SDG Annual Report

2025-26
Academic Year



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





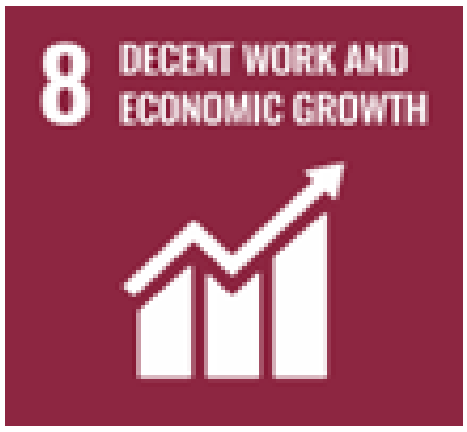




































Introduction

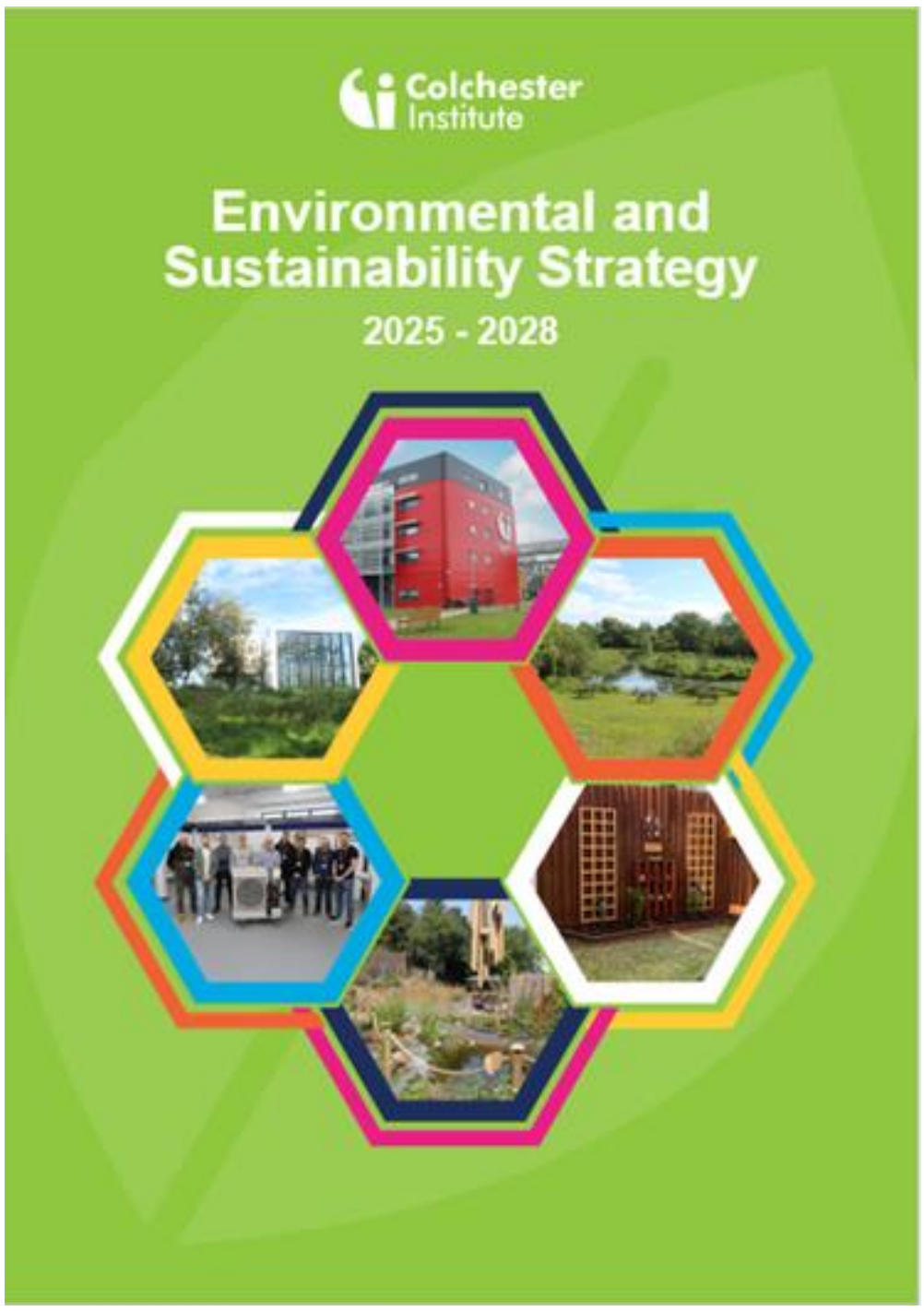
At Colchester Institute, we believe that creating a more sustainable future starts with the actions we take today.

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2021, we have continued to turn our sustainability commitments into practical action across our campuses and wider community. From reducing carbon emissions and increasing renewable energy, to improving waste management, protecting biodiversity and engaging our students and staff, our work is contributing to positive environmental, social and economic change. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a shared global framework for tackling some of the world's most pressing challenges. They recognise that sustainability goes beyond environmental action, encompassing quality education, health and wellbeing, decent work, responsible consumption, strong communities and a more inclusive society.

As an education provider, we have an important opportunity to contribute to these goals. The decisions we make today can reduce our environmental impact while helping develop the knowledge, skills and awareness needed for a more sustainable future.

This report highlights our progress and demonstrates how activity across Colchester Institute contributes to the SDGs. It brings together evidence of our achievements and impact, while recognising where further action is needed and providing a foundation to measure progress over time. From climate action and renewable energy to HillyFields, waste and resources, sustainable travel and sustainability engagement, each action contributes to a wider picture of change.

This report reflects where we are today, the progress we have made, the difference we are making and our ambition to go further.



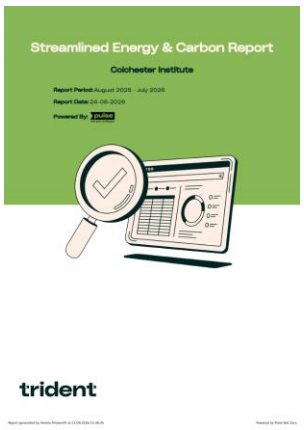
A New Strategy for 2025-26.

