



UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY

SUSTAINABLE SURREY 

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/4



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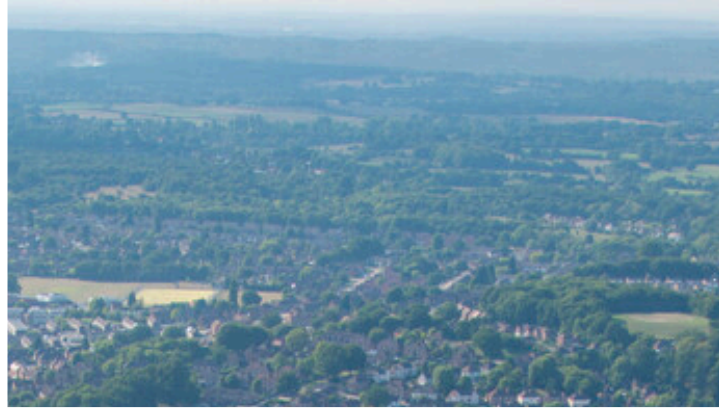
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CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

The University has set out a number of targets and aspirations regarding the delivery of sustainability and the Operations Policy makes specific reference to delivery of sustainability.

With a new Head of Sustainability, Institute for Sustainability and Executive Dean responsible for sustainability, the last year has seen significant development of sustainability activities, processes and governance.

This report provides a progress report on sustainability activity and sets out some key steps for the future.



Key Highlights:

- The University's 8 key policies are to integrate sustainability within them.
- Utility budget savings were made from an initial £17.9m to £15.8m.
- Carbon emissions are 19% down on baseline year.
- New 8-point NZC plan in place and being implemented.
- Solar Farm at Blackwell is close to a planning decision.
- Water consumption is up due to a faulty meter - now reading correctly.
- 100% of waste is diverted from landfill.
- University ranked 49th in Sustainable Development Goal index (Times Higher Impact Ranking) which is top 5% globally.
- Significant engagement activity including Green Impact, LEAF and Sustainability Week.
- Significant work underway with key service providers within operations including, procurement, horticulture, catering, IT services and careers.



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY & GOVERNANCE

To help deliver sustainability in a direct and timely fashion, the Environmental and Sustainability Steering Group (ESSG) has been replaced with a new group called the Napier Group, made up of an Executive Dean with responsibility for sustainability, the Director of Operations at the Institute for Sustainability and the estates-based Head of Sustainability.

Sustainability is a central theme within the new University vision and strategy. The Executive Board has therefore proposed that rather than having a separate sustainability policy, sustainability should be embedded within each of the key 8 University policies.

Working with process owners, each policy will look at high level aims to include and will then look to set out a delivery plan for a range of objectives and actions to deliver the primary policy aims for sustainability.

The Napier Group is working with process owners to help embed sustainability. The process has started with 'Our Colleagues' policy which will act as a template for how we deliver this key piece of work.

The aim is to cover all 8 policies during 2024/25.

In the meantime, actions are underway to deliver change across a range of different areas.

Delivery Plans

Developing



Waste Management

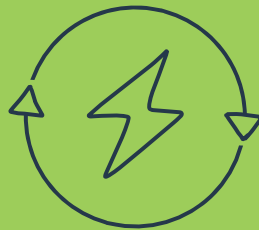


Transport



IT

Drafted



Net Zero Carbon (scope 1 & 2)



Sustainable Procurement



Biodiversity

Implementing



Catering



UTILITY BUDGET

The utility budget (electricity, gas, water and fuel oil) has increased dramatically over the last 4 years. In 2019/20 it was £7.6million, and in 2023/24 it was estimated to be £17.9 million. This was due to the combined impacts of covid, the cost-of-living crisis and the Ukraine war.

By taking action to reduce consumption and change VAT ratings for utilities, the University has managed to reduce spend from £17.9million down to £15.8million during 2023/24. The continued delivery of our Net Zero Carbon plans will help reduce the University's exposure to external cost drivers.

* Energy & carbon

The University has a target to achieve Net Zero Carbon (NZC) in its scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030, against a baseline year of 2017/18.

