



**Milton Keynes College Group**

**Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2030**

# Contents

Foreword	<a href="#">3</a>
Our Commitment to Building Fairer Futures	<a href="#">3</a>
Climate Action Plan: High-Level Summary of Actions	<a href="#">4</a>
Scope, Context & Performance Monitoring	<a href="#">6</a>
Identifying Our Climate Aims	<a href="#">7</a>
Climate Ambitions to 2030	<a href="#">8</a>
We will all lead the way	<a href="#">8</a>
We will promote green skills and climate awareness	<a href="#">10</a>
We will work towards carbon neutrality in operations	<a href="#">12</a>
We will transition towards a circular economy	<a href="#">15</a>
We will improve our offer to nature	<a href="#">17</a>

# Foreword



## Our Commitment to Fairer Futures in a changing climate

At the heart of our work at Milton Keynes College Group (MKCG) is the commitment to deliver [Fairer Futures](#) through the power of education. However, a rapidly changing climate is putting the future of our planet and its communities at risk.

We are seeing more and more extreme weather events as a result of global warming – including heat waves, storms and flooding. A recent survey at the College showed that over three-quarters of our staff members and students are concerned about what this could mean for their future. We know we need to act now to protect our planet and ensure Fairer Futures for all.

Whilst it can feel daunting, there is opportunity in a green future. As a further education provider, we have a unique responsibility to prepare our students with the knowledge and skills to navigate this changing environment. But we need to make sure we model these practices across our estates too.

This climate action plan is the result of a consultation with our staff, students, governors and communities to identify the most critical environmental issues for us as a College Group. It lays out our ambitions for reducing our environmental impact and working towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

We'd like to thank our colleagues, learners, community and employer partners for their input and support in creating our climate action plan. We truly believe that, together, we can make our campuses more resilient to climate change and create positive impacts in our communities through the power of action and education.

**Sally Alexander,**  
CEO and Group Principal



**Ruby Parmar**  
Chair of Governors



## Building Fairer Futures

Our purpose as a further education provider is to inspire positive change in the people and the communities we serve through delivering exceptional learning experiences to transform lives.

The climate action plan is one of the many mechanisms at MKCG for enabling us to live and breathe our purpose. The action plan directly responds to **Strategic Aim 3: to achieve and maintain financial and operational sustainability**, but also contributes more widely by integrating sustainability into educational experiences, fostering partnerships for climate action, and promoting fairness and inclusion in climate adaptation.

# CLIMATE ACTION PLAN



# IN SUMMARY

Ambition	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Lead the Way	Active student committee	Advocacy training	Encourage student-led initiatives			
	Set targets	MKCG strategic plan and SDGs	Continued annual reporting			
	Risk management approach		Climate resilience interventions			
Green skills & Awareness	Launch Green Skills Centre	Embed green skills and courses				
	Curriculum review	CPD programme for business, prison and campus staff members				
	Communications strategy	Local climate networks	Collaborate with partners on sustainability projects			
Carbon Neutrality	Costed decarbonisation plan		Decarbonisation projects		Performance validation	
	No/low cost efficiency actions					
	Map scope 3 emissions		Carbon avoidance initiatives (offsets)			
	Collect commuting data	Greener travel policy	Green transport initiatives			
Circular Economy	Collect waste data	Improve signage	Waste reduction and reuse projects			
	Increase recycling					
	Food waste strategy					
	Collect data on purchased goods	Responsible purchasing policy	Supplier outreach and data collection			
			Implement responsible purchasing principles			
Nature	National Education Nature Park	Collaborate with communities	Student-led conservation projects			
	Biodiversity audit	Conservation guidelines				

# Scope, Context & Monitoring

## Scope

The climate action plan primarily addresses the environmental impacts of our owned and leased estates (excluding prison estates not within our operational control), college curriculum, and nursery and prison education services. It also considers our indirect impacts through our value chain, requiring collaboration with partners and suppliers on categories including waste generation and purchased goods and services.

The action plan's aims are set for 2030, a milestone towards our ambition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with annual reviews to address any statutory changes and major updates.

## Context

### The Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy

MKCG's climate action plan embeds the principles of the [Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#) published in April 2022, though updates may be required due to a recent change in government (at the time of writing).

### Climate Action Roadmap for Further Education

To enable consistency in approach despite national political changes, the climate action plan aligns to the [Association for College and EAUC's Climate Action Roadmap for Further Education](#). Key actions will be incorporated into the delivery of MKCG's climate action plan to enable MKCG to become a "Leading" establishment.

