



Meeting:	Combined Executive Member Decision Session
Meeting date:	04/11/2025
Report of:	Claire Foale, Chief Strategy Officer
Portfolio of:	Cllr Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Decision Report: Annual Carbon Emissions Report 2024/25

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. This report relates to the Council's operations throughout financial year 2024/25.
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. The Council's operational emissions totalled 5,830 tCO₂e in 2024/25. This represents an overall 205 tCO₂e from 2023/24, largely due to changes in Scope 3 data collection. Scope 1 emissions, or the Council's direct emissions, have decreased by over 7% (285 tCO₂e) since 2023/24.
4. This report marks the fifth 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.

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. 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 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.
9. Good governance and evidence-based planning are key priority areas for guiding climate-based action across York. One of eight key priority areas of the Climate Change 10-Year Strategy (2022-2032) is good governance. This sets the following objectives:
 - 8.1 Decide responsibility
 - 8.2 Track action
 - 8.3 Monitor progress
 - 8.4 Report annually

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. The Council Plan 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.

Financial Strategy Implications

13. The report identifies 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.
14. The Council has set capital funds aside to upgrade the fleet with electric vehicles where practical, as part of an ongoing process.
15. Other carbon reduction measures will explore implementation via grant funding, including funding available from Carbon Negative Challenge Fund, Mayoral Renewables Fund and other regional and national funding sources.

Recommendation and Reasons

16. 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

17. The Council's 2024/25 emissions are reported using the Local Government Association's (LGA) Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool. This tool was adopted by the Council in 2023 and has been designed for Local Authority use.
18. 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.
19. From reporting year 2022/23 onwards, additional reporting categories have been incorporated into the Council's scope 3 reporting. While this will increase the total emissions figure from the Council, the like-for-like difference between categories is a net reduction.
20. The LGA describes the measurement of Scope 3 emissions as an emerging area, and they usually represent 70-80 per cent of a local authority's total emissions. As such, it is important to increase understanding and awareness of these emissions to reduce the Council's indirect emissions and drive sustainability across downstream activities.

Annual Emissions 2024/25

21. The Council's operational emissions totalled 5,830 tCO₂e in 2024/25. This represents an overall 205 tCO₂e from 2023/24. Scope 1 emissions, the Council's direct emissions, have decreased by over 7% (285 tCO₂e) since 2023/24.
22. 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 tariff, 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.

23. Since 2023/24, City of York Council's contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), who operate Council leisure centres have been included in reporting as an outsourced service. The Outsourced Scope 3 category is for emissions that come from activities provided to the local authority by other parties and/or outsourced operations.
24. A summary of these emissions, and how they've changed from the previous year, is illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1 Corporate Emissions across Scope 1, 2,3 and Outsourced Scope 3. Green arrows represent a decrease in emissions, red an increase in emissions, and orange limited change (+/- 3 tCO₂e).

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	2,096 ↓
		Authority's Fleet	1,501 ↓
Scope 2	<i>Indirect emissions associated with purchased energy consumed by City of York Council¹</i>	Electricity	64 ↑
Scope 3	<i>All other indirect emissions that occur in the Council's supply chain.</i>	Staff Business Travel	44 ↑
		Staff Commuting	493 ↑
		Working From Home	629 ↓
		Transmission and Distribution Losses	194 ↑

¹ Since April 2020, we purchase 100% renewable electricity, reducing the Council's emissions by 2,102 tCO₂e this year. 66 tCO₂e have been produced by electricity for cars and vans in our fleet using the public charging network. In reality, not all of electric fleet vehicles are charged on the public charging network, some are charged at Hazel Court Eco Depot by renewable energy. As a breakdown of charging location data was not available at the time of reporting, all charging data has been reported in the interest of transparency.

