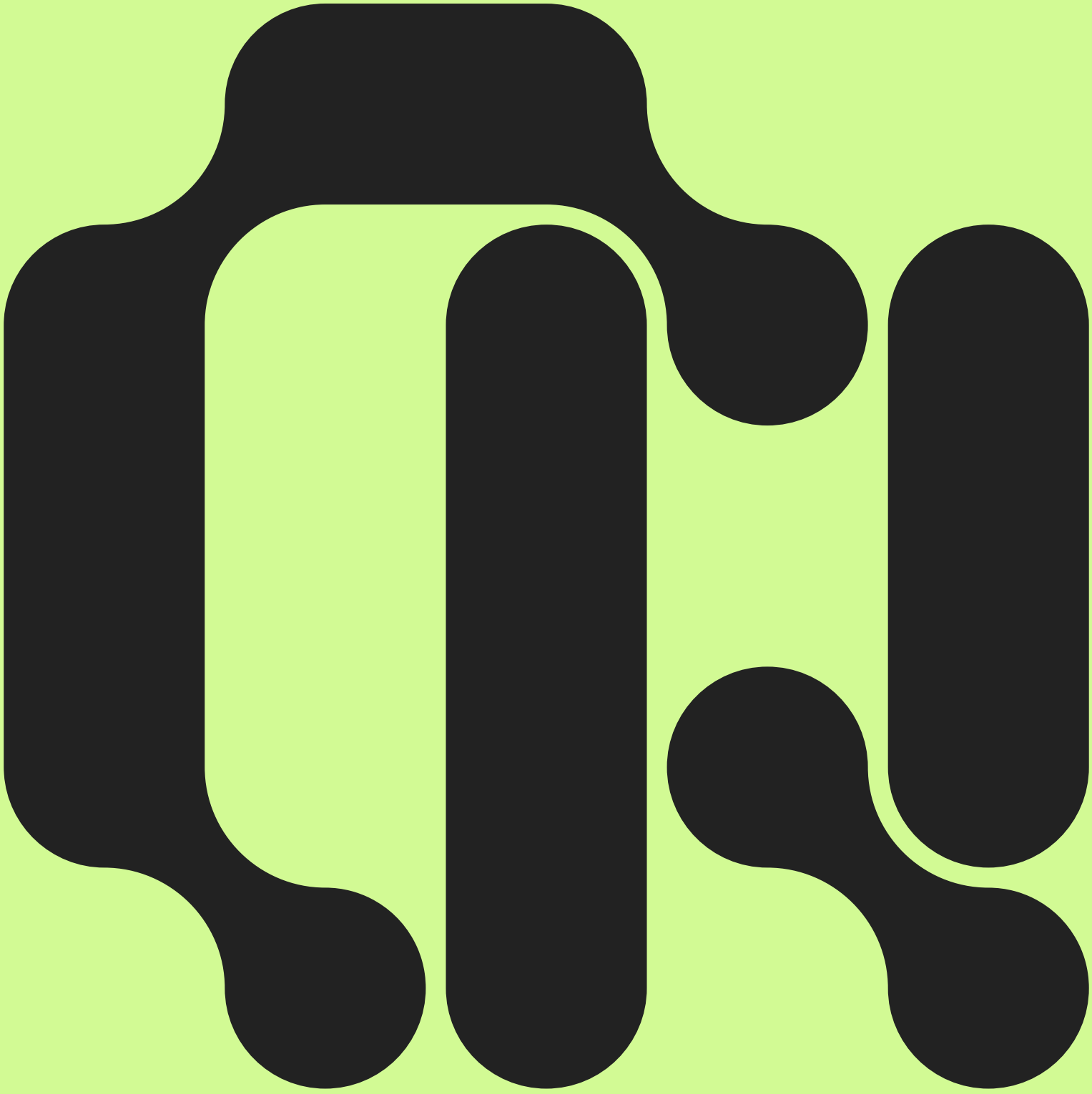
Climate Action Roadmap 2030



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

2024 Update

Mission Lab

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01 Introduction

Purpose of Document

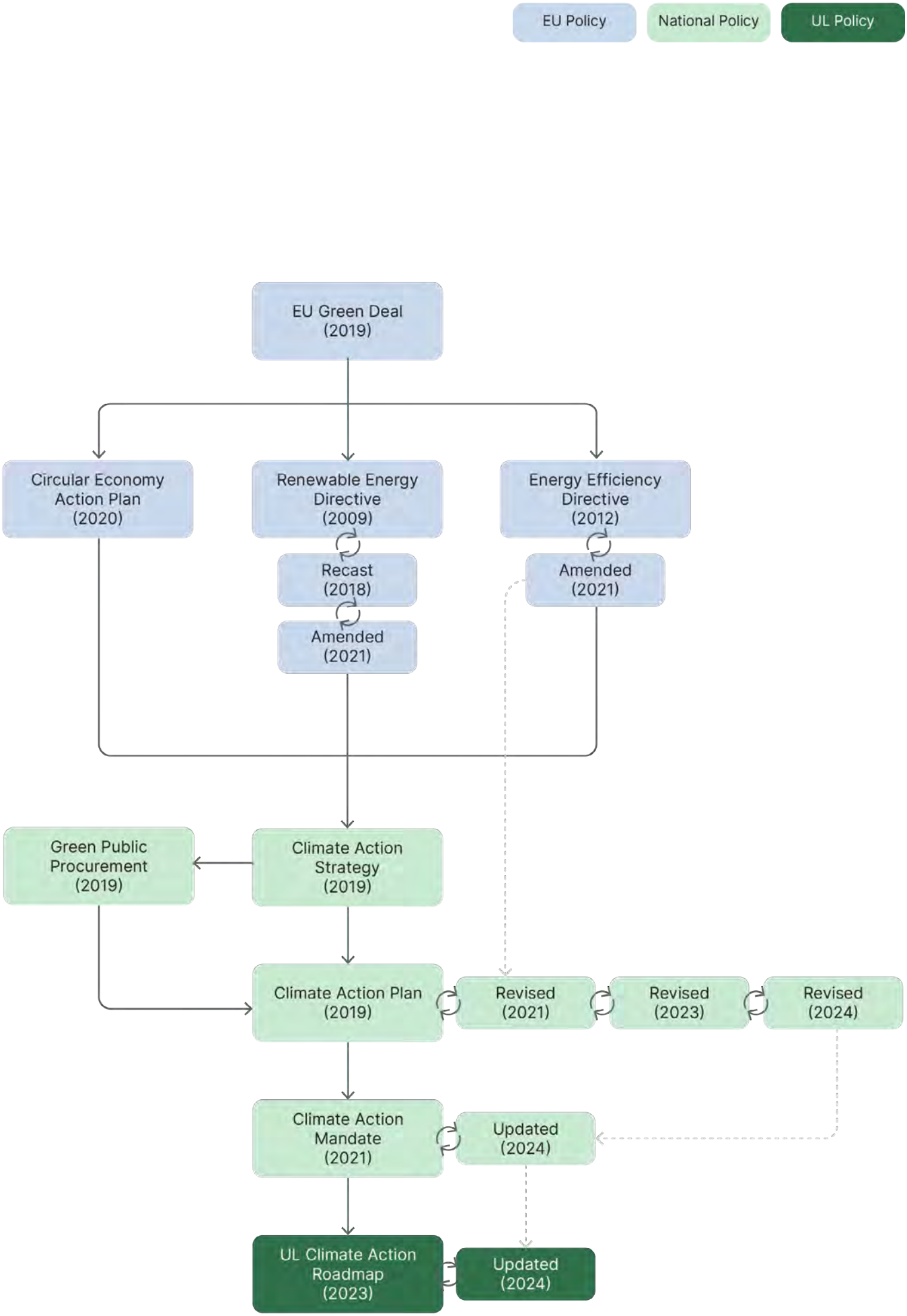
This document builds upon UL's 2023 Climate Action Roadmap, which laid the foundation for transformative climate action across our campus. It provides an updated status on the initiatives we have undertaken, our progress against both national and institutional targets, and outlines the path forward.

Our efforts are aligned with the Irish Climate Action Plan and the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, which call for public sector bodies like UL to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 51% and improve energy efficiency by 50% by 2030. In addition, UL's own ambitions, as articulated in our Mission-Based Sustainability Framework 2030, aim for carbon neutrality by 2040. This update reaffirms our commitment to these bold goals and highlights the systemic changes and projects that are steadily moving us towards a more sustainable future.

This document aims to:

- Report on current progress against the targets set out in both the national climate policies and UL's original Climate Action Roadmap.
- Identify emerging challenges and opportunities in the context of UL's decarbonisation and sustainability strategy.
- Outline the next steps for achieving the 2030 targets, with a specific focus on governance, operations, culture, and systemic transformation.

By adopting a multi-level perspective, this document acknowledges that achieving these ambitious targets will require collaborative actions across governance, infrastructure, operations, and community engagement. It reflects our shared responsibility and the ongoing efforts to innovate and implement changes that contribute to our collective sustainability goals.


EU Policy
National Policy
UL Policy
EU Green Deal (2019)
Circular Economy Action Plan (2020)
Renewable Energy Directive (2009)
Recast (2018)
Amended (2021)
Energy Efficiency Directive (2012)
Amended (2021)
Green Public Procurement (2019)
Climate Action Strategy (2019)
Climate Action Plan (2019)
Revised (2021)
Revised (2023)
Revised (2024)
Climate Action Mandate (2021)
Updated (2024)
UL Climate Action Roadmap (2023)
Updated (2024)

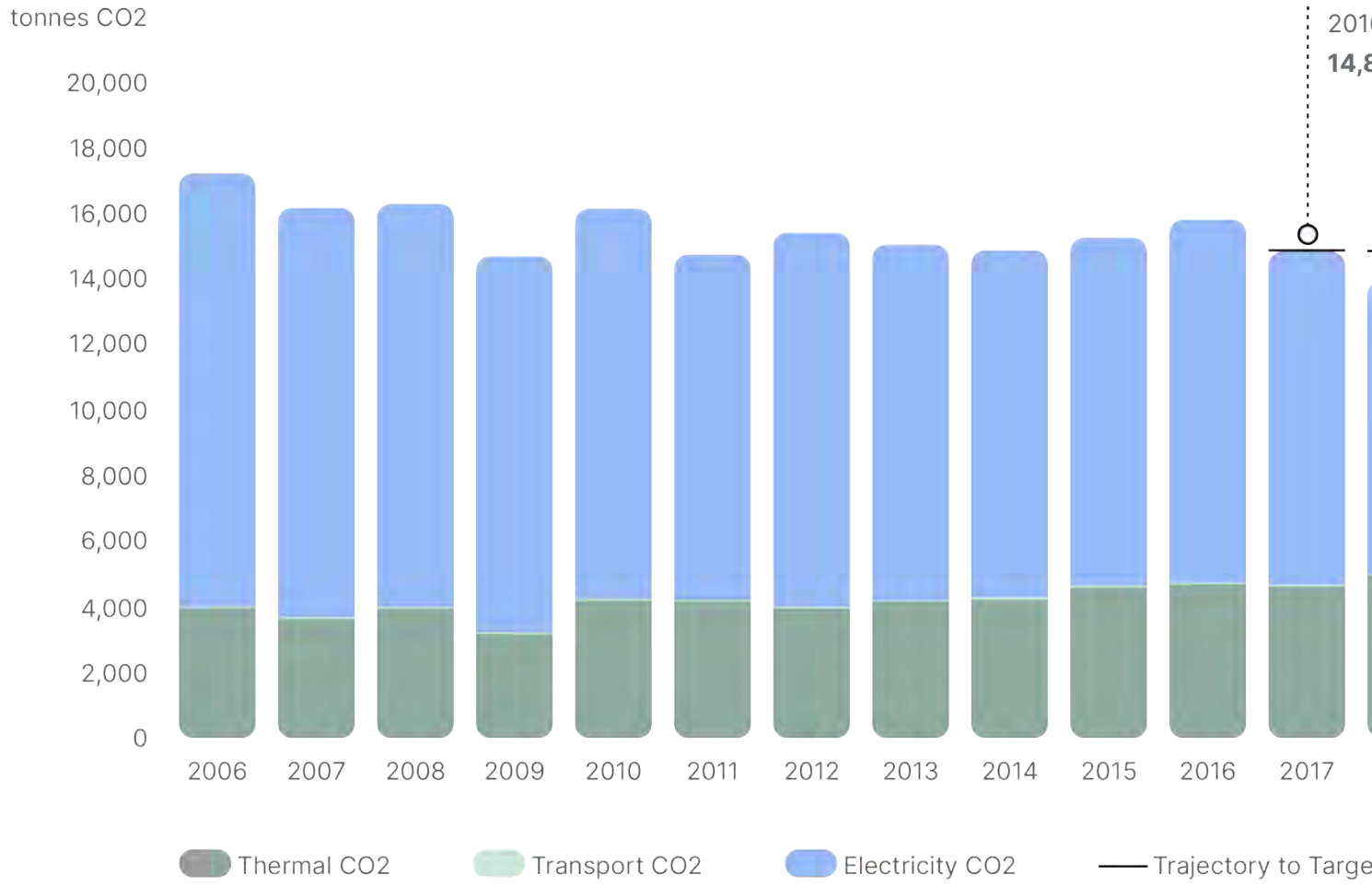
Current Status of Mandated Targets

MANDATED TARGET

The University of Limerick is required to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030, in line with the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate. This target is based on emissions levels recorded between 2016 and 2018. In addition to this mandate, UL has set an ambitious goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, as outlined in its Mission-Based Sustainability Framework 2030.

PROGRESS TO DATE

As of 2023, UL has reduced its emissions to approximately 10,400 tonnes of CO2, representing a reduction of around 30% from the baseline of 14,846 tonnes. While this reflects meaningful progress, further acceleration in emissions reductions will be necessary to meet the 2030 target of 4,513 tonnes of CO2. Current projections, based on ongoing initiatives, indicate that UL is well-positioned to achieve the 2030 target, provided that all proposed work is fully implemented.



PROPOSED WORK

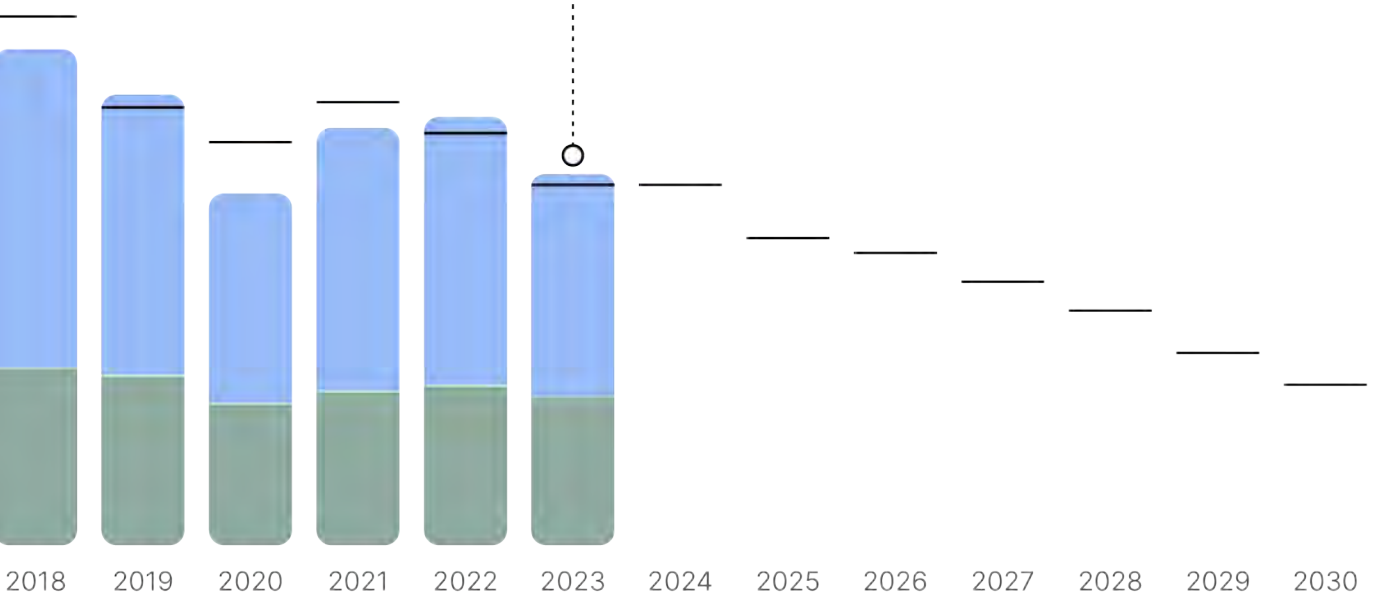
UL's approach to meeting the 2030 target includes electrifying heating systems, installing solar energy infrastructure, upgrading lighting, and enhancing building efficiency. These measures are projected to reduce emissions by 2,161 tonnes, positioning UL to meet and potentially surpass the mandated reduction target. The estimated cost of carrying out this work is €26.9 million. Continued emphasis on these projects will be essential in fulfilling our climate commitments and fostering long-term sustainability.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

While UL is on course to meet the 2030 target, securing the necessary funding to complete these projects remains the most significant challenge. The proposed investment will require strategic financial planning and external funding sources to ensure progress continues as planned. Additionally, reducing energy consumption will be critical for UL to meet its energy efficiency targets alongside emissions reductions. Despite the positive impact of ongoing sustainability projects, addressing these financial challenges will require continued focus and adaptation.