### Sustainable Development Goals

The climate aims and their key performance indicators within this climate action plan are guided by existing MKCG policies and reports as well as the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

The SDGs guide action for universal sustainable development and indicators for measuring success.

## Monitoring

The Sustainability Lead is responsible for coordinating the Sustainability Committee which is made up of representatives across the College Group functions and student body, including curriculum, data and IT, marketing and partnerships, prison education, capital projects, and facilities and estates.

Together with learners, they will oversee the progress monitoring for each climate aim. Progress updates will be provided to the governing board at least bi-annually with an annual summary report published to all internal and external audiences on the sustainability webpage.



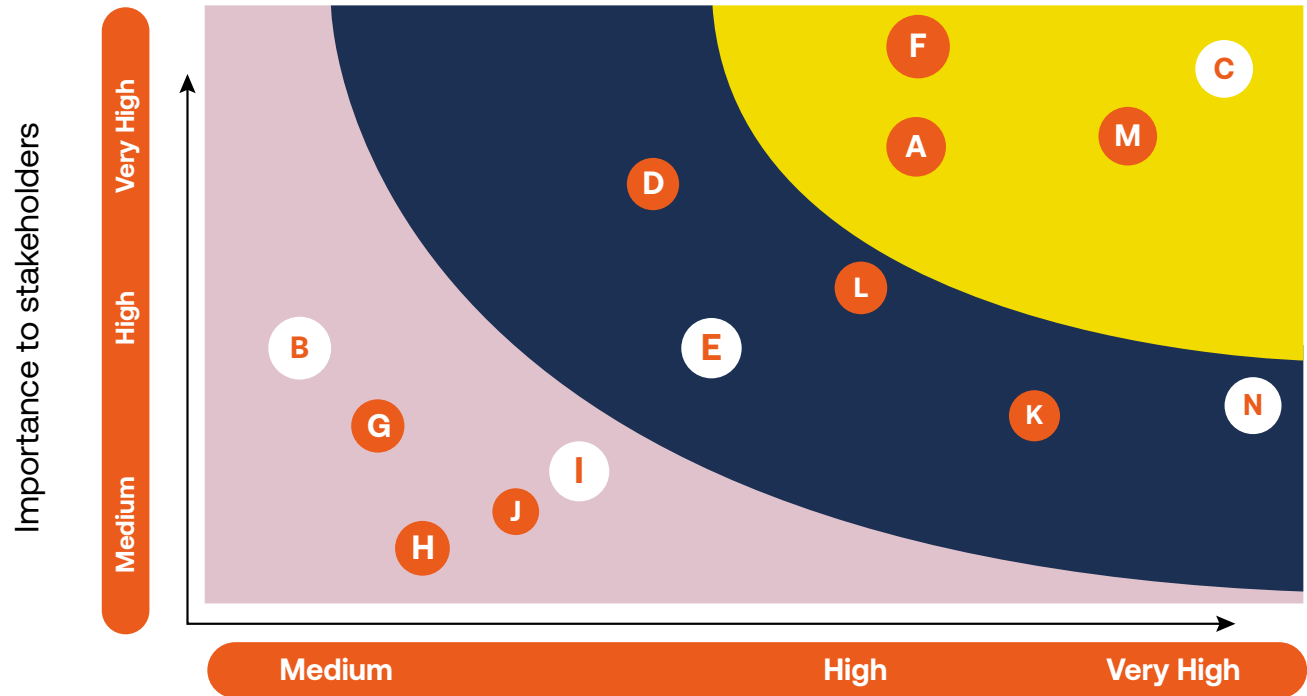
# Identifying Our Climate Aims

To identify MKCG’s direction of travel for climate action, a series of workshops and surveys – involving staff members and the executive leadership team, students, governors, and community leaders and local business – were conducted between June and October 2024.

Together, they identified the topics deemed most important for reducing the college’s environmental impact as well as their perceived impact to the business, e.g., financial impact, importance for meeting local skills needs, alignment to the Fairer Futures strategy.

The results are mapped onto the matrix (right) and have been used to guide the development of the climate ambitions and aims. The markers in white also represent the key topics which the Department for Education advise all climate action plans must address and are incorporated within this strategy.

Material sustainability topics for MKCG stakeholders



## Identified topics

- A - Working with communities
- B - Protecting nature
- C - Energy use
- D - Climate justice

- E - Renewable energy generation
- F - Reducing waste
- G - Green transport
- H - Responsible food choices
- I - Climate adaptation and resilience

## Impact to business

- J - Water consumption
- K - Campaigns and communications
- L - Sustainable purchasing
- M - Using technology and innovation
- N - Green skills

# Climate Ambitions to 2030

## We will all lead the way.

Through effective leadership, everyone at the College Group will feel empowered to improve the climate resilience of our college community.

