

Meeting:	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency
Meeting date:	19/11/2024
Report of:	Claire Foale, Interim Director of City Development
Portfolio of:	Cllr Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Decision Report: Annual Carbon Emissions Report 2023/24

Subject of Report

1. City of York Council (the Council) has set a target to reduce carbon emissions from corporate activity to net zero by 2030. An Annual Carbon Emissions Report is produced to monitor progress against this target and identify areas of improvement.
2. The Council's emissions have been reported using the Local Government Association's Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool. The data collected covers the Council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions as well as some of the Council's Scope 3 emissions.
3. This report marks the fourth year of reporting carbon emissions for the Council's buildings and operations. In some areas, there is data available dating back to 2015/16, which has been used for historical comparisons.
4. Where possible, comparative data is shown. However, it should be noted that the final corporate carbon emissions figure includes additional data not presented in previous years reporting.

Benefits and Challenges

5. Annual publication of the Council's operational emissions allows us to monitor progress towards our net zero by 2030 ambition, while also identifying opportunities for further carbon reduction activities.

Regular reporting will track the impact of our work to enable corrective activity if required.

6. The Council continually strives to increase the scope of its reporting to accurately reflect the carbon impact of its operations and activities. This can be particularly challenging where our Scope 3 emissions are concerned. In recent years we have sought to expand the remit of our Scope 3 reporting to include items such as material usage, employee commuting and homeworking and staff business travel.
7. Sharing progress to reduce our corporate carbon emissions in an accessible and transparent way is crucial for public, city-wide support in the key areas for the council to address. Public and transparent annual reporting through public meetings and the York Open Data platform¹ provides a monitoring framework for this to occur.

Policy Basis for Decision

8. Climate is one of the four core commitments in the Council Plan (2023-27), requiring the Council to understand and take consideration of climate impacts and all our actions have on the environment when making Council decisions.
9. One of the Key Performance Indicators for Council delivery against this core commitment is the level of carbon emissions from council buildings and operations. Consequently, this annual report is key to monitoring the delivery of the Council Plan.
10. The Council Plans has also set a priority for '*Cutting carbon, enhancing the environment for our future*', which describes a number of actions, including exploring and accelerating our activities to become a net zero carbon Council. This report demonstrates the carbon impact associated with Council operations to inform future plans and policies.
11. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and set the ambition for York to reach net zero by 2030. The subsequent York Climate Change Strategy (2022-32) and Climate Change Action Plan guide progress towards this ambition. The Climate Change

¹ York Open Data

<https://www.york.gov.uk/YorkOpenData#:~:text=York%20Open%20Data%20was%20launched,transport%2C%20energy%20and%20community%20engagement.>

Strategy and Action Plan state that the council will report annually through publicly available forums (Council, Executive and Scrutiny) and the York Open Data Platform.

Financial Strategy Implications

12. The report identifies a number of actions that the carbon reduction team propose to undertake over the coming year. The majority are contained within agreed budgets. The Council has also been successful in attracting external funding and will continue to maximise such funding to match fund Council contributions.
13. The Council has set capital funds aside to upgrade the fleet with electric vehicles where practical. There are also budgets set aside for replacing lights in Council buildings with LED through the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Net Zero Fund.
14. Other carbon reduction measures will explore implementation via grant funding. Grant funding schemes relevant to the Council's operational emissions include the Low Carbon Skills Fund, Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund, Carbon Negative Challenge Fund and other regional and national funding sources.

Recommendation and Reasons

15. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - i) Approve the Annual Emissions Report for publication.

Reason: To monitor progress against the Council's ambition to be net zero by 2030.

