

Report of the Assistant Director Policy and Strategy

Portfolio of the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change

Carbon Reduction Update

Summary

1. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and set an ambition for York to be a net zero carbon city by 2030.
2. This paper provides an update on carbon reduction activity across the council over the last 12 months.
3. The first York Climate Change Strategy will provide the framework for collective action to realise our ambition and the strategic objectives that the city will work towards.
4. Emissions from the council's corporate activity have reduced by 38% since 2005. We are on track to reduce our direct emissions to net zero by 2030.
5. Reflecting the ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030, there is already a significant programme of carbon reduction activity underway across the council.

Recommendation

6. Scrutiny members are asked to note the content of this report.

Climate Change Strategy

7. The York Climate Change Strategy combines a robust scientific evidence base with extensive stakeholder and resident engagement, through Our Big Conversation, to create a framework for citywide action that can achieve our net zero carbon ambition.
8. The Strategy includes the first greenhouse gas emissions inventory for the city (figure 1) which shows total direct carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions for York in 2018 were 936,000t. Existing buildings are responsible for around 60% of our emissions, with space heating and hot water being the main source. Transport is the other significant contributor, with the majority of these emissions coming from road travel.

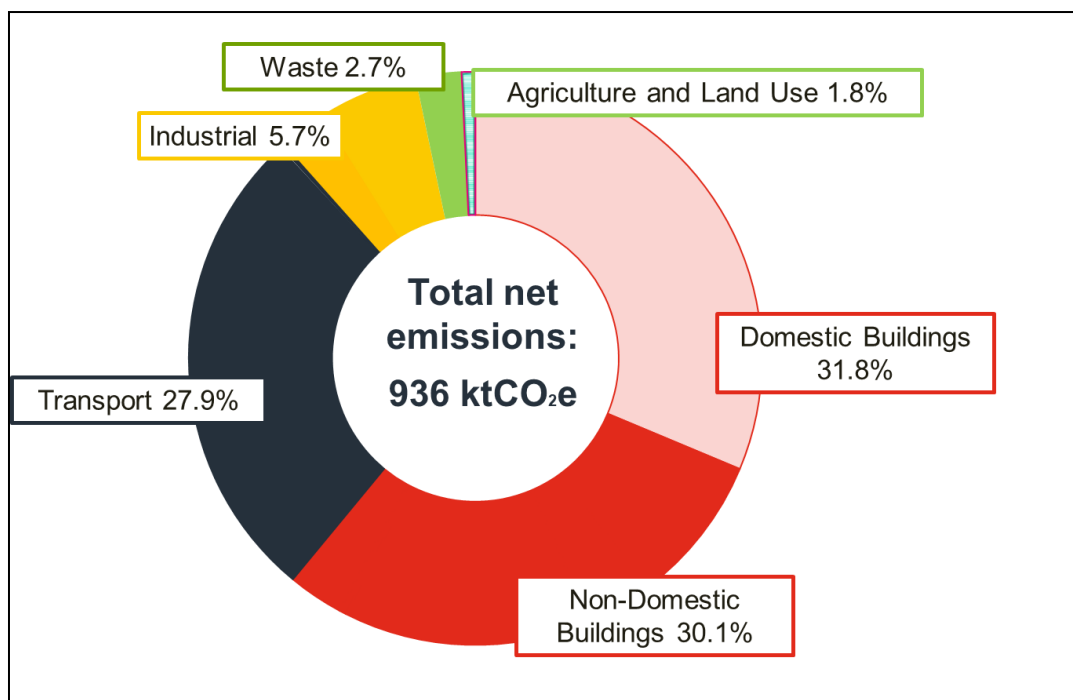


Figure 1: York Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (source: SCATTER)

9. A roadmap has been developed based on four strategic approaches:
 - i. Significant emissions reduction consisting of actions that can be delivered with currently available technology, deployment rates and policy as described by the 'High Ambition decarbonisation pathway';