6 - 2018 Baseline Emissions
846 tCO2

2023 Total Emissions
10,400 tCO2
Since the baseline, UL has achieved to reduce it's emissions by 30%.
To hit the 2030 target, UL will have to reduce emissions by a further 5,884 tCO2.



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Driving Systemic Change

Achieving the University of Limerick's ambitious sustainability goals requires a transformation that goes beyond individual departments or isolated projects. While important innovations—such as retrofitting buildings and upgrading heating systems—are underway, the university recognises that achieving carbon neutrality by 2040 will require a holistic, coordinated approach.

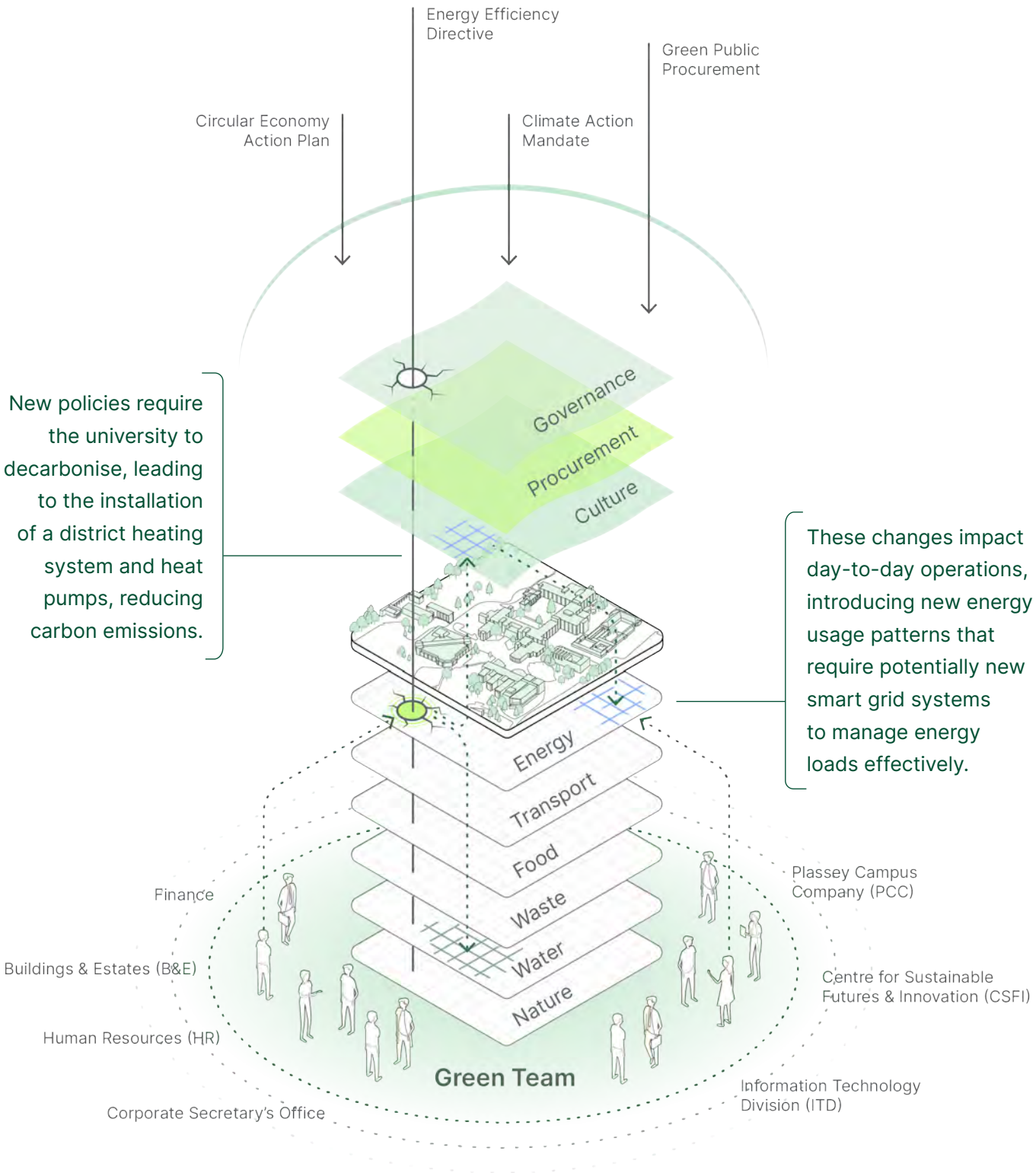
This approach will ensure that governance, culture, infrastructure, and daily operations are aligned to maximise impact. UL has already taken significant steps, launching a range of sustainability initiatives across key areas. These initiatives demonstrate the university's commitment to climate action, and as UL continues to integrate sustainability across its operations, further opportunities will arise to accelerate progress. Collaboration between departments and sustained leadership across all levels of the university will be key to unlocking the full potential of these efforts.

As sustainability becomes more deeply embedded into university culture, there are growing opportunities to engage staff, students, and external partners in climate action. By fostering a shared sense of responsibility and encouraging broad participation, UL is cultivating a vibrant community of changemakers who can contribute to its sustainability goals. The university's focus on education and research around sustainability also positions it to become a leading example of how academic institutions can influence systemic change, not only on campus but also through partnerships and outreach.

Looking ahead, UL is strengthening governance structures to align all departments with its long-term sustainability vision. This approach is reflected in the UL Mission-Based Sustainability Framework 2030, which provides a clear path forward and highlights key areas of focus, such as energy, transport, procurement, and waste management. By continuing to build on this foundation, UL is well-positioned to accelerate its progress toward carbon neutrality.

UL's multi-level perspective, which considers both external pressures—such as national and EU sustainability plans—and internal opportunities for innovation, offers a valuable framework for driving systemic change. By fostering cross-departmental collaboration and ensuring sustainability is embedded into governance, infrastructure, and daily operations, the university can continue to build momentum toward its 2040 carbon neutrality goal.

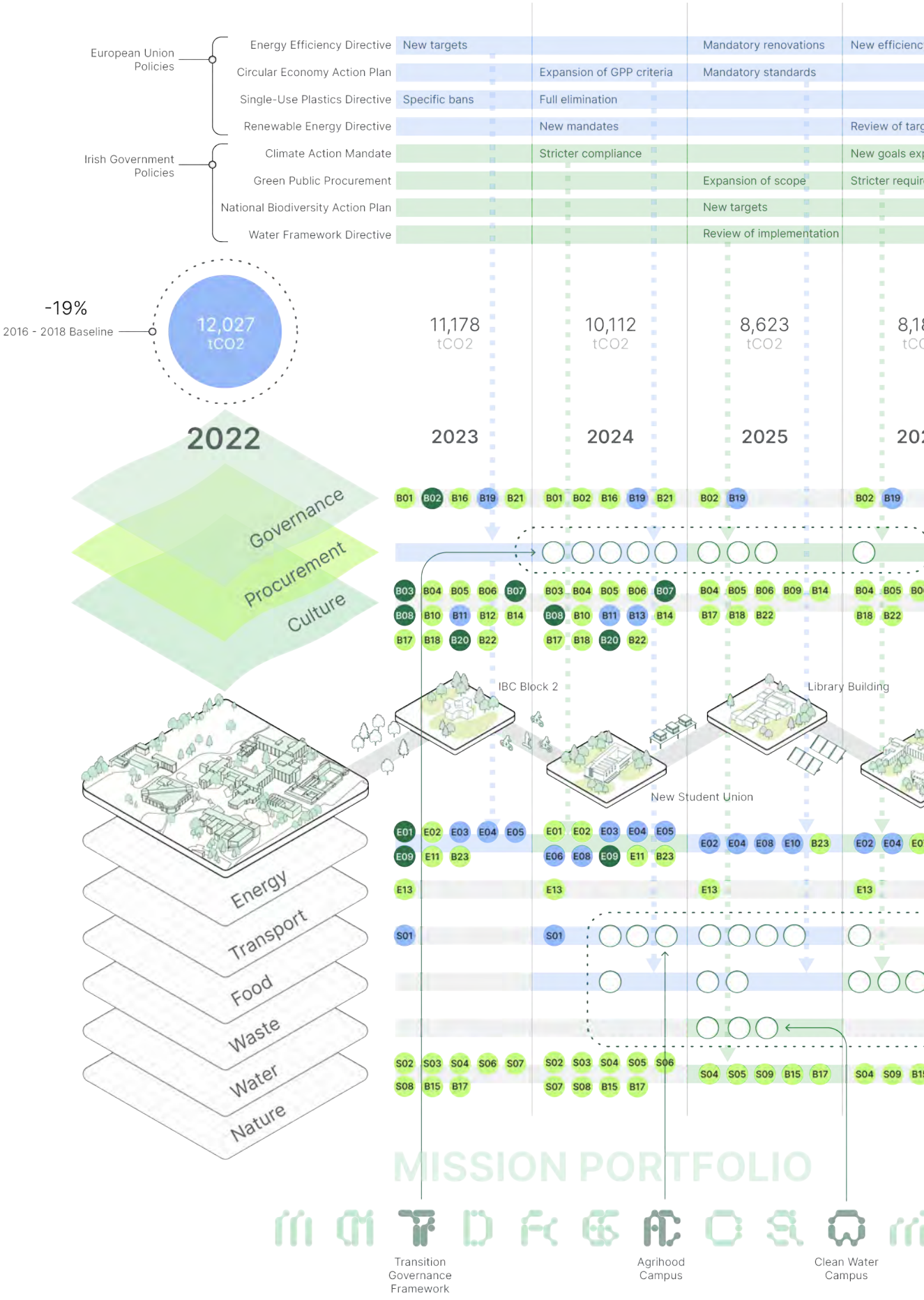
The following diagram visually maps out UL's transition process, illustrating the interconnected efforts that are shaping the university's sustainability journey. It highlights key projects and initiatives, demonstrating how governance, innovation, and operational change are converging to create a more sustainable future.

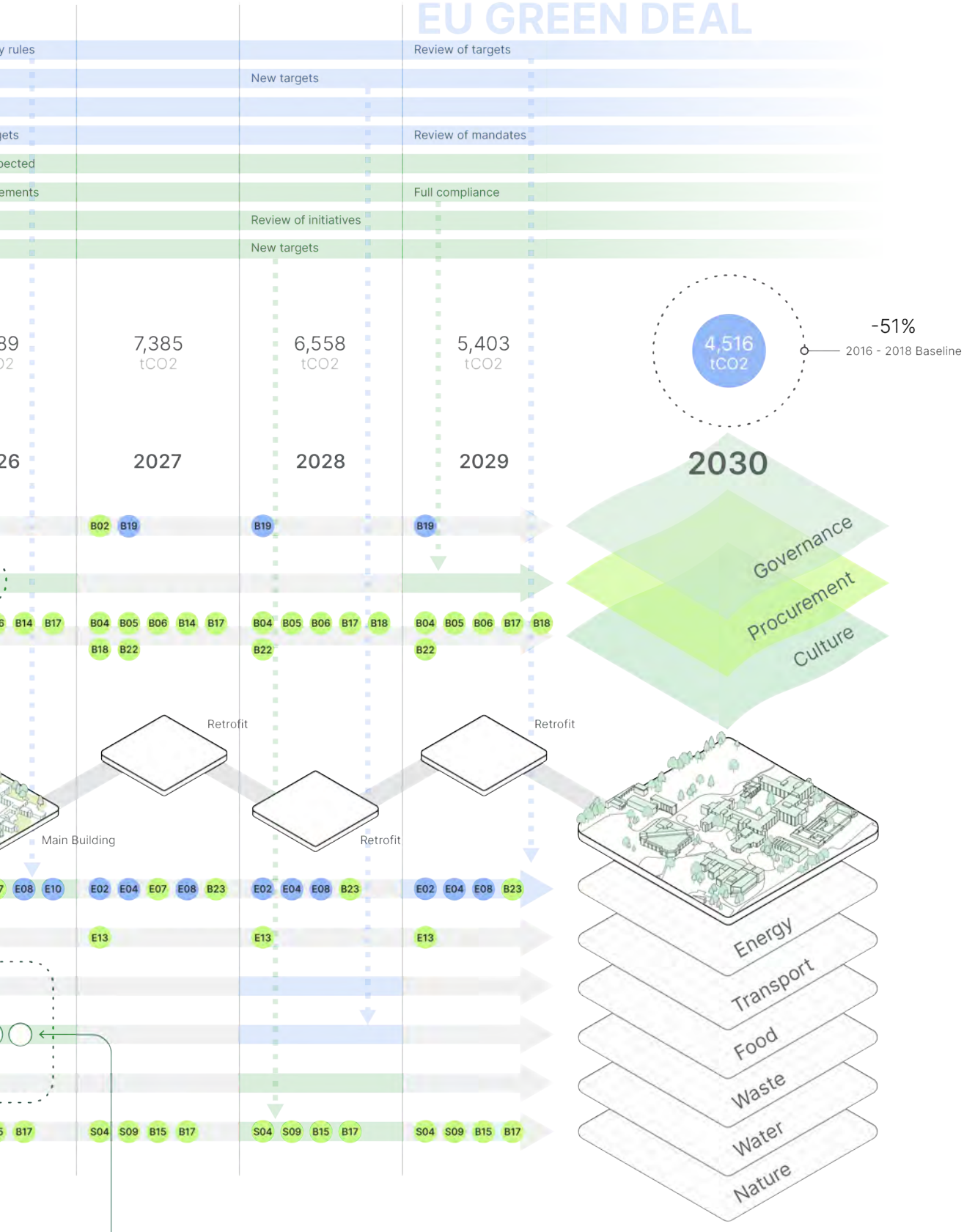


New policies require the university to decarbonise, leading to the installation of a district heating system and heat pumps, reducing carbon emissions.

These changes impact day-to-day operations, introducing new energy usage patterns that require potentially new smart grid systems to manage energy loads effectively.

