



## Toyota prevention of future death report

A senior coroner has warned that more drivers could die because a Toyota braking system failed to stop a woman's car before a deadly M25 crash. Lisa Bowen, 48, died instantly when her Toyota Corolla hit the back of a stationary lorry on the hard shoulder at almost 38mph in January 2022 despite her pressing the brake pedal repeatedly. Senior Surrey coroner Richard Travers said the car's anti-lock braking system (ABS) "operated to reduce the braking effect almost entirely" and was "working in accordance with its design", but the design did not account for what happened when her tyre deflated and detached at speed. He said the outcome was "an unintended effect of the system's design which arose because the specific scenario [...] had not been taken into account in the design process." Mr Travers warned this creates "a continuing risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken".

The senior coroner said he was noting that a large number of Toyota Corollas on UK roads have the same anti-locking braking system as Ms Bowen's car, and other brands may well be affected too. He also criticised the "catastrophic failure" of the lorry's under-run protection bar saying its strength was "grossly insufficient" under current laws. The coroner said he was concerned that the risk of future death will arise without more stringent requirements for how much force such bars must withstand.

He has issued a statutory Prevention of Future Deaths report to Toyota, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and the Department for Transport (DfT), saying: "Action should be taken to prevent future deaths by addressing the concerns set out above." They must reply by 16 January 2026. A DfT spokesperson said: "Every death on our roads is a tragedy, and our thoughts are with Lisa's family and loved ones. We will carefully review the coroner's findings from this tragic case to determine the appropriateness of further amendments to these requirements."

A Toyota spokesperson [Toyota's HQ is in Burgh Heath, Epsom] said the company was "deeply saddened by this tragic accident" and "acknowledges the findings of the coroner", adding it would "carefully review the Senior Coroner's conclusions."

Emily Dalton LDRS

Toyota HQ Epsom Google

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## Nirvana comes to Epsom care home

Sponsored article: **Linden House Care Home in Epsom** is proud to announce a new era under its new owners, Nirvana Care Group. Established in the 1980s, the home has long served the local community, and the new leadership has already made significant investments to further elevate care standards across Surrey.

Phase 1 of a resident-led refurbishment is now complete, shaped by meaningful input from those who live at the home. Linden House has also invested in modern technologies and strengthened service partnerships to enhance safety, comfort, and wellbeing.

The transition has been warmly received by staff, with six former team members returning to support the refreshed vision. The home is also delighted to welcome back former manager Reshma Topsy, reflecting Linden House's strong sense of community and continuity. With a dedicated multicultural team and an in-house chef, residents enjoy personalised menus tailored to cultural and faith requirements, along with fully customised activity programmes.

Following the renewed leadership, upgraded facilities, and a focus on truly personalised care a small number of vacancies remain for families seeking warm, modern, and compassionate care.

For enquiries or to arrange a visit, contact Reshma on **01372 721 447**

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## Is Epsom and Ewell ideal for remote working?

When remote work is supported well, it can raise job satisfaction, reduce commuting stress and give people meaningful control over their work life balance. However, the recent drive by some organisations to bring staff back into offices risks reversing these gains and widening the gap between regions, according to a new study that University of Surrey researchers contributed to as part of the R-Map project.



A new study, published in Nature's Scientific Data, details how access to reliable internet, local services, green space and community facilities can determine whether remote work improves quality of life or deepens inequalities. The research is based on a survey of more than 20,000 workers from across Europe and explores how remote work is influencing relocation patterns, wellbeing, job satisfaction, productivity, travel behaviour and the pull between urban and rural living.

The study gathered responses from people living and working remotely in Europe through a large, structured survey. Participants were asked about their preferences, experiences and the practical realities of working away from a traditional office. The survey was distributed across multiple languages and included workers in both rural and urban environments.

The study highlighted that remote work, either fully or partly i.e. hybrid work, is often associated with higher job satisfaction and a stronger sense of personal autonomy, particularly because people can choose where and when they work. This can support better work life balance, reduce commuting stress and create more space for family time or personal priorities.

However, where remote work is discouraged or unsupported workers may lose these benefits. Returning to a daily commute or living far from their workplace can limit choice, increase strain and reduce the positive local impact remote work can bring to smaller towns and rural communities.