- ii. Going beyond the high ambition when new technology, deployment and policy mechanisms challenging central government and key organisations to help us to go further faster;
 - iii. Removing remaining emissions from the atmosphere through nature based and technological solutions (Insetting and Offsetting); and
 - iv. Being prepared for a changing climate and extreme weather events now through the development of appropriate plans and investment opportunities
10. The strategy will embed a series of core principles throughout the strategic framework covering:
 - a) Increasing collaboration and cooperation
 - b) Adapting to change
 - c) Building inclusive, healthy, sustainable communities
 - d) Creating new employment and investment opportunities
 - e) Providing accurate information
11. Strategic Objectives consider the local challenges and opportunities in York. The objectives cover the core themes of Buildings, Transport, Industrial & Commercial, Waste, Natural Environment and Energy Supply.
12. The Strategy identifies potential economic, social and environmental co-benefits for York including:
 - Significant financial savings for residents and businesses from energy bills
 - Creation of new employment across the city
 - Support for thousands of households across the city that are in fuel poverty
 - Improvements to local air quality
 - Making the city's homes warmer, safer and more comfortable
 - More green spaces across the city and increased biodiversity
13. The Strategy provides case studies and examples of carbon reduction best practice from across the city and sets out the monitoring framework, which includes transparent reporting through the York Open Data Platform.

Strategic alignment

14. The Climate Change Strategy will be ready for adoption at the same time as the emerging Economic Strategy and 10-year plan. In addition, the health and wellbeing strategy is due to be refreshed this year.
15. To be successful, each of these strategies will require a city-wide approach with the council, residents, partners and businesses working together to achieve the objectives.
16. The strategies are now being iteratively aligned through internal workshops, by checking the strategic ambition, objectives, tone and pace are consistent with each other and that there are no unintended consequences or missed opportunities.
17. Strategies will then be refined with resident, community groups and scrutiny consultation and further engagement (this includes the next phase of Our Big Conversation).
18. Strategies will be presented to show their interdependencies and links to other strategies. They will share components such as using case studies to share real examples and executive summaries that highlight the interdependencies.
19. Each strategy, by its nature, is interdependent, city wide and provides a focal point for partners and stakeholders to work together on behalf of the city.
20. By articulating our ambition in health, environment and the economy, we will also be better prepared to influence emerging regional infrastructures, such as the Integrated health and care system (ICS) or the recently announced Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA).
21. In addition, the strategies will inform the 10 year plan which is currently being developed with partners and aims to establish conditions that better support York throughout the next decade.

22. More information about the Climate Change Strategy is in **Annex A: Climate Change Strategy Update**.

Corporate Emissions

23. Carbon Emissions associated with the council's corporate activity has been reported for the first time, covering the financial year 2020/21:

Source	Unit	Total	CO ₂ e	Cost (£)
CYC buildings – Electricity	kWh	5,407,807	-	£816,283
Street lighting – Electricity	kWh	6,011,316	-	£894,947
CYC buildings - Gas	kWh	9,518,654	1,713	£289,918
CYC buildings - Water	m ³	54,559	23	£110,957
Corporate Waste (total)	tonnes	222	5	
Recycling		31	1	
CYC Fleet (total)		710,511	1,904	
Gasoil	ltrs	38,476	103	£699,148
Diesel		672,036	1,801	
Business travel (Total)		NA	12	
Flights		-	-	
Trains		NA	1	
Hotels		NA	2	
Car Club (total)	miles	38,750	10	£166,584
Diesel		749	0	
Unleaded		25,734	7	
Hybrid		12,066	2	
Electric		201	0	
Land use	Trees	230	-22	
Total			3,635	£2,977,837

24. The council's corporate emissions account for 3.8% of citywide greenhouse gas emissions, demonstrating the importance of collaboration and cooperation to deliver out net zero ambition.
25. Based on the current available data, our fleet and gas consumption account for the majority (98.7%) of our corporate emissions.
26. Since April 2020, we now purchase 100% renewable electricity, reducing our emissions by approximately 3,800tCO₂/yr. Electricity consumption, however, still accounts for significant cost and opportunities to reduce demand should still be considered for financial benefits.