Background

Accounting Methodology

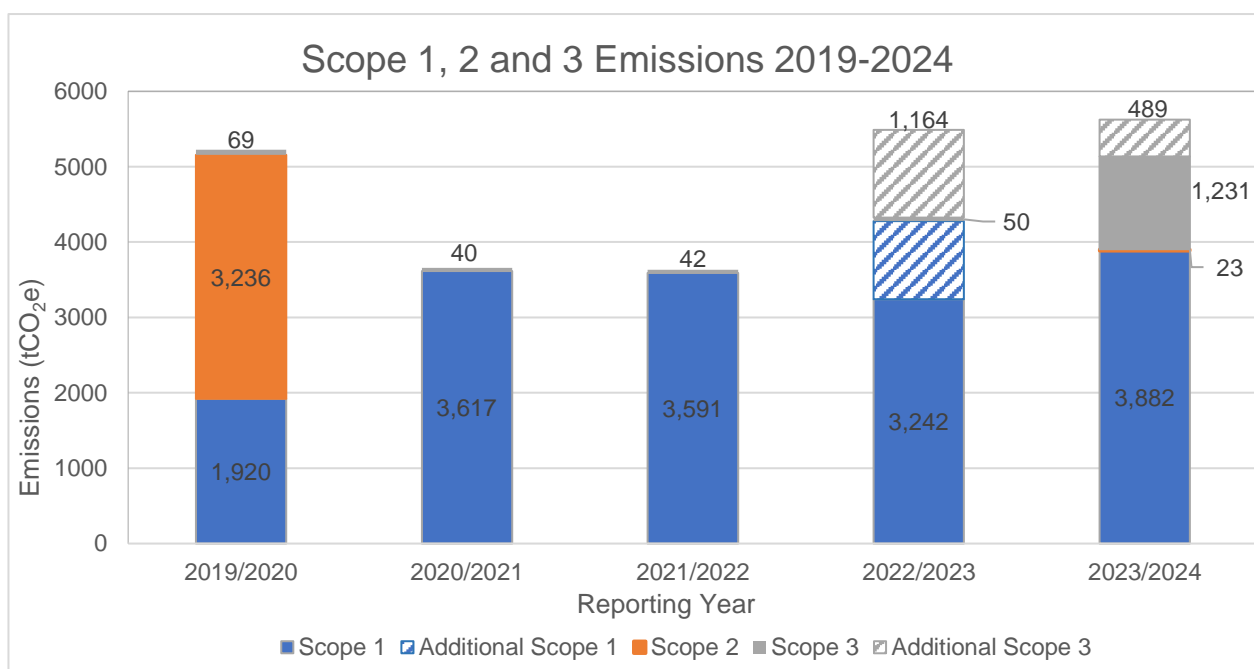
16. The Council's 2023/24 emissions are reported using the Local Government Association's (LGA) Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool.
17. An operational boundary was adopted to account for sites the Council has ownership of, or maintenance responsibility over. This

includes the Council's own corporate buildings, maintained schools and libraries.

18. 2022/23 was the first year in which the reporting scope was expanded to include buildings beyond the Council's corporate buildings. Accounting for the emissions of our wider estate portfolio is important to understand how we can holistically reduce emissions to achieve the Council's ambition for net zero by 2030.
19. In 2023/24, there has been a further expansion of the scope, and some recategorisation of data. Details of this are provided below.

Annual Emissions 2023/24

20. The Council's operational emissions totalled 5,625 tCO₂e in 2023/24. Direct (Scope 1) emissions from Council-owned buildings and vehicles are the largest contributor to operational emissions. Scope 2 emissions (from purchased and metered electricity) are deemed to be zero due to our green tariff², aside from the electricity used by our electric fleet vehicles outside of our own electric charge points. Indirect (Scope 3) emissions result from the wider supply chain, rather than from activities under direct control.



² 2 Since April 2020, we purchase 100% renewable electricity, reducing our emissions by 2,225 tCO₂e this year. 23tCO₂e have been produced by electricity for cars and vans in our fleet using the public charging network.

Table 1: Corporate emissions in 2023/24 across Scope 1, 2, 3 and Outsourced Scope 3.

Scope	Scope Definition	Emissions Type	Emissions (tCO₂e)
Scope 1	<i>Direct GHG emissions from buildings, plant and vehicles owned or controlled by City of York Council</i>	Heating	2,230
		Authority's Fleet	1,652
Scope 2	<i>Indirect emissions associated with purchased energy consumed by City of York Council</i>	Electricity	23
Scope 3	<i>All other indirect emissions that occur in the Council's supply chain.</i>	Staff Business Travel	41
		Staff Commuting	10
		Working From Home	708
		Transmission and Distribution Losses	194
		Material Use	229
		Waste	12
		Water	37
Outsourced Scope 3	<i>Indirect emissions that occur from outsourced operations.</i>	GLL (Leisure Centres)	489
Total Emissions 5,625			

21. In April 2022, the scope of reported data has been expanded to include maintained schools and museums managed by York Museums Trust (YMT). Data on YMT has not been incorporated this year, as following the operational boundary YMT falls outside of the Council's operational control due to the lease agreement in place.
22. In 2023/24, the LGA's Accounting Tool was updated to incorporate Outsourced Scope 3. The Outsourced Scope 3 category is for emissions that come from activities provided to the local authority by other parties and/or outsourced operations.
23. To reflect this change, our previously unreported contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), who operate our leisure centres, has been included as an outsourced service.

24. This is the second reporting year to include a wider range of the Council's Scope 3 activities, including material usage, transmission and distribution (T&D) losses³, staff commuting and home working. Increasing the scope of data collection allows us to identify key areas for emission reduction; we will continue to expand the scope of reporting where feasible.
25. An additional 2,250 tCO₂e has been accounted from these additional data sources in 2023/24. Taking into account the addition of leisure centre data, the like-for-like comparison between 2022/23 and 2023/24 is minimal, with <0.3% increase in emissions. This increase is largely due to the increased data coverage for material usage, water and gas consumption.

