



2026/27 - 2030/31

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SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

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HEART OF
WORCESTERSHIRE
COLLEGE

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Owner:

Vice Principal – Higher Education, Adult and Curriculum Development

Date:

18 December 2025



HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE

1. STRATEGIC INTENT

Heart of Worcestershire College recognises that environmental sustainability is critical to:

- the long-term resilience of the College estate
- the financial sustainability of operations
- the preparation of learners for a low-carbon economy
- our role as a responsible civic institution

This framework sets the strategic direction for environmental sustainability. It defines where the College is focusing its effort, why these priorities matter, and how progress is governed, monitored and assured.

Detailed delivery actions are set out in the accompanying Environmental Sustainability Action Plan.

Introduction: Principles and the Planet Strategic Pillar

Heart of Worcestershire College is committed to embedding sustainability at the heart of its mission, guided by our “Strategic Pillar - Planet”. This strategy is not just a set of actions—it reflects our values and our responsibility to lead by example in the education sector.

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Leadership and Responsibility:** We take a proactive stance on environmental stewardship, with clear governance and accountability at all levels. The college’s leadership team, staff, and students all play a role in driving positive change.
- **Integration:** Sustainability is woven through every aspect of college life—from teaching and learning to estates management, procurement, and community engagement. It is not a standalone effort, but a fundamental part of our culture and operations.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We set ambitious targets, monitor progress, and adapt our actions in line with best practice and stakeholder feedback. Our commitment is to ongoing improvement, not just compliance.
- **Collaboration:** We work with students, staff, local partners, and national bodies to maximise our positive impact. Partnership is central to achieving our goals.
- **Transparency:** Progress is measured, reported, and shared openly with our community and stakeholders, ensuring accountability and building trust.

The “**Planet Strategic Pillar**” is one of the college’s core strategic pillars, ensuring that environmental sustainability is embedded in our curriculum, our decision-making, and our daily practices. This strategy supports the college’s wider mission to prepare learners for a sustainable future and to contribute meaningfully to our local and global communities.

2. STRATEGIC OUTCOMES (WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE)

By 2030 and beyond, the College will:

1. **Operate a low-carbon, energy-efficient** estate that actively reduces emissions and operating costs.
2. **Minimise environmental impact from resources, waste and travel**, embedding sustainable behaviours across the organisation.
3. **Enhance biodiversity and environmental quality across all campuses**, using the estate as a positive environmental asset.
4. **Embed environmental sustainability into learning, skills and behaviours**, ensuring learners and staff contribute to positive environmental outcomes.
5. **Demonstrate strong environmental governance and accountability**, supported by transparent reporting and continuous improvement.



3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The College will focus its environmental effort on **five strategic priority areas**.

Priority 1: Carbon, Energy and Climate Impact

Strategic aim: Reduce environmental impact and financial exposure through sustained reductions in energy use and carbon emissions.

Focus:

- Energy efficiency and demand reduction
 - Low-carbon technologies and renewables
 - Carbon monitoring and reporting
 - Progression towards low carbon college in line with national expectations
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Priority 2: Resources, Waste and Circular Practices

Strategic aim: To achieve a target of 50% of waste being recycled, annually. Recycling rates are at 36% in 2025/26.

Focus:

- Waste reduction before recycling
 - Elimination of landfill wherever practicable
 - Responsible management of hazardous waste
 - Reuse of materials, equipment and furnishings
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Priority 3: Sustainable Travel and Ways of Working

Strategic aim: Reduce environmental impact from travel while supporting accessibility and wellbeing.

Focus:

- Modal shift towards public transport, cycling and walking
- Reduced need for travel through digital and flexible working
- Behavioural incentives and facilities that support sustainable choices

Priority 4: Biodiversity and Sustainable Estates

Strategic aim: Use the College estate to positively support local biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Focus:

- Habitat creation and protection
- Wildlife-friendly landscaping
- Biodiversity considerations in all estate development and maintenance
- Engagement of learners in environmental stewardship

Priority 5: Environmental Learning, Skills and Culture

Strategic aim: Ensure environmental sustainability is understood, valued and acted upon by learners and staff.

Focus:

- Curriculum content that supports environmental literacy and green skills
- Staff development to support sustainable practice
- Student and staff participation through champions and enrichment
- Visible environmental culture across all campuses



4. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Environmental sustainability is governed through a **clear and proportionate framework**:

Executive Leadership Accountability:

Strategic leadership and accountability for environmental sustainability sit with the Vice Principal – Higher Education, Adult and Curriculum Development.

Eco Group:

The Eco Group provides operational oversight, progress monitoring and stakeholder engagement. Membership includes staff, students and a nominated Governor representative.

Governor Oversight:

Environmental sustainability performance and risk are reported to Governors through formal reporting mechanisms, including annual reporting and KPI review.

Review Cycle:

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy and associated action plan are reviewed every three years, with progress monitored at least annually.



5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE

Progress is assured through:

- Quantitative performance indicators, including energy use and carbon emissions
- Annual reporting through Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)
- External validation where appropriate (awards, partnerships, audits)
- Transparent communication of progress, priorities and outcomes

This ensures the College maintains credibility, accountability and continuous improvement.



6. PROGRESS BY STRATEGIC THEME - 2026

Emissions & Energy Management

The college has a comprehensive system for monitoring and reporting on energy use and linked Co2 emissions, on a termly basis. This identifies areas where energy draw potentially reflects “Wasted energy” that could be conserved, through changes in behaviour or technical adaptation. These are monitored through two groups a distinct “College Energy Group” and the broader “Eco Group” for sustainability.