Dr Nikolas Thomopoulos, Principal Investigator of the study from the University of Surrey, said:

"Remote work is changing how our towns and cities function and who gets access to good and rewarding jobs. When remote work is supported properly it can reconnect residents and tourists with their communities and boost local economies. When it is not, it risks deepening divides. We are hopeful that this research will provide policymakers with the clear evidence needed to shape a fairer and more sustainable future of work."

Dr Tracy Xu, Co-Director of the Future of Work Research Centre at the University of Surrey, said:

"Our research shows that remote work can genuinely improve quality of life by giving people more choice in where and how they live. Without strong digital access and supportive environments, remote workers can feel isolated and overlooked. This study gives us the detail needed to understand where remote work thrives and where it needs to be improved."

The R-Map findings suggest that remote work can revitalise some rural or suburban areas, especially when people are able to move away from expensive city centres in search of more space, affordability or proximity to nature.

However, the benefits are not shared equally. The study shows that access to everyday amenities such as green spaces, grocery shops, healthcare and public transport within a short walking distance plays a key role in whether remote work feels sustainable and supportive of wellbeing. Where these amenities are lacking, and where digital connectivity is weak, remote workers were more likely to report feelings of isolation and difficulty maintaining work life balance. In contrast, participants with reliable internet and access to local services reported greater satisfaction with remote work and stronger ties to their communities.

Surrey University



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## Primark finally indicates a season to open in Epsom

The Ashley Centre in Epsom has confirmed that Primark is set to open its doors in Spring 2026, occupying a two-floor, 44,000 square foot retail unit. The arrival of this major fashion retailer is being billed as a milestone for the Centre and for the local retail offering in Epsom.

### Background and delays

The unit which Primark will occupy has had a long and troubled history of vacancy. The previous occupier closed three years ago, leaving the large space empty ever since. Work to transform the unit was delayed when the first building contractors appointed to



carry out the full refit went bust, setting the project back significantly. After these setbacks, the confirmation that Primark will finally open its Epsom store marks the end of a long wait for local shoppers and a major boost for the Ashley Centre.

## The new Primark store

Primark will open next to fashion giant JD Sports and within easy reach of other major retailers such as NEXT, Marks & Spencer and Oliver Bonas. The store will span two floors and showcase the brand's extensive range of women's, men's and children's clothing, accessories and homeware. Its size and location will make it one of the key anchors within the shopping centre.

## A boost for the town centre

Ashley Centre Assistant Manager Will Greenland said: "The opening of Primark is one of the most highly anticipated openings that Ashley Centre has had for quite some time, and we know just how much local shoppers are looking forward to it. Primark's arrival will not only bring a fantastic new retail offer to Epsom, but it will create new job opportunities, increase footfall, and further elevate the centre's role as a prime shopping destination in the community."

The store is expected to generate new employment, draw additional visitors from across Surrey, and strengthen the Centre's position as Epsom's prime shopping hub.

## About Primark

Primark was founded in Dublin in 1969, trading as Penneys in Ireland, before expanding to the UK in the 1970s. It has since grown into one of the country's biggest clothing and homeware retailers, known for its affordable fashion and high turnover of seasonal collections. The company continues to rely on the appeal of physical stores rather than online sales, promoting what it describes as a lively, social shopping experience.

In recent years, the brand has invested in sustainability and responsible sourcing, aiming to improve transparency across its global supply chain. Despite broader challenges in the retail sector, Primark has consistently reported strong growth and remains a major draw for shopping centres across the UK.

## Looking ahead

For Epsom, the long-awaited opening of Primark represents more than just another store. It brings one of Britain's best-known brands to the town centre, fills a large empty space, and sends a signal of renewed confidence in the local retail economy. Shoppers can expect a broad and affordable range of fashion and homeware when doors finally open in Spring 2026.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Primark to open in Epsom

5 Shops that could replace House of Fraser in the Ashley Centre

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# Epsom and Ewell College Principal wins Silver at



## National Business Women's Awards

**Julie Kapsalis recognised for bridging the gap between boardroom and classroom.**

Nescot's Principal and CEO, Julie Kapsalis, won silver in the 'Community Champion' category at the National Business Women's Awards in London last night. Julie was also a finalist for the 'Corporate Leader of the Year' award, highlighting how the college brings together corporates, the community and students, offering young people exciting opportunities to shine.