Carbon Emissions (scope 1 & 2) tCO₂e:

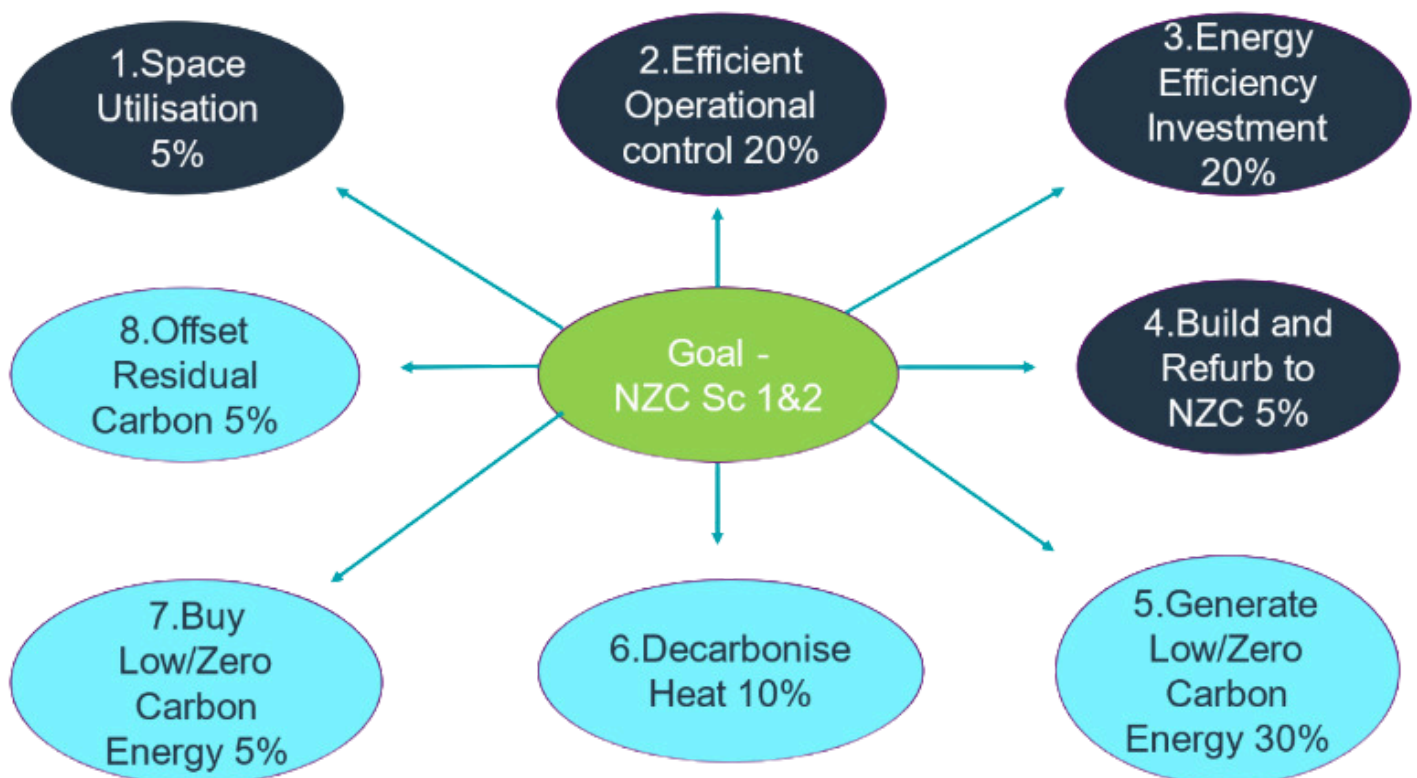
2017/18 baseline	2022/23 emissions	2023/24 emissions	reduction against baseline
19,470	14,975	15,625	19%

Carbon emissions have fallen against the baseline by 19%. This is a function of decarbonisation of the grid, the reduction in on site activity post covid and several energy efficiency measures undertaken.

But carbon emissions have risen between 22/23 and 23/24 by 4%. This is a function of increased activity on site as the University continues to come out of the covid period; with more students; as well as changes to operational activity.

To deliver the University’s NZC target and address rising consumption, an **8-point plan** has been developed over the last year. The percentages noted against each point illustrate their contribution to achieving NZC.