Through the Eco group the college has introduced several energy-savings initiatives, which include the use of LED lights and motion sensors, as well as improving Building Management Systems (BMS). The college has called upon guidance from key contacts and organisations, like the Midlands Energy Hub, to identify the most efficient changes to implement and any funding that could be employed to help overcome the cost.

The college reports energy use annually through its Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR Report), which is published on our website, presented to Governors and monitored via key performance indicators to support progress towards Net Zero targets.

Since the 2018/19 baseline, carbon emissions have fallen by 46% by 2024/25, representing substantial progress towards the 2030 target.

On-going Priorities

- Invest in energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources.
- Reduce carbon emissions by over 65% by 2030 and become a low carbon college by 2050.



Waste Management

The college has increased recycling and reuse rates over the last 3 years by providing extensive recycling facilities and promoting use across all sites. The college has recently added a Food Waste recycling process in the main cafeterias. These arrangements and other partnerships mean the college does not contribute any waste to landfill on an annual basis, but rates of recycling material, going through processes to reuse the core materials, is lower than the target of 50%.

The college also seeks to reuse and optimise existing equipment, facilities and buildings in the approach to any new building projects. This has included reusing metal panelling, reuse of computer equipment and furniture and re-purposing equipment through partner organisations.

The college has arrangements in place with the main IT technology provider to re-purpose “redundant” equipment and cables, to support education institutions with less developed IT infrastructure.

Other actions include the forced printing on double sided paper, the reuse of construction and electrical materials in workshops and a reduction in wasted food and drink through college meetings, including the Governing Body.

All hazardous waste is responsibly disposed of safely.

On-going Priorities

- Increase the amount of college waste recycled to 50% by 2030.

Sustainable Travel

The college encourage staff and students to use public transport, cycling, or walking to college or in their personal life. This is via promotions of local arrangements, like the Beryl Bikes in Worcester and inter-college transport at Redditch and Bromsgrove and through the annual Planet Earth Games to encourage increased use through gamification techniques.

Bike racks and facilities are available and suitable at every campus, and nearby to the Worcester campus there is a Beryl Bike parking bay for easy deposit of their bicycles. Facilities are monitored to see if more racks, etc, are required. Showers are available at each site.

The college’s family-friendly Flexible Friday’s initiative significantly reduces car use every week, the investment in work and home infrastructures for Cloud services and other platforms, enables this approach.

On-going Priorities

- Promote car-sharing schemes among staff and students.
- Limit travel to the United Kingdom, wherever possible.

Biodiversity & Estates

In 2025, the College won the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs “Bees’ Needs” Champion Awards, for significant contributions undertaken on campus to supporting pollinators. The College has planted 10 fruit trees across campuses, has a living wall at Malvern Construction Centre, and areas around college are left to “Grow Wild” during May as part of “No Mow May.” Gardens have also been created by SEN learners, who have also taken direct steps to protect birds and wildlife around campus. The college considers re-wilding and improving biodiversity as part of every estate development. This may include measures such as avoiding disturbance to birds during the nesting season, establishing wildflower meadows and creating diverse, species-rich habitats to support local biodiversity.

On-going Priorities

- Use college estates to create wildlife havens and support local biodiversity.
- Ensure new developments consider sustainable construction principles.

Ethical Procurement

The college carefully selects contractors and regular suppliers, taking into account environmental credentials and food miles, for example. The college purchases products that are energy-efficient, recyclable, and have minimal environmental impact, wherever possible, this has included new LED lighting across the college and improved heat saving through new windows. The college refectory menus have an increased offer of vegetarian and vegan options. The college cafeteria services have been awarded the Silver Award from Plastic Free Worcester for their work in removing single use plastic from their food manufacturing and retailing processes.

On-going Priorities

- Continue to reduce the use of single-use plastics and promote sustainable alternatives.



Education & Curriculum Integration

The college has a strong record of integrating sustainable themes across its curriculum. This includes courses that specifically develop green skills across construction, engineering and electrical installation, for example. All subject areas have some form of sustainable education as part of their programmes, either relating to the content of the curriculum or by project-led learning initiatives and THRIVE tutorial activities. Students increase their knowledge and appreciation of these themes during their time at college.

A group of Environmental and Sustainable Development Goal Eco champions support the proliferation of these themes in their department areas. The Eco group also promotes these opportunities and assists areas in finding projects, resources and partner organisations to aid them in creating these campaigns.

The college has been in the Top 10 of the “SDG Teach In” leaderboard for students and staff signing up to the initiative to contextualise sustainable themes in their teaching. The college is consistently above other Further Education colleges in this league nationally, as well as for the Planet Earth Games initiative.

On-going Priorities

- Conduct an Audit to ensure the college curriculum has sustainable development goals included in every subject area and across the Tutorial programme.
- Provide access to annual staff training on sustainable themes.

Community Engagement

The College works with a number of partners in delivering the above strategy. These include Plastic Free Worcester, Worcester City and Worcestershire County Council and a selection of contacts at specific departments. This also includes our suppliers and contractors who work with the college to base development on sustainable principles. The college continues to work with The Midlands Hub, Worcestershire Public Sector Sustainability Group, University of Worcester and College’s West Midlands to identify opportunities and aid the promotion of sustainable themes, skills and knowledge across the region and nationally.

The college develops key partnership arrangements with local voluntary and non-statutory organisations like Act on Energy, Transition Worcester, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and Worcester Environmental Group.

On-going Priorities

- Promote sustainable practices to local communities, employers, and stakeholders.
- Work with regional bodies and national organisations in developing these themes.