Under Julie's tenure, Nescot has made business and community partnerships a primary focus, consistently opening doors for students. Examples include collaborations with the cruise industry and Epsom Downs Racecourse which have given students hands-on experience and led to new apprenticeships. Other students have gone behind-the-scenes at darts tournaments, hotels, museums, airports and at the Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, while the art department has revitalised community spaces in Epsom with vibrant murals.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO at Nescot said: "Congratulations to the worthy and inspirational winners last night. It was great to win silver and to be in such illustrious company. The recognition reflects the hard work that goes on across Nescot, where we're always creating and taking opportunities to help our students thrive. I love my role, which I see as an enabler, and being able to make things happen. I get huge job satisfaction from bringing employers and students together so they benefit, either through an apprenticeship, a placement or even just an introduction that changes their path.

"The joy of attending awards is the connections you make and the inspirational stories you hear. Networking is key and I love meeting people, as I know that each business, community or civic connection we make has the potential to change a student's life."

Julie established a Women in Business Network, which hosts local leaders from organisations including KPMG, NatWest, Ringway, Wates and Atkins Realis. This year, she is especially proud of a partnership that Nescot has formed with the Royal Society for Blind Children which has enabled the establishment of a new Centre of Excellence for Blind and Visually Impaired students at Nescot, meaning young people from Surrey no longer need to travel outside the county for a college education.

The National Business Women's Awards aims to raise the profile of industrious, hardworking and enterprising Business Women nationally. The awards are made up of 23 categories and winners are chosen by an expert panel of judges. Find out more here.

NESCOT



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## "Outstanding" rating for Worcester Park based carers

Trinity Homecare Group is delighted to announce that its Worcester Park-based visiting care service has been awarded an 'Outstanding' rating by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following a recent inspection.

The CQC awarded the service **Outstanding in four of the five key areas** - Well-led, Caring, Effective and Responsive - placing it among a *tiny handful* of homecare providers nationally to achieve this level of recognition.

### A service at the heart of the community

Inspectors praised the service for being "exceptionally personalised and kind," with carers and managers going above and beyond to support local people in their daily lives. The Worcester Park branch provides visiting care to individuals and families across Surrey, including communities in Cobham, Walton, Weybridge, Byfleet, Addlestone, Epsom, Banstead, Kingston, Tadworth, Ashted, Leatherhead, New Malden, Surbiton, Thames Ditton, Molesey and Chessington.

Highlights from the inspection report included:



- Helping clients maintain independence, with flexible support tailored around their daily routines.
- Supporting people to enjoy life's small but meaningful moments – from feeding ducks and gardening, to celebrating birthdays.
- Spotting health needs early and working with families and local professionals to ensure the right support is in place.
- Embracing new technology and creative initiatives such as *Stories for Life*, enabling people to capture their personal history and strengthen family connections.

## Celebrating local carers

"Families in our local communities trust us not just to provide safe care, but to make every day more meaningful," said **Carla Gama, Director of Operations at Trinity Homecare Group**.

"That is thanks to the incredible work of our carers here in Worcester Park and across Surrey. They bring compassion, kindness and professionalism into people's homes every single day, and this Outstanding rating is truly theirs to celebrate."

**Summer Smith, Registered Branch Manager at Worcester Park**, added:

"I am so proud of our team here. Every carer and support staff member goes above and beyond to make sure people feel safe, valued and cared for in the way they want. This rating reflects their dedication and the strong relationships they build with clients and families in our local communities."

## About Trinity Homecare Group

Trinity Homecare Group is one of the UK's leading providers of live-in and visiting homecare, supporting people to live independently and safely in the comfort of their own homes. With over 25 years of experience and a growing national footprint, Trinity continues to set the standard for high-quality, person-centred care.

The Group includes a family of trusted brands: Trinity Homecare, Country Cousins and Patricia White's – together spanning fully managed, regulated live-in and visiting care, as well as introductory agency live-in and visiting care services across the UK.

Learn more or view the full CQC report: [www.trinityhomecare.co.uk](http://www.trinityhomecare.co.uk)

[Copy prepared by Trinity Home Care.]