"We recognised that the question was no longer about what the College was doing to reduce its environmental impact, but how was it using its influence, relationships and resources we already held, to help raise awareness and accelerate wider change and become a system leader"

We worked hard to ensure that our Sustainability Strategy covered every aspect of college life and to build on previous sustainability successes. Given the world faces unprecedented, connected crises of climate instability and nature loss (especially in Essex where 50% of our wildlife has been lost), our scoping ensured we extended oversight into a new area by including nature recovery alongside climate action, supporting the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Our strategy aligns to our Strategic Plan, Clean Energy Technical Excellence College bid, FE Climate Action Roadmap, Road to Zero, SDG Accord, Scope 3 reduction and other accreditations. In our pursuit of excellence, we knew we needed to forge new partnership support; we collaborated with leading local wildlife and conservation charities including Essex Wildlife Trust, Colchester Zoo and Colchester Natural History Society. We sought connections with organisations with shared values including Mosaic Publicity (B.Corp), Colchester Rangers, Toyota, Samsung, Saint Gobain, Trident Utilities, EAUC, Essex Climate Action Commission, University of Essex, The Science Hub.

Streamlined energy carbon Report 2025-2026



SECR Report - Colchester Institute - FY 2025 - 2026

We are delighted to confirm the College has reduced its carbon emissions by 31 per cent in the year, and by 55 per cent since it declared a climate emergency and began monitoring in 2021, despite the number of 16-19 students rising by over 15% over the period.

Year-end data shows emissions of 760 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) for 2025-26, using location-based methodology, down 31 per cent on 2024-25. Since monitoring began in 2020-21, the College has cut emissions by 831 tonnes, a 55 per cent reduction over a six-year period.

The College has previously invested in 972 solar PV panels to self-generate 15% of all the electricity it uses, with the remainder sourced from renewables. In 2022 the College was also the beneficiary of a £3.7m grant from the Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to support a major £6m retrofit of principal buildings. Sustainability is also increasingly shaping the College's curriculum, not just how its campuses are run. Sustainable Development Goals have been mapped to ensure green skills are embedded across the curriculum, from low-carbon heating and building methods in construction and energy-efficient systems in engineering, to sustainable procurement in hospitality, and careful use of resources across all subject areas.

Key points for our carbon footprint calculation

We declared a climate emergency in 2021, and this was when we started to measure, and report on our scope 1 and 2 emissions. There will be a significant increase in 2027 as we identify and include more categories of scope 3 emissions for the first time. We have purchased electricity via renewable sources since 2024, allowing us to report emissions on a market-based methodology alongside location-based emissions.

Scope	Emission Source	2021 CO2e (tonnes) (Location-based)	2025 CO2e (tonnes) (Location-based)	2026 CO2e (tonnes) (Location-based)	2026 CO2e (tonnes) (Market-based)
Scope 1	Gas	726.2	517.5	403.3	403.3
Scope 1	Company Vehicles	2.2	8.3	7.2	7.2
Scope 1	Refrigerants	155.1	81.1	0.0	0.0
Scope 1	**Total**	**883.5**	**606.9**	**410.5**	**410.5**
Scope 2	Electricity	637.5	430.1	294.0	0.0
Scope 2	**Total**	**637.5**	**430.1**	**294.0**	**0.0**
Scope 3	**Total**	**77.1**	**65.4**	**55.3**	**55.3**
All	Tonnes of CO2e	1598.10	1102.40	759.80	465.80
	TCO2e per employee (Intensity Metric)	2.07	1.39	0.95	0.58
	TCO2e per £ million turnover	44.39	23.76	15.11	9.26
	% Intensity Metric reduction on base year		33%	55%	71%

The 17 SDGs:

PEOPLE

1 NO POVERTY

2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

RESOURCES

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

PROSPERITY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



PLANET

13 CLIMATE ACTION

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

15 LIFE ON LAND

PEACE & PARTNERSHIP

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

What the SDG's work to achieve:

- ✓ Improve quality of life and reduce inequality
- ✓ Build stronger, healthier communities
- ✓ Support economic growth and decent work
- ✓ Protect the planet and its natural resources
- ✓ Create a more sustainable future for all



Supporting Action Against Food Poverty

Our students have been working collaboratively to support Action Against Food Poverty by creating content for its website, social media and video-sharing platforms. Having already designed tote bags and badges for the campaign, students will continue to use their creative skills to raise awareness of food poverty and help share the campaign's message with a wider audiences.





Also supports: SDG 2 | Zero Hunger

Tackling Student Poverty

Colchester Institute Foundation Trust (CIFT) is an independent charity which raises funds to support students who due to financial pressures, might otherwise be at risk of not completing their programme of education. This includes students studying Further Education, Higher Education and Apprenticeships.

The principle purpose of CIFT is to benefit Colchester Institute students who are experiencing financial hardship to the extent that they are struggling to participate at College / University and complete or achieve their qualifications.

Whilst the College has access to Government awarded discretionary Learning Support Funds and financial assistance to provide financial support for students on low incomes, who meet pre-defined eligibility criteria, in the current economic climate there are often cases where an individual student needs more financial help than these funds can provide. Additionally, some students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for government-funded support, can still struggle to meet the costs associated with studying on vocational programmes and CIFT can often provide support here too. During the 2025/26 financial year, CIFT donated £14,069.99 to support students in need.

Department for Education

The Discretionary Learner Support Fund, provided by the DfE is a financial hardship fund to help adult and further education students cover unexpected costs that might prevent them from studying.

The DLSF covers travel support, course materials including essential books, equipment, or clothing, and emergency welfare. During the year the College distributed support to the value of £656,677 in bursary payments to help reduce financial barriers to education. This support helps students access the resources they need for their studies and supports them in continuing their education.

Also Supports: SDG 10 | Reduced inequalities



Free School Meals

Through another fund provided by the DfE the College allocates free meals to eligible students, helping to ensure they have access to nutritious food during their studies. This helps reduce barriers to accessing regular meals, eases financial pressures and supports students' wellbeing and ability to engage in college life. In 2025/26, £284,249.50 was distributed through the Free School Meals system.

Also supports: SDG 1 | No poverty, SDG 3 | Good Health and Wellbeing

Sustainable 53.3 Degrees Coffee

The College has introduced 53.3 Degrees as its new coffee supplier, supporting a more responsible and sustainable coffee supply chain. 53.3p from every kilogram of coffee sold goes directly back to the coffee farming community. The switch has also introduced 100% recycled, commercially compostable coffee cups, providing a more sustainable alternative to the previous cups. The new coffee also offers a more affordable option for staff and students.



Compostable coffee cups that break down in 60 days

Also supports: SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production,

Too Good To Go

Working in partnership with Aramark, a Too Good To Go scheme helps reduce food waste by selling surplus food at a reduced price. Bags containing items such as sandwiches, paninis and sides, worth around £9, are available for just £3. Over the past year, 62 bags have been purchased by staff and students, helping make food more affordable while ensuring surplus food is enjoyed rather than wasted.

