

Annual Sustainability Report

2024-2025

Bradford College

Executive Summary

Over the past year, Bradford College has strengthened its commitment to sustainability across curriculum, operations, and community engagement.

Our carbon footprint for 2024/25 decreased slightly to 1,622 tCO₂e, representing a 2.17% reduction compared to the previous year.

SECR headline figures:

- **Total emissions:** 1622tCO²e (Scope 1 and 2)
- **Emissions intensity ratio:** 2
- **Key sources of emissions:** gas consumption (52%)

Key Achievements 2024–2025

Awards and Recognition

- Two curriculum projects recognised at national Green Gown Awards in November 2025, including one winner and one highly commended.
- Finalist for the Social Impact in Sustainability Award, Yorkshire Sustainability Excellence Awards in April 2025.
- PLW learners received the Sustainability Champions Award at the local SkillsHouse CTE Awards in July 2025.

Strategic Progress

- Development of the College's first Climate Action Plan; a clear pathway towards reducing our environmental impact.
- Strengthened carbon accounting and data baselines to support informed sustainability decisions.

Infrastructure and Skills Development

- Ongoing LED lighting upgrades in the David Hockney Building contributes to long term operational efficiency as part of our wider decarbonisation plan.
- Commencement of works on the Bradford District Heating Network, marking a key step in transition to low carbon energy.

Waste and Circular Economy

- Food waste segregation implemented across all buildings in line with Simpler Recycling legislation.
- Borrow Cup Scheme available at all catering outlets, reducing single use cups and promoting circular economy practice (2,753 drinks served in reusable cups to date, saving approximately 165,180g CO₂e).

Challenges and Future Direction

While significant progress has been made, the College recognises ongoing challenges including enhancing biodiversity, improving consistency across teaching and operations, and further reducing carbon emissions.

Our Climate Action Plan provides clear steps to address these priorities, ensuring sustainability continues to be central to College strategy, operations, and learning.

Bradford College remains committed to embedding sustainability at the heart of our culture, equipping learners and staff to create positive impact locally, nationally, and globally, and laying strong foundations for a more sustainable and equitable future.

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Our Commitment to Sustainability

Bradford College exists to transform lives and create a better future for all; we recognise our responsibility in shaping a more equitable and responsible future, and preparing learners to thrive within it. Even where it is not the primary focus, sustainability can play a central role in achieving this; our approach extends beyond environmental initiatives to include social justice, equity and inclusion.

We are committed to embedding sustainability across all aspects of college life for the benefit of our students, staff, and the wider community. In vocational education, this is reflected through responsible resource use, ethical decision making and the reduction of inequalities through inclusive practice. **EDI is a fundamental part of sustainability.** A truly sustainable society is one where every individual has equitable access to education, opportunities and a healthy environment. Sustainability cannot be an isolated strand of our work and must be woven through all that we do. By embracing sustainability, we also reinforce our commitment to EDI.

Each of our seven Strategic Objectives (SOs) contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), helping us demonstrate how our actions support global priorities through local action, while providing learners with opportunities to make meaningful contributions to society and generate a lasting positive impact for future generations.

By recognising the significance of sustainability as a potential driving force behind everything we do - from strategy to practice - the College can not only deliver on its strategic objectives and wider priorities, but also create additional value across educational, social and environmental outcomes.

| A Truly Inclusive College | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 5 GENDER EQUALITY | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Curriculum that meets the needs of learners, employers and the community | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS |
| Deliver an Outstanding Student Experience | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | |
| Be an Employer of Choice | 1 NO POVERTY | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES |
| Maintain a Sustainable College | 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | 13 CLIMATE ACTION |
| Grow the College Income | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | | | 15 LIFE ON LAND |
| Empowering Education Through Digital Transformation | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | | | |



Climate Action and Carbon Reduction

Carbon Accounting

This year we established a more accurate data baseline which allows us to track progress more consistently and prioritise the highest impact interventions.

| SECR data | 23-24 | 24-25 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Gas consumption (kWh) | 5,261,891 | 4,573,111 |
| Gas emissions | 950 | 836 |
| Owned transport | 2.75 | 2.45 |
| Total scope 1 emissions | 963 | 799 |
| Purchased electricity (kWh) | 3,590,481 | 3,782,484 |
| Electricity emissions | 694 | 839 |
| Total Scope 1 and 2 emissions | 1,658 | 1,622 |
| Intensity ratio | 2 | 2 |

Note on Baseline Revision

During the preparation of this year's carbon accounts, inaccuracies were identified in the data used for previous years' calculations, including the 2022–23 baseline. As a result, the historic carbon figures do not accurately reflect the organisation's true emissions for those years.