Transition Pathways Towards a Sustainable University




EU GREEN DEAL
Review of targets
New targets
Review of mandates
Full compliance
Review of initiatives
New targets
7,385
tCO2
6,558
tCO2
5,403
tCO2
4,516
tCO2
-51%
2016 - 2018 Baseline
2027
2028
2029
2030
Governance
Procurement
Culture
Retrofit
Retrofit
Retrofit
Main Building
Energy
Transport
Food
Waste
Water
Nature
Circular
Campus

02 Climate Action Updates

Overview

UL's approach to sustainability goes beyond environmental stewardship to encompass cultural change, governance reform, and resource management. This chapter shows how sustainability is being embedded into every layer of the university through cross-departmental collaboration, forward-thinking strategies, and the engagement of staff, students, and external partners. The following sections will detail not only the actions taken but also the opportunities for further improvement as UL continues its journey toward becoming a sustainable university.


STOP
NO ENTRY

Governance: People and Policy

UL has already made significant progress in establishing key roles and teams to support sustainability efforts. The Buildings and Estates Department, including the Energy Manager, the Director and the team at the Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation, and the Climate Champion on the executive team are all actively contributing to UL's sustainability initiatives. Additionally, the Sustainable University Working Group intends to play an active role in guiding these efforts. However, we recognise the increasing complexity associated with implementation mandates and sustainability requirements. Achieving meaningful progress will require cross-divisional collaboration and stronger coordination to drive change at all levels of the university.

Governance around sustainability at UL has made important strides, with several sustainability-related groups and initiatives already in place. A key development is the formation of a formal Green Team, proposed in the original Climate Action Roadmap, which is now in the process of being established. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Green Team have been drafted to define its roles and responsibilities, with a focus on ensuring cross-organisational collaboration and supporting the achievement of both national and institutional climate action goals.

The Green Team will have broad responsibilities, including ensuring compliance with sustainability regulations, driving decarbonisation efforts, and embedding sustainability into university policies, operations, and procurement processes. Key responsibilities include risk mitigation, developing an annual regulatory framework, coordinating staff training on climate literacy, and monitoring progress on key initiatives such as decarbonisation, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and biodiversity enhancement. The team will also be responsible for advancing UL's Sustainability Framework 2030 and integrating sustainability considerations into all aspects of university governance. The Green Team's composition reflects its cross-functional role, with senior representatives from key departments across the university.

These include:

- Buildings and Estates (B&E): leading the deployment of the university's decarbonisation plan, driving energy efficiency, biodiversity, travel and transport (modal shift), and waste management improvement initiatives and institutional reporting on official sustainability metrics e.g. to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland for the purposes of calculating UL's GHG emissions and energy efficiency improvements and in collaboration with the Research Office for various rankings e.g. THE, QS GreenMetric etc.
- Finance: Leading Green Public Procurement and securing resources for sustainability projects.
- Human Resources (HR): Facilitating staff training and development in climate literacy.
- Information Technology Division (ITD): Addressing IT waste, digitalisation, and paper reduction efforts.
- Corporate Secretary's Office: Overseeing policy development and ensuring compliance with sustainability-related legal requirements.
- Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation (CSFI): Leading cross-organisational engagement, implementing the Sustainability Framework 2030, and institutional reporting on sustainability progress.

The Green Team will be chaired by a senior member of the Executive Committee and will report directly to the Sustainability Champion. This structure ensures both high-level oversight and integration of sustainability initiatives across the university's operations and governance. While various teams and individuals continue to contribute significantly to sustainability efforts, the formalisation of the Green Team brings coherence and alignment to governance structures. Its role will be crucial in ensuring UL meets its climate commitments and effectively embeds sustainability across all areas of the university's operations.

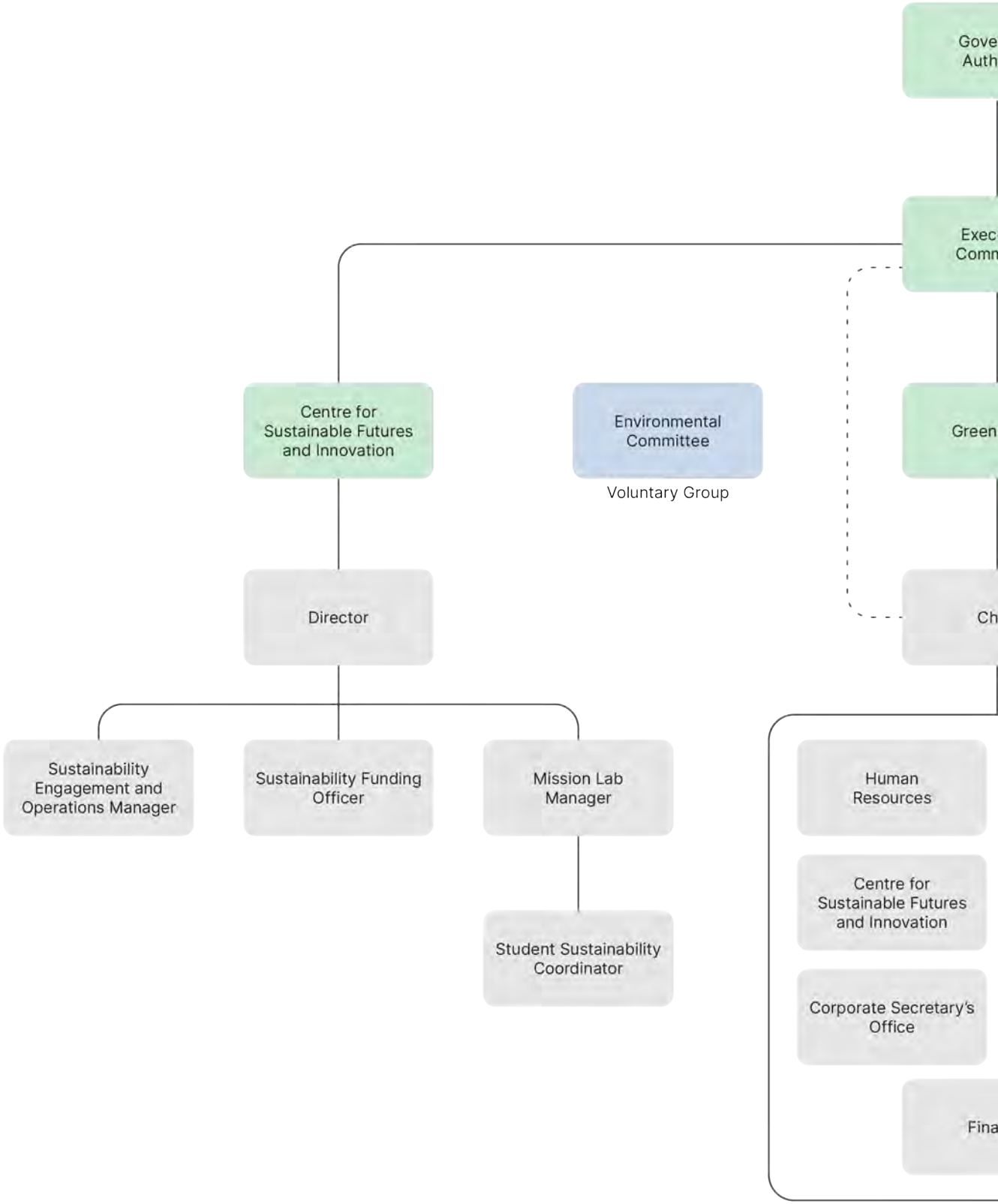
UL has made notable progress in embedding sustainability into its governance through a range of existing policies and strategies. The Travel and Subsistence Policy (2022) encourages staff to adopt a climate-conscious approach to travel, promoting virtual collaboration tools and reducing unnecessary travel. Additionally, the Process for the Development of New Building Projects (2018) outlines sustainability considerations during the design phase, including energy ratings and mobility management, ensuring that sustainability is factored into campus development from the outset.

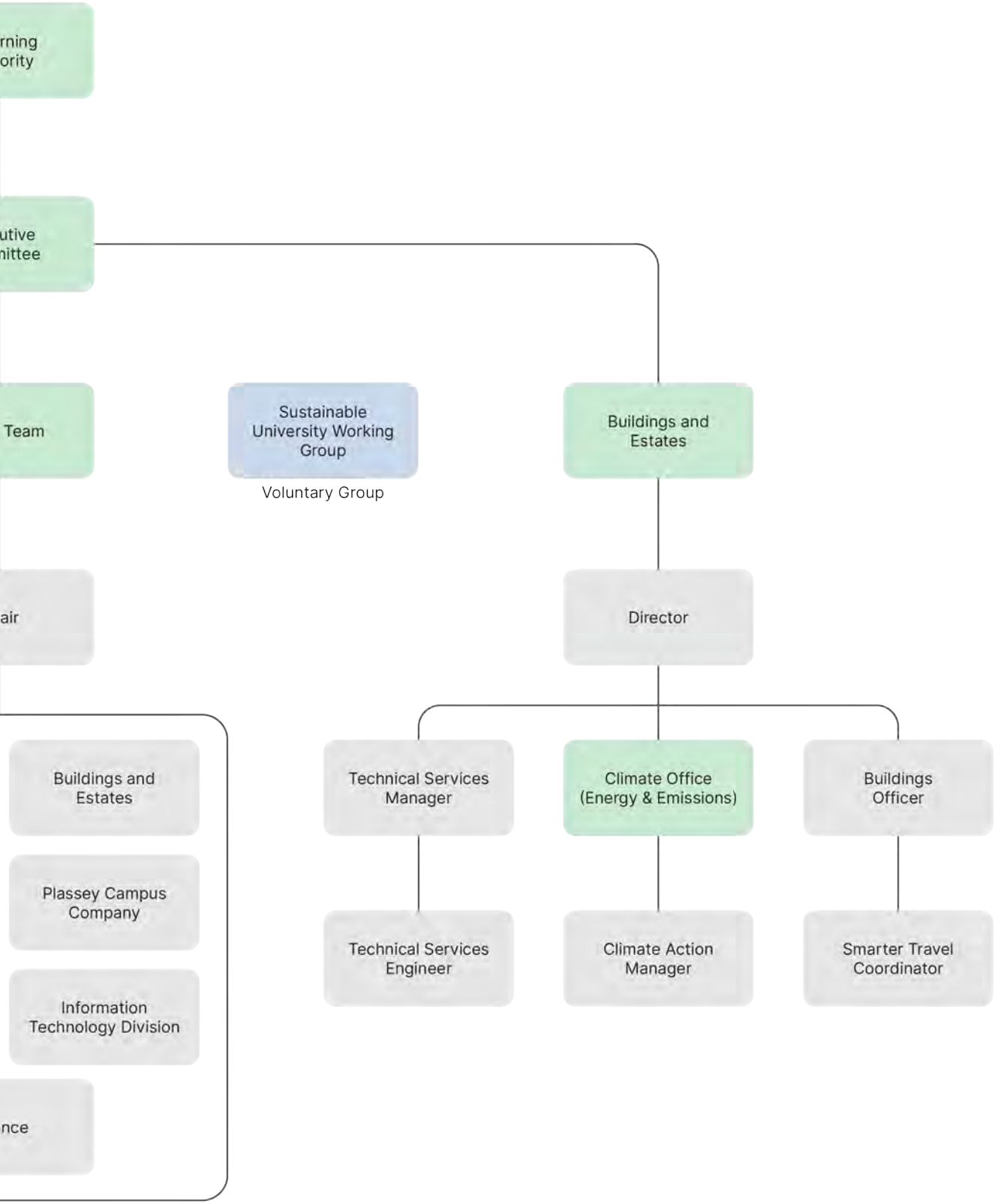
Several university-wide strategies also integrate sustainability, embedding it into both operational and academic activities. The UL Research Strategy 2022-2027 incorporates sustainability into its mission-oriented challenges, while the UL Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy 2022-2027 and the KBS Strategic Plan 2023-2028 reflect sustainability in their values, goals, and objectives. The EHS Strategy Plan 2022-2025 similarly prioritises sustainability through its metrics and targets, ensuring that sustainability is an increasing focus in the university's strategic direction.

While these efforts demonstrate progress, there is a recognised need for more comprehensive and targeted policies to fully support UL's sustainability objectives. Opportunities for development include a dedicated Travel Policy to specifically reduce the carbon footprint of university-related travel, a Food Policy that focuses on sustainable sourcing and operations for catering services, and a Circularity Strategy to promote the reuse and recycling of materials across campus. Additionally, the introduction of a Single-Use Plastics Ban and an Energy Strategy are critical next steps to encourage sustainable behaviour and further drive decarbonisation across the university.

There is also growing recognition of the importance of transparency and regular reporting of sustainability efforts. At present, UL does not yet report on sustainability activities or carbon emissions in its annual report. However, plans are in place to begin this process by 2025. The university's forthcoming Strategic Plan will include a dedicated section on sustainability, reflecting a shift towards greater accountability and visibility of UL's climate commitments.

Governance: Organisational Chart

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Team
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Sustainable University Working Group
Voluntary Group
Buildings and Estates
Director
Technical Services Manager
Climate Office (Energy & Emissions)
Buildings Officer
Technical Services Engineer
Climate Action Manager
Smarter Travel Coordinator
Buildings and Estates
Plassey Campus Company
Information Technology Division
nce

Culture

Engagement and training in sustainability have become central to building a strong culture of climate action at UL. A key part of this effort is the university's commitment to staff training, in line with the sustainability mandate. In support of these goals, UL rolled out the UN online sustainability training programme, inviting 334 staff members to participate. With 179 staff completing the training, this marks an important step in raising awareness and enhancing knowledge of sustainability practices across the university.

Complementing the online training, 69 staff members attended an in-person event focused on sustainability engagement. This interactive platform enabled participants to delve deeper into sustainability topics, encouraging thoughtful discussions on how these principles can be integrated into their roles and responsibilities. These initiatives reflect significant progress in embedding sustainability into UL's culture, laying the groundwork for further climate action across the institution.

To further support this cultural shift, UL hosted the Inaugural Climate Action Summit in April 2024. The event brought together over 70 staff members from across the university for a day of climate-focused training and dialogue. Using Open Space Technology, the summit allowed participants to propose topics for discussion, ranging from active transportation to sustainability communication strategies. This ground-up approach fostered collaboration and generated practical ideas to accelerate sustainability efforts across campus.

In addition, UL's commitment to sustainability has extended beyond staff training to broader educational initiatives aimed at students. The Mission Innovation Bootcamp provides mission-oriented innovation training for students, empowering them to take an active role in sustainability projects. The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development programme offers extra-curricular training for Erasmus and Study Abroad students, equipping them with the skills to contribute to global sustainability goals.

The Kemmy Business School has taken a proactive step towards enhancing climate literacy by training 30 staff members through the Climate Fresk program. This initiative equips participants with a deeper understanding of the complexities of climate change and fosters collaborative problem-solving.

The innovative work of the Citizen Innovation Lab, a collaboration between UL and Limerick City and County Council, was highlighted at the 79th UN General Assembly Science Summit in New York. A team from UL and LCCC were invited to the summit to showcase the lab's success in bringing citizens, researchers, and local government together to drive innovative climate action.

UL's focus on sustainability is also reflected in student-led initiatives. The Student Conversation and Workshop Series engaged students in discussions around the UN SDGs, fostering meaningful dialogue and participation. Students were encouraged to integrate sustainable practices into their daily lives. These events, alongside student-driven projects like the UL BioBlitz and Balsam Bashing activities, underscore the growing culture of environmental consciousness on campus.

Participants from the UL BioBlitz 2024 event exploring campus biodiversity.

Primary school students engaging in the Climate Fresk workshop.

UL and LCC team presenting at the 79th UN General Assembly Science Summit.

Procurement

UL's procurement processes are evolving to align more closely with Green Public Procurement (GPP) requirements, reflecting the university's growing commitment to embedding sustainability into its purchasing decisions. While significant progress has been made, key policies and actions are still under development, offering further opportunities for improvement.