Outsourced Scope 3	<i>Indirect emissions that occur from outsourced operations.</i>	Material Use	220	↓
		Waste	4	↓
		Water	5	↓
		GLL (Leisure Centres)	580	↑

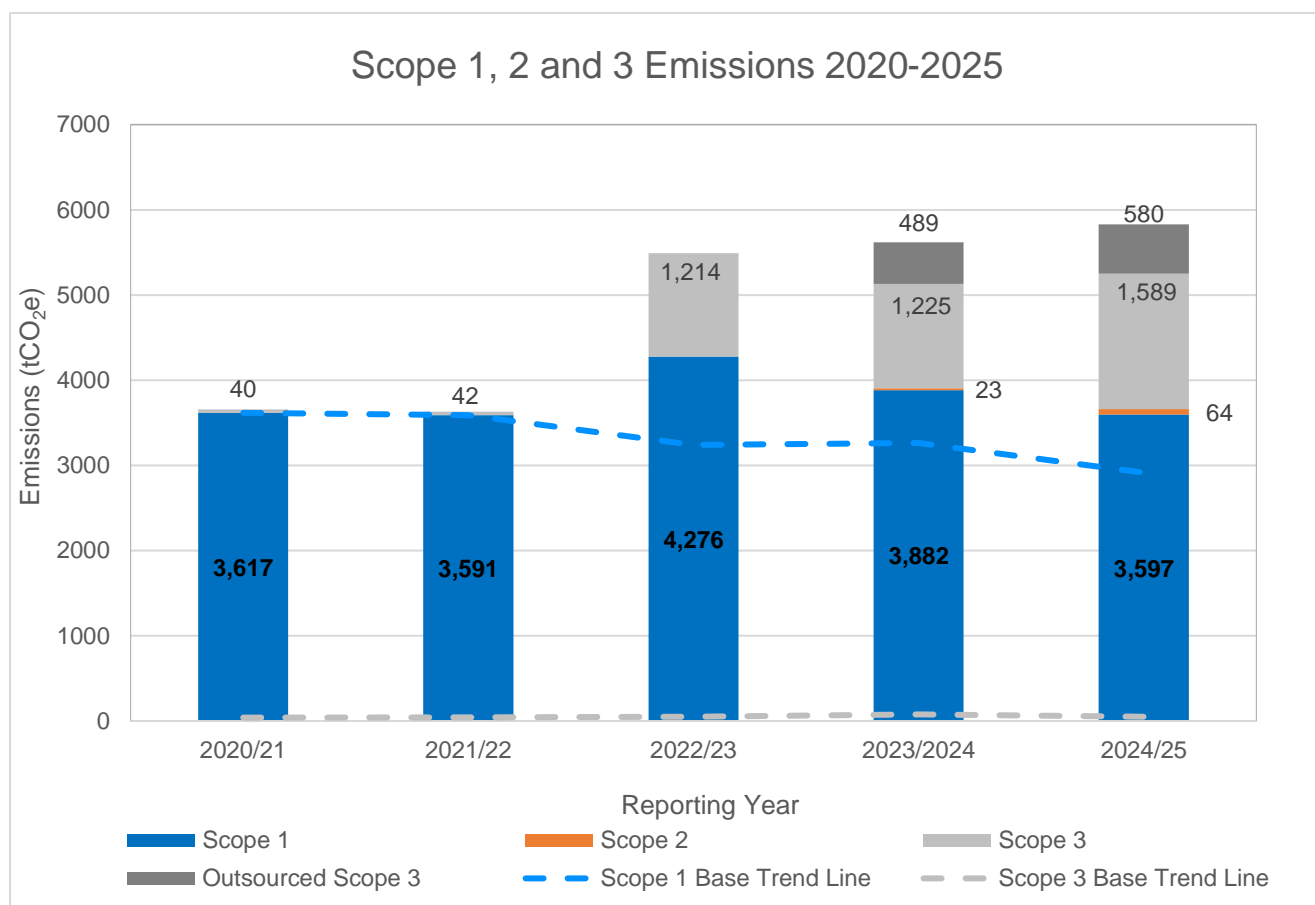


Figure 1 The Council's Scope 1, 2, 3 and Outsourced Scope 3 emissions from 2020-2025. As noted above, the Council have been expanding reporting scope. The dashed lines represent the Council's greenhouse gas emissions without these changes, showing an overall decrease when accounting for a 'like-for-like' comparison.

Gas

25. The Gas usage from buildings is the Council's most carbon intensive activity and is a major operational expense. Scope 1 fossil fuel use has decreased by 6% (-134 tCO₂e) since the last reporting year. This includes gas use in the Council's corporate buildings, libraries and schools (Figure 1).
26. Gas use in the Council's leisure centres is reported as Outsourced Scope 3, as utilities are managed by outsourced partner GLL.