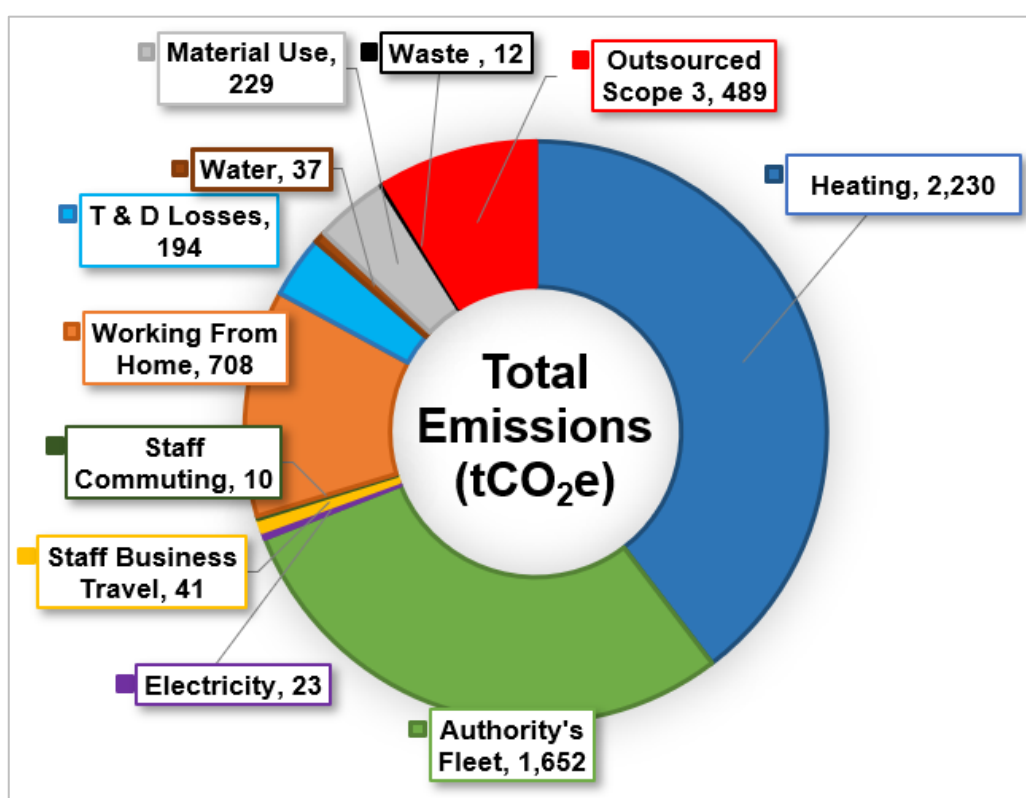


Figure 1 The Council's operational emissions in reporting year 2023/24 by category.

Gas Usage

26. Gas usage from buildings is the Council's most carbon intensive activity. Figure 3 illustrates the emissions associated with different building types within the Council's portfolio, including: corporate buildings, libraries, leisure centres and maintained schools.

³ Transmission and distribution losses occur during the generation of electricity, steam, heating, and cooling.

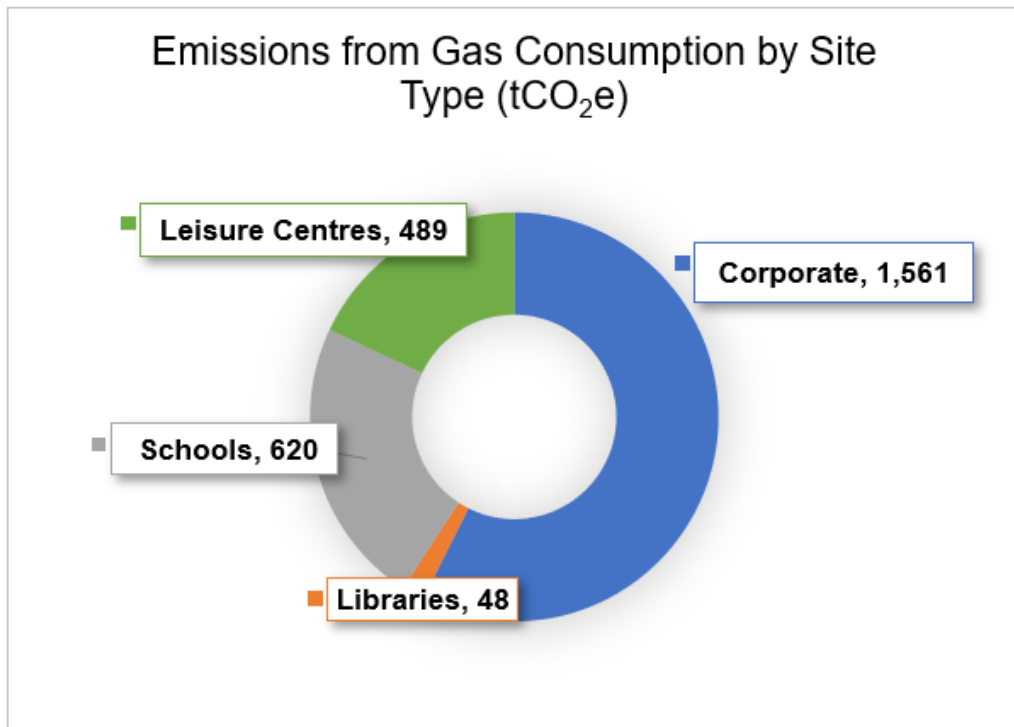


Figure 3 Emissions from gas usage at leisure centres, corporate buildings, schools, and libraries in reporting year 2023/24.