Also supports: SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production

Costa Coffee

Costa Coffee supports more sustainable production through responsible sourcing, waste reduction and efforts to lower its environmental impact. The company works with Rainforest Alliance Certified farms to support farming communities, protect local ecosystems and promote more sustainable coffee production. It also aims to halve carbon emissions per coffee serving by 2030.On our campus, staff and students can collect free used coffee grounds from a station inside the Costa outlet to use as garden fertiliser, giving coffee waste a second life and supporting local food growing. The Aramark team who run the outlet also contribute to campus sustainability by litter-picking across campus, operating our composter and helping to reduce food waste through more responsible food management.







Also supports: SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production



College Gym Facilities



The College gym has been transformed following an investment of just under £10,000 through the Find Your Active – Places & Spaces programme, delivered by Active Essex. The investment was made in response to feedback from staff and students, highlighting the need for more beginner-friendly machines and a wider range of equipment. New kit includes a ski machine, cable machine, fixed barbells, dumbbells, benches, an assault bike and an expanded free weights area. The upgraded facilities have been well received, with increased gym memberships and positive feedback from staff and students. Students studying Sport and Active Leisure and Uniformed Services also benefit from free access to the improved training facilities.

Also supports: SDG 4 – Quality Education

Supporting Healthy Eating

New menus are being introduced across the College to further expand the range of healthier food options available to staff and students. The menus include additional vegetarian and vegan choices, alongside gluten-free options, providing greater variety and catering for a wider range of dietary needs and preferences. This builds on the healthy food choices already available across the College.

Also supports: SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

Prioritising Staff Wellbeing

Wellbeing Programme

The College's Wellbeing Programme offers a range of initiatives, resources and benefits to support the general wellbeing of all staff, with additional support available for individual needs and during times of crisis. Mental Health First Aiders provide a confidential, non-judgemental space for colleagues to talk, help them access appropriate support and promote mental health awareness. Staff also have access to Perkbox, which offers wellbeing resources and benefits to help employees feel valued and supported.

Also supports: SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth

Our Running Wild 5K charity mud run for Essex Wildlife Trust encouraged staff to improve their fitness, challenge themselves and work together towards a shared goal, supporting physical health and wellbeing. We also recognise the benefits of spending time in nature for mental wellbeing. Hillyfields gives staff and students a place to unwind and enjoy nature walks, while our Hillyfields Taskforce encourages staff to get outdoors, connect with nature and support their wellbeing through volunteering and conservation activities







Also supports: SDG 15 | Life on Land, SDG 11 | Sustainable Cities and Communities



Excellence in Education, Training and Apprenticeships

Colchester Institute provides vocational, professional and technical education across North Essex, offering over 550 courses across seven levels, supported by approximately 850 staff. The College has record numbers of 16–19 learners (4,560, up 20% in four years) and apprentices (approximately 1,600 in learning at any one time), alongside the highest number of construction students in the East of England. Despite serving some of the most deprived areas in the UK, the College achieved an overall further education achievement rate of 85% in 2025/26, above the national rate of 84%. Apprenticeship achievement reached 74.5%, compared with 65% nationally. The College ranks sixth nationally among apprenticeship providers, including first for plumbing, fifth for engineering and sixth for construction, based on the latest published data for large providers.

Also supports: SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10 | Reduced Inequalities

CETEC College Recognition

Colchester Institute has been recognised as a Clean Energy Technical Excellence College (CETEC), reflecting our commitment to developing the technical knowledge and practical skills needed for the UK's transition to a low carbon economy. The recognition brings together our work in technical education, industry relevant skills and clean energy technologies, helping ensure that learners are prepared for emerging opportunities within the sector. The achievement strengthens our contribution to sustainability focused education and supports our wider ambition to equip learners with the skills needed for a changing economy.

Also Supports: SDG 7 | Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth

Climate Change Awareness

Students have engaged with the People's Emergency Briefing climate crisis film through PD sessions, providing an opportunity to explore the causes and impacts of the climate and nature crisis. Students then completed a survey exploring what they had learned, how the session made them feel and what actions they could take. The feedback provides evidence of student awareness and engagement and can help inform future climate education. Evidence of impact: Student survey responses will capture learning, awareness and intended actions following the sessions.

Also supports: **SDG 13 | Climate Action**

Electric And Hybrid Vehicle Training Centre

The development of an Electric Vehicle Centre will give students hands-on experience in maintaining and repairing electric vehicles, alongside learning about the technology and systems that power them. Access to specialist equipment will help learners develop practical technical skills and prepare for careers in the growing electric vehicle industry.

Also supports: SDG 7 | Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9 | Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure



Carbon Literacy Awareness

Colchester Institute is working towards Carbon Literacy Silver accreditation, supporting the development of climate knowledge and awareness across the organisation. Staff are undertaking Carbon Literacy training, while internal facilitator training is also underway. Developing internal facilitators will help expand access to sustainability education and build longer term capacity to deliver Carbon Literacy training across the college.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action, SDG 11 | Sustainable Cities & Communities

Student-led Habitat Mapping



ESOL and Foundation Learning students took part in habitat mapping across the campus, gaining hands-on experience in identifying local habitats and biodiversity. The activity was through Education Nature Park and helped students develop their environmental awareness, fieldwork skills and confidence through practical learning outside the classroom.

Also supports: **SDG 15 | Life on Land, SDG 10 | Reduced Inequalities**

Balkerne Restaurant



The Balkerne Restaurant at Colchester Institute provides Catering and Hospitality students with a professional environment to develop their practical skills and prepare for careers in the industry. Following a major refurbishment in October 2025, the restaurant now includes industry-standard equipment, a modernised bar and a redesigned dining area with new furniture and furnishings. The improvements provide students with an updated space to gain practical experience and develop their skills in a setting that reflects the hospitality industry. The restaurant is also open to the public during term time, giving students the opportunity to gain experience working with real customers.

Also supports: **SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Practical Learning for Nature



As part of a practical workshop project, carpentry students designed and constructed bird boxes to provide safe nesting spaces for local birds. The project allowed students to apply their vocational skills to a real environmental purpose, connecting practical education with biodiversity and nature recovery. It demonstrates how sustainability can be incorporated into vocational learning while developing students' technical abilities.

Also supports: SDG 15 | Life on Land



Embedding Inclusive Sustainability Across The College

Inclusive sustainability is embedded through organisational expectations, curriculum planning, personal development and learner participation. Requiring every department to develop a sustainability project demonstrated visible leadership commitment and established sustainability as part of everybody's role. It also enabled teams to interpret sustainability in ways that were relevant to their responsibilities, learners and areas of influence.

Curriculum teams map sustainability within vocational and academic areas, helping learners understand its relevance to their chosen industry, future employment and everyday lives. The personal development programme ensures this learning reaches learners across the College and reinforces the message that everybody has a part to play.