Given these discrepancies, it is recommended that use of the 2022–23 data is discontinued, with 2023–24 established as the new baseline year. The 2023–24 carbon data has been reviewed and updated since its initial publication to ensure that future reporting is based on accurate data.

Gas consumption reduced by 13% resulting in a 12% fall in gas-related emissions. Owned transport emissions decreased slightly, indicating either reduced vehicle usage or improved vehicle efficiency. Total Scope 1 emissions therefore fell by 164tCO₂e, representing a 17% reduction in direct emissions.

Electricity consumption increased slightly, leading to higher associated emissions (21%). This is likely due to increased occupancy (an additional 144 FTE staff and 1,034 students) in addition to the completion of Garden Mills adding 2,915 m² to the estate; in combination these increased electricity demand for lighting, heating and equipment.

However, despite the rise in electricity related emissions, the total emissions saw a small overall reduction (2.17%) due to the fall in gas use. The intensity ratio remains unchanged, indicating that emissions per unit of activity are stable, even as the organisation continues to grow.

Around 50% of the College's total emissions each year are from heating, making this a key area of focus for decarbonisation. This is expected to reduce significantly in 2026 when we connect to the Bradford District Heat Network.

To further improve the accuracy of our carbon reporting, we could consider including Scope 3 emissions, such as staff mileage claims. This would require a system to capture total mileage per vehicle type, enabling precise calculation of associated emissions.

SECR Measures Explained

- **Scope 1 emissions** - direct greenhouse gas emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the organisation.
Scope 1 includes combustion of natural gas and fuel used in vehicles.
- **Scope 2 emissions** - indirect greenhouse gas emissions from the generation of purchased electricity.
- **tCO₂e** - tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.
This is the standard unit to express emissions by converting all greenhouse gases into the equivalent amount of CO₂ based on their global warming potential.
- **kWh** – kilowatt hours
This is a unit to measure how much energy is used over time. 1 kWh is the amount of energy consumed by a 1 kilowatt device running for one hour.
- **Gas consumption** - the amount of natural gas used.
- **Gas emissions (tCO₂e)** - greenhouse gas emissions resulting from gas consumption.
- **Owned transport (tCO₂e)** - emissions from vehicles owned or operated by the organisation.
- **Total Scope 1 emissions (tCO₂e)** - the combined emissions from gas consumption and owned transport.
- **Purchased electricity (kWh)** - the amount of electricity used.
- **Electricity emissions (tCO₂e)** - greenhouse gas emissions resulting from electricity consumption.
- **Total emissions (tCO₂e)** - the sum of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions.
- **Intensity ratio** - used to track emissions performance as the organisation grows or changes.
It shows how much carbon is produced per FTE staff member (this is the recommended ratio for the sector).

Bradford District Heat Network

The Bradford District Heat Network is a city wide initiative that will deliver low carbon heat to the central campus. Works are now underway, marking the start of our transition away from traditional gas boilers. The David Hockey Building and Alternative Technology Centre will be connected to this network in 2026.

LED Lighting Upgrades

The ongoing LED lighting upgrades continued during 2024/25, with more than 3,000 lights being replaced in the David Hockney Building. This represents a significant step forward in reducing energy consumption, carbon emissions and operating costs. These upgrades are estimated to reduce electricity usage annually by 196,500 kWh, resulting in a reduction of 60.32tCO₂e and delivering financial savings of £84,418 per year.

Following upgrades completed over the Easter break, this graph shows a clear reduction in energy consumption, with this lower level being sustained throughout the next term.



Garden Mills Refurbishment

The Garden Mills refurbishment has now been completed, delivering modern and energy efficient teaching and learning spaces. Carbon friendly features such as improved insulation, low energy lighting and smart heating controls reduce emissions and operating costs, while providing a comfortable environment for students and staff.

Junction Mills

Construction of the Junction Mills building is progressing, with sustainability embedded at every stage. Contractor Morgan Sindall has implemented their '10 Tonne Carbon Challenge' to identify solutions to cut the project's carbon footprint. A whole life carbon assessment, covering embodied and operational emissions from design through to end of life has already delivered savings of 182 tonnes in total, achieved through reduced steel and concrete usage and further efficiencies in cladding and internal walls.

The project also achieved a full score under the Considerate Constructors Scheme's Care for the Environment category, recognising efforts to minimise impacts and enhance the natural environment.

Food Waste

Food waste segregation is now in place across all buildings in line with Simpler Recycling legislation which came into effect on 31st March 2025. Food waste that is segregated from general waste streams can be converted into biogas using anaerobic digestion at specialist facilities.

This ensures compliance with national standards, reduces environmental impact, supports circularity and more sustainable waste management economy practice, and aligns with the College's commitment to sustainability.