27. The Council's gas use from all Council buildings was responsible for over half (52%) of total CO₂e emissions and cost £2,347,487 in this reporting year. Gas use from corporate buildings alone is responsible for 26% of emissions and accounted for an annual expenditure of £1,266,722.
28. The additional costs shown in Figure 4 reflect the rising costs of energy supply chains that have impacted the UK as a whole, and not as a result of any local change.

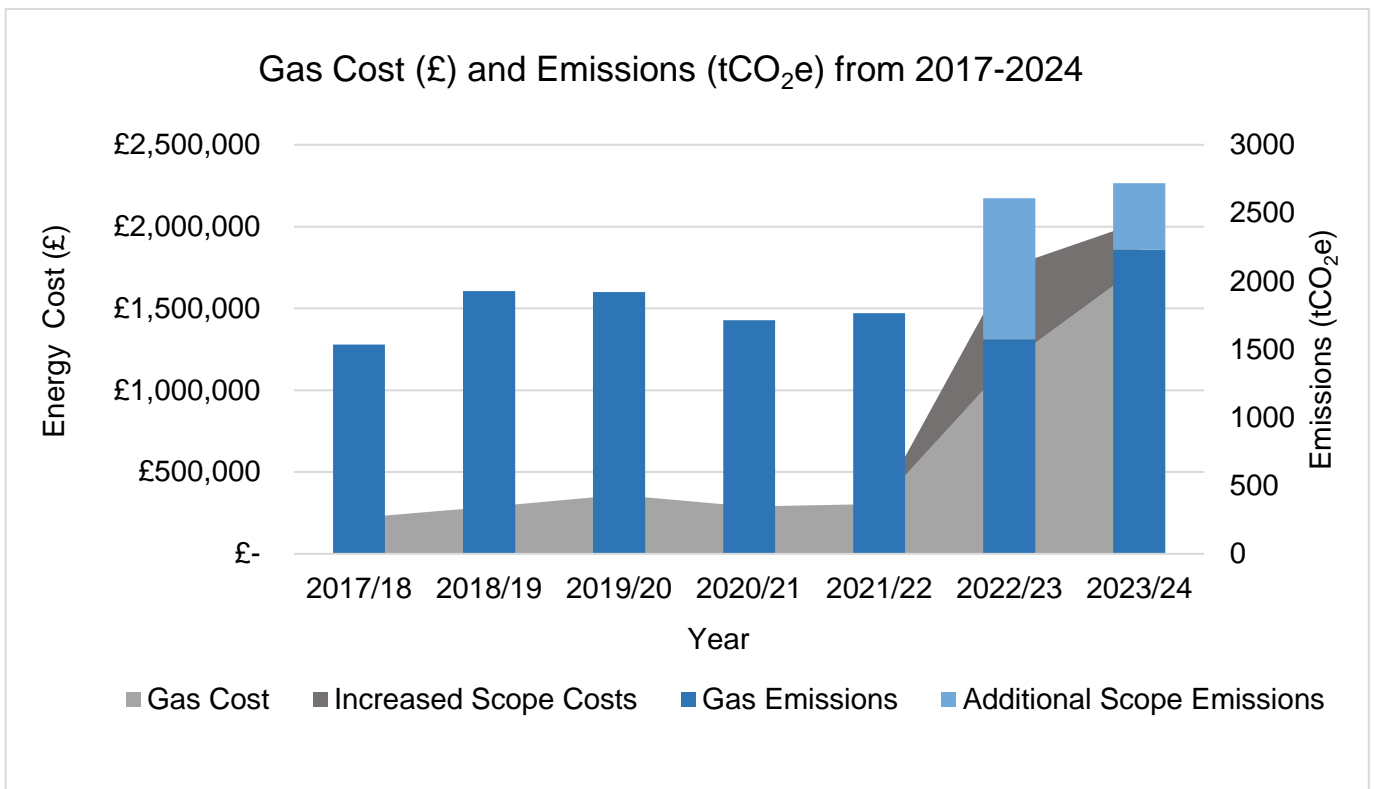


Figure 2: Emissions and cost from gas usage in 2023/24. Additional Scope categories include Leisure Centres, which have not previously been reported.

29. The Council adopts the energy hierarchy ‘Be Lean’, ‘Be Clean’, ‘Be Green’ and ‘Be Seen’ approach to use less energy, maximise the efficiency of the existing infrastructure, and encourage low and zero carbon technologies to deliver the best outcomes in emissions reduction from our buildings⁴.
30. To implement this hierarchical approach, decarbonisation plans for one library site and one corporate site have been completed, using funding from the Northeast and Yorkshire Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme, alongside plans for 21 schools and five leisure centres that were the previous year through the Low Carbon Skills Fund.
31. The Council has also produced plans for our seven highest-emitting corporate sites. These plans identify key building fabric upgrades and opportunities for low and zero carbon technologies. These plans will be progressed via grant funding when feasible.

