce carbon emissions and material waste, and provide healthy eating options and Fairtrade produce.

Sustainable and Ethical Catering Plan 2024/25 update – oct 25			
Action	**Time scale**	**Measure**	**Status**
Continue to develop using leftover stock to produce more products.	September 24	n/a	Complete – leftovers used, eg for soups
Reduction of plastic use in all coffee shops - switching from plastic milk bottles to recyclable milk pouches and reusable jugs	September 24	82% reduction in plastic milk bottles	Complete

Wider availability of reusable salad / bento boxes and soup thermos.	September 24	Available in all retail outlets	In Hillside only
Money off food purchases available when reusable cups/boxes are being used.	September 24	Available in all outlets	Complete
Continued promotion of the Thursday and Friday food share scheme in conjunction with the Students Union and the Community Hub.	September 24	Promoted	Complete
Taking The Hideout to "plastic free".	November 24	No plastic used front of house	Complete
Removing all consumer plastic products and reducing back of house packaging where possible.	November 24	Removal of plastics	In progress
Begin process to achieving the "Food Made Good" standard from the Sustainable Restaurant Association. https://thesra.org/the-food-made-goodstandard.	November 24	Make application for 'Food Made Good'	Complete
Produce individual meals with a published carbon footprint, to begin to highlight the environmental impact of certain foods and help promote plant-based options.	February 2025	A range of foods on offer have had their carbon footprint done.	Not completed – transferred to 2026.
Achieve "Food Made Good" standard accreditation	July 2025	Achieve at least 1 star within certification.	3 stars achieved (out of 3) for certification
Begin to measure our business wide carbon footprint to highlight our environmental impact with a view to understand how we could become Carbon Neutral in the future.	July 2025	Carbon footprint for 80% of foods undertaken.	Not completed – carried over to 2026.
Introduce additional charges for disposable cups in our coffee shop outlets to encourage the use of reusable options.	July 2025	A new reusable scheme in place	Reusable cup scheme to be introduced early in 2026.
Report on progress within the university wide sustainability report.	July 2025	Catering included within university annual report.	Included within university annual report.

Review and update the Sustainable and Ethical Food Plan, canvassing staff and student feedback on where sustainable improvements could be made	July 2025	Updated plan in place for 2026.	Plan for 2026 written.

Information technology – a draft sustainable IT plan has been written, with a number of actions taken during the year including a ROT analysis which looks to identify files on the University storage system which are no longer required, freeing up costly space but also reducing carbon emissions.

Transport – the University's Campus Services team are looking to update the University's Transport Plan as it was last reviewed in 2018. During 2025 a travel survey was conducted.

Key findings were 51% of staff/students travel by single occupancy car, 23% walk, 12% come by train and 8% by bus, 3% cycle and 4% lift share in one form or another.

Preventing pollution – during 2024/25 an Emissions and Discharges plan was developed. The aim of this plan is to prevent pollution incidents from university activity and processes.

The plan will be reported on in the next sustainability annual report. A copy of the plan can be seen at surrey.ac.uk/sustainability/estates-and-operations/buildings-and-development