Teaching encourages learners to examine environmental questions alongside social and economic inequalities. In construction, learners consider not only carbon reduction and sustainable materials, but also inclusive design, accessibility, representation and the creation of workplaces in which people from different backgrounds can succeed.

The involvement of Women in Construction and learners with SEND demonstrates that learner voice is part of the initiative's development. Learners are not treated simply as recipients of sustainability information. They are encouraged to shape sustainability mapping, identify priorities and contribute solutions based on their knowledge and lived experience.

Together, these approaches not only embed inclusive values from leadership through to classroom practice and learner support, but they are helping the College build a culture in which sustainability belongs to everyone and in which a more diverse range of staff and learners can influence environmental action.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education, SDG 10 | Reduced Inequalities



Water Literacy Programme

Colchester Institute has taken part in a Water Literacy Programme to strengthen staff understanding of water resources, sustainable water use and the growing challenges surrounding water security. Six members of staff completed the half-day course, exploring how water consumption can be reduced through everyday choices and practical changes. To gain accreditation, staff completed a pledge form committing to actions both on campus and in their personal lives, helping translate their learning into positive changes in how they use and value water.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education

Water Refill Stations

NEW water refill stations have been installed across our campuses, making it easier for students and staff to refill reusable bottles and reduce reliance on single-use plastic. The stations feature environmental facts highlighting the benefits of reusable bottles and sustainable water use. Built-in sensors record each use, allowing us to monitor engagement and demonstrate the impact of the initiative through measurable usage data.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education

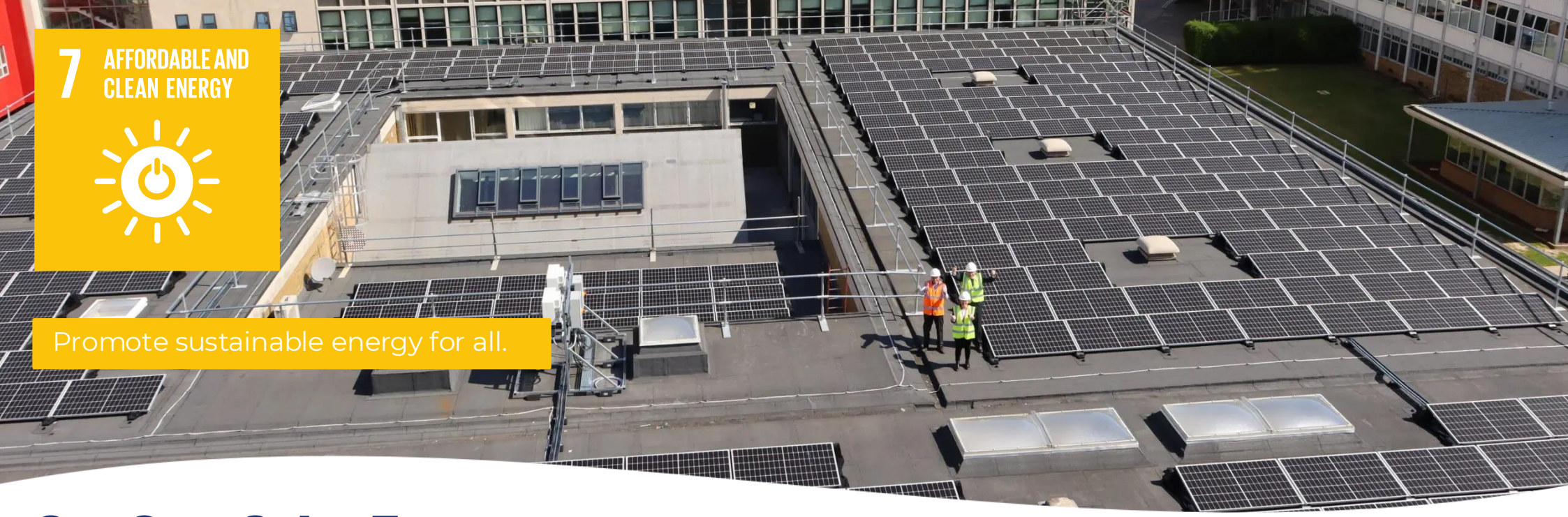




Improving Water Efficiency Through Smart Metering

Over the course of the 2025-26 academic year, the college has invested in new water infrastructure supporting the main college campus. new water meters will allow managers to monitor usage and set targets for reduction; thus preserving water for others as water scarcity becomes an increasing issue for residents in the south east of England in particular.

Also supports: SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production



Our Own Solar Energy



Colchester Institute has solar PV panels installed across its estate, generating renewable electricity for the college. During the reporting period, self-generation amounted to 255,856 kWh - **accounting for 15% of our overall energy use**, reducing reliance on electricity from the grid and supporting our transition towards cleaner energy. Continued monitoring of solar generation allows us to track the contribution of renewable energy to our overall energy consumption.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action

Improving Energy Efficiency

We are continuing to improve the energy efficiency of equipment across the college. Gas hobs are being replaced with induction alternatives, reducing reliance on gas, while older equipment such as chillers, mixers and other appliances are being upgraded to more energy efficient models. These improvements help reduce energy consumption and associated emissions while ensuring our facilities remain suitable for teaching and learning.

Also supports: **SDG 13 | Climate Action**





Transition To An Electric Fleet



Colchester Institute is moving towards a fully electric fleet, with four electric vehicles already in use and a further two electric cars and an electric minibus on the way. Growing demand for electric vehicles across the College has made the transition away from petrol and diesel increasingly achievable, helping reduce transport-related emissions

Also supports: SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, **SDG 13 | Climate Action**



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Encourage inclusive economic growth and employment.

Lynch Plant Training Centre







Colchester Institute has partnered with Lynch Plant to provide a dedicated practical training environment using low-carbon machinery and vehicles, including excavators and other groundworks equipment. The Centre supports people who have completed their relevant courses and are developing the practical skills and experience needed to operate machinery safely and progress into employment in groundswork and related industries. The partnership also provides an opportunity to support the development of more sustainable practices within the industry.

Also supports: SDG 9 | Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 4 | Quality Education

Apprenticeship Achievement

Colchester Institute achieved a 72.9% apprenticeship achievement rate in 2024/25, 7.5 percentage points above the national average and an 8.1 percentage-point improvement on the previous year. The College ranked sixth nationally among large further education colleges, with Plumbing and Domestic Heating Technician apprenticeships achieving a 90.3% success rate, the highest in the country. These results reflect the College's role in developing skilled workers and supporting progression into employment.

Also supports: SDG 4 – Quality Education.