These emissions are also reflected in the graph below. The increase in leisure centre emissions is partially due to the addition of biomass use into the reporting to reflect best accounting practice.

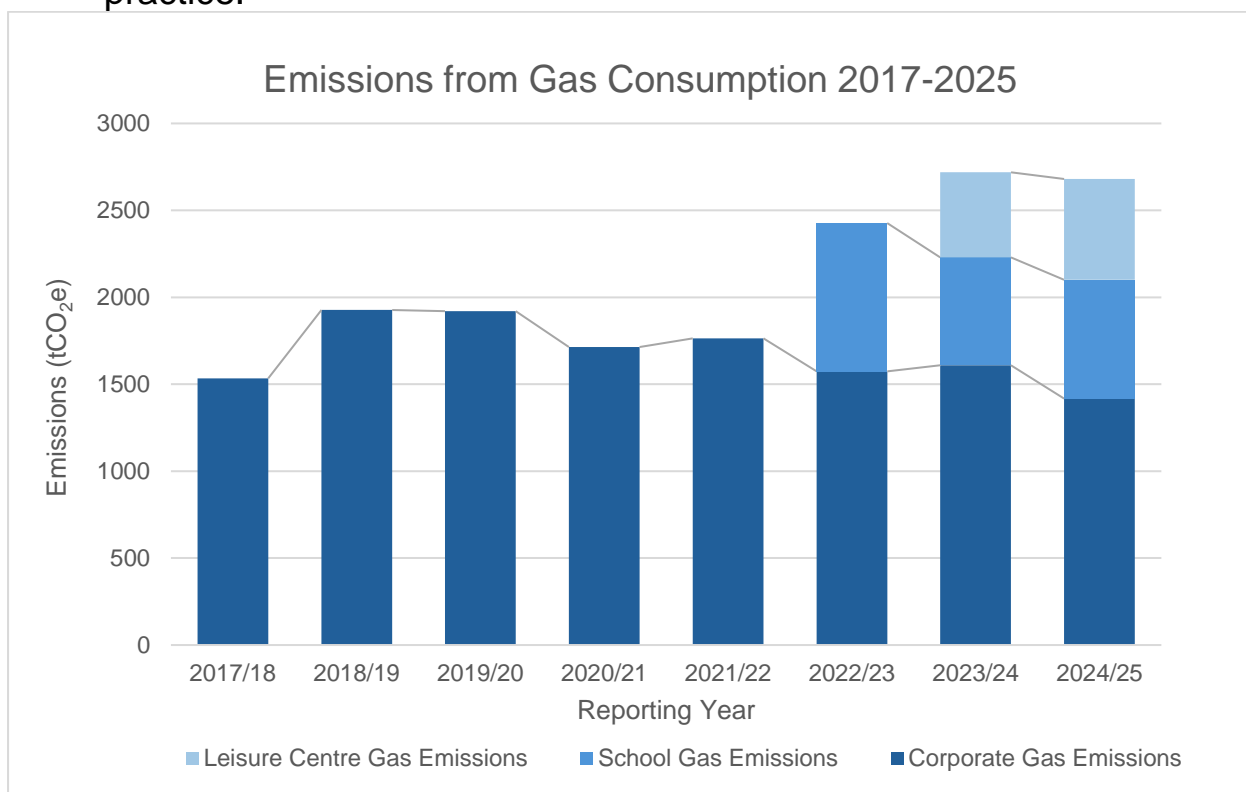


Figure 2 Emissions from the Council's gas usage since 2017/18 financial year. Since 2022/23, the Council have been capturing more data to improve the reporting process. This additional data (including schools and leisure centres) is captured in lighter colours.

27. 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 buildings².
28. To implement this hierarchical approach, decarbonisation plans for one library site and eight corporate sites, five leisure centres and twenty-one schools have been completed, using funding from the Northeast and Yorkshire Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme and the Low Carbon Skills Fund.
29. These plans identify key building fabric upgrades and opportunities for low and zero carbon technologies and will be progressed via grant funding, or other strategic mechanisms, when feasible.