To deliver Fairer Futures, we must ensure that our climate actions are fair and inclusive. Without the buy in of our staff members members and learners and the sponsorship of senior leaders, it will be difficult to make the changes required to deliver climate action that benefits all. This becomes more important as we experience the growing effects of environmental changes on our estates and communities.



## Climate Aim 1: Pursue a whole group approach.

Co-created with stakeholders, the climate action plan will be owned by the entire Milton Keynes College Group. All members of the College Group community will feel confident contributing towards our ambitions.

### What does this mean in practice?

- The Sustainability Lead will hold regular progress reviews with the Sustainability Committee and create open lines of communication to encourage participation of campus and prison staff members members in sustainability initiatives.
- The climate action plan will have sponsorship by senior leaders including a named, link governor, to enable committed and continuous progress.
- The College Group will have an active student body that leads on sustainability initiatives and holds senior leadership to account.
- The governing board will be equipped with the necessary information for decision-making around climate action and regularly invited to comment on progress.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will measure the understanding and awareness of climate action by college group stakeholders (e.g. staff members, students, governors, and employer and community partners) through annual survey questions.



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 13.3](#).  
Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.



# We will all lead the way.



## Definitions

**Climate resilience:** Resilience describes “the capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of hazardous climatic events while incurring minimal damage to societal wellbeing, the economy and the environment” ([Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and Environment](#)).

## Climate Aim 2: Improve resilience to climate change.

We aim to adopt strategies that ensure our estates, staff members and learners are prepared for future climate-related hazards ensuring no one is left behind.

### What does this mean in practice?

- We will set targets for each aim within the climate action plan and annually report against them, with the governing board receiving at least a bi-annual progress update.
- In line with the Department for Education’s emphasis on adaptation and resilience, we will identify key climate risks and look to incorporate climate change adaptation approaches to central policies and procedures.
- MKCG’s future strategic plans will align where possible with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order that our activities as a Group contribute to prosperity for people and planet.
- Through the curriculum and communications, we will support staff, learners, and by extension their own households, to understand how they can individually prepare for and cope with climate related hazards.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will record the climate resilience interventions delivered each year and their impacts towards identified risks. This can include projects such as climate risk governance and vulnerability assessments, climate-proofing infrastructure, and sharing of best practices on climate risk management (qualitative).



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 13.3](#).  
Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

# Climate Ambitions to 2030

## We will promote green skills and climate awareness.

Using digital practices, we will equip our learners with the skills and information needed to access green jobs and make informed decisions in their communities to promote climate action.

The transition to a more sustainable future will require a major transformation of the UK skills landscape. As a further education provider, our curriculum plays a key role in delivering the necessary skills to support the creation of green jobs as well as the knowledge to adopt more sustainable practices within existing industries. Partnerships and communications will form an important part of identifying local skills needs and growing sustainability awareness.



## Climate Aim 3: Embed sustainability and green skills into curriculum and CPD.

We aim to embed sustainability and green skills across our curriculum areas whilst providing a comprehensive continuing professional development (CPD) programme to support staff members to promote sustainable behaviours.

### What does this mean in practice?

- After reviewing existing practice, we will identify and respond to opportunities for embedding sustainability and green skills into teaching across college and prison education.
- We will develop a CPD programme for staff members to support their teaching and provide the information required for all staff members to participate in sustainable practices.
- Driven by our Green Skills Centre, we will explore, offer and promote new apprenticeships, T Levels, and courses related to green careers.
- We will be an advocate for technology and innovation to prepare learners with the digital skills to support the growth of the green economy.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will measure:

- The percentage of prison and campus staff members having completed MKCG's carbon literacy training modules.
- The extent to which sustainability and green skills are embedded into curriculum areas as defined in self-assessment reviews and student surveys.
- The number of T Levels, apprenticeships and courses offered related to green jobs and careers, and recruitment onto these.



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 4.7](#). By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

## We will promote green skills and climate awareness.



### Definitions

**Green jobs:** The [Department for Education](#) defines green jobs as “jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet”, e.g., solar panel engineers, ecologists. However, all jobs can be green jobs as all jobs have an impact on the environment.

## Climate Aim 4: Raise awareness through partnerships and communications.

We aim to form effective partnerships and deliver informative communications to encourage collaborative solutions and participation in sustainable practices.