Project Updates

Natural environment: York Community Woodland

27. The Council has appointed Forestry England as delivery partner to create and maintain the York Community Woodland, a new 78ha green amenity space with over 6km of trails and over 100,000 trees located to the west of Knapton.
28. Forestry England are utilising funding secured through DEFRA's Trees for Climate Fund to deliver and maintain the woodland at no cost to the council – a saving of almost £1m.
29. The project has been co-designed with considerable community involvement and will deliver on the original objectives to:
 - a) Increase amenity green space for improving physical and mental health and wellbeing
 - b) Provide carbon sequestration – the woodland will absorb over 26,000t of carbon over the next 40 years.
 - c) Creates a diverse wildlife habitat that increases biodiversity
 - d) Provides new employment, volunteering and nature based learning opportunities
 - e) Create Opportunities for greater public involvement in nature, improving awareness of, and skills for, nature conservation
30. The project was selected by the Local Government Association as a [best practice case study](#) for community involvement in a nature based climate change solution during CoP26.
31. The woodland is at the heart of York's successful bid to be a Champion City for the [Queens Green Canopy](#) and will host an iconic tree-planting event to celebrate the platinum jubilee.

Transport

32. We completed the purchase of two EV refuse trucks, reducing emissions from our waste fleet and have plans to transition all corporate vehicles less than 3.5t to electric over the next 4 years

33. Significant increase and improvements to the electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the city, including the planned opening of the new Hyper Hubs at Poppleton Bar and Monks Cross.

Waste: circular economy

34. SMEs in York have been provided with the opportunity to participate in the Yorkshire Circular Economy pilot; supporting our businesses to reduce waste and resource use, leading to environmental and financial savings.

Buildings: Energy

35. Secured over £3m of central government funding to deliver home energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy installations as part of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) scheme.

Increasing collaboration and cooperation

36. On 10th November, we hosted the Net Zero Building Solutions event at York Community Stadium. The day included a series of presentations and an exhibition of net zero building solutions to over 60 attendees.
37. In August, we launched the Climate Change E-newsletter, which now has over 300 subscribers. The newsletter provides latest news of projects and programmes tackling climate change from across the city.

Council Plan

38. The Climate Change Strategy relates to the ambitions for York to achieve net zero carbon and the Greener and Cleaner outcome.

Implications

- **Financial** – No comments received
- **Human Resources (HR)** – There are limited HR implications associated with this update report. There are existing and sufficient arrangements in place for all services in the event of extreme weather

impacting on staff / services which would include the implementation of individual business continuity plans. There is also advice available for staff where their working hours are affected by severe weather. Any additional CYC employment opportunities that become available as a result of funding projects will be advertised in line with current HR recruitment processes.

Staff will be made aware of the climate change strategy and how they can make a contribution in their role and be part of the big conversation.

- **Equalities** – There are no equalities implications associated with this report. Equalities implications will be considered when looking at the specific actions set out in the strategy to identify if people with protected characteristics are treated less favourably
- **Legal** – No implications noted
- **Crime and Disorder** – No implications noted
- **Information Technology (IT)** – Deployment of IoT sensors will be used on our new housing stock to monitor and manage the energy performance of new homes
- **Property** – Contained in the report and the proposed Forestry England lease for Knapton as reported to Executive previously is currently being drafted by property and legal officers
- **Other**

Risk Management

23. The following risks are associated with this report:

- A lack of stakeholder engagement could produce a Climate Change Strategy that does not reflect the whole city and therefore falls short of our ambitions. The second phase of Our Big Conversation has been designed in a way to ensure as broad participation as possible with opportunities for greater insight from identified groups.
- National emissions data is used to apportion local emissions reporting. This may not be an accurate reflection of actual emissions associated city activity. We are working with partners to develop a consistent methodology to measure a more accurate local impact.

- With a 2.5 year time lag for the data, it will be some time before the impact of policies is really understood. This brings a risk that inadvertent and negative impacts aren't acted on quickly enough. To mitigate this risk the council will work with city partners, and draw on available evidence to better understand impact until the accurate data is available

Contact Details

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Report Date 2/2/22
Approved

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: Climate Change Strategy Update

Background papers

York Community Woodland

https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s151731/Exec%20Report_YCW_26%20Aug%202021.pdf

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s151994/EMDS%20report%208%20Sept%202021%20York%20Community%20Woodland.pdf>

Emissions Reporting

https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s153499/EMDS_Corporate%20Emissions%20Report_2021.pdf

https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s153498/EMDS_York%20Emissions%20Inventory%20Report_2021.pdf

General

<https://www.york.gov.uk/ClimateChange>