² City of York Council Adopted Local Plan <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/10103/city-of-york-adopted-local-plan-2025>

30. The Council has installed a heat pump at Yearsley Primary School this year, reducing gas consumption onsite. Heating upgrades have also taken place at Alex Lyon and Honeysuckle House with funding from the Combined Authority's Net Zero Fund.

Electricity Usage

31. 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 has reduced the Council's emissions by 2,195 tCO₂e in 2024/25, from both buildings and streetlighting.
32. The Council received grant funding from the Combined Authority to upgrade 1,333 streetlamps to LED. Since 2022/23, this project has reduced consumption in electricity from streetlighting. While there have been some increases in streetlighting consumption (kWh) since 2023/24, costs have decreased by over £375,500 (Figure 2). The scheme is expected to have a reduction of annual electrical energy consumption of 11% which will result in a decrease of 65.5 tCO₂/yr.

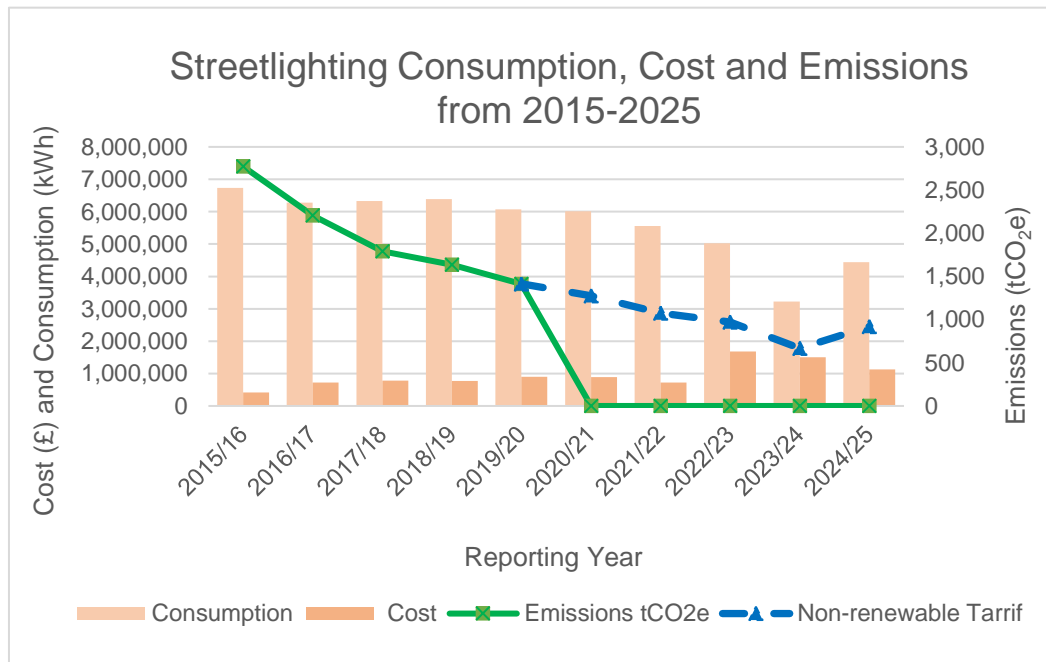


Figure 3 Streetlighting consumption, cost and emissions from 2015 to 2025. The green tariff adopted in 2020 means our electricity supply is backed by 100% renewable energy.

33. 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 (<1%). From April 2024, these vehicles have started charging at Hazel Court Eco Depot

backed by renewable energy. However, vehicles are sometimes still charged on the public network. Without a clear breakdown of charging data, all EV mileage is reported in the interest of accounting transparency.

34. The Council is working to reduce electricity consumption across its estate and increase renewable energy in York. The Council's partnership with Solar for Schools has seen solar panels installed on six Council maintained schools: Clifton Green Primary School, Lord Deramore's Primary School, Dringhouses Primary School, Applefields School, Westfield School and Danesgate School.
35. The Council was also successful in securing £216,000 through the Mayoral Renewables Fund to deliver Solar PV at Yearsley Swimming Pool, Joseph Rowntree School, and Acomb Library. The Council is continuing to pursue delivery mechanisms to reduce electricity consumption and increase energy security.