### What does this mean in practice?

- Using a dedicated communications plan, we will employ a range of communication methods to increase participation in sustainability activities and initiatives across the group.
- We will establish partnerships and participate in local climate networks to enable collaborative solutions to common sustainability challenges.
- We will respond to local green skills needs by working closely with communities and employers.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will record:

- The internal stakeholder engagement rate with sustainability content on internal platforms.
- Details of collaborative working with local community groups and employer partners around the sustainability agenda (qualitative).



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 12.8](#). By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

# Climate Ambitions to 2030

## We will work towards carbon neutrality in operations.

By 2030, we aim to reach carbon neutrality in operations as an interim target to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Energy use and renewable energy generation were considered important to stakeholders given the global urgency to move away from fossil fuels. We have aligned our ambition to the Race to Zero Charter and Milton Keynes City Council targets, however we recognise that funding availability within the further education sector can be limited and has potential to be a major barrier to achieving our 2030 target. We will need to be ambitious yet realistic when defining our actions.

### Definitions

**Carbon neutral:** “making or resulting in no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, especially as a result of carbon offsetting (avoidance).

**Net zero:** cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, achieving a balance between the greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere and those taken out through removal offsets. ([Building a Green Campus, Shakespeare Martineau](#))

We refer to carbon neutral “in operations” as the emissions in our operational control, predominantly our, Scope 1, 2.

## Climate Aim 5: Decarbonise our estates.

We aim to be carbon neutral in operations by 2030 meaning we will have reduced our Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions across our estates as far as possible and will offset remaining emissions through legitimate solutions.

### What does this mean in practice?

- We will continue to collect and monitor resource consumption and emissions data (e.g., electricity, gas, water) for the buildings in our operational control to inform practical decarbonisation solutions.
- In line with MKCG’s estates strategy, we will identify organisational decarbonisation targets and pathways to inform the scale and pace of solutions needed.
- We will explore and implement decarbonisation technologies aligned to our identified emission reduction targets as far as possible within funding availability.
- Through engaging campaigns and communications, we will support campus and prison staff members and students to make more efficient use of energy during daytime and evening operations (e.g., control of air conditioning, heating, lighting, TV screens, computers, printing).
- We will explore accredited carbon offsetting (avoidance) solutions.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will measure tonnes of carbon dioxide (TCO<sub>2</sub>e) per staff member/student/square metre area (Scope 1 and 2).



Metric aligned to the UK government [Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting \(SECR\)](#) regulations which requires all eligible companies to report on their global energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.



The [Race to Zero Charter for Universities and Colleges](#) is a global initiative aimed at mobilising further and higher education to commit to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by monitoring, reporting and reducing their emissions.

Find out more about what Net Zero means in this video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPmUAfuqM08>

**We will work towards carbon**

**neutrality in operations.**



#### Definitions

**Scope emissions:** The emissions we produce are grouped into three categories. The GreenHouse Gas Protocol (a recognised reporting standard) defines the scopes as:

**Scope 1:** direct emissions from owned or controlled sources (e.g., owned fleet, natural gas heating).

**Scope 2:** indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy (e.g., supplied electricity).

**Scope 3:** indirect emissions (not included in Scope 2) that occur in the value chain (e.g., emissions from the manufacture of purchased goods and services, emissions related to waste generation, transport emissions resulting from business travel).

**(GHG Protocol)**

## Climate Aim 6: Monitor indirect emissions.

By 2030, we aim to have set up processes and targets to monitor and reduce our indirect (Scope 3) emissions towards becoming net zero by 2050.

### What does this mean in practice?

- We will set up processes for collecting and monitoring Scope 3 emissions with regards to identified hotspots, e.g., purchased goods and services, waste generated in operations, business travel, and employee and student commuting.
- A baseline will be established for Scope 3 emissions categories in order to set targets for reduction.
- We will deliver initiatives targeting Scope 3 emissions reduction in line with Climate Aims 7, 8 and 9 and will explore solutions for reducing our digital carbon footprint.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will measure tonnes of carbon dioxide (TCO<sub>2</sub>e) per staff member/student/square metre area (Scope 3).



Metric aligned to the UK government [Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting \(SECR\)](#) regulations.



[Click here to take a closer look at the scopes in this GHG Protocol diagram.](#)

**We will work towards carbon**

**neutrality in operations.**



## **Climate Aim 7: Promote greener transport.**

We aim to reduce the emissions related to our business travel, commuting and curriculum trips by promoting greener transport options.