Currently, UL Procurement is in the process of developing a comprehensive Green Procurement Policy, which is expected to be finalised by the end of Q1 2025. This policy will provide a clear framework for how the university adheres to GPP Strategy and Action Plan obligations, ensuring that sustainability is prioritised in procurement activities. Alongside this, the Corporate Procurement Plan is being updated to integrate sustainability considerations into all procurement processes, making it a core element of decision-making.

Training on GPP has already begun, with procurement staff receiving initial training on green procurement practices. To build on this progress, further training will be provided as needed to ensure staff remain up-to-date on GPP requirements and best practices. The planned inclusion of the GPP Criteria Search in the Corporate Procurement Plan is another important step. Actively promoting this tool within the organisation will ensure that sustainability criteria are consistently considered in purchasing decisions, supporting UL's broader climate goals.

In terms of capital projects, UL is beginning to incorporate sustainability into the planning and execution of its infrastructure developments. B&E will continue to specify low-carbon construction materials and sustainable building processes will be prioritised for future projects, reflecting the university's commitment to reducing its environmental impact. Although limited capital projects are currently underway, these criteria will play an increasingly important role as the university continues to invest in its campus infrastructure.

Looking ahead, UL aims to enhance transparency by integrating sustainability metrics into its annual reporting process. While GPP implementation details have not yet been included in the university's annual report, this will be considered during the upcoming policy review. By tracking and reporting on sustainability-related procurement activities, UL will not only ensure compliance with GPP obligations but also demonstrate its ongoing commitment to climate action.

Energy: Decarbonisation

UL is firmly committed to meeting the mandated targets of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a 50% increase in energy efficiency by 2030. To support this transition, UL has conducted a comprehensive energy audit, identifying key decarbonisation projects and potential funding mechanisms. Major opportunities for decarbonisation include the implementation of a district heating system, decentralised heat pumps, solar PV installations, LED lighting upgrades, and extensive building retrofits. These initiatives will form the core of UL's decarbonisation strategy, positioning the university to make significant strides toward its climate goals.

A detailed decarbonisation plan is currently being finalised and will be released once it receives approval from the Executive Committee. Among the key priorities for retrofitting is the Main Building, one of UL's highest carbon emitters. Funding for the detailed design stage of this project has been secured through the HEA's Energy Efficiency Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme, but progress has been delayed. The retrofit of the Library Building, another major project, is similarly on hold due to funding constraints. These retrofits, once completed, will be instrumental in reducing the university's overall emissions.

Looking ahead, the New Student Centre, set to be fully operational by 2025, is expected to add approximately 16.73 tonnes of CO2 annually to UL's emissions. However, the centre, like all future projects, will rely on minimal gas usage, with the national electricity grid expected to be 80% green by 2030. This shift toward renewable energy means that any increase in electricity consumption will have a progressively smaller impact on overall emissions. In line with this, all future developments, including those funded under the HESIF programme, are being designed as near zero-energy buildings (NZEB), significantly reducing the need for imported energy.

Another significant decarbonisation project is the retrofit of the International Business Centre 2 (IBC2) building. Completed within the permitted budget, the retrofit included upgrades such as solar PV, heat pumps, glazing improvements, cavity wall insulation, and LED lighting. While these improvements are significant, further work on the building's fabric remains to be completed, with additional funding currently on hold.
Despite some delays, UL's ongoing commitment to decarbonisation and energy efficiency remains strong. With a clear focus on sustainable infrastructure and a strategic approach to reducing emissions, the university is well-positioned to continue making meaningful progress toward its 2030 and 2040 climate goals.

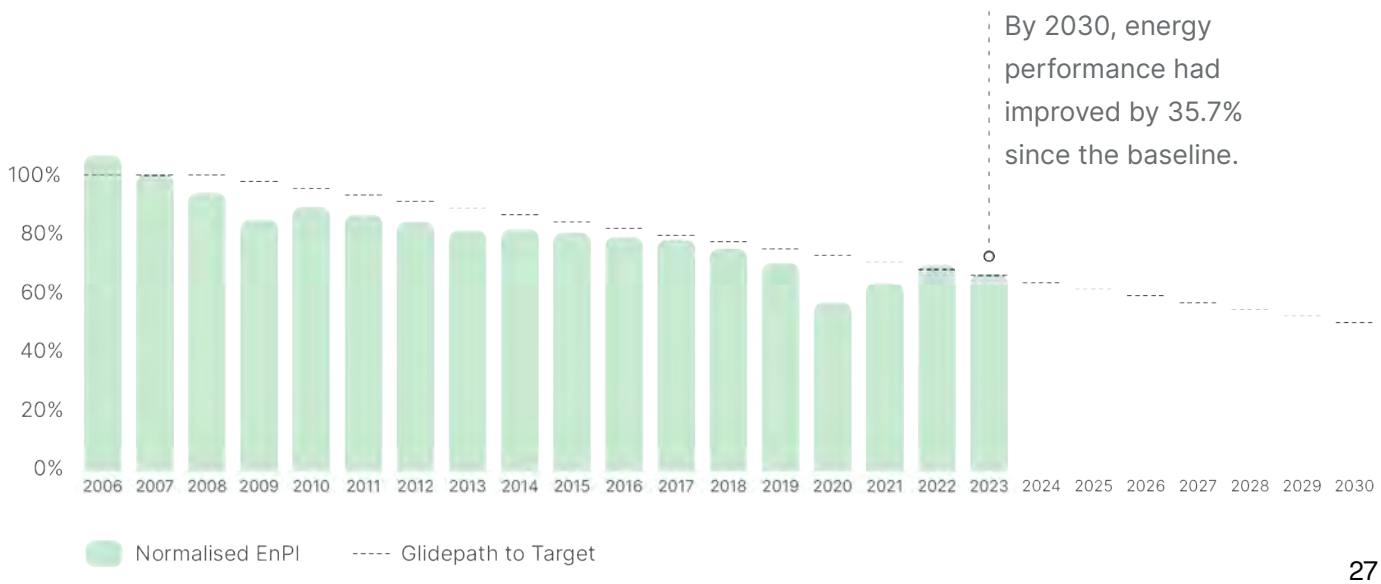
Energy: Energy Efficiency

A key initiative currently underway at UL is the drive to attain ISO 50001 accreditation by Q1 2025. This internationally recognised standard will enable the university to implement a more systematic approach to energy management, improving efficiency across campus operations. The recent energy audit has provided critical insights into current energy use, forming the foundation for this accreditation effort and helping to guide the next steps in UL's energy strategy.

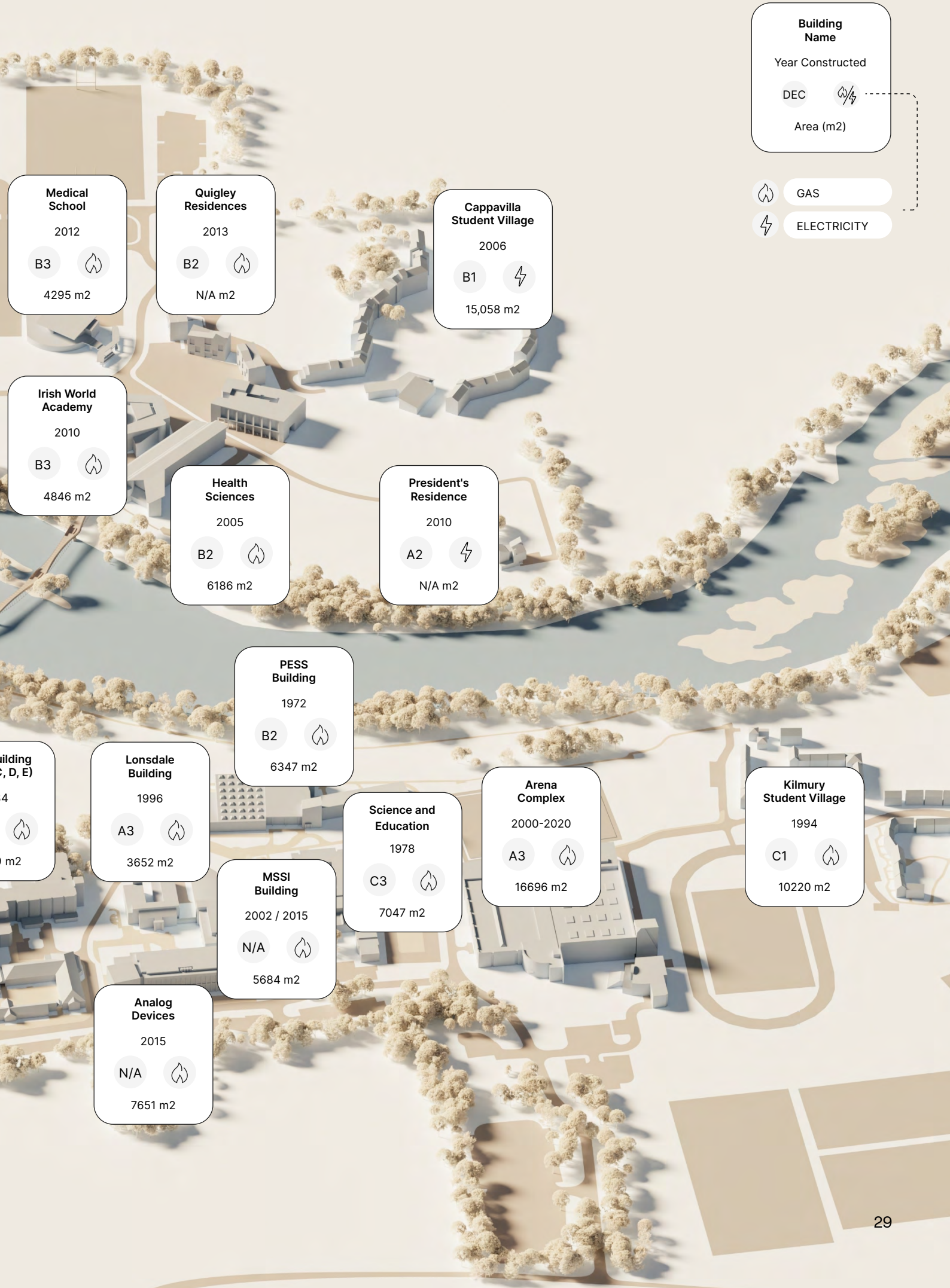
To support transparency and tracking of energy performance, Display Energy Certificates (DECs) have been issued for all buildings on campus. These certificates offer a clear view of each building's energy usage, playing an important role in monitoring progress as UL continues its decarbonisation efforts. Additionally, UL regularly reports its energy performance through the national Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system, ensuring compliance with public sector energy targets and reinforcing the university's commitment to transparency in its sustainability efforts.

The success of UL's energy efficiency goals depends not only on infrastructure upgrades but also on reducing unnecessary energy usage through staff and student engagement. Achieving the targeted 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030 will require an ongoing focus on cutting energy consumption across campus. This is a key area where sustained efforts to encourage behavioural change, combined with technical advancements, will be critical to driving progress.

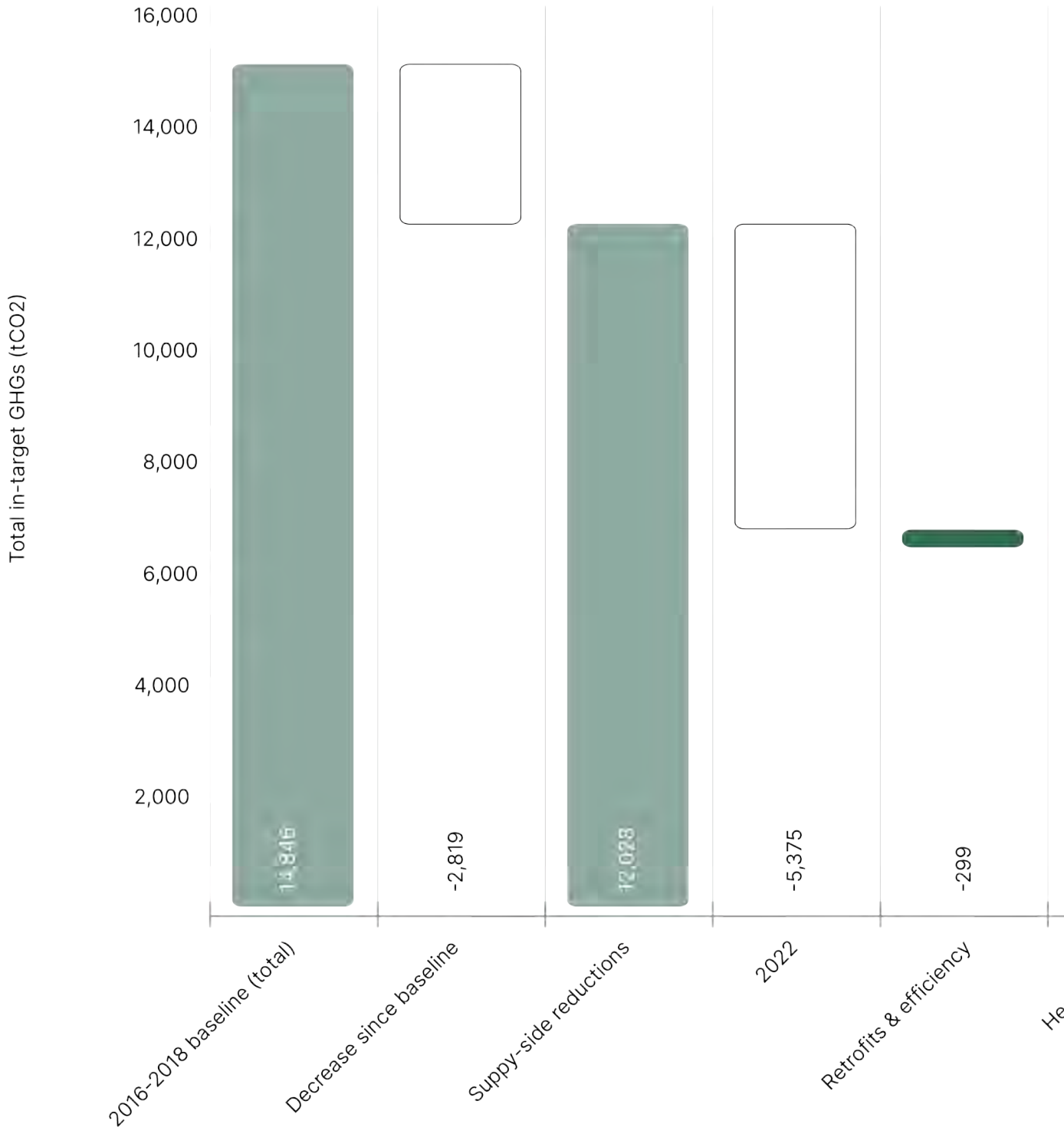
As part of this strategy, UL has signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Office of Public Works (OPW) to roll out the Optimising Power at Work energy behaviour change campaign. This initiative is designed to promote energy-saving habits among staff and students, reducing energy consumption across the university. By fostering a culture of energy efficiency and coupling it with innovative infrastructure improvements, UL is taking important steps toward meeting its energy targets.