⁴ City of York Local Plan Consolidated Main Modifications January 2023: <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/8756/proposed-main-modifications-schedule>

Electricity Usage

32. The Council has adopted a green tariff for all electricity consumption and as such no emissions are attributed to electricity usage from buildings and streetlighting. The reduction in emissions achieved by implementing this tariff is illustrated in Figure 5.

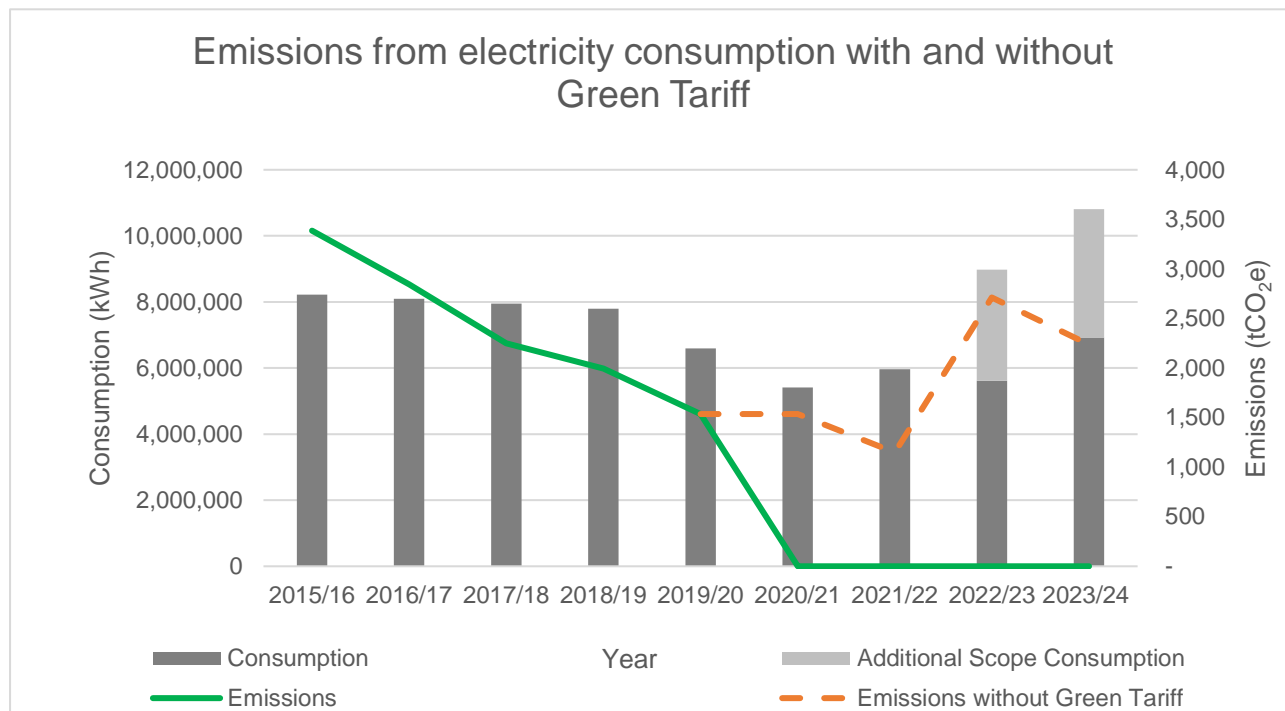


Figure 3: Electricity consumption by council buildings, streetlighting and EV charging. From April 2020, the Council has purchased a green tariff for buildings and streetlighting. In 2023/24, the 'Additional Scope' categories include Leisure Centres.

33. Electricity usage from the Council's buildings represents 78% of consumption, streetlighting represent 22% and EV Charging from fleet vehicles represents 1%.
34. The only emissions attributed to electricity usage from the Council are from the electric vehicles in the fleet. These account for a minimal proportion of total emissions (0.4%). From April 2024, these vehicles will no longer use the public charging network, and will instead be powered by chargers at Hazel Court Eco Depot. As such, there will be no emissions associated with charging these vehicles going forward.
35. The Council's partnership with Solar for Schools has seen solar panels installed on four CYC schools: Clifton Green Primary School, Lord Deramore's Primary School, Dringhouses Primary School, and Danesgate School.

36. Since 2015/16 estimated electricity consumption for street lighting has decreased by more than half, due to LED upgrades and disconnected sites. York has approximately 21,500 lighting columns; nearly 70% of the lamps in these columns have been upgraded to LED.
37. The Council has received funding for a streetlight LED conversion project for 1,200 of these columns through the York and North Yorkshire Net Zero Fund. Replacement of these lamps with LED will reduce annual emissions by over 50%, resulting in a carbon saving of 74tCO₂e/yr. Nearly 300 columns have already been upgraded, with the remaining 900 set to be completed by March 2025.