Circular Economy

Since the launch in 2024, the Borrow Cup Scheme has continued to be successful in reducing the number of single use cups across college and the reusable cups are available at all catering outlets. The deposit based scheme enables them to be reused continually and discounts are also offered to those using their own reusable cup. This encourages sustainable habits among staff and students and promotes circular economy practice. To date, 2,753 drinks have been served in reusable cups, preventing significant waste and saving an estimated 165,180g CO₂e.



Community Impact and Recognition

Our sustainability work extends beyond the campus. By combining practical action, learner engagement and community impact, our curriculum initiatives benefit the local community and have begun to earn national recognition.

This year, curriculum projects were triumphant in two categories of the prestigious Green Gown Awards, showcasing innovation and excellence in sustainability.

These projects are not only operational improvements but also involve the College community, giving learners and staff opportunities to participate in meaningful sustainability work with tangible impact.



Winner 2025

Benefiting Society category

Welcome Café (Adult Skills)

Reducing food waste by transforming surplus food into nutritious, affordable meals promotes social inclusion and demonstrates how sustainability initiatives empower students while benefiting the wider community.

Judges' comments: 'The Welcome Café is a small-scale, not-for-profit initiative with a powerful social impact. It supports sanctuary seekers, reduces food waste, and fosters inclusion by involving local businesses and volunteers. While it doesn't offer direct financial savings, it delivers significant "cost avoidance" and social value. The café upskills asylum seekers, building confidence and offering routes into employment, all within a warm, community-led setting. Reviewers describe it as a "wholesome" and "feel-good" project, demonstrating what's possible on a limited budget. It's a genuine example of grassroots sustainability—where compassion, community, and creativity come together to drive meaningful, lasting change.'

This project was also a finalist for the Social Impact in Sustainability Award at the Yorkshire Sustainability Excellence Awards, recognising its contribution to positive social and environmental outcomes.



Highly Commended 2025

Next Generation Learning and Skills

Reboot For Good (PLW)

Obsolete IT equipment is refurbished by PLW learners and donated to community centres working to tackle digital exclusion. This project reduces e-waste and provides practical learning experience for students, while providing valuable resources to support community access to digital technology.

Judges' comments: 'Bradford College deserves praise for recognising, supporting and growing a student-led initiative. This project showcases excellent collaboration across several College departments. Simple, impactful and replicable. This is a fantastic student-spearheaded initiative.'

The SDG Accord published this project as a case study for SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production.



Curriculum and Green Skills

As educators, we prepare learners to become active participants in society. Not only contributing to the workforce, but also being responsible citizens: informed, ethical decision makers who understand the wider impact of their choices.

Green Skills Centre

To reflect regional workforce needs, our curriculum offer includes specialist training for low carbon careers. The Green Skills Centre at the Trinity Green campus opened in December 2024, providing a dedicated facility for training in renewable technologies, sustainable construction and retrofit skills. Our teaching capacity will be strengthened further with the addition of two new Employability Skills and Sustainability lecturer roles in our Construction department.

Developing Educators for Sustainability

PSET teacher training is undertaken by staff across the College alongside their existing teaching roles. It is delivered in-house and tailored to meet the College's needs.

Feedback from these trainees highlights significant professional and pedagogical development in relation to sustainability. They now view sustainability 'beyond the environmental lens', appreciating its 'social, cultural and economic dimensions', and describe becoming more reflective practitioners; acknowledging their previously limited understanding of sustainability and recognising the importance of embedding it more meaningfully into learning.

By critically evaluating existing practices to embed sustainable education principles, they lead and influence change that extends the impact across multiple curriculum areas. Designing learning with the intent of developing their learners' 'sense of responsibility and purpose' results in more relevant learning experiences, and improved engagement and outcomes for learners.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Toolkit

Our new Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Toolkit will be launched this academic year to support a consistent approach to embedding sustainability across teaching practice. Training and resources will be available to accompany the toolkit, including a Sustainability Skills Progression Model aligned with the new Navigate skills. Together, these tools will further integrate sustainability within curricula and provide guidance to track learners' development of the related skills. By committing to ESD, we will equip our learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to act as responsible global citizens.

Curriculum Mapping and Learner Experience

To improve the visibility of sustainability within courses, the Sustainability Lead is working with teaching staff and learners to map the SDGs and ESD pedagogies across programmes. 35 staff have participated to date, providing a clearer picture of how sustainability is already integrated across the curriculum and identifying opportunities to further enhance learner engagement with sustainability through practical and vocationally relevant projects.

Student led curriculum mapping will take place at the end of 2025, aiming to incorporate learner voice and encourage participation in shaping learning experiences. SOS-UK will then provide a report and recommendations based on the findings.