Getting Students Into Work

Colchester Institute's curriculum is designed to ensure learners gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours valued by employers. Programme offerings are mapped to the Local Skills Improvement Plan, with content designed alongside local employers and stakeholders to ensure learners are well prepared to progress to their chosen destinations.

Also supports: SDG 4 – Quality Education



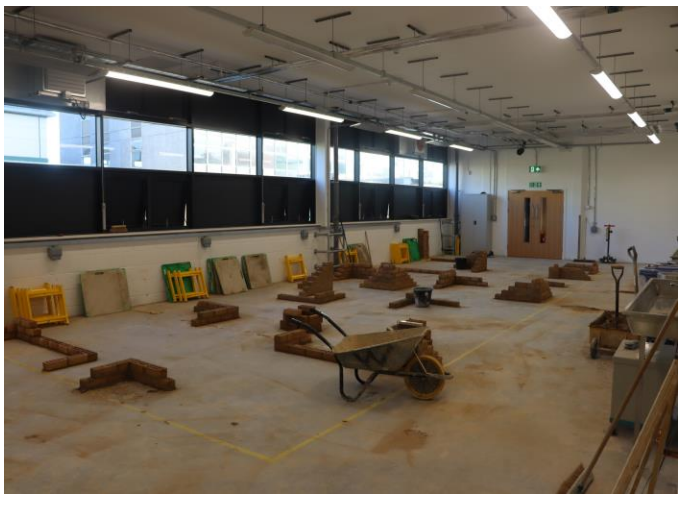
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

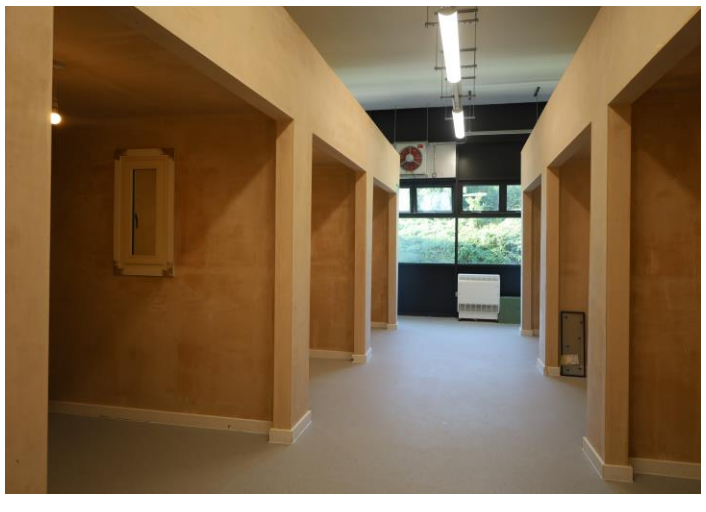
Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation

Refurbishment Of L Block

Colchester Institute has refurbished L Block to provide an improved and expanded space for construction training and practical learning. Rather than demolishing and replacing the existing building, the project has brought the building back into use while incorporating a range of sustainability improvements. These include solar panels, energy-efficient LED lighting and a rainwater harvesting system, helping to improve the building's environmental performance while making better use of existing infrastructure.

Also supports: SDG 6 | Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7 | Affordable and Clean Energy



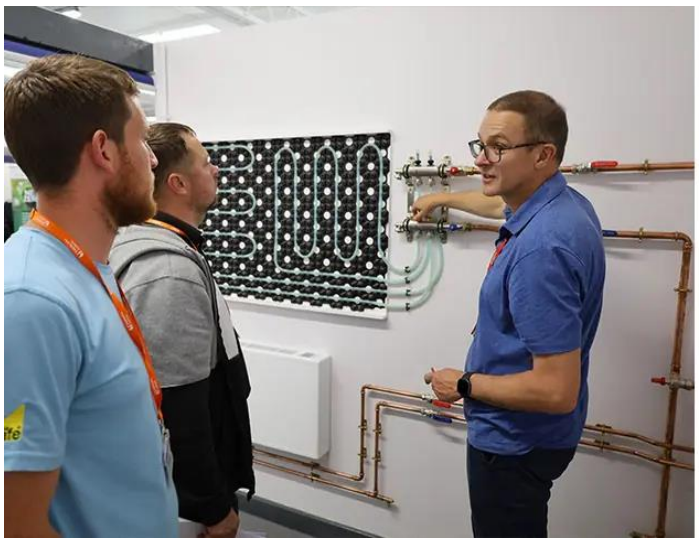


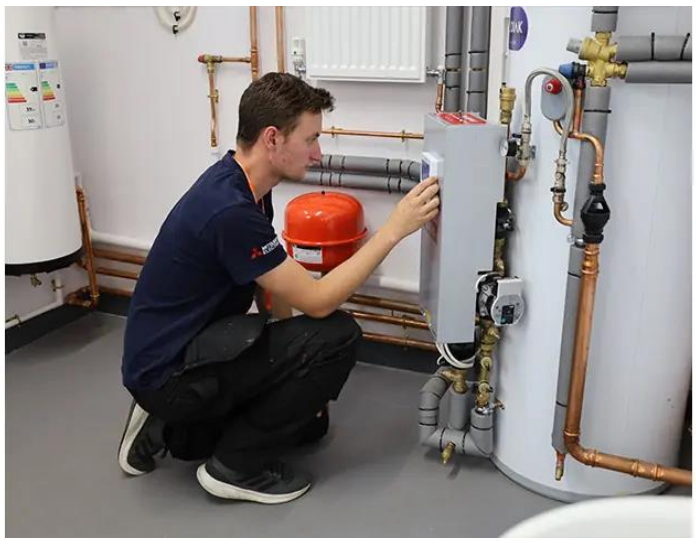


Net Zero And Renewables Centre

Colchester Institute invested £500,000 in a new 300m² Net Zero and Renewables Centre, developed in partnership with Samsung UK, Worcester Bosch and Gasway, with support from the Local Skills Improvement Fund. The Centre features modern renewable energy technologies, including heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage, providing specialist facilities for hands-on training. It supports apprentices, school leavers and industry professionals in developing the skills needed to meet growing demand across the low-carbon sector.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education, SDG 7 | Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8 | Decent Work and Economic Growth.









Understanding Inequality In Sustainable Development

At Colchester Institute, sustainability is understood as both an environmental responsibility and an issue of equity and social justice. Our work recognises that environmental change affects communities differently and that people who have historically been marginalised must have a meaningful voice in shaping sustainable solutions. Sustainability has been embedded across the curriculum and within the College's personal development programme, with clear links to EDI. Learners explore how every member of the College and wider community has a role to play in sustainable development and this includes examining how experiences and opportunities can be influenced by gender, disability, background and wider social inequalities. The programme encourages learners to consider sustainability through an EDI lens. Rather than presenting it as a purely environmental or technical subject, learners consider who participates in decision making, whose experiences may be overlooked and how sustainable development can create fairer and more inclusive communities.