Energy: Building Stock


Building Name
Year Constructed
DEC
Area (m2)
GAS
ELECTRICITY
Medical School
2012
B3
4295 m2
Quigley Residences
2013
B2
N/A m2
Cappavilla Student Village
2006
B1
15,058 m2
Irish World Academy
2010
B3
4846 m2
Health Sciences
2005
B2
6186 m2
President's Residence
2010
A2
N/A m2
PESS Building
1972
B2
6347 m2
Lonsdale Building
1996
A3
3652 m2
Science and Education
1978
C3
7047 m2
Arena Complex
2000-2020
A3
16696 m2
Kilmury Student Village
1994
C1
10220 m2
MSSI Building
2002 / 2015
N/A
5684 m2
Analog Devices
2015
N/A
7651 m2

Energy:
Modelled Decarbonisation Scenario



-1,634
-229
0
4,491
0
4,509
eat pumps
100% RES-E
Increased energy use
2030 (modelled total)
Gap to total CO2 target
2030 total CO2 target

Transport: Commuting

Transport and travel at UL are undergoing significant transformation, with a strong focus on shifting towards more sustainable modes of transport. Recent data on modal transport highlights encouraging trends: while 72% of staff still drive to work, only 24% of students commute by car. Students are significantly more likely to walk or cycle compared to staff, reflecting a growing preference for sustainable travel. Although bus usage among both groups remains relatively low, it has seen a slight increase since 2019. Overall, the number of people driving cars has decreased, while cycling and walking have gained momentum since 2011, demonstrating UL's progress in promoting sustainable travel.

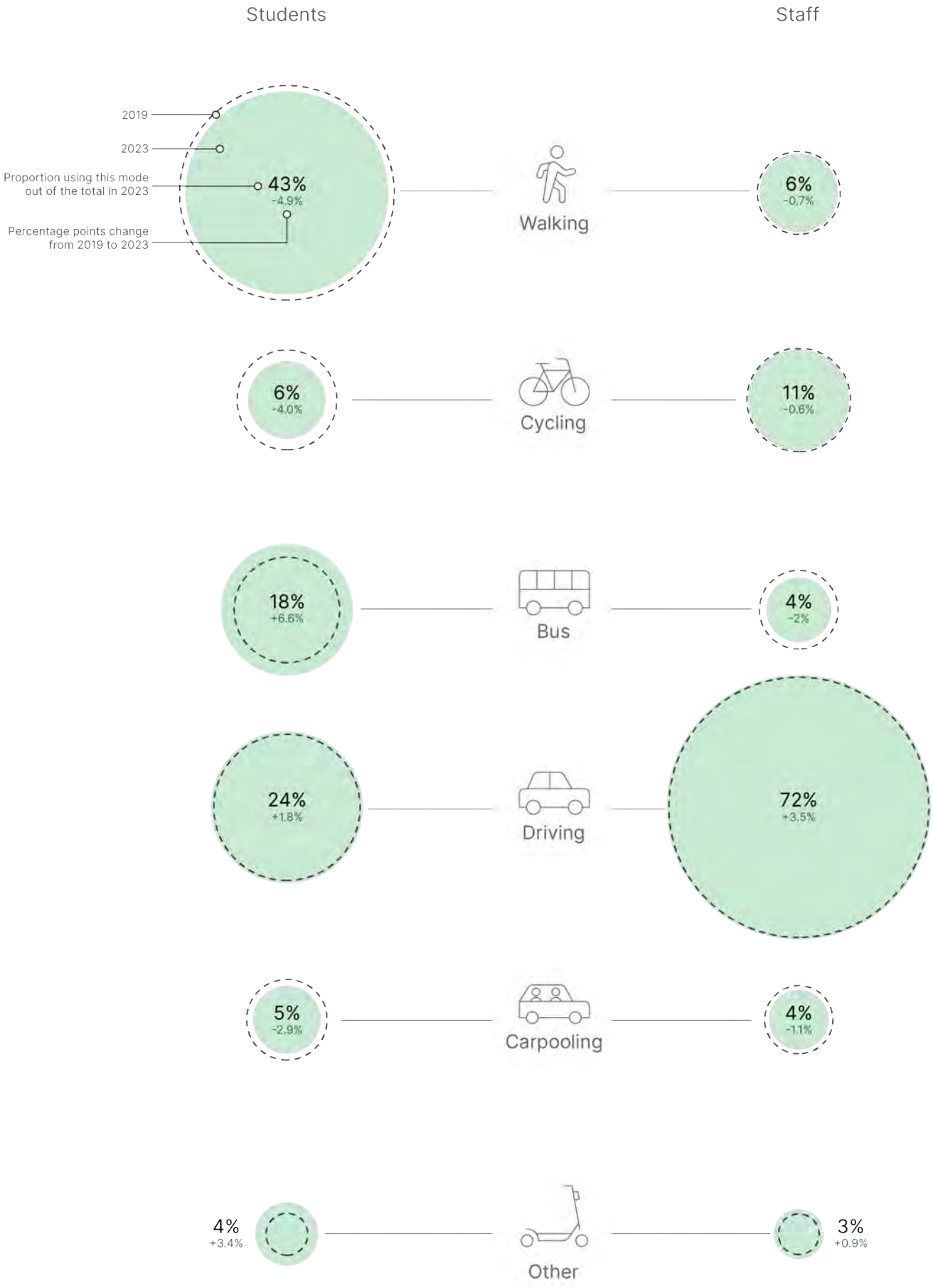
However, there is still work to be done, particularly in reducing the traffic that is a regular feature on campus during peak hours. Continued efforts are essential to further reduce the environmental impact of commuting, especially among staff.

One of UL's most innovative transport initiatives is the Inclusive Sustainable Cycling (ISCycle) project, part of a broader study focused on exploring the potential of e-bikes to promote inclusive cycling across different population groups. As the first study site for the project, UL is providing participants with e-bikes to assess how cycling can become a more viable and inclusive form of transport for people of varying fitness levels and abilities. Early findings from this research are expected next year, offering valuable insights into making cycling more accessible to a broader demographic.

In addition to ISCycle, UL has introduced several bike-related schemes. The free student bike rental programme, launched by Healthy Campus, provides students with easy access to bicycles for commuting and leisure. The dockless bike-sharing scheme via Tier's Nextbike system offers convenient bike rental and return options at multiple campus locations. Looking ahead, a new plan to install 58 docked National Transport Authority (NTA) bikes on campus is in motion, with installation expected to be completed by Q4 2024. These initiatives collectively contribute to UL's ongoing efforts to encourage cycling as a primary mode of transport.

UL has also earned the prestigious Smarter Travel Mark gold accreditation, becoming the first academic institution in Ireland to receive this distinction. This achievement reflects UL's dedication to promoting smarter, more sustainable travel options. The Buildings and Estates department has played a key role in these efforts, securing funding for a dedicated Smarter Travel Coordinator position, which will further enhance these initiatives once filled.

While UL has made commendable strides in promoting sustainable transport, these initiatives highlight the need for continued efforts to make commuting to and from the university more sustainable for both staff and students. By expanding on these successful programmes and introducing new solutions, UL remains committed to reducing its carbon footprint and enhancing mobility options for the entire campus community.


Students
Staff
2019
2023
Proportion using this mode out of the total in 2023
Percentage points change from 2019 to 2023
43%
-4.9%
Walking
6%
-0.7%
6%
-4.0%
Cycling
11%
-0.6%
18%
+6.6%
Bus
4%
-2%
24%
+1.8%
Driving
72%
+3.5%
5%
-2.9%
Carpooling
4%
-1.1%
4%
+3.4%
Other
3%
+0.9%

Transport: Vehicles and Air Travel

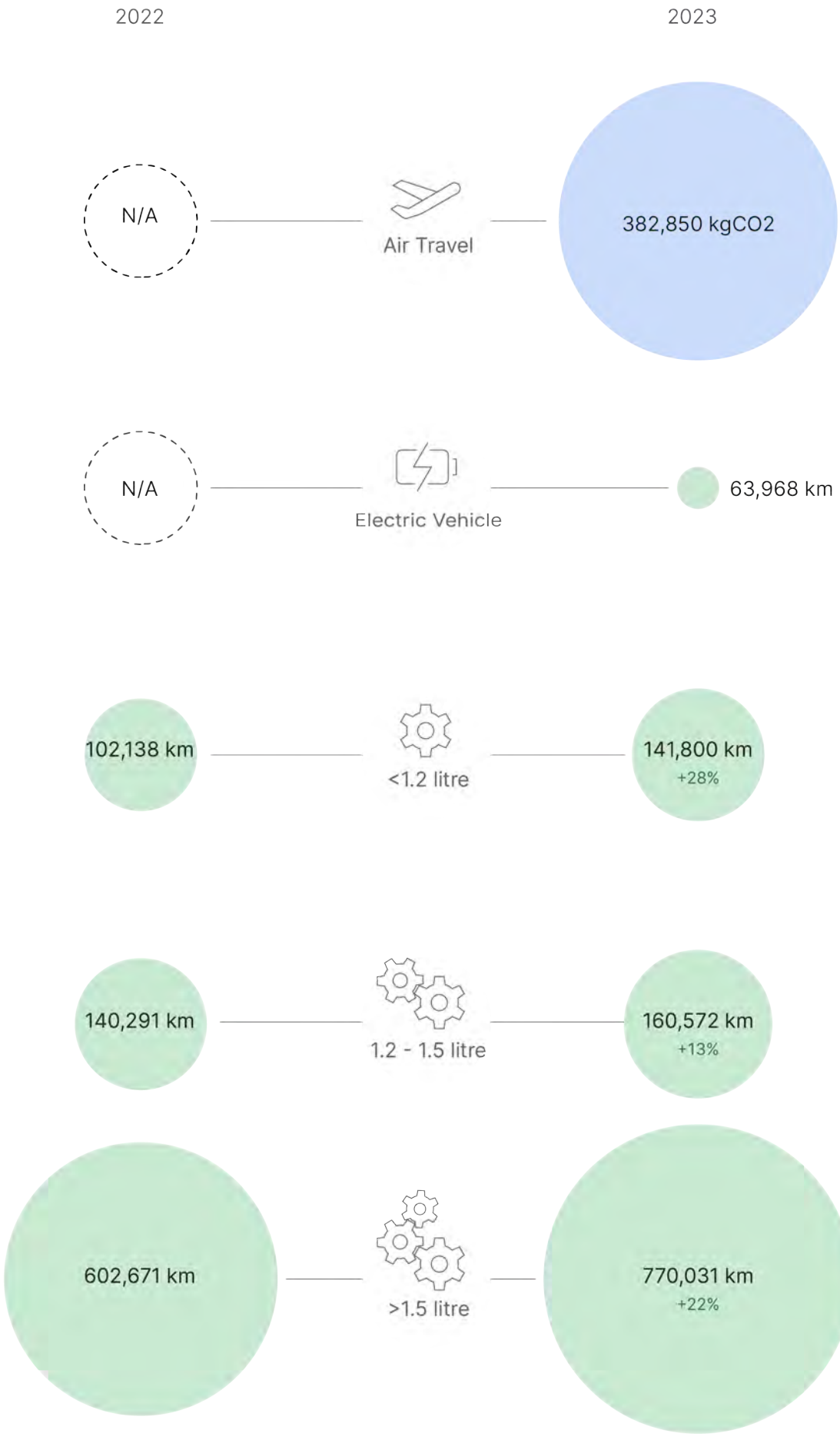
University of Limerick is actively working to manage and reduce the environmental impact of its vehicle fleet and air travel. By regularly monitoring data on vehicle use and business travel, the university is developing strategies to promote more sustainable transport practices.

In 2023, UL vehicles logged over 1.1 million kilometres, with a significant portion driven by vehicles with engine capacities exceeding 1.5 litres. However, there has been a gradual shift towards electric vehicles (EVs), with EVs covering nearly 64,000 kilometres last year. While this progress reflects a positive step, further efforts are required to reduce the reliance on high-emission vehicles. To support UL's broader sustainability goals, the Buildings and Estates (B&E) department is reviewing the vehicle procurement process in line with the government's Clean Vehicles Directive (SI381/2021). This review will prioritise zero-emission vehicles wherever feasible, and the updated procurement policy is expected to be completed by Q1 2025.

In terms of infrastructure, expanding EV charging stations across the campus is a key priority. A list of suitable locations for these stations has already been developed, though additional funding is needed to move forward with the installation. As UL continues to invest in sustainable transport infrastructure, these charging points will play a critical role in supporting the growing number of electric vehicles on campus.

The draft Capital Development Plan also addresses the issue of parking, with a strategic focus on reducing parking spaces by building on existing car parks and brownfield sites. This shift will encourage more sustainable commuting options, aligning with the university's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

Air travel remains another area of focus for reducing emissions. While air travel data is currently being consolidated, the university is actively tracking flights taken by staff and students to better understand the environmental impact. This data will inform future strategies to minimise non-essential air travel and promote the use of lower-carbon alternatives such as virtual meetings or train travel where feasible. Reducing air travel is a key aspect of UL's commitment to cutting emissions, and the continued monitoring of this data will help guide more sustainable travel practices moving forward.


2022
2023
N/A
Air Travel
382,850 kgCO2
N/A
Electric Vehicle
63,968 km
102,138 km
<1.2 litre
141,800 km
+28%
140,291 km
1.2 - 1.5 litre
160,572 km
+13%
602,671 km
>1.5 litre
770,031 km
+22%

Food

UL is currently in the process of tendering for its main catering services, and in preparation, the university has developed a comprehensive Food Philosophy. This forward-looking document sets out the vision and targets for UL's future food ecosystem, with a focus on sustainability, health, and inclusivity. Co-created by Plassey Campus Centre (PCC), the Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation (CSFI), Healthy UL, and the UL Catering Committee, the Food Philosophy will guide the tendering process and shape future food policies on campus. It aligns closely with national initiatives such as the Climate Action Mandate, Green Public Procurement Criteria, Healthy Ireland at Work, the Healthy Campus Charter, the EPA Food Services Pathways, and the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.

This Food Philosophy sets clear expectations for future suppliers, emphasising sustainable sourcing, nutrition, and inclusivity. By integrating these principles into the tendering process, UL aims to create a food ecosystem that supports both the health of the community and the environment. The document outlines strict sustainability standards for suppliers, ensuring that future catering services align with UL's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and promoting responsible consumption.

However, one challenge remains: the limited availability of suppliers who can meet these high standards. To address this, the university is advocating for government support to incentivise more sustainable agricultural and catering practices, which would help ensure a greater supply of environmentally responsible food services in the future.

The Food Philosophy is built around eight core principles:

- Enhance the physical and mental health of the university community through nutritious offerings.
- Emphasise responsible sourcing practices that prioritise environmental and animal welfare.
- Foster collaborative relationships with local food suppliers and the community.
- Prevent, reuse, recycle, and recover food waste on campus.
- Ensure food services cater to all through inclusive and affordable options.
- Maintain clear communication and responsible practices in food services.
- Promote biodiversity and hands-on education by cultivating food on campus.
- Lead in sustainable food system practices through research and academic integration.

These principles are designed to create a food system that not only supports environmental sustainability but also enhances the well-being of the entire university community. UL's leadership in developing this vision is an important step towards creating a more sustainable and inclusive food ecosystem on campus, setting a new standard for university catering services.

UL Food Philosophy: Guiding Principles

Core Values: Accessibility, Affordability, Sustainability, Inclusivity

Enhance the physical and mental health of the university community through nutritious offerings.

Emphasise responsible sourcing practices that prioritise environmental and animal welfare.

Foster collaborative relationships with local food suppliers and the community.

Prevent, reuse, recycle, and recover food waste on campus.

Ensure food services cater to all through inclusive and affordable options.

Maintain clear communication and responsible practices in food services.

Promote biodiversity and hands-on education by cultivating food on campus.

Lead in sustainable food system practices through research and academic integration.

Waste

UL's journey towards obtaining Green Campus accreditation for waste management began in 2015, when Buildings & Estates (B&E) conducted a comprehensive review of waste data, focusing on how waste is generated and managed on campus. Currently, there are 17 waste depots across UL, seven of which are dedicated to recycling. These depots employ various waste reduction methods, such as food waste digesters and compactors, which significantly reduce the volume of waste collected.