Water

36. Emissions from Water consumption and treatment comprised less than 1% of our emissions in 2024/25 (5 tCO₂e). This is a reduction of 32 tCO₂e.
37. In 2024, the Council changed water supplier. As such, data has only been available from June 2024 to March 2025, meaning that there is a two-month gap in reporting. This disparity, however, does not account for the decrease in emissions wholly; reduced water supply and reduced annual emissions factors also contribute.
38. Several Council buildings, including key sites West Offices and Hazel Court, use sustainable water design features such as rainwater harvesting.

Fleet

39. Emissions from the Council's fleet have decreased by 9% since 2023/24 (-134 tCO₂e). This reflects a wider trend of emissions reduction due to the impact of the ongoing fleet replacement programme which has seen investment in Electric Vehicles (EV) for council use.

40. At present, 76% of the Council's fleet vehicles under 3.5 tonnes have transitioned to EV under this programme. This number will reach 90% by 2026.

Business Travel

41. Emissions from staff business travel have remained largely unchanged from 2023/24, with a minor increase (+3 tCO₂e). This represents a plateau in emissions reduction, after a large decrease in the previous reporting year as seen in Figure 3.
42. This change was driven by an increase in hotel use and domestic flights. There was no change in the use of the Rent-a-Car service, and only a slight decreases in emissions from rail travel.