Also supports: SDG 4 – Quality Education

Neet Prevention And Learner Progression

Colchester Institute's NEET Prevention and Reduction Strategy aims to prevent people from becoming disengaged from education, employment or training, while helping those who have already left to reconnect with suitable opportunities. The strategy focuses on identifying barriers early, providing accessible support and helping learners overcome challenges that may affect their ability to continue their education or progress into work. Through tailored learning support, wellbeing services, careers guidance and partnerships with local authorities, schools, employers and community organisations, the College aims to ensure individuals receive the right advice and support for their circumstances. This includes helping learners plan their next steps, access work experience and apprenticeships, develop essential skills and explore alternative pathways where continuing their current course is not possible. By working with partners across Colchester, Braintree and Tendring, the College aims to reach people who may face barriers to accessing education or employment, helping more individuals find suitable opportunities and progress towards meaningful, sustainable futures.

Also supports: SDG 4 – Quality Education



Sustainable Travel Partnership

Colchester Institute uses Mobilityways to promote car sharing, with reserved car-sharing bays helping to encourage staff to share journeys, reduce emissions and get to know colleagues better. Staff can also use personalised travel plans to compare routes to and from work, with travel options ranked from lowest to highest carbon emissions. These plans also help promote existing staff travel discounts and the cycle-to-work scheme. Perkbox points are offered as an incentive for staff who sign up to Mobilityways and add their commute. The next step is to introduce incentives for active travel, including walking and cycling, to encourage more staff to choose sustainable ways of travelling to work.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action

Sharing Sustainability Good Practice

Colchester Institute was invited to share its sustainability work at Colchester Zoo's Greener Spaces for Stronger Communities: Nature Action Planning for Local Councils event. This was an opportunity to showcase how sustainability is being put into practice across our campus, from nature recovery at Hillyfields to initiatives that improve our environmental impact. By sharing our experiences with local councils and other organisations, we can help inspire wider action, exchange ideas and demonstrate how local initiatives can contribute to greener, more resilient communities.

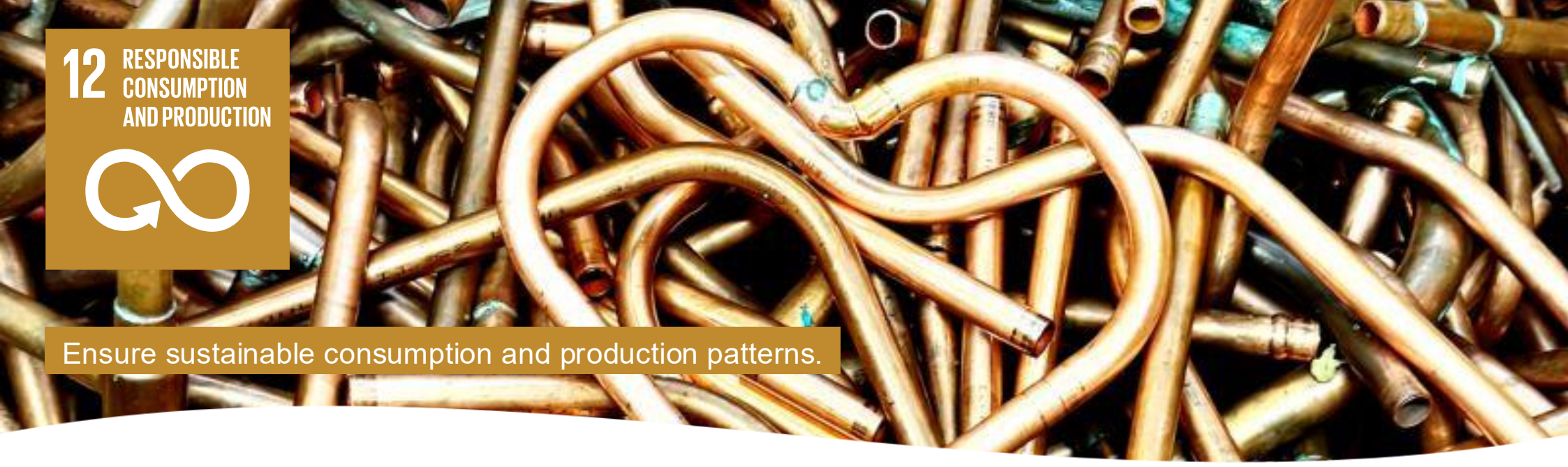


Also supports: SDG 17 | Partnerships for the goals

Empowering Communities Through Climate Action

The National Emergency Briefing provided an opportunity to engage the wider community in discussions about climate change and the practical action needed to create a more sustainable future. Alongside raising awareness of the challenges ahead, the event highlighted solutions such as electric vehicles, solar panels and air source heat pumps, as well as grants that can help make these changes more accessible. By bringing people together to explore these options, share ideas and discuss what can be done locally, the event helped connect climate awareness with practical action. This supports the development of more sustainable and resilient communities by helping people understand the choices available to them and how they can contribute to change.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action, SDG 7 | Affordable and Clean Energy



Mortice Lock Training Project

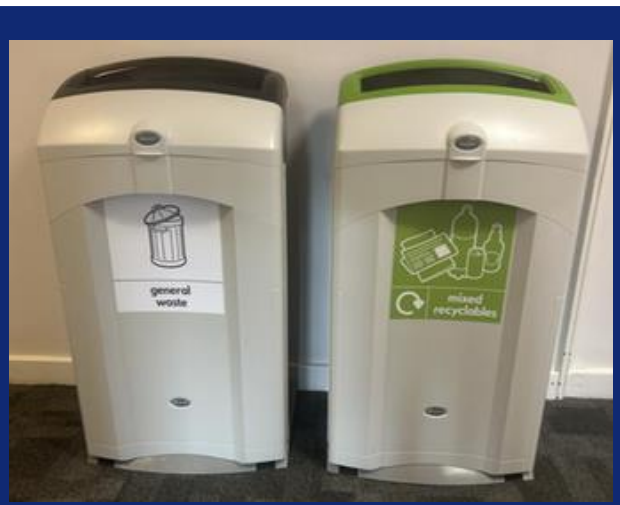
This project provides students with a reusable way to practise fitting mortice locks as part of their curriculum and assessments. Instead of using and disposing of a whole door each time, the equipment allows students to practise using only small amounts of timber. This helps to reduce material waste while still giving students the practical experience they need to develop and demonstrate their skills.



Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education

Campus Recycling Pilot

New recycling bins are being piloted across campus to support Simpler Recycling requirements and improve waste segregation. Dedicated bins for dry mixed recycling (DMR), general waste and food waste will help reduce contamination and increase recycling rates.



Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action

Battery Recycling Partnership

Colchester Institute has partnered with Valpak to improve the collection and recycling of used batteries across the college. This provides a dedicated route for battery waste, helping to ensure materials are recovered and hazardous components are managed appropriately.



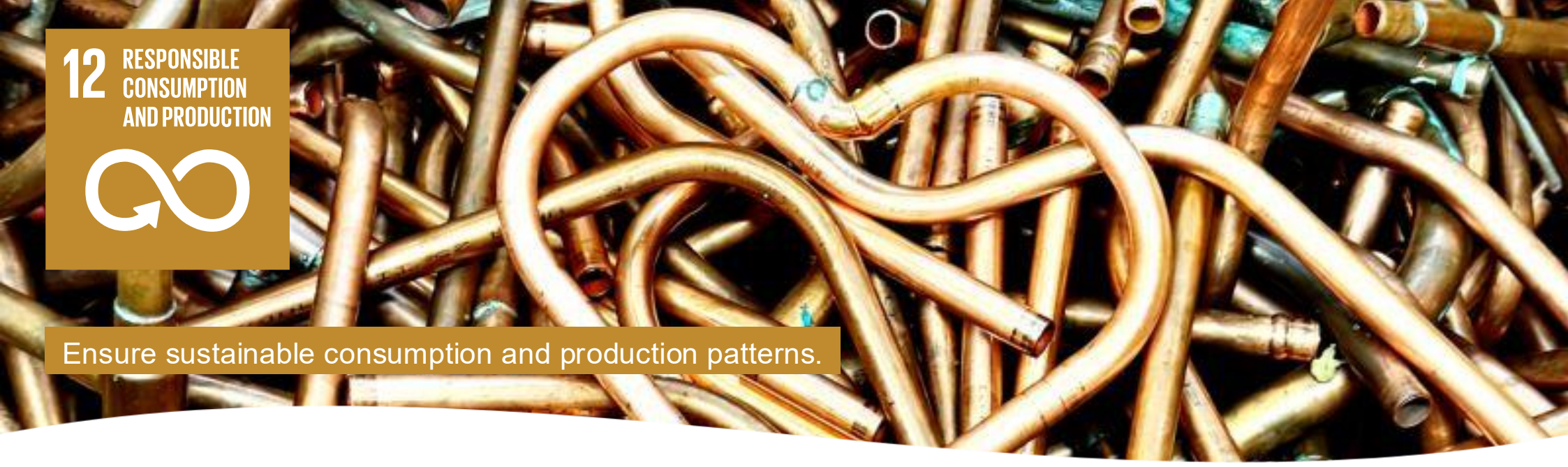
Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action

On-site Composting

A Ridan Pro composter has been installed at the college to support the future processing of food and green waste on site. The system will help divert suitable organic waste from other waste streams and create compost that can be reused across the campus. The composter is now in place, with composting due to begin once the system is fully operational.



Also supports: SDG | Climate Action, SDG 15 | Life on Land



John Constable Commemorative Hay Wain



Level 2 Furniture Making students designed and built a traditional-style hay wain to mark the 250th anniversary of landscape artist John Constable's birth. Using reclaimed materials supplied by Colchester Castle Park, students developed their woodworking skills while celebrating local artistic heritage and giving existing materials a new purpose.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education

Switching To Recycled Paper

Colchester Institute has switched from virgin to recycled paper across its printers and is also working to reduce the amount of paper used across the College. This helps reduce our reliance on new raw materials and makes everyday printing more sustainable.

Also supports : SDG 13 | Climate Action

Lanyard Reuse And Recycling



Colchester Institute encourages the reuse and recycling of lanyards through a dedicated collection station in reception. Posters displayed around campus raise awareness of the initiative and encourage staff and students to return unwanted lanyards, helping reduce waste and keep materials in circulation.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action , SDG 4 | Quality Education

Creating Bird Protection Plates



Our welding and fabrication students put their practical skills to use by making metal bird protection plates from scratch for the College's bird boxes. These plates help protect nesting birds from predators, while providing students with a real-world opportunity to apply their skills to a project with an environmental purpose.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action , SDG 4 | Quality Education



National Emergency Briefing Screenings

Colchester Institute is raising awareness of the climate and nature crises through its National Emergency Briefing screenings. Nine screenings have been hosted so far for staff and the wider community, with further screenings booked for the coming months. The briefing highlights the scale of the challenges we face, their potential impacts and the urgent action needed to address them.



The College is extending this work beyond its own campus by partnering with local councils and external organisations to host further screenings and reach wider audiences. These partnerships are helping to bring the briefing to more people, encouraging greater understanding of the climate crisis and the need for collective action.



Also supports: SDG 17 | Partnerships for the Goals.

Sustainabiltiy Marketplace 2026

Colchester Institute hosted a Sustainability Marketplace showcasing around 50 climate action projects from across all departments. The marketplace demonstrated the wide range of action taking place across the college to reduce carbon emissions, increase biodiversity, reduce waste, reuse resources and raise sustainability awareness. Projects included habitat mapping, beehive gardens, herb gardens, collecting sports kits for charity and promoting more sustainable approaches within construction. The event highlighted how different departments are taking practical action and contributing to a more sustainable college community.



Also supports: **SDG 4 | Quality Education, SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 15 | Life on Land**

REDUCING DELIVERY EMISSIONS

The College is working with Amazon to reduce the environmental impact of deliveries and purchasing. This includes reducing delivery days from five to three days a week to help combine orders and limit delivery journeys, as well as requesting less packaging to reduce unnecessary materials.

Also supports: SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production.



Our Sensory Garden Pond

Our sensory garden provides a green space on campus where staff and students can enjoy nature, while also supporting local wildlife. The pond is an important feature of the garden, providing a freshwater habitat for newts and attracting dragonflies. A small water feature routinely releases water that trickles down a slope into the pond, creating movement in the water. Ponds play an important role in supporting life underwater, providing places for aquatic species to feed, grow and breed. Newts rely on ponds for breeding, while dragonflies begin their life cycle underwater before emerging as adults. These habitats also support wider food chains and provide valuable resources for wildlife. Looking after the pond and its surrounding vegetation helps maintain this habitat and support biodiversity across the campus. Beyond its environmental value, our sensory garden gives staff and students a place to step away from busy campus life, enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature. It forms an important part of creating a greener, more welcoming campus for our college community.