Net Zero Carbon: 8-point framework



Delivery of the University's NZC 8-point plan has progressed with audits of space utilisation (point 1 of plan), a design guide for the integration of NZC criteria into all construction projects (point 4), an investment of £300,000 in energy efficiency projects (point 3), the setting up of a new engineering team reducing demand by improving building service controls (point 3) with initial demand reduction of 30% within buildings like IFH, and finally the proposal to join a carbon offsetting scheme with other universities (point 8).



Solar Farm

Planning permission was also approved for a new energy centre, with the aim of replacing old gas boilers with heat pumps, electro boilers and energy storage systems to decarbonise heat (point 6 of the NZC plan).

It will take two to five years to move the plan to delivery and for that work to flow through to reduction in carbon emissions.



Surrey Sports Park

Significant progress has been made in delivery of renewable energy projects (point 5), with the planning application for a 12MW solar farm at Blackwell nearing a planning decision and roof top solar projects, such as a 500KW array on Surrey Sports Park, nearing construction phase.

Further solar projects on car parks and rooftops are going through feasibility studies.



EV charging installation



Two key carbon related documents have been drafted during 2023/24: a 'Scope 3 Carbon Reduction Plan', aiming to reduce carbon emissions within the supply chain, and a 'Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan', 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.

The University of Surrey's baseline for Scope 3 emissions, taken in 2018/2019, is 83,110tco_{2e}. In 2021/2022, Scope 3 emissions totaled 68,964tco_{2e}.

The University aims to reduce scope 3 carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2050.

* Water

Water consumption (m³)

2017/18 baseline	2022/23	2023/24
414,188	377,521	454,661

Water consumption has risen over the last year (by 20%) and against baseline (by 10%) primarily due to the identification of a faulty main incoming meter to the Manor Park site. This fault has meant that the previous year’s consumption figures were abnormally low.

Continued measures designed to reduce consumption including presence-controlled water use in bathrooms, shower timers in halls of residence, and the water contract with ‘Wave’ via our utility broker saving around £50,000, has been expanded during 2023/24 to include further services such as water reduction surveys, which will help address consumption rises against our baseline.

An application for a second borehole at Manor Park was rejected by the environment agency over concerns about the level of extraction of water from the local aquifer. The Stag Hill borehole project continues to operate, with the University continuing to have the lowest cost of water within the sector.

* Waste management

Waste disposal:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Tonnes of waste collected	1,544.92	1,408.29	1,473.76
Dry recyclable	54%	51%	50%
Energy from waste	32%	32%	32%
Food waste	2%	5%*	5%
Glass	3%	3%	4%
Other wastes	9%	9%	9%
% diverted from landfill	99%	100%	100%

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

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 recycle. A key first step is better segregation of food waste from general recycling, as this means less dry recycling is contaminated by food and can be recycled, as well as more food going to anaerobic digestion. The aim is to reduce the amount of waste that goes to an 'energy from waste' plant.

Food waste collection as a volume between 2022/23 and 2023/24 rose by 22%.

Further work during 2024/25 focuses on segregating more food and glass waste from our waste streams and working with procurement to reduce the amount of waste generated from packaging across our supply chain.

Times Higher Impact Rankings



In recognition of our contributions to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we were ranked within the top 100 in the world (86th) and top 25 in the UK (21st) by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. This equates to being in the top 5% of universities in the world. More universities took part in the ranking this year and competition is increasing; thus, we have seen a drop in ranking from 49th globally and 9th in the UK.

During 2024, the Institute for Sustainability has been working with departments to better understand how their work addresses the sustainable development goals and where there are gaps in understanding. As well as this, a new role is being created to help coordinate work around rankings including Times Higher and QS.



ENGAGEMENT & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

* Green Impact

Green Impact, a departmental scheme where staff take sustainable actions, saw 20 teams implement a total of 422 actions. 12 of those teams achieved either participation, bronze, silver or gold certification.

* LEAF

The Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework was launched at the University. A total of 17 labs have signed up, with 6 labs achieving bronze standard and 2 others silver. LEAF aims to make lab areas more sustainable, reducing their carbon emissions, waste creation and improving management systems. All faculties have agreed to implement LEAF to bronze level during 2024/25.