Food waste management is a key priority, particularly as UL is in the process of tendering for its main catering concession. The new contracts will require operators to measure and monitor food waste, with a strong emphasis on minimising it. By 2025, UL is committed to working with all its catering providers to achieve Zero Waste Catering, which includes eliminating disposable cups, plates, and cutlery. The tender process also specifies the need for reusable packaging options and encourages the use of third-party deposit/return schemes to further reduce waste. Waste segregation will remain a critical part of this strategy, with all catering contractors adhering to the EPA Food Service Pathway to Less Food Waste and Better Margins.

Significant progress has already been made in reducing single-use plastics on campus, with plans to eliminate them entirely from food service areas by 2025. A trial conducted at the Kemmy Business School in 2024 successfully removed single-use plastics from its catering operations, providing valuable insights for broader campus-wide implementation.

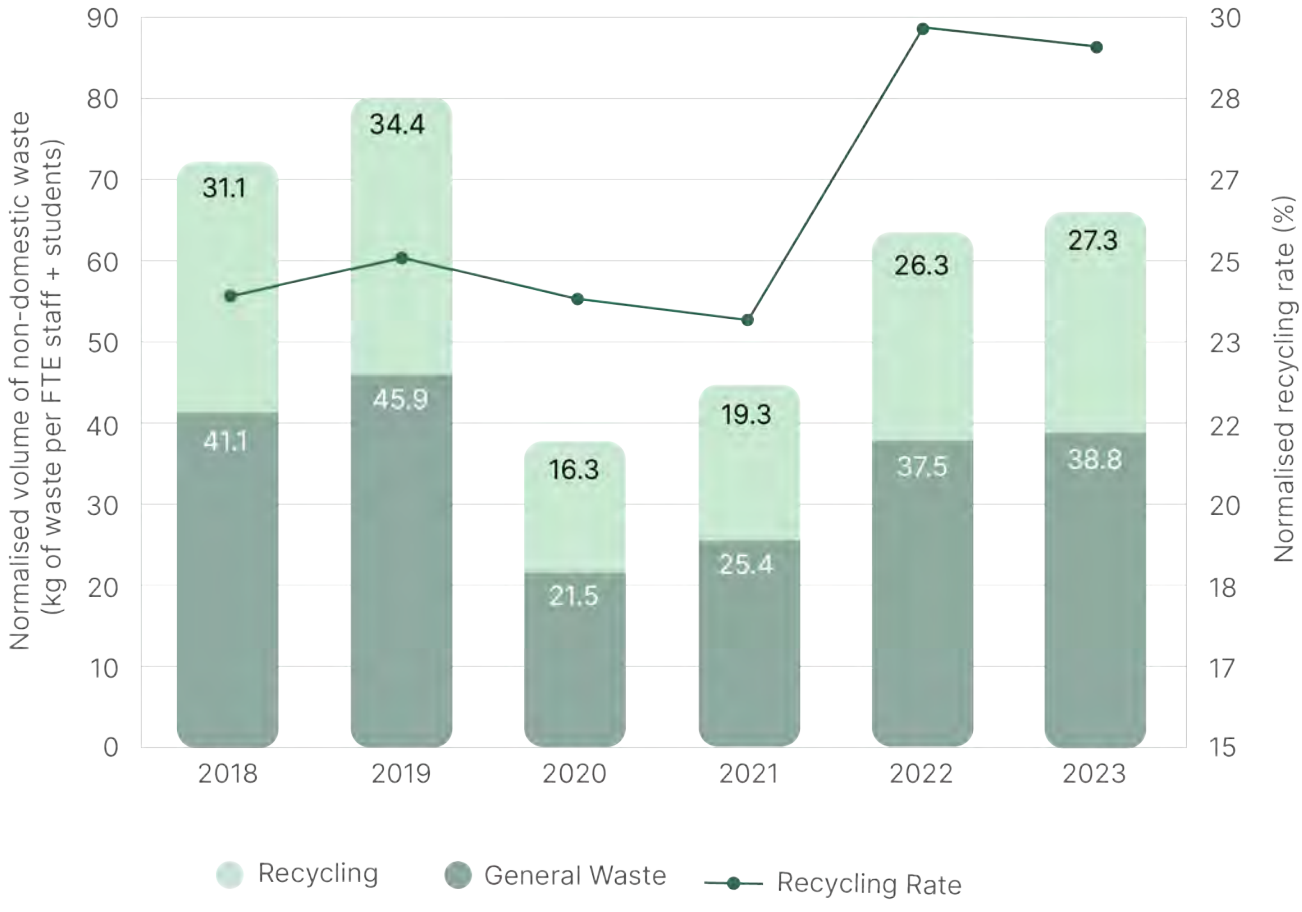
Paper waste is another area for improvement. While paper consumption is not yet closely monitored, UL is moving towards more digital processes under the guidance of the Digital Governance Steering Committee. Initiatives such as swipe-to-print for students and staff and the transition to electronic submissions via Brightspace have already helped reduce unnecessary paper use. However, further steps are required, including a review of staff printing habits and exploring electronic alternatives for traditionally paper-heavy processes.

In parallel, UL is running a Circular Campus Mapping project to explore the current flow of goods and materials in and out of the university. This project aims to identify opportunities for improvement and transition towards a more circular economy by rethinking how materials are consumed and reused. The insights from this mapping will inform UL's resource efficiency and support our zero waste ambitions.

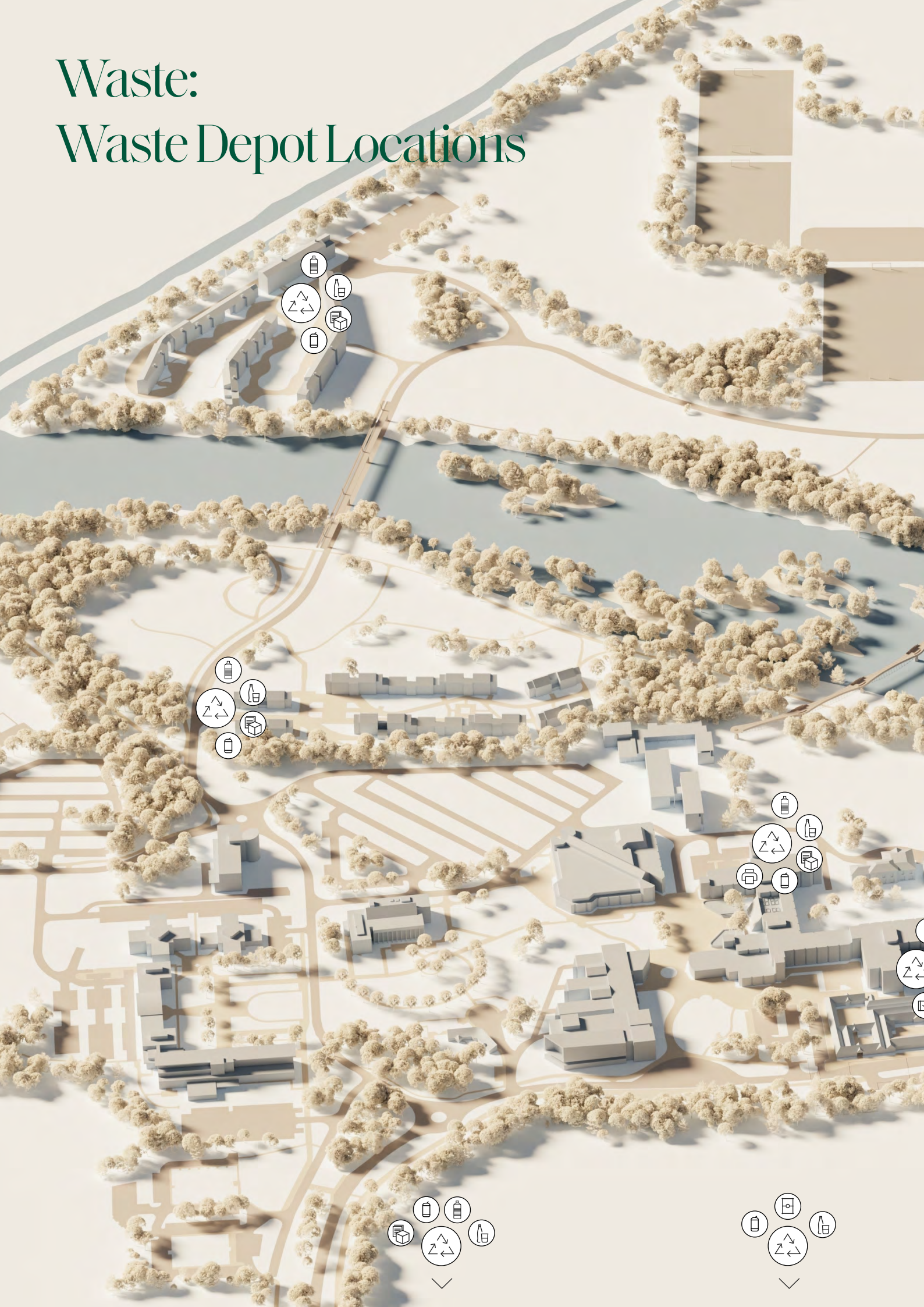
Electronic Waste

	Laptops	Desktops	Servers	Expansions	Drives
2022	76	596	7	0	727
	+18%	-7%	+57%	+100%	+3%
2023	93	553	3	1	752

General Waste and Recycling



Waste:
Waste Depot Locations




PLASTIC
GLASS
DRINK CANS
PAPER & CARD
BATTERIES
CARTRIDGES
FOOD CANS

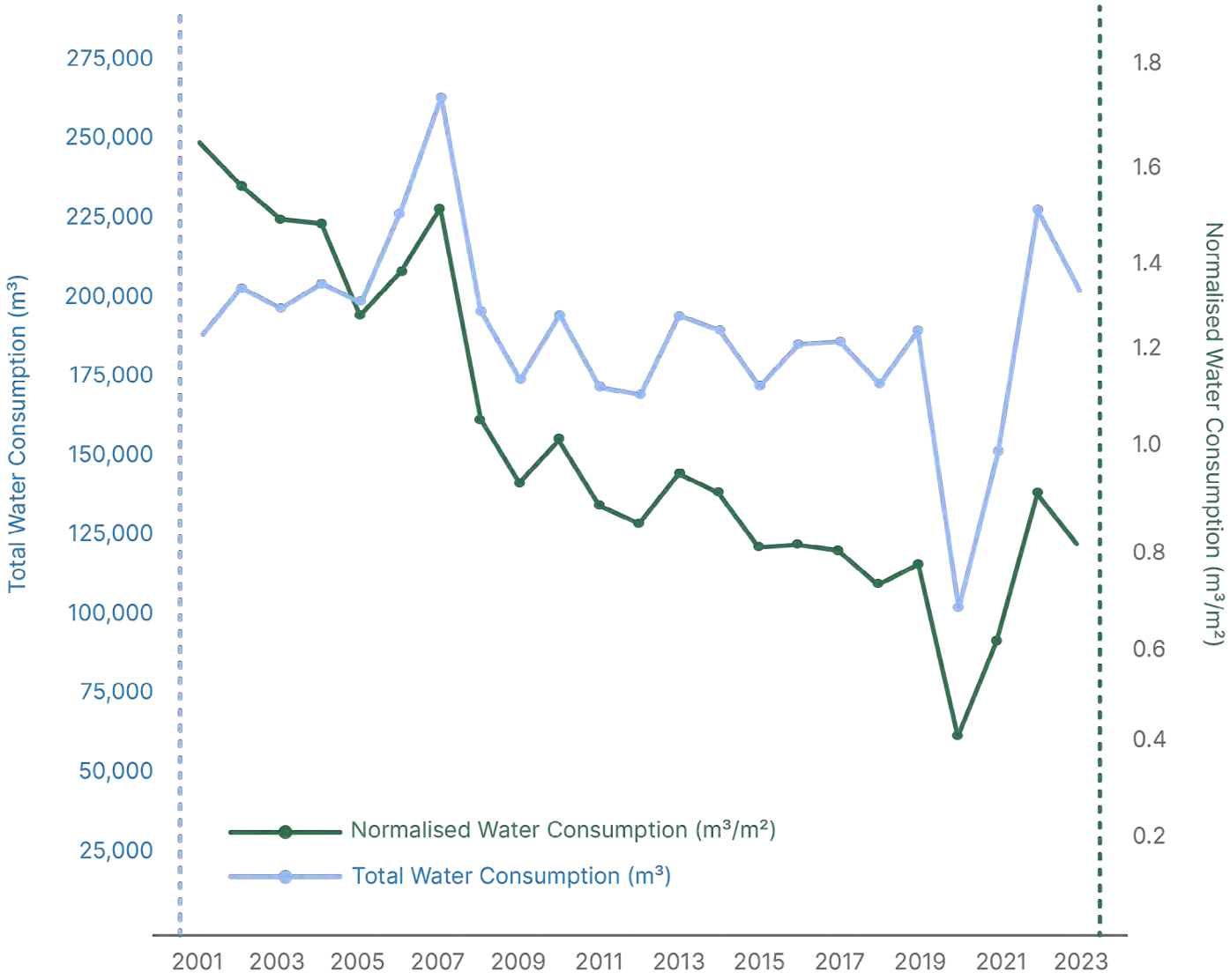
Water

UL has implemented robust systems to monitor, measure, and reduce water consumption across campus. Water usage is tracked through a combination of Irish Water meters and advanced dataloggers, which ensure that any irregularities or spikes in consumption—typically caused by leaks—are quickly identified and addressed. This proactive approach minimises water wastage and ensures that leaks are repaired promptly, helping the university conserve this valuable resource.

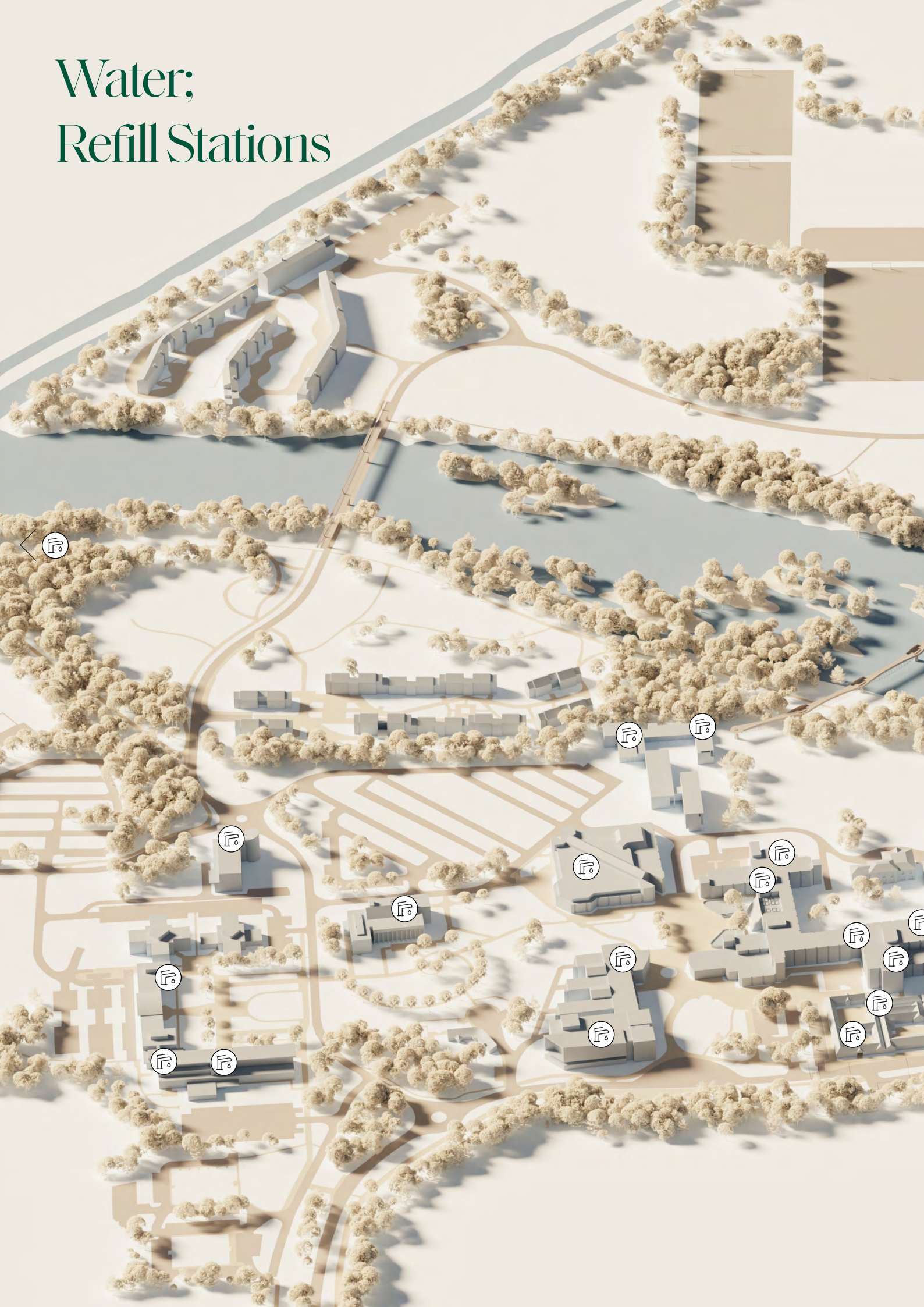
In line with UL's broader sustainability goals, 32 water refill stations have been installed across the campus. These stations provide accessible drinking water for staff, students, and visitors while supporting the university's commitment to reducing single-use plastic bottles. This initiative aligns with UL's wider effort to minimise plastic waste and promote sustainable practices within the community.