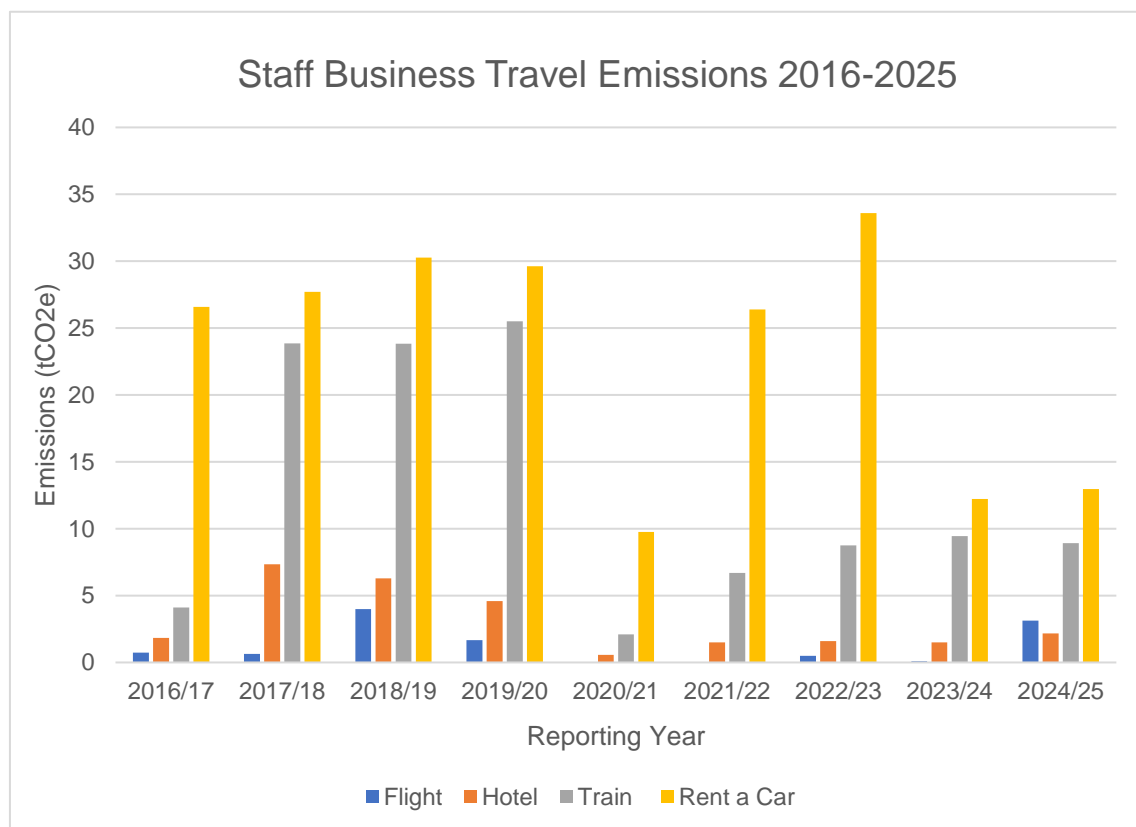
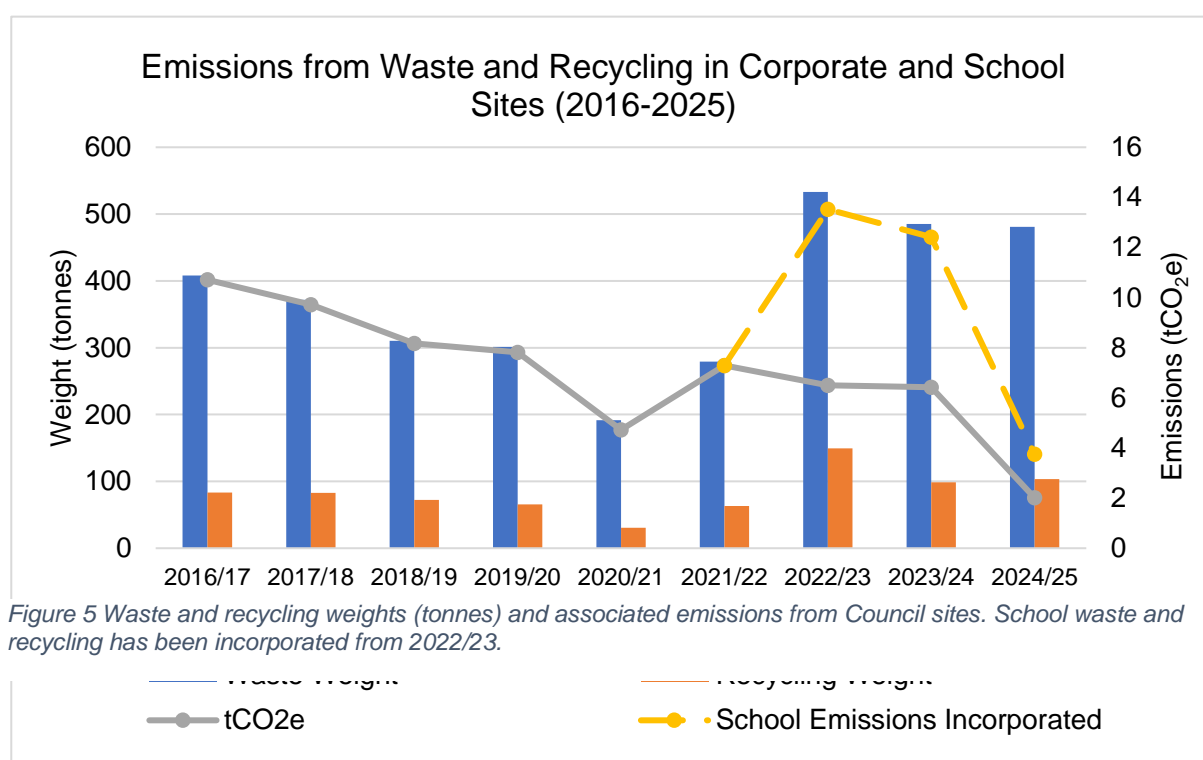


Figure 4 Staff business travel emissions from flights, hotels, trains and the Enterprise Rent-a-Car service.

43. The emissions from the Council's employee Car Club service have remained mostly unchanged since 2023/24 (-1 tCO₂e). Battery Electric Vehicles have been introduced to the Car Club service, comprising 15% journeys alongside the Hybrid vehicles (8% of journeys). Petrol remained the most driven car type.

Waste

44. Emissions from waste have significantly decreased in both schools and corporate sites in comparison to the previous reporting year. A 70% reduction in emissions (-9 tCO₂e), has been seen across these categories as shown in Figure 4.
45. While there have been slight decreases in commercial waste and increases in the recycling rate, the majority of this emissions reduction is due to decreased emissions factors due to a correction from the Government on Energy from Waste (EfW) and Recycling³. This impacted all of the Council's waste figures, as all waste is recycled or turned into electricity or 'EfW' at Allerton Waste Recovery Park.



