This year at the University of Cambridge, we have continued efforts to improve our environmental sustainability performance and we remain on track to meeting our commitment to reduce energy-related emissions from our operational estate to absolute zero, for scope 1 and 2 emissions, by 2048.

We’ve also been transforming the way we report on our performance and progress, focussing on the key targets we need to work towards to become a sustainable university.

This year has seen a particular focus on our scope 3, or ‘indirect’ emissions, such as those arising from our supply chain, to understand the opportunities and potential collaborations for carbon reduction across all our activities.

And to further reduce our use of fossil fuels, we have been exploring options for reducing our use of gas across our estate.

We appointed a new waste contractor for the whole estate and introduced some new targets.

The ‘zero to landfill’ commitment remains, but we want to significantly increase recycling rates

We are also developing our Water Management Plan, measuring baselines to understand how and where we are using water, and how to manage this more efficiently.

Our Operational Grounds Team joined Cambridge City Council for biodiversity training with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust.

It’s the start of a programme of engagement to share knowledge and ideas, and enhance practical skills and understanding.

As an early signatory of the Nature Positive Universities Network we have pledged our commitment to enhance biodiversity across our estate and within our cities and communities.

In summer 2023 we welcomed the arrival of fully electric buses across our newly extended Universal Bus network.
And it was the busiest ever year for the Universal Bus, with almost 720,000 passengers using the service.

When it comes to staff travelling to work, 26% cycle and 5% walk.

The University’s Strategic Procurement and Purchasing programme is fast becoming ‘business as usual’ and we now have a minimum 10% weighting relating to sustainability in all tender criteria.

Opened in early 2022, the Chris Abell Day Nursery was awarded an ‘Excellent’ BREEAM rating.

The Cambridge Centre for Carbon Credits (4C) continued its work on a methodology to accurately assess carbon credits needed for robust offsetting, which is informing the development of a University offsetting scheme.

Work continued to develop Local Environmental Sustainability Plans with NETPositive Futures to identify key sustainability impacts and make sure environmental considerations are embedded across the University.

For the first time, all 31 Cambridge Colleges came together to highlight the positive progress they are making towards environmental sustainability in the Colleges Environmental Sustainability Report.

We look forward to continuing our work towards becoming a sustainable university.

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Find out more and get involved environment.admin.cam.ac.uk