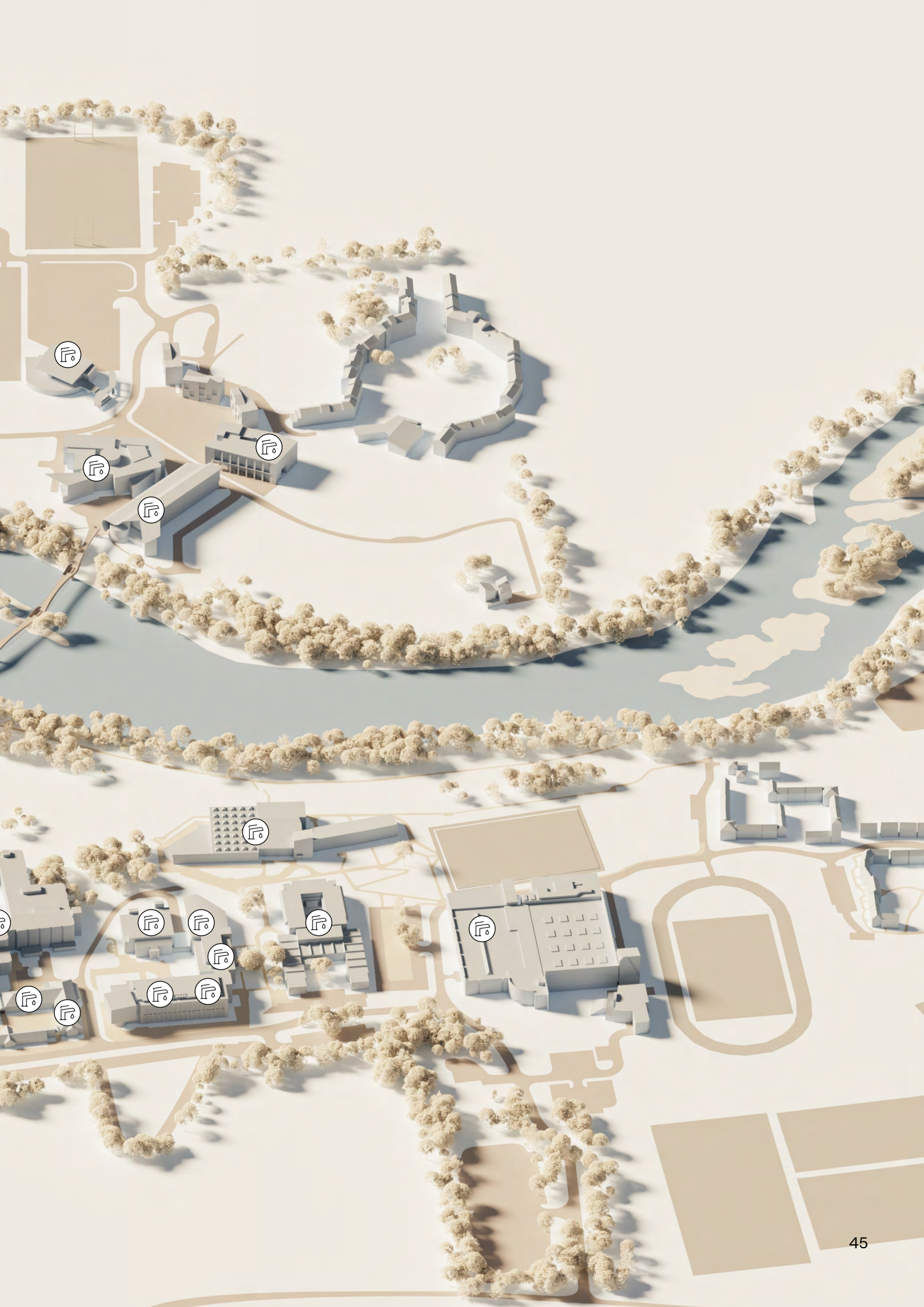
In terms of water efficiency, UL has adopted low water consumption fittings as a standard in all buildings. This approach is part of a long-term strategy to ensure that water efficiency is integrated into the university's infrastructure, reducing overall consumption and contributing to UL's sustainability targets.

By continuously improving its water management practices and promoting water conservation across campus, UL is making significant strides in reducing its environmental impact and advancing its sustainability agenda.


Total Water Consumption (m³)
275,000
250,000
225,000
200,000
175,000
150,000
125,000
100,000
75,000
50,000
25,000
Normalised Water Consumption (m³/m²)
1.8
1.6
1.4
1.2
1.0
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
2001
2003
2005
2007
2009
2011
2013
2015
2017
2019
2021
2023
Normalised Water Consumption (m³/m²)
Total Water Consumption (m³)

Water; Refill Stations





Nature

UL continues to enhance biodiversity and natural habitats across its campus through a series of projects aligned with national goals such as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Recent ecological assessments, including species diversity and environmental conditions around the PESS building and UL Arena, have contributed data towards establishing a biodiversity baseline.

As part of UL's rewilding efforts, large areas of previously manicured lawns are being transformed into meadows, focusing on high-visibility locations such as the Main Building, PESS, Foundation Building, and Dromroe Village. This initiative is aimed at promoting pollinators and creating more sustainable green spaces across campus.

The development of an arboretum is also underway, with a committee approved to guide its progress. Efforts to increase pollinator-friendly planting have been further supported by the installation of the Memorial Garden, designed with pollinator-friendly species. Additionally, the campus orchard has matured and is bearing fruit.

UL's BioBlitz 2024 was a collaborative event aimed at enhancing campus biodiversity awareness. Held in April, it engaged 17 student citizen scientists from UL and TUD, supported by local ecologists, to record over 570 provisional wildlife species. Participants also took part in nature walks to further explore biodiversity on campus. This initiative demonstrated the university community's commitment to understanding and preserving campus ecosystems.

Additionally, the AHSS Bird Watching Citizen Science Project launched in 2024 as part of a Wellness Day for faculty. Led by staff from the Geography department, the group now has 15 members actively recording bird species using a dedicated spreadsheet and sound recordings. The project aims to monitor bird life on campus, and the group has already identified species such as Robins, Wrens, and Chaffinches. A guided bird walk is planned for spring 2025 to further engage the campus in this biodiversity effort.

Two recent initiatives from the Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation:

The Biophilic Campus Pilot was launched with the development of a playbook in collaboration with the Glucksman Library. This project aims to introduce biophilic design elements that improve the health and wellbeing of students and visitors. The playbook includes various patterns and interventions that can be applied campus-wide, starting with specific designs for the library. The goal is to integrate biophilic design throughout UL, fostering a stronger connection with nature and enhancing the overall campus environment.

In addition, CSFI collaborated with multiple partners, including the Castleconnell River Association, to submit an EU LIFE funding application for Nature and Biodiversity. This project, focused on the River Shannon which runs through the UL campus, aims to improve the health of the river and its surrounding biodiversity. If successful, the funding will support major restoration and conservation efforts along the river's catchment area, strengthening local ecosystems and contributing to long-term environmental sustainability.


All-Ireland Pollinator Plan


UL SPORT

Nature; Rewilding Map


MEADOWS
WOODLAND

03 Mission Projects

Mission Portfolios

The mission projects listed in this chapter are categorised into three key portfolios: Reduce Emissions, Increase Sequestration, and Change Behaviours. These portfolios were first introduced in UL's original Climate Action Roadmap (2023) to strategically address climate objectives. Each project within these portfolios is designed to contribute towards the university's climate targets through focused actions, from retrofitting buildings to implementing behaviour change campaigns. This chapter provides an update on these projects and highlights progress.

Reduce Emissions

IBC Block 2 Retrofit

This project will see windows and lighting upgraded, boilers replaced (with a series of low temperature heat pumps), additional wall insulation fitted and roof-mounted solar panels installed.

UPDATE
Retrofit complete within permitted budget (solar PV, heat pumps, glazing upgrades, cavity wall insulation, limited LED lighting). Funding on hold for remaining fabric elements.

E01

PROJECT STATUS
Ongoing

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
SEAI Pathfinder Programme
HEA Energy Efficiency
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Campus Street Lighting Upgrade

This project will see street lighting on campus replaced with high efficiency LED upgrades. Sample projects will be undertaken to determine the most cost efficacious methods of upgrading to LED.

UPDATE
Trial project underway.

E02

PROJECT STATUS
Proof of Concept

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Insulation & Radiator Upgrade

This project will see uninsulated pipework and valves in boiler houses fitted with lagging jackets. Furthermore fan assisted nZEB radiators which are circa 10% more efficient than existing steel panel radiators will be trialed with a view to deploying at a larger scale if successful.

UPDATE
Awaiting status to be confirmed.

E03

PROJECT STATUS
Awaiting Confirmation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Campus Internal Lighting Upgrade

This project will see internal lighting on campus replaced with high efficiency LED upgrades. Sample projects will be undertaken to determine the most cost efficacious methods of upgrading to LED.

UPDATE
Projects nearing completion in the Library, Foundation and Main Building. Business case to be put together for Finance/Executive to upgrade all fittings to LED.

E04

PROJECT STATUS
Proof of Concept

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Main Building Retrofit (Blocks C, D, E)

This project will see the primary heat source for this building replaced with a high temperature heat pump, roof and wall insulation and lighting upgraded, and BMS, energy metering and solar panels installed.

UPDATE
Funding secured to develop this project to detailed design stage, however this funding is on hold.

E05

PROJECT STATUS
Awaiting Funding

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
SEAI Pathfinder Programme
HEA Energy Efficiency
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Library Building Retrofit

This project will see the primary heat source for this building replaced with a high temperature heat pump, roof and wall insulation and lighting upgraded, and, BMS, energy metering and solar panels installed.

UPDATE
Funding secured to develop this project to detailed design stage, however this funding is on hold.

E06

PROJECT STATUS
Awaiting Funding

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
SEAI Pathfinder Programme
HEA Energy Efficiency
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Reduce Emissions

Western Car Park Solar Photovoltaics

E07

This project will see the Western Car Park, containing circa 350 car parking spaces, covered in photovoltaic solar panels. The installation will feed directly into adjacent buildings.

PROJECT STATUS
Feasibility

PROJECT TIMELINE
2026 - 2027

UPDATE
Quotation received. Business case to be put together for presentation to Finance/Executive for a suite of solar PV projects.

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Small Scale Wind

E08

To complement the deployment of photovoltaic on campus, this project will see small scale wind turbines on site, if and where feasible.

PROJECT STATUS
Cancelled

PROJECT TIMELINE
2024 - 2029

UPDATE
Small scale wind does not feature in UL's proposed decarbonisation plan, so there are no further plans to pursue at this time.

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

North Bank Sports Pitches Lighting

E09

This project will see pitch lighting on UL's north campus replaced with high efficiency LED upgrades. Careful consideration will be given to the most cost efficacious method of upgrading to LED.

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

UPDATE
Project complete.

FUNDING SOURCES
Plassey Campus Centre Group

Main Building Retrofit (Blocks A, B)

This project will see the primary heat source for this building replaced with a high temperature heat pump.

UPDATE
Part of Blocks A & B to be upgraded as part of the HESIF. Procurement of Design Team stage. HEA funding on hold for this project.

E10

PROJECT STATUS
Design / Decision

PROJECT TIMELINE
2025 - 2026

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Inclusive Sustainable Cycling

The e-bike research project to encourage modal shift in behaviours towards more sustainable transport forms. Scheme provides e-bikes free of charge to staff at the university of Limerick, to trial them over a period of 6-12 weeks.

UPDATE
Project launched. Preliminary findings due early next year.

E11

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Department of Transport
SEAI

New Student Centre Construction

This project will be a NZEB building constructed to provide a space where students can relax, chill, party, play, be informed, be advised, supported, network and live life.

UPDATE
On track for completion in 2024

E12

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Student Levy
University of Limerick
Plassey Campus Centre Group

Reduce Emissions

Sustainable Student Bike Rental Scheme E13

This project aims to encourage students to use more sustainable modes of transport and reduce traffic on campus. It provides a bike for a student for a semester or longer, for a minimum fee.

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
Devolved Grant

UPDATE
Plan agreed to located 58 no. docked NTA bikes on campus. Legal formalities concluded and installation due for completion in Q4 2024 (TBC).

Green Lab Certificates E14

This project aims to reduce the environmental impact of UL's labs by achieving My Green Lab certification. It focuses on improving energy efficiency, resource use, and sustainable lab practices to support campus-wide sustainability goals.

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

UPDATE
Green Lab certification secured for postgraduate and undergraduate teaching labs.

Increase Sequestration

Small Scale Green Houses

UL has currently got a number of green houses on campus, this project will see them rejuvenated and used as a growing space on campus to encourage participation and enable hands-on-learning.

UPDATE
No updates.

S01

PROJECT STATUS
Concept

PROJECT TIMELINE
2022 - 2023

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Green Roofs

Green roofs have a direct positive influence on local biodiversity. UL is planning to leverage its roof top spaces on campus by building and expanding on its current roof top garden.

UPDATE
Several potential Green Roof spaces identified by B&E.
Small sum of funding secured for existing Roof Garden.

S02

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Environmental Committee

Biophilic Campus

By 2030, UL will have integrated nature and natural materials within all campus building and environments.

UPDATE
Small pilot complete with the Glucksman Library, tools and guidelines developed for wider implementation across campus.

S03

PROJECT STATUS
Implementaiton

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Biodiverse Campus

By 2030, UL will increase the biodiversity and volume of plant and animal live on campus and maintain ecologically healthy levels.

UPDATE
Large tracts of high-visibility land, previously managed as manicured lawns are now being managed as meadows in accordance with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025.

S04

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2022 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Campus Orchard

An orchard of fruit trees have been planted in an area to the east of Plassey House in a manner reflective of traditional parkland. It is situated in an area to take full benefit of natural light.

UPDATE
Mature and established orchard on campus (on East Slopes facing PESS) and bearing fruit.

S06

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2022 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Pollinator Plan

UL continues to work to integrate and connect our campus with the National Pollinator Plan. Our focus is on increasing pollinator friendly planting and habitats on campus.