### **What does this mean in practice?**

- We will explore opportunities for reducing the impact of single-occupancy travel between the Bletchley and Chaffron Way campuses.
- We will review our travel policy in line with the travel hierarchy to reduce the impact of business travel and college curriculum trips.
- New purchases and renewal of owned and leased vehicles will prioritise high-efficiency models where possible, i.e., hybrid and electric options.
- We will deliver initiatives which promote greener modes of transport and reduce single-occupancy commuting, taking into account the different people and roles within the College Group.
- We will continue to promote hybrid working where possible to reduce the need for commuting, ensuring staff members are supported to reduce their impact at home.

### **What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?**

We will measure the percentage of prison/campus staff members and students taking single-occupancy trips (by car) to and from site (Bletchley, Chaffron, prison settings) and identify alternative modes of travel used.



Metric aligned to [Target 11.2](#). By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport.

# Climate Ambitions to 2030

## We will transition towards a circular economy.

We will reduce the waste generated from our operations by adopting the principles of the circular economy; to design out waste and keep materials in use for longer.

The nature of our operations and curriculum means we work with many different materials, from paint tins and car parts to paper and food waste. By reducing the waste we create we can make significant financial, operational and environmental savings. We aim to adopt circular principles that pay closer attention to the items we buy, the materials they are made from and their opportunities for reuse.

### Definitions

**Circular economy:** “A system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated” ([Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#)). The materials we buy are kept in use through reuse, repair, recycling and composting – avoiding pollution and removing the need to extract raw materials.

LINEAR ECONOMY



RECYCLING ECONOMY



CIRCULAR ECONOMY



## Climate Aim 8: Minimise waste through reuse and recycling.

We aim to create a clearer data picture of our waste generation and to adopt practices that reduce waste and maximise the value of materials.

### What does this mean in practice?

- With support from staff teams and learners, we will develop a process for collecting and monitoring waste materials data from across departments to establish a baseline.
- We will set targets for waste minimisation and deliver initiatives to achieve them, i.e., reuse and recycling.
- We will explore and implement opportunities for food waste reduction and diversion.
- We will work with partners to give new life to discarded materials and add value to our communities.

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

#### We will measure:

- The amount of residual waste in kilograms (kg) per staff/student.
- The amount of recyclable waste in kilograms (kg) per staff/student.
- Details of reuse projects which divert materials from disposal (qualitative).



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 12.5](#).  
By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

**We will transition towards  
a circular economy.**



## **Climate Aim 9: Adopt responsible purchasing practices.**

We aim to increase the information we collect about the sustainability performance of our supply chain and adopt practices to reduce the impact of our purchasing decisions.

### **What does this mean in practice?**

- We will create processes to collect relevant information regarding the sustainability performance of our supplier base.
- We will embed responsible purchasing expectations into new and existing policies to ensure purchased goods and services are selected in line with the climate action plan and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies. This includes exploring low-carbon catering and local sourcing.
- We aim to support suppliers to provide the required information and understand their own impacts through engagement and education.

### **What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?**

We will track the percentage of suppliers providing environmental action plans as well as the percentage of suppliers providing carbon emissions data.



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 12.6](#). Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.



# Climate Ambitions to 2030

## We will improve our offer to nature.

We will create and preserve attractive habitats for wildlife across our estates by engaging learners and staff members teams in nature friendly practices.

Nature includes all living things and ecosystems in our environment. It provides us with our essential needs such as water, food and clean air as well as boosts wellbeing and inspires creativity. The loss of biodiversity is considered one of the top three risks to humanity over the next ten years ([World Economic Forum, Global Risk Report 2024](#)) and is a key area within the Department for Education's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.



## Climate Aim 10: Increase biodiversity on campus.

We aim to increase the biological diversity on our campuses and support the connection of wildlife networks across the city, putting nature at the heart of the learner experience.

### What does this mean in practice?

- Through our estates management, purchasing practices and curriculum, we will develop guidelines for best practice that encourage wildlife and preserve natural resources including water.
- Our staff members and students will deliver initiatives to conserve and increase the number of habitats and species observed on our estates.
- We will work with local community groups and partners to develop wildlife networks across the city in line with the Department for Education's initiative to create a [National Education Nature Park](#).

### What metrics will we use to measure progress year-on-year?

We will record the number of biodiversity conservation actions delivered, which can include projects to do with land protection, education and awareness, and species management.



Metric aligned to [SDG Target 15.5](#). Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.



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# Milton Keynes College Group

## Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2030