Ofsted Relevance

Although sustainability is not identified as an explicit theme within Ofsted's 2025 inspection framework, it intersects with and enhances all seven areas. The framework's emphasis on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as a key focus area is significant, as EDI is intrinsically linked to sustainability.

The following summary illustrates these connections, highlighting the relevance, impact and added value that sustainability brings.

Sustainability in the 2025 Ofsted Framework

Although not an explicit theme, sustainability is a consistent thread throughout all areas of the 2025 inspection toolkit:

Safeguarding

- Sustainability is increasingly framed as a safeguarding issue.
- Sustainability issues can affect learners' mental health, motivation, and attendance.
- Learners need support to navigate misinformation and extremist narratives.
- Positive engagement with sustainability can build hope, resilience and wellbeing.

Inclusion

- Embedding EDI throughout all aspects of learning, culture & operations ensures learners feel represented.
- A diverse and inclusive approach helps learners develop agency, responsibility, and respect for different perspectives.
- Linking EDI principles with sustainability and social justice strengthens belonging and shared purpose.

Leadership and Governance

- Leaders shape the vision for sustainability and align curricula with local and national skills priorities.
- Strategic planning can embed sustainability across policies, procurement, and partnerships.
- Institutions that address local social justice and environmental challenges have greater community impact.
- Understanding how sustainability links to employability and key competencies strengthens leadership decisions.

Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs

- Collaboration with employers, industry, and communities prepares learners for emerging and changing sectors.
- Focusing on local and regional skills needs, green growth areas and shifting industries supports employability, resilience, and relevant learning.
- Sustainability helps to future proof local workforce development.

Curriculum, Teaching, and Training

- Learners build transferable skills, values, and attributes needed for modern workplaces.
- When learners connect sustainability to their sector, they can translate theory into practice.
- Real world and project based learning reinforces relevance, creativity, and application.

Achievement

- Skills in sustainability, critical thinking, and social responsibility enhance employability and outcomes.
- Learners apply good practice, consider consequences, and can adapt to future changes.

Participation and development

- Learners build responsibility, awareness, and skills through collaborative participation.
- Social and environmental action can enhance community impact and employability.

Challenges and Future Direction

While we are proud of the progress we have made, we recognise the challenges ahead as we set a clear direction for the future, particularly in enhancing biodiversity and ensuring sustainability is applied consistently across all teaching and operations.

Our carbon footprint for 2024/25 is 1622tCO2e, representing a 2.17% decrease compared to the previous year. Establishing consistent data baselines enables us to track progress year on year and target the highest impact interventions.

Climate Action Plan

In line with the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, the College developed its first Climate Action Plan (CAP) this year, providing steps to advance sustainability across the institution.

Key objectives include:

- Embed sustainability across strategy, values, KPIs and business planning.
- Celebrate actions to external audiences.
- Declare commitments publicly to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Develop a Biodiversity Action Plan and encourage nature friendly grounds practices to enhance biodiversity.
- Integrate sustainability and green skills into curriculum and careers guidance.
- Improve emissions reporting, optimise energy use and explore renewable energy opportunities.

The actions outlined in the Climate Action Plan aim to reduce emissions through the application of sustainable practices across our campuses and facilities, while integrating sustainability into the curriculum to enhance teaching and student engagement, and equip our learners to thrive in a greener economy.

Conclusion

Over the past year, Bradford College has continued to strengthen sustainability initiatives across our campuses and curriculum. From investing in low carbon infrastructure and smarter energy management that will reduce environmental impact, to inspiring positive change and gaining national recognition through learner led projects; we are building strong foundations for long term impact, while already making valuable contributions to society and the environment.

Our curriculum and skills initiatives have enhanced teaching quality, strengthened vocational learning, and empowered learners to act as informed, ethical, and responsible citizens. Mapping of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across courses, alongside practical and vocationally relevant projects, has increased visibility and integration of sustainability throughout the curriculum.

We have also made significant progress in operational sustainability. The LED lighting upgrades, Bradford District Heating Network, Garden Mills refurbishment, and Future Technologies Centre demonstrate our commitment to low carbon buildings, energy efficiency, and carbon-conscious construction. Carbon accounting improvements and our first Climate Action Plan provide a clear framework for monitoring and reducing emissions, while embedding sustainability across strategy, operations, and teaching practice.

By building on these achievements, Bradford College will continue to generate lasting positive impact for learners, the local community, and future generations. Looking ahead, we remain committed to embedding sustainability not only as an operational priority but as a core part of our College culture and identity. We will continue to enhance biodiversity, optimise energy use, integrate sustainability into learning and equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values to thrive in a greener economy.