UPDATE
Additional spaces have been identified and progress was made on the Memorial Garden which was installed with pollinator-friendly planting.

S07

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2022 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Increase Sequestration

Native Tree Planting

UL is committed to planting new native trees every year to increase carbon sinks. Our goal is to gradually increase our 13% canopy cover.

UPDATE
Project is still ongoing.

S08

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2022 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Arboretum Status

UL is applying to to Arboretum Accreditation Program that provides standards for the establishment and development of an official or bona fide arboretum.

UPDATE
In progress. Terms of Reference for Arboretum Committee approved by Executive.

S05

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2024 - 2025

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

Revitalised River Shannon

By 2030, UL will have significantly contributed to the ecological health of the River Shannon and its associated natural ecosystems.

UPDATE
Application submitted to EU Life for funding. Cross sectoral partnerships in place. €2.4 million raised in matched funding. Total project budget €4.6 million.

S03

PROJECT STATUS
Awaiting Funding

PROJECT TIMELINE
2025 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
EU LIFE
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Change Behaviours

Sustainability Dashboard

UL sustainability website fully functional. Housing reports, news, videos, training opportunities, events and all content related to UL transition towards becoming a sustainable University.

UPDATE
Website built out, reporting visualised, gradually working towards making more and more data available.

B01

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

University Digital Twin

Digital model of the university campus infrastructure. It will be used to simulate, test and optimise various scenarios and outcomes.

UPDATE
Digital twin modelling of energy consumption complete with the KBS. Plans currently being developed to roll out more extensively with a larger scale pilot across campus and to leverage funding.

B02

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2027

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick
External Funds

Mission-Driven Learning

UL staff will get an introduction to 'Educational for Sustainable Development' (ESD) while exploring its relevance to Higher Education. Staff also identify and implement sustainability projects on their own campus.

UPDATE
To date 14 UL staff have travelled to Norway and received training over 3 months on Sustainability while implementing sustainability initiatives locally.

B03

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Erasmus+
YERUN
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Student Sustainability Conversations

B04

These sessions are designed to engage students in the fundamentals of sustainability while demonstrating actionable ways of getting involved in sustainable development in their personal, professional, and academic lives.

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

UPDATE
A series of talks took place across campus which engaged guest speakers and students in robust conversations. Each session connected to a UN SDG.

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Green Campus Week

B05

The annual week of activities and events in conjunction with An Taisce Green Campus' Green Campus Week.

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

UPDATE
As part of green campus week, UL student sustainabilty hosted panel discussions bringing together student societies.

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Student Sustainability Workshops

B06

Workshops run with students to understand student sentiment toward sustainability, and what initiatives or projects they would like to see UL prioritise and collectively take action on.

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

UPDATE
No updates.

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Change Behaviours

Online Sustainability Community

Fostering an online community for students and staff to learn more about, and connect with, UL's sustainability portfolio and progress toward a sustainable university.

UPDATE
Online community set up to leverage 'UL Connect' (internal communications tool) showcasing sustainability initiatives across campus.

B07

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Sustainability Video Series

'Unsung Heroes' series of videos to bring to light the action oriented work that UL sustainability advocates are carrying out across campus.

UPDATE
A series of videos were captured to build momentum on campus and to share insights into the diversity of work that is ongoing on campus.

B08

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Sustainability Fund (TBC)

ESD Doctoral College

This doctoral program will focus on increasing students' understanding of sustainability, enabling meaningful interdisciplinary collaborations and taking action to address sustainability challenges.

UPDATE
BIP funding secured to roll out ESD program for early stage PhD students. The program will run for 13 weeks in January 2025 and include participants from UL and from EU Universities.

B09

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2024 - 2025

FUNDING SOURCES
YERUN
Erasmus+
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Citizens Mission Council

By 2030, UL Mission Lab will have fostered active citizenship through robust civic engagement and participatory innovation processes.

UPDATE
The second citizens' assembly took place on 3rd May 2024.

B10

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Engage

Baseline Mapping Education

This project will work to map all UL education to the UN SDGs. Enabling us to identify gaps, measure progress, connect key projects and plan new mission-based learning projects.

UPDATE
Base line study complete with UL Sustainability Working Group. Awaiting the formation of a working group on ESD.

B11

PROJECT STATUS
Concept

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Baseline Mapping Research

This project will work to map all UL research to the UN SDGs. Enabling us to identify gaps, measure progress, connect key projects and plan new mission-based research projects.

UPDATE
All research connected to UN SDGs. Database now in place.

B12

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Research Office

Change Behaviours

Baseline Mapping Community

B13

This project will work to map all community based initiatives connected with the UN SDGs. Enabling us to identify gaps, measure progress, connect key projects and plan new mission-based initiatives with the wider community.

PROJECT STATUS
Concept

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
UL Engage

UPDATE
All community based projects that connect to UN SDGs are now mapped. Increasing levels of work on UNSDGs with the community are being supported.

Sustainability Scholars Scheme 2022

B14

The Faculty of Science & Engineering is supporting collaborative, transformative and interdisciplinary initiatives in sustainability by funding five structured PhD scholarships.

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
Faculty of Science and Engineering

UPDATE
No updates.

Baseline Mapping Biodiversity

B15

A biodiversity baseline study is the collection and interpretation of information on the biodiversity values at a site; this includes the species, habitats and ecological systems present, their current condition and their trends before a project commences.

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

UPDATE
Three different ecological assessments were carried out on campus as part of the UL50 Sustainability Challenge. A complementary study was undertaken on the stream that passes through UL.

Baseline Mapping Policy

Baseline study of policies at UL to support the design and development of a portfolio of sustainability related policies.

UPDATE
Baseline study of policies at UL, national and EU levels complete. Next step is to co-design and development of a portfolio of sustainability related policies.

B16

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

ESD Beekeeping Course

8 Week Intensive Bee Keeping Course. Teach staff and students to start their own hives.

UPDATE
This continues to run annually. 44 Registered students in 2023.

B17

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
Environmental Committee

Sustainability Challenge

An interfaculty competition which calls on students to submit ideas to make our environment more sustainable – to either the campus, the city or wider Mid-West region or further afield.

UPDATE
Second Sustainability Challenge in planning, due to start Q4 2024. First Sustainability Challenge concluded in 2023.

B18

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

Change Behaviours

Climate Action Quarterly Updates

Quarterly UL campus wide updates to ensure all staff and students are aware of progress towards carbon neutrality.

UPDATE
This will become part of the remit of the new green team when formed.

B19

PROJECT STATUS
Concept

PROJECT TIMELINE
2025 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

Regenerative Futures Workshops

UL wide workshops designed to engage the campus community in collectively reimagining a regenerative future for Higher Education.

UPDATE
Over 120 staff took part in a series of workshops designed to collectively imagine a sustainable future. All input generated will be part of a regenerative futures exhibition in 2025.

B20

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

Sustainability Framework 2030

UL wide workshops designed to introduce the campus community to sustainability and the UL Framework 2030.

UPDATE
The framework is now being implemented with nearly half of the 21 Missions under way.

B21

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2024

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

Sustainability Literacy Libguide

The library is leading on the creation of resources and academic content in the areas of climate literacy, biodiversity, energy, food production and agriculture.

UPDATE
Sustainability Literacy LibGuide now available at the Glucksman Library.

B22

PROJECT STATUS
Complete

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

Energy Behaviour Change Campaign

This project will see Buildings & Estates, the OPW and both existing and new Green Teams continue and expand the roll out of the Optimising Power at Work initiative.

UPDATE
Service Level Agreement (SLA) signed with the Office of Public Works (OPW) to deploy the Optimising Power at Work - energy behaviour change campaign.

B23

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2023 - 2030

FUNDING SOURCES
Buildings and Estates

Circular Campus Mapping

Designed to map the flow of good and materials in and out of campus. This project is aims to identify actionable initiatives and transition towards a circular campus by rethinking how goods are consumed and reused. The outcomes from this project will inform UL's Zero Waste ambitions.

UPDATE
Project kick off October 2024.

B24

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2024 - 2025

FUNDING SOURCES
Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation

Change Behaviours

Climate Fresk Workshops

Using interactive and collaborative techniques, these workshops promote awareness and help participants understand the complexities of climate systems, fostering behaviour change and climate action across campus.

UPDATE
Successful pilot has taken place at KBS where the majority of the staff have completed Climate Fresk training. Plan to expand this across other Faculties and to develop a team of Climate Fresk trainers in UL.

B25

PROJECT STATUS
Implementation

PROJECT TIMELINE
2024 - 2025

FUNDING SOURCES
University of Limerick

04 Appendix

Mandate Requirements

1. Our Targets

1.1 Reduce energy related GHG emissions by 51% in 2030. Pages: 8-9, 26-31

1.2 Improve energy efficiency in the public sector by 50% by 2030. Page: 27

1.3 Update Climate Action Roadmaps annually within 6 months of the publication of the Climate Action Plan. Develop Climate Action Roadmaps if none are in place.

2. Our People

2.1 Establish and resource Green Teams, reporting to senior management, to become integrated drivers of sustainability in every public sector body. Pages: 11, 18, 20-21

2.2 Nominate a member of the Management Board as the Climate and Sustainability Champion with responsibility for implementing and reporting on the mandate. Page: 18

2.3 Incorporate appropriate climate action and sustainability training (technical and behavioural, including green procurement training) into learning and development strategies for staff. Pages: 22-24

2.4 Organise staff workshops (at least annually) to engage on climate issues, including a focus on decreasing the organisation's carbon footprint. Page: 21

2.5 Ensure all senior management (P.O. level or equivalent and above) and members of State Boards,2 complete climate action leadership training course. Page: 21

3. Our Ways of Working

3.1 Report on the following in the Annual Report of the public sector body: Page: 19

- GHG Emission
- Implementation of the mandate
- Sustainability activities
- Compiance with Circular 1/202: Procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel.

3.2 Using SEAI's Public Sector M&R System, public bodies are to report annually on implementation of the individual mandate requirements using a "comply and explain" approach. Page: 27

3.3 Achieve formal environmental certification for large public sector bodies, such as ISO 50001 (Energy Management Standard) or ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System), with a view to going beyond ISO 14001 to adopting Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Specifically:	Page: 27
3.3.1 All public sector bodies with an energy spend greater than €2 million per annum to achieve ISO 50001 certification by end-2024;	Page: 27
3.3.2 All remaining public bodies to implement energy management programmes as per SEAI's energy management guidance (S.I. 426 of 2014) and report to SEAI annually on its M&R system.	Page: 27
3.4 Implement Green Public Procurement, using the EPA Green Public Procurement Guidance and criteria/Office of Government Procurement's online Green Public Procurement Criteria Search tool as resources.	Page: 24
3.5 Construction	
3.5.1 Specify low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement material as far as practicable for directly procured or supported construction projects from 2023.	Page: 24
3.5.2 Adhere to the best practice guidelines for the preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for construction and demolition projects for directly procured or supported construction projects from 2024.	Page: 24
3.6 Food Waste	
3.6.1 Measure and monitor the food waste generated on premises from 2024, using a standardised approach to food waste measurement set out in the EPA Protocol/Pathway.	Page: 38
3.6.2 All new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services, including events and conferences, to include measures that are targeted at addressing food waste, with a specific focus on food waste prevention and food waste segregation.	Page: 36
3.7 Paper	
3.7.1 Review any paper-based processes and evaluate the possibilities for digitisation so it becomes the default approach. Eliminate paper-based processes as far as is practicable. Where paper must be procured, ensure that recycled paper is the default.	Page: 39
3.7.2 Measure and monitor paper consumption.	Page: 39
3.8 Provide suitable drinking water refill points for all staff and in any premises accessed by the public and measure and monitor usage of the refill points.	Pages: 42-45
3.9 Single Use	
3.9.1 Cease using disposable cups, plates and cutlery in any public sector canteen or closed facility, excluding clinical (i.e., non-canteen healthcare) environments, and in publicly funded advertising or broadcasting, where feasible.	Pages: 36, 38

Mandate Requirements

3.9.2 Progressively eliminate all single use items within the organisation and from events organised, funded, or sponsored.	Page: 36, 38
3.10 Other Materials	
3.10.1 Support Ireland's Producer Responsibility Initiatives in the collection and recycling of products.	Pages: 38-39
3.10.2 Use waste collection services that are segregated into a minimum of 3 streams – residual/general waste, recycling waste and organic/biowaste.	Pages: 38-41

4. Our Buildings and Vehicles

4.1 Promote the use of bicycles (including push bikes, electric bikes, and cargo bikes) and shared mobility options as an alternative to car use among employees and visitors by creating and maintaining facilities (both inside and outside of buildings) that support such options, including secure and accessible bicycle parking, shared mobility parking, and charging stations, as appropriate, with a view to achieving the National Transport Authority's Smarter Travel Mark.	Pages: 32-34
4.2 Phase out the use of parking in buildings that have access to a range of public transport services and active/shared mobility options for the majority of staff/visitors, while providing that sufficient accessible parking is maintained for those with physical mobility issues.	Page: 34
4.3 Display an up-to-date Display Energy Certificate in every public building that is open to the public to clearly show energy use.	Pages: 27-29
4.4 The public sector will not install heating systems that use fossil fuels after 2023, in (1) new buildings, and (2) "major renovation" retrofit projects as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) unless at least one of the following exceptions applies: The fossil-fuel use is only through using electricity from the grid. • There is no technically viable non-fossil alternative (generally only related to applications for a purpose other than space heating). • The installation of a renewable space heating system would increase final CO2 emissions. • The fossil-fuel use is provided for backup, peaking, or operational purposes (and makes up less than 10% of annual heating energy). • Where the direct replacement of existing fossil fuel heating is required for an emergency maintenance purpose.	Page: 26

4.5 In relation to existing buildings:

4.5.1 Public sector bodies and sectoral groups with a large estate should commence a deep retrofit of at least one building in 2024 in pursuit of the 2030 51% emissions reduction target. The planning of deep-retrofit building measures will be undertaken at sectoral level for homogenous sectors, e.g., in relation to the Civil Service, the OPW will plan the deep retrofit of Government Departments' building stock.	Page: 26
4.5.2 Public sector bodies and sectoral groups with a large estate should develop a portfolio building stock plan (including determining the buildings necessary for their activities), in line with guidance published by SEAI, by end 2024 to mobilise large scale programmes towards meeting the Climate Action Plan targets.	Pages: 28-29
4.5.3 As part of the building stock plan, large public sector bodies and sectoral groups with a large estate should undertake data gathering and consider the long term (to 2050) retrofit key performance indicators to upgrade their building stock to Nearly Zero Energy Buildings or Zero Emission Buildings as outlined in the EPBD proposal and recast Energy Efficiency Directive.	Page: 26
4.5.4 Small public sector bodies should include a basic building stock analysis or statement as part of their Climate Action Roadmap, in line with the guidance published by SEAI.	Pages: 28-29
4.5.4 Procure (purchase or lease) only zero-emissions vehicles from the end of 2022, enabling Ireland to go beyond the requirements of the EU Directive, amending Directive 2009/33/EC on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles (EU Directive 2019/1161, the Clean Vehicle Directive) and act as an international leader in this area. An exception applies where the vehicle is exempt under European Communities (Clean and Energy-Efficient Road Transport Vehicles (Amendment) Regulations (S.I. 381 of 2021). Public sector procurement contracts for delivery and haulage should specify zero-emissions vehicles where possible. As an enabler for the switch to zero-emissions vehicles and meeting Climate Action Plan targets, in 2024 public sector bodies with a vehicle fleet should develop a plan for installation of charging infrastructure in relevant locations. The plan should align installation of infrastructure with timelines for decarbonisation of the body's fleet. The plan should be included in the body's Climate Action Roadmap.	Page: 34