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## Surrey Uni to open in India after UK PM's visit

### Surrey joins new UK Universities in India Alliance while on UK trade mission to India

The UK's universities can be a "skills and research accelerator" for the potential of the strengthening UK-India trade partnership, which was the focus of Sir Keir Starmer's trade mission this week. This is according to Professor Stephen Jarvis, newly appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey – and a participant in the trade mission.

On his return from India, where the multi-sector delegation met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Professor Jarvis highlighted the strong fit of the University of Surrey's 'purpose-driven' approach to education and research, and the importance of the new Universities in India Alliance, which Surrey was proud to become a founder member of during the trip.

During the visit, the University of Surrey was presented with approval in principle from IFSCA (International Financial Services Centres Authority) to proceed with opening a new International Branch Campus at GIFT City, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat State.

On the trip, the University also celebrated its network of research and education partnerships with Indian universities – including its partnership with the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc) – which will see both institutions partner to drive research and innovation in semiconductor chip design and medical research, with a particular focus on human health and veterinary medicine.

Professor Stephen Jarvis said:

*"I was honoured to be invited to join the Prime Minister on his visit to India to celebrate the enormous potential for UK higher education to partner and collaborate in India to drive international skills development and research to solve global challenges."*



India is an economic and skills superpower – it has its own thriving higher education sector, but also recognises the value that Britain's globally recognised higher education sector can bring to meeting the extraordinary growth in demand for quality education in India.

*"As we move towards opening our new campus in GIFT City, we're delighted to have been invited to become founding members of the nine-strong UK Universities in India Alliance. Education is an immensely important export industry for the UK, and Surrey is proud to be standing shoulder to shoulder with our fellow universities, bringing our own unique brand of purposeful education, as we seek to expand the potential for higher education to be a skills and research accelerator, benefitting both the UK and Indian economies."*

Alison Barrett MBE, Country Director India, British Council, said:

*"Congratulations to the University of Surrey on receiving approval in principle from IFSCA (International Financial Services Centres Authority) to establish its International Branch Campus in GIFT City, Ahmedabad, India. This reflects the UK's commitment to accessible, innovative, and inclusive education, but also demonstrates the positive impact of the National Education Policy 2020. Aligned with the shared ambition outlined in the India-UK Vision 2035, bringing Surrey's expertise to India will create exciting new opportunities for students and equip them with the skills needed to thrive in the future."*

Surrey University



Image: 09/10/2025. Mumbai, India. Prime Minister Keir Starmer meets Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a bilateral meeting at the Raj Bhavan. Picture by Simon Dawson / No 10 Downing Street

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## Businesses get £2 million boost in Surrey

An economic boost worth millions, scores of new jobs and hundreds of local opportunities will be delivered thanks to funding awarded to dozens of businesses by Surrey County Council.

From vineyards and biotech to manufacturing and AI firms, a diverse range of organisations from across the county have been awarded grants in the first round of the Surrey Economic Growth Fund.

The scheme, launched by the council in April, brings together pooled funding streams including the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund. Following a highly competitive process, close to £2 million has been awarded to dozens of recipients, unlocking significant match funding and private investment.

The successful bids are collectively estimated to grow Surrey's economy by £9 million, create or safeguard 300 jobs and bring 1,350 residents into employment.

### Local firms supported

Among those receiving funding is Aero Sensor, a technology firm at Dunsfold Industrial Park in Cranleigh, led by former F1 engineer Dr Barney Garrod. The company is one of only three globally developing new aerodynamic measurement probes for automotive and aerospace applications.

The grant will support the creation of a new wind tunnel facility to test its designs, creating highly skilled jobs in the process.

Dr Garrod said:

*"The grant enabled us to fully kit out the wind tunnel with the tools and instruments we need. We'll also be hiring new staff and technicians. Having our own wind tunnel means we can halve our turnaround time and massively accelerate our development. It's moved the business forward by about a year."*





Other successful bids include Woodlark Nurseries in Hersham, which is creating a new horticultural facility, while Upper Birtley Farm Partnership near Bramley will establish a premium glamping and outdoor education site in the Surrey Hills.

In Godalming, Sammi-Select will develop a 'practice interview' tool adapted from an AI platform to support marginalised jobseekers such as young people not in education or training and those who are digitally excluded.