Water

38. Emissions from Water consumption and treatment comprise just 0.7% of our emissions in 2023/24 (37tCO₂e).
39. Several Council buildings, including key sites West Offices and Hazel Court, use sustainable water design features such as rainwater harvesting.

Fleet

40. Emissions associated with our fleet are slightly reduced from 2022/23 (-1%) and have maintained a 10% decrease from 2020/21. This long-term reduction reflects the impact of the 4-year fleet replacement programme in which many vehicles have been transferred to Electric Vehicles.

Business Travel

41. Staff business travel using flights, hotels, trains, and our rent-a-car service has overall decreased by nearly half (47%) since 2022/23. While there have been some decreases in hotel and plane use, the largest decrease is from the rent-a-car service.
42. Train use on the other hand saw an increase of 8% in emissions from the previous reporting year, due to more journeys being made by train in 2023/24.

43. One short haul return flight was taken in 2023/24 for business travel purposes. There were also two return Eurostar train journeys. International travel is avoided where feasible, and more sustainable transportation methods are encouraged.

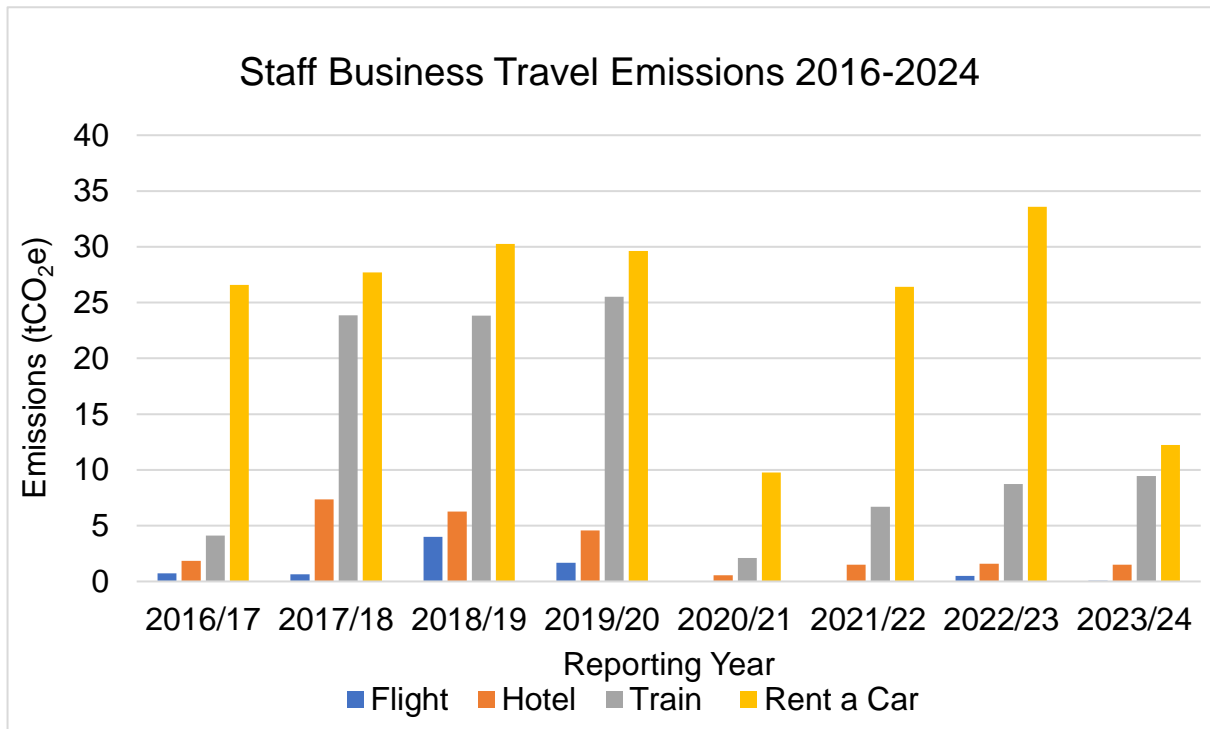
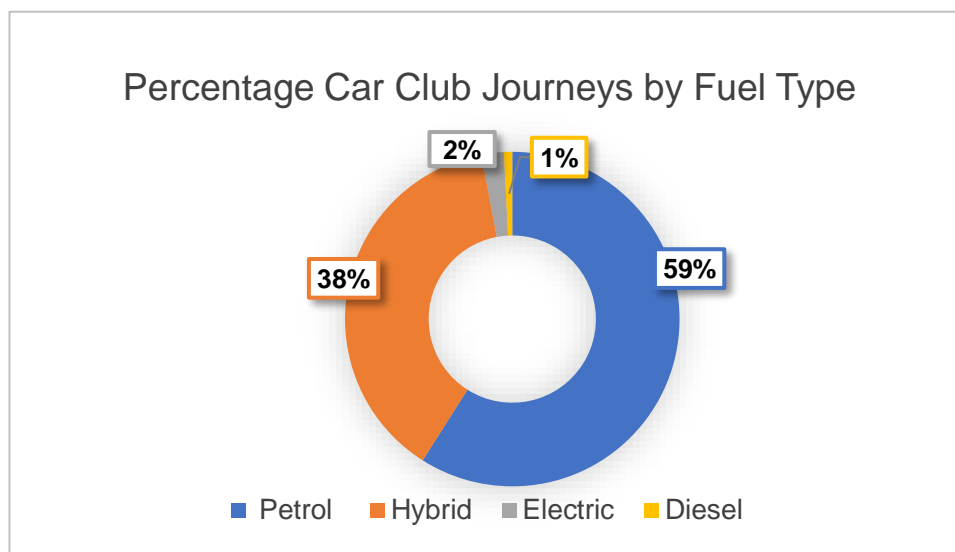