* 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 nighttime energy audits, upcycling events, electric vehicle demonstrations, cooking demonstrations illustrating healthy options that reduce your carbon footprint, book swaps and tours of sustainability facilities. In all, over 30 events were run with over 500 people involved.



* Sustainability Assemblies

These run each term and offer opportunities for staff and students to be actively involved in sustainability actions. This year, a workshop on integrating sustainability into university policies and the University's carbon plans were discussed.

* Student Projects

Projects this year included running a community garden, green careers events, carbon education via pop-up events and volunteering opportunities. Various internships with the Sustainability Team have also successfully run throughout the year, providing 4 students with the opportunity to lead on sustainable engagement projects and develop core graduate skills. Katie King, the Sustainable Labs intern this year, has now gone on to work at UCL within their sustainable labs department.



SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

The University hosted its first Sustainability Awards in June 2024, recognising staff and students going above and beyond to embed sustainable practices both on campus and within the community.

* Award winners:

Sustainability Hero: awarded to Katy Downton (GSA) for their achievements as a Sustainability Champion for Guildford School of Acting and their work on the industry renowned Theatre Green Book.

Community Action: awarded to Michelle Rimmington (FABSS), Susan Keirle (EFCS) and Amy Woods (EFCS) for encouraging reuse of unwanted items, setting up partnerships with local schools and charities.

Environmental Improvement: awarded to Hannah Davies and Catherine Finnegan (Vet School) for developing a veterinary module encouraging students to act sustainably in the workforce.

Innovation for Engagement: awarded to the Vet School Sustainability Working Group for rolling out sustainable practices within their school.

Student Leadership: awarded to Cemsu Senyurt for increasing student awareness and involvement in sustainability initiatives.

OTHER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- * **Procurement** - we are following the government's flexible framework on sustainable procurement which aims to integrate sustainability in all procurement activity. Work includes: the development of a sustainable procurement delivery plan; development of Sustainability Impact Assessments for commodities to reduce cost, social and environmental risk; engagement with supply chain to encourage carbon reduction and social justice within suppliers; and identifying ways to optimise resource use.
- * **Biodiversity** - a baseline study was commissioned and is under way, with the aim to establish the range and scope of habitats for future action on increasing biodiversity on site. The University Grounds Team are already making significant progress in making their day-to-day operations more sustainable. Their closed loop recycling system which takes garden waste and turns it into mulch to be re-used on campus, received the prestigious Green Apple award in September 2023. The team also achieved a Green Flag award for Stag Hill and Manor Park, recognising our campuses as green spaces of international importance.
- * **Catering** - An ethical and sustainable catering plan is being implemented, aiming to reduce carbon emissions and material waste, provide healthy eating options and Fairtrade products.
- * **Sustainable Careers** - the University's Careers Service launched its Employability & Careers Ethical Code of Practice, setting out the department's aims to work with companies and organisations looking to reduce their carbon footprint and sustainability impacts. In line with this new code of practice, the main careers fair asked for all employers to advertise their sustainability credentials to students. The fair itself went paperless and increased on-site recycling facilities. An employer's sustainability panel sold out in February, at which students could find out what they need to start careers in the growing sustainability sector.
- * **Information Technology** - Developing a sustainable IT plan, aiming to reduce carbon emissions.



Next steps for delivery of sustainability

There are a lot of detailed actions planned for the coming years, but the Sustainability Team has 13 key objectives to deliver during the next five years. These objectives are:

1. Integrate sustainability into the University's 8 policies
2. Develop & implement delivery plans for all policies including KPI's and targets
3. Deliver NZC plan for Scope 1 & 2
4. Solar farm and other solar projects up and running
5. Agree and start delivery of Scope 3 carbon plan
6. Agree and implement a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP)
7. Integrate sustainability into all purchasing decisions
8. All course modules have sustainability integrated and maintained
9. All departments have their own Climate Action Plan
10. LEAF in all labs to gold standard
11. Certification to ISO14001, Surrey to be a top ten university within sustainability rankings
12. Introduce staff and student induction on sustainability
13. Improve our sustainability data and how we measure success

Some of these objectives are well underway and it is likely that after two years this list will be revised as delivery proceeds.

Reporting will also evolve as KPI's are established and reported on moving to a plan, do, check, act approach.



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