## County-wide initiatives

There are county-wide projects too, including the Surrey Venture Studio scheme, a collaboration between Surrey's three universities to support start-ups, and Source in Surrey, led by the county's Chambers of Commerce, encouraging larger businesses to 'buy local'.

Both are expected to complement existing work through the council's Business Surrey initiative.

Councillor Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said:

"The new Economic Growth Fund has generated a huge level of interest from across Surrey, demonstrating the real appetite from our amazing business community to drive innovation, growth and job creation in our county.

"Round one was highly competitive and we've only supported the highest quality bids which fully met the criteria. This ensures every pound invested delivers genuine growth, meaningful jobs and positive outcomes for Surrey's communities.

"Our ambition is to position Surrey—which already contributes £50 billion to UK plc every year—as one of the UK's leading regional economies, and this fund is one of the ways we're building the foundations to achieve that."

## Next round

Round Two of the Surrey Economic Growth Fund is due to launch in October, focusing on Business Growth Grants. Applicants can expect a streamlined, one-stage process supported by a guidance handbook.

For full details visit: [businesssurrey.co.uk/innovate/economic-growth-fund](https://businesssurrey.co.uk/innovate/economic-growth-fund)

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Epsom and Ewell Times reporter adds Epsom winner Lesh Wear (or Lesh), is a maternity and nursing wear company focused on creating comfortable, leak-proof products for mothers, such as their FREEFLO nursing bra, aiming to reduce the use of disposable breast pads. The company, also known as Lesh Wear Ltd, was incorporated in March 2022 and is headquartered in Epsom, Surrey, with the primary goal of making the breastfeeding journey easier.

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## Recipients of Round One funding

A total of £1,979,982 has been awarded to the following organisations:

- Dorking Distillery, Dorking
- Halt Glass, Guildford
- Emilia JH, Reigate
- Sammi-Select, Godalming
- Molecular Medical, Guildford
- Bonovate, Camberley
- Woven Bio, Woking
- Streetwise Technology
- The Good Bacteria Company, Farnham



- UKIOT, Weybridge
- Lesh Wear, Epsom
- Woodlark Nurseries, Hersham
- Aero Sensor, Dunsfold
- Rhizo PTX, Guildford
- Cambertronics, Cranleigh
- Misty Moon Cider, Farnham
- DIREK, Guildford
- Tiontech, Guildford
- Raw Honey Distillery, Fetcham
- Whitespace Work Software, Godalming
- LenzIQ, Horley
- GT Joinery, Molesey
- Source in Surrey (via Surrey Chambers of Commerce)
- Surrey Venture Studio
- Surrey Innovation Board (via the University of Surrey)
- Blakes Lane Farm, Guildford
- Upper Birtley Farm Partnership
- Ivelle Farm, Waverley

Image: Matt Furniss, Exec Member for Growth, with Barney Garrood of Aerosensor  
Surrey County Council



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## Energy storage plan takes a battering from a Surrey Council

A bid to build a huge battery storage farm on green belt land in Shepperton has been thrown out after councillors decided it didn't pass the 'special circumstances' test needed to build on protected countryside.

Sunbury BESS Ltd wanted to install 50 industrial-scale battery units – each the size of a shipping container – on 3.5 hectares of land north of Charlton Lane, next to the Eco Park. The site, sandwiched between the M3 and the railway line, is designated green belt.

Objecting to the scheme, Nigel Spooner said: "We ask the committee to refuse this application and thus avoid inflicting on Charlton village, Shepperton and Sunbury an entirely inappropriate, unnecessary and hazardous blight for the next 40 years."

Officers had originally concluded the project's climate benefits – supporting renewable energy and cutting carbon – outweighed





the harm to the green belt and local landscape.

But Spelthorne Borough Council's planning committee threw out the application on September 17, arguing there simply were not any "very special circumstances" to justify bulldozing into green belt land.

The scheme, designed to store energy for the National Grid and release it when demand peaks, was pitched as helping the UK hit its climate targets.

The battery site would store electricity when there is plenty spare and feed it back into the grid when demand is high to help balance the supply. The applicant's agent said at the meeting: "The project will actively contribute to decarbonisation by reducing renewable energy curtailment."

But Green Party Cllr Malcolm Beecher argued: "If we are still using fossil fuel power in our power stations to generate the electricity going into the batteries for storage, we are not reducing our carbon emissions.