Also supports: SDG 15 | Life on Land

Braintree Campus River

The river running through our Braintree Campus is part of the natural environment we share with local wildlife. Ducks and swans can regularly be seen on the water, while muntjac deer and other wildlife can be found around the surrounding greenery. The river and its bank provide valuable space for wildlife to live and find shelter, adding to the biodiversity of our campus.

Also supports: SDG 15 | Life on Land





Beekeeping On Campus

The Foundation and Supported Learning team developed the idea for a dedicated beehive garden on campus. College staff built the base, while students constructed the shed and beehives as part of the project. The College also has its own internal beekeeper, who has completed specialist beekeeping training to manage the colony and support the project. The College has since introduced its own bee colony, providing opportunities to develop practical knowledge of beekeeping and raise awareness of the importance of bees and pollination in supporting biodiversity.





Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action, SDG 4 | Quality Education

Hedgehog Friendly Campus



The College joined the Hedgehog Friendly Campus programme, taking part in a range of activities to make the campus a safer and more suitable habitat for hedgehogs. A dedicated hedgehog group was established to lead the work, including practical actions and activities to help staff and students learn more about hedgehogs and how to support them. From this, we have achieved our **Bronze Hedgehog-Friendly Campus accreditation.**

Also supports:

Hillyfields Nature Recovery

The College has continued to enhance, protect and manage HillyFields Nature Reserve, focusing on maintaining and improving habitats for wildlife, including red-listed and locally significant invertebrates such as bees, wasps and butterflies. Work has included habitat management, protecting sensitive areas, improving access through signage and deadwood markers, and creating features such as bare ground, refugia and bird boxes. Ongoing monitoring and habitat surveys by Essex Ecology, alongside advice from Colchester Natural History Society, help identify further opportunities to support biodiversity.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action, SDG 4 | Quality Education, SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

Hillyfields In Action

The HillyFields Taskforce was established to support the ongoing care and monitoring of the nature reserve through practical conservation activities. Members have taken part in litter picks, dormice and reptile surveys, trail camera monitoring and clearing plant debris to improve habitats and support wildlife. The Taskforce also provides opportunities for staff and students to get involved in the care and monitoring of Hillyfields.



Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate action



Let's Grow: Early Years Learning

Colchester Institute has partnered with Let's Grow, an educational initiative co-created by CBeebies' Mr Bloom, Ben Faulks, and his wife Mimi. Developed around the Early Years curriculum, it uses nature, play and practical activities to support children's learning and development. As the second further education institution to adopt the initiative, Colchester Institute will introduce its Early Years students to creative ways of bringing nature into their future practice.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education, SDG 17 | Partnerships for the Goals.

Campus Litter Picking



ESOL students have taken part in litter picking across campus, helping to maintain clean outdoor spaces and reduce the risk of litter affecting local wildlife. Removing waste from green areas helps protect the natural environment and keeps campus grounds clear of materials that could harm animals or damage habitats. This encourages students to take an active role in caring for their campus environment.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action

Herb Garden



Carpentry students built planters for the campus herb garden, which Chef and Hospitality students have planted and continue to maintain. The project brings departments together to apply their practical skills, create a greener campus and give students hands-on experience in growing herbs and understanding how ingredients are produced.

Also supports: SDG 4 | Quality Education, SDG 12 | Responsible Consumption and Production.

Early Years Garden



Early Years students created a garden on campus using reusable materials, including bags and pallets as planters. Students planted seeds and have been involved in caring for the garden, developing practical knowledge of plants and growing while exploring ways that reused materials can be incorporated into gardening.

Also supports: SDG 4 – Quality Education; SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production.

No Mow May



As part of No Mow May, we leave selected areas of grass unmown to allow wildflowers and plants to grow, providing food and shelter for pollinators, invertebrates and small mammals. Longer grass also offers opportunities for insects to feed, lay eggs and complete their life cycles, helping to support biodiversity across our campus.

Also supports: SDG 13 | Climate Action



Strong Governance and Sustainable Leadership

The College has improved financial resilience over the last ten years and has recorded Outstanding Financial Health in July 2026. This has provided a solid platform upon which to invest further in sustainability initiatives including large-scale capital works referred to in this report and a revenue budget for expenditure and to support the College's first ever Sustainability Officer, appointed in December 2025. The College recorded Ofsted Good in 2024 with Strong for Skills and was awarded Clean Energy Technical Excellence College status in 2026.

Governor buy-in is strong. Securing commitment to a sustainability Governor, joining NEB screenings / debates, calculating their own carbon footprints, delivering a climate action project, are ways in which strong Governance has assisted sustainable development. Most importantly they have backed investment proposals that have support fossil fuel divestment from the Salix Decarbonisation Project in 2022 through to Solar PV Investments and gas appliance replacements in our training kitchens.

Climate Action Project – Corporation Board Members

At the start of the year it was agreed that all Governors would participate in a climate action project to be showcased at the Sustainability Marketplace event in July 2026. Governor pledges came from across the membership and included two Governors switching from combustion engine cars to electric, moving to meat free meals twice per week, making gardens more wildlife friendly and sharing petitions from NEB events with family members. Others have planted wildflowers, installed solar PV panels at home and in one case, installed air source heat pumps.





17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Strengthen global partnerships to support and achieve the SDGs.

Essex Wildlife Trust

Essex Wildlife Trust is the College's Charity of the Year, bringing staff and students together to raise funds and support local conservation efforts. Over £7,600 has been raised through quiz nights, raffles, Running Wild and other fundraising events. Staff have also taken part in tree planting at a new woodland site, while Carpentry students have put their practical skills to use by building benches for the Trust's nature reserves. The College also supports events such as Wild Keep Weekend, raising additional funds for Essex Wildlife Trust and helping to support its work to protect wildlife and natural habitats across Essex.

Also supports: SDG 15 | Life on Land

Colchester Zoo



The College maintains an annual partnership with Colchester Zoo, including sponsorship of the lemurs. The partnership provides a range of opportunities for students, with educational visits supporting different areas of learning. For some courses, visits provide opportunities to explore wildlife and conservation, while others use the Zoo as a setting to develop knowledge of areas such as retail and business. Staff are also offered free zoo tickets each year, and the College participates in Zoo events as an exhibitor or speaker. The partnership provides a valuable link with a local organisation, supporting education, biodiversity and wider community engagement.

The College will also be renewing its Platinum Investor status with Essex Wildlife Trust this year



Also supports: SDG 15 | Life on Land

Working Together for a Greener Future

We work with a range of external organisations, charities and local partners to share knowledge, support sustainability initiatives and make a positive environmental impact. These partnerships help us learn from others, bring new opportunities to our campus and work towards shared sustainability goals.