Procurement

46. Emissions associated with procured goods and services are not included in this report.
47. 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

³ 2024 Government Green House Gas Conversion Factors for Company Reporting:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2024>

sustainability criteria across a range of categories including: Carbon Reduction, Circular Economy, Biodiversity and Sustainability.

48. The Council's existing Social Value Policy is currently being updated to include several outcomes focused on climate action. Social Value policies 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

49. Since April 2022, the emissions associated with material use from council building services have been incorporated in this annual report. 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.
50. The Council's supplier of construction materials was unable to provide an updated report for 2024/25. As such, the data from the most recent report (2023/24) has been accounted for in this report, using the updated conversion factors for this reporting year
51. Material usage from building services therefore accounted for 220 tCO₂e in 2024/25.
52. 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

53. An employee commuting and home working survey was first distributed in 2023. A revised survey was distributed to council employees July-August 2025 to collect updated information about employee habits.
54. The staff survey relies on self-reporting and estimation methods which must be taken into consideration. This method allows the Council to understand the wider impact of its operations in a hybrid working system, and how sustainability can be supported.

55. Employee numbers have increased from 2554 in 2022/23 to 2694 in 2024/25 which impacts these emissions.
56. Emissions from homeworking have decreased, due to a decrease in Full Time Equivalent Hours worked from home. Emissions from employee commuting have increased significantly, largely due to an improvement in the calculation methodology.

Actions

57. Since the publication of the Council's Annual Carbon Emissions Report in 2023/24, the Council has implemented a range of new actions to reduce corporate emissions. Over the past financial year, the Council has:
 - Worked with Solar for Schools (SfS) to install solar panels a further two schools, Applefields Primary and Westfield Primary Community School. A total of six Council-owned schools now have solar panels with SfS, with a total installed capacity of 248 kWp.
 - Obtained funding through the Mayoral Renewables Fund to install solar panels at three council-owned sites: Joseph Rowntree School, Acomb Library, and Yearsley Swimming Pool. The combined installed capacity at these sites will be 547 kWp and will save an estimated 84.5 tCO₂e/year.
 - Completed three technoeconomic feasibility studies to understand the potential to generate more renewable energy at council sites.
 - Completed 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.
 - Completed renewable heating upgrades and solar PV installation 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 760 tCO₂e over the next 15 years and achieve a 50% reduction in energy bills.

- 58. The Council still has ambitions to incorporate sustainable procurement and principles into more of our purchasing decisions, beyond building services.
- 59. The Council has been progressing a waste strategy, which will focus on reducing waste production and integrating circular economy principles.

Consultation Analysis

- 60. 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.
- 61. 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.
- 62. To better understand the Council's Scope 3 emissions, council officers were consulted on their commuting and homeworking habits in summer 2025. This survey was completed in 2023 and will be repeated every two years to record changes to employee habits.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

- 63. 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

64. 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.
65. 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 identified.
- **Legal:** There are no legal implications linked to the recommendations specifically referred to within this report.
- **Procurement:** No implications identified.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Publication of this report increases transparency and accountability of the Council's work to reduce carbon emissions which is welcome given the growing body of research that shows actions to reduce carbon emissions are beneficial to 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 identified.
- **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:** Whilst there are no specific implications for the report itself, the data and analysis included can be used as part of the organisation's wider communications and engagement work around climate and sustainability.
- **Economy:** No implications identified.

Risks and Mitigations

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

Wards Impacted

67. All Wards.

Contact details

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

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Background papers

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

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

Background Paper: Corporate Emissions Report 2021/22
https://modgov.york.gov.uk/documents/s164307/EMDS_Corporate%20Emissions_Dec%202022_.pdf

Background Paper: Corporate Emissions Report 2020/21
https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s153499/EMDS_Corporate%20Emissions%20Report_2021.pdf

Background Paper: Corporate Emissions Report 2022/23
[https://democracy.york.gov.uk/\(S\(aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnl055\)\)/documents/s/s171185/Decision%20Report%20Annual%20Carbon%20Emissions%20Report%20202223.pdf](https://democracy.york.gov.uk/(S(aw2b23jofoyuejfc1asnl055))/documents/s/s171185/Decision%20Report%20Annual%20Carbon%20Emissions%20Report%20202223.pdf)

Background Paper: Corporate Emissions Report 2023/24
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s179414/Report.pdf>