Figure 4: Emissions from staff business travel 2016-2024.

Car Club

44. From 2017, the Council began using Enterprise Car Club pool vehicles. The fleet consists of vehicles that run on unleaded petrol, diesel, hybrid electric and full electric. The breakdown of these journeys can be seen in Figure 7.



45. To reduce emissions from the Car Club, the proportion of hybrid and electric vehicles is increasing, and staff are encouraged to use electric and hybrid vehicles rather than petrol or diesel. Hybrid car journeys have increased 8% compared to 2023/24, and diesel usage has decreased. Enterprise use a preventative maintenance scheme which helps to keep vehicles running more efficiently.

Waste and Recycling

46. Waste from our corporate buildings and schools accounted for 12.4tCO₂e this reporting year, an 8% decrease from 2022/23. Emissions from waste and recycling in both schools and corporate sites have reduced since 2022/23, with the overall amount of waste also declining.



Figure 8: Emissions from waste from council operations across corporate and school sites.

47. The recycling rate at our corporate sites is 20%, largely level with 2022/23. Additional recyclable materials and food waste may be removed from the general waste during processing at Allerton Waste Recovery Park. Electricity is created from the general waste through incineration as an alternative to landfill, also known as energy-from-waste.

Procurement

48. Emissions associated with procured goods and services are not included in this report.
49. In an effort to reduce emissions from our procurement practices, a sustainable procurement policy has been produced and adopted by the Council. Suppliers are routinely asked about their sustainability criteria across a range of categories including: Carbon Reduction, Circular Economy, Biodiversity and Sustainability.
50. The Council's existing Social Value Policy is currently being updated to include several outcomes focused on climate action. Social Value polices offer significant opportunity for the public sector to engage with its supply chain by rewarding organisations that go beyond the provision of just the core contract requirements to deliver more value for the community. Climate action Social Value measures are specifically dedicated to mitigating the risks of climate change and increasing the resilience of our communities.

Material Use

51. Expanding the extent of our reporting to cover a wider range Scope 3 emissions sources allow the Council to build a greater picture of corporate emissions in our wider supply chain. Consequently, we have incorporated the emissions associated with our Building Services since April 2022.
52. Material usage from our corporate activities accounted for 229tCO₂e in 2023/24. Metals, sanitaryware, plastics and cement are the most carbon intensive building materials used.
53. The Council have a carbon neutral working group with our supplier Jewsons, which aims to reduce material use and to find more sustainable alternatives to carbon intensive materials.
54. The products included in this analysis have been increased by 23% in 2023/24, now covering 57% of materials bought by the Council. We will continually aim to improve the collation of this data.
55. The Council will reduce Scope 3 emissions from material usage by following its sustainable procurement policy, working with local

suppliers and choosing less carbon intensive materials where feasible.

Employee Commuting and Work from Home

56. A survey to assess emissions from staff commuting and home-working was distributed in October 2023.
57. This survey will be updated every two years to collect up-to-date information about employee habits. The staff survey relies on self-reporting and estimation methods which must be taken into consideration.
58. The data from last year's survey has been used to calculate employee commuting and homeworking in 2023/24 using the updated conversion factors. Employee homeworking accounted for 708tCO₂e and commuting 9.65tCO₂e.
59. Car usage accounts for the largest proportion of commuter emissions (77%). These emissions are predominantly from petrol and diesel cars. Public transport (buses and trains) account for 18% of emissions from commuting (1.8tCO₂e).
60. The Council encourage sustainable employee commuting through a car sharing scheme, pool bikes, a cycle scheme, secure cycle parking and BetterPoints.
61. An updated Council Travel Plan is under development to encourage behaviour change towards active travel and increase uptake of public transport, in line with the recently approved Local Transport Strategy.
62. Homeworking emissions incorporates the use of office equipment, lighting and heating during the workday. While energy consumption practices when working from home is beyond the Council's direct sphere of influence, we encourage energy saving behaviours amongst staff, and advertise our energy efficiency advice resources⁵.