"Unless we have a condition that only green energy can be stored in these batteries, there are no special circumstances to have it in the green belt."

The company halved the size of its original plans following strong objections, but locals still were not convinced. Residents wrote more than 40 letters objecting to the proposal, raising fears about fire risk, noise, health hazards and what they described as "the industrialisation" of Shepperton's countryside.

But in the end, it was the location that killed the scheme. Planning officers said the battery farm counted as "inappropriate development" in the Green Belt, causing a "significant loss of openness" and clashing with rules designed to stop urban sprawl.

Despite concerns about fire risks and safety, officials said there was no evidence to refuse the battery farm on these grounds. Surrey Fire and Rescue service as well as the Health and Safety Executive raised no objections.

A planning report stated: "The proposal would introduce a range of industrial plant within an open field, resulting in considerable harm to the openness of the Green Belt and encroaching into the countryside. These harms are not clearly outweighed by the benefits put forward."

The decision is a major blow for Sunbury BESS Ltd, which argued the project would provide vital infrastructure to balance renewable energy supply and demand.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: An example of a battery storage "farm": Invenergy Beech Ridge Energy Storage System at Beech Ridge Wind Farm in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Author Z22. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

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## Surrey Uni studies the climate friendly way to grow our lettuces

Vertical farming has been hailed as a futuristic answer to Britain's food security challenges – but a new study led by the University of Surrey suggests the picture is more complicated.

The research, published in *Food and Energy Security*, found that while vertical farms can deliver extraordinary crop yields and use far less water than traditional fields, their carbon footprint still exceeds that of soil-based farming.

### What is vertical farming?

Unlike conventional agriculture, vertical farms grow crops indoors, often in stacked trays under carefully controlled light, temperature and humidity. Plants are usually grown without soil, using hydroponic or aeroponic systems that deliver nutrients directly to their roots. This means vertical farms can operate in cities, warehouses, or disused buildings – and, crucially, they are not dependent on weather or seasons.

Proponents argue that this approach could free up farmland for nature, cut transport emissions by producing food closer to consumers, and help guarantee supplies as climate change disrupts traditional growing regions.



## The Surrey-led study

The University of Surrey team compared lettuce grown in a commercial UK vertical farm with lettuce from two UK field farms – one on mineral soil and one on peat – and with Spanish farms, which supply around 95% of Britain's winter lettuce.

They found that vertical farms can produce more than 20 times the yield of field farms: around 97 kilograms of lettuce per square metre, compared with just 3.3 kilograms outdoors. Water use is also dramatically lower, at 0.9 m<sup>3</sup>/kg compared with up to 7.3 m<sup>3</sup>/kg in Spain.

But the greenhouse gas emissions are still higher. Even when powered by renewable energy, vertically farmed lettuce produced about 0.93 kg of greenhouse gases per kilogram, compared with 0.57 kg from UK field farms.

## Energy and materials the key hurdles

Much of the carbon burden comes from the heavy energy demands of lighting and climate control, as well as the jute fibre plugs used to support plant roots. Researchers estimate that swapping these for alternatives such as coconut coir could cut the land footprint of vertical farms by more than 95%.

Michael Gargaro, Postgraduate Researcher at Surrey's Centre for Environment and Sustainability and lead author of the study, said:

"Vertical farming has the potential to transform food security in the UK, particularly as climate change and seasonal drought place growing pressure on traditional agriculture. Our research shows that while the technology can bring far higher yields and reduce water use, it currently comes with a higher carbon cost. The challenge now is to make vertical farming more energy-efficient and better integrated with renewable systems, so that it can become a truly sustainable solution."

Dr Zoe M Harris, Director of the Centre and Co-Director of the Institute for Sustainability, added:

"With around 95 per cent of lettuce imported from Spain during the winter months, advances in vertical farming make it possible to secure a year-round supply of fresh produce while freeing up land for restoration. But to viably compete with field farming, vertical farms must cut their energy use and rethink the materials they rely on."

## Can vertical farms really feed the UK?

The study concludes that vertical farms are not yet the most sustainable option for lettuce. But with further innovation – particularly in energy efficiency and material use – they could become an essential part of Britain's food system. For now, they remain a promising supplement to, rather than a replacement for, traditional farming.

The research was funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).