⁵ Energy Efficiency <https://www.york.gov.uk/EnergyEfficiency>

Actions

63. The City of York Council: Annual Carbon Emissions Report 2023/24 provided several actions for reducing our corporate emissions. Since then, the Council has:
- Published the Local Transport Strategy with its commitment to reduce emissions from transport by 71%
 - Produced a further two heat decarbonisation plans for one corporate and one library site in addition to the 33 plans produced last reporting year.
 - Worked with Solar for Schools to install solar panels on four schools, with further schools due to have solar panels installed in 2024/25.
 - Relaunched York Climate Commission, with 10 working groups focused on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing sustainability across York.
 - Expanded the Travel Plan Working Group and produce a draft travel plan aiming to increase sustainable travel at the Council's workplaces across the fleet, staff business travel and staff commuting.
 - Updated the Climate Change Action Plan with new actions, both targeting operational and city-wide emissions reduction and adaptation.
 - Implemented streetlighting and commercial building LED lighting renewal projects and two renewable heating upgrades at independent living locations through the Combined Authority's Net Zero Fund. These four capital projects are expected to result in more than 1,600 tonnes of carbon emissions saved in the next 15 years.
 - Implemented renewable heating upgrades at Honeysuckle House and Alex Lyon House through the Combined Authority's Net Zero Fund. Installing heat pumps and upgrading the building fabric at these sites is estimated to save more than 760tCO₂e over the next 15 years and achieve a 50% reduction in energy bills.
64. Other actions identified to reduce the Council's operational emissions include:
- Incorporate sustainable procurement and circular economy principles into our purchasing decisions.

- Develop a methodology to calculate Scope 3 emissions associated with Council activity.
- Review the corporate waste contract and undertake a waste audit.

Consultation Analysis

65. The Council's internal Climate Change and Natural Capital Programme Board was consulted to overview the corporate emissions data in its capacity to provide oversight, monitor progress, identify opportunities and manage risk relating to the Climate Change action.
66. The Climate Change and Natural Capital Programme Board agreed priorities are to ensure increased visibility of the impact the Council is making on reducing carbon emissions and increased officer awareness of the understanding individual projects make to contribute to reduction in emissions.
67. To better understand our Scope 3 emissions, council officers were consulted on their commuting and homeworking habits in 2023. This survey will be repeated every two years in order to record changes to employee habits.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

68. This report seeks to approve the Council's annual carbon emissions report for publication. The options presented are as follows:
 - a) Do nothing – do not approve the annual carbon emissions report .
 - b) Approve the annual carbon emissions report
69. The publication of this report supports the Council's goal to provide transparency of the progress made against the ambition for York to be net zero by 2030.
70. This report also fulfils the Council Plan's Key Performance Indicator to monitor the level of carbon emissions from council buildings and operations.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- **Financial:** The report highlights investment that the council is making in reducing its overall emissions. Further reductions in emissions will require additional investment and this continues to be sought from external bodies as well as within current budgets.
- **Human Resources (HR):** No implications.
- **Legal:** There are no legal implications linked to the recommendations specifically referred to within this report.
- **Procurement:** No implications.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** There is a growing body of research which shows that actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are beneficial to health, mainly due to the reduction in outdoor and household air pollution, better insulated homes and increase in healthy behaviours – including increased physical activity, by walking and cycling. Reduction in respiratory disease linked to reduced air pollution together with substantial reductions in heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes, road deaths and injuries are also possible to improve public health.
- **Environment and Climate action:** Reducing corporate carbon emissions to net zero represents a key commitment within the council plan. This report represents progress against that ambition.
- **Affordability:** No implications.
- **Equalities and Human Rights:** No equalities impact for this report as the Executive Member is being asked to accept a retrospective report.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:** As there is no personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data being processed, there is no requirement to complete a data protection impact assessment (DPIA). This is evidenced by completion of DPIA screening questions AD-10400.
- **Communications:** No implications received.
- **Economy:** No implications received.

Risks and Mitigations

71. There are no known risks associated with the above.

Wards Impacted

72. All Wards.

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

Author

Name:	Shaun Gibbons
Job Title:	Head of Carbon Reduction
Service Area:	Carbon Reduction
Telephone:	07923222971
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	08/11/2024

Background papers

Local Transport Strategy

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s177488/Annex%20A%20Local%20Transport%20Strategy.pdf>

Council approve The Climate Change Strategy 2022-2032 [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 15 December 2022, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\) item 36](#)

Council approve the Council Plan 2023-2027 [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 21 September 2023, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\) item 6](#)

Corporate Emissions Report 2021/22

https://modgov.york.gov.uk/documents/s164307/EMDS_Corporate%20Emissions_Dec%202022_.pdf

Corporate Emissions Report 2020/21

<https://modgov.york.gov.uk/documents/>

Corporate Emissions Report 2022/23

[https://democracy.york.gov.uk/\(S\(aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnl055\)\)/documents/s171185/Decision%20Report%20Annual%20Carbon%20Emissions%20Report%20202223.pdf](https://democracy.york.gov.uk/(S(aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnl055))/documents/s171185/Decision%20Report%20Annual%20Carbon%20Emissions%20Report%20202223.pdf)