The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	CCC/22/24

Committee: **Climate Change**

Date: **7 November 2024**

Report Title: **Annual Report under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2023/24**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive – Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report is the Highland Council's Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) Report for 2023/24. The report is produced annually and is a mandatory requirement of all public bodies.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

i. **Consider and agree** the Highland Council's draft Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1;
ii. **Delegate authority** to the Assistant Chief Executive – Place to sign the declaration in Part 6e and submit the Report by 30 November 2024; and
iii. **Consider and comment** on progress against the organisation's emissions reductions targets.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - As outlined in the report, the Council is required to report as part of the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties report how it aligns its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering emissions reduction targets.

3.2 **Legal** - Public sector bodies are legally required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support Scotland's adaptation to a changing climate. They are also legally required to report annually on their greenhouse gas emissions and what they are doing to help adapt to a changing climate. The detail of the legal requirements is outlined in section 4.

3.3 **Risk** - Failure to proactively address the climate and ecological emergency across all service delivery carries significant reputational risk, particularly considering the political ambition at both local and national level around the climate change agenda. In addition, failure to take a proactive approach to climate change action will necessarily limit opportunities to secure external funding.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no Health and Safety implications arising from this report.

3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 This is a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

5.1 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is a statutory framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Scotland. Included within the Act are the following requirements on public bodies in the exercise of their functions:-

- act in the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- act in the way best calculated to deliver Scotland's statutory adaptation programme; and
- act in a way that it considers most sustainable.

5.2 In 2015, the Scottish Government introduced an Order under the Act requiring all public bodies to submit an annual report detailing their compliance with the climate change duties detailed above.

5.3 In September 2019, the Scottish Parliament passed the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, which sets the following national emissions reduction targets:-

- at least 75% lower than the baseline year by 2030;
- at least 90% lower than the baseline year by 2040; and
- Net Zero by 2045 ('Net Zero' refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere).

5.4 To ensure and monitor compliance with these targets, the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 ("The Order") came into force in November 2020. This order requires public bodies to include the following information in their annual reports, for reporting periods from 1 April 2021:-

- where applicable, a target date for achieving **zero direct emissions** of greenhouse gases, or such other targets that demonstrate how the body is contributing to Scotland achieving its emissions reduction targets;
- where applicable, any targets **for reducing indirect emissions** of greenhouse gases;
- how the body **aligns its spending plans and use of resources** to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reduction targets;
- how the body will publish, or otherwise make available, its **progress towards achieving its emissions reduction targets**; and
- how the body is **contributing to Scotland's Adaptation Programme**

5.5 The Council's draft return for reporting year 2023/24 under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties is attached as **Appendix 1**. All public bodies are required to submit annual reports by 30 November 2024.

5.6 Highland Council has participated in a peer review of the 2023/24 PBCCD report with the Scottish Borders Council, enhancing accuracy and consistency in our reporting. This ensured aligned reporting methods and enabled and provided critical analysis to verify data and identify opportunities for future improvements.

6 Scope of Reporting

6.1 The report relates to the Council's operational emissions, including water and energy use in buildings operated by High Life Highland (HLH), and waste, staff and fleet travel relating to HLH operations.

6.2 To calculate the Council's total carbon footprint, metrics such as miles, kWh, waste tonnage and fuel are converted into CO_2 equivalents (CO_2e) using UK Government Conversion Factors. These conversion factors are updated annually and consider changes to behaviours and technologies relating to renewables, energy efficiency, vehicle types and fuel economy.

For example, the emissions conversion factor for petrol fell from 2.16kgCO_2e/litre in 2021/22 to 2.10kgCO2e/litre in 2022/23 – a drop of 3%. This means that the same level of petrol consumption in 2022/24 would emit 3% less CO_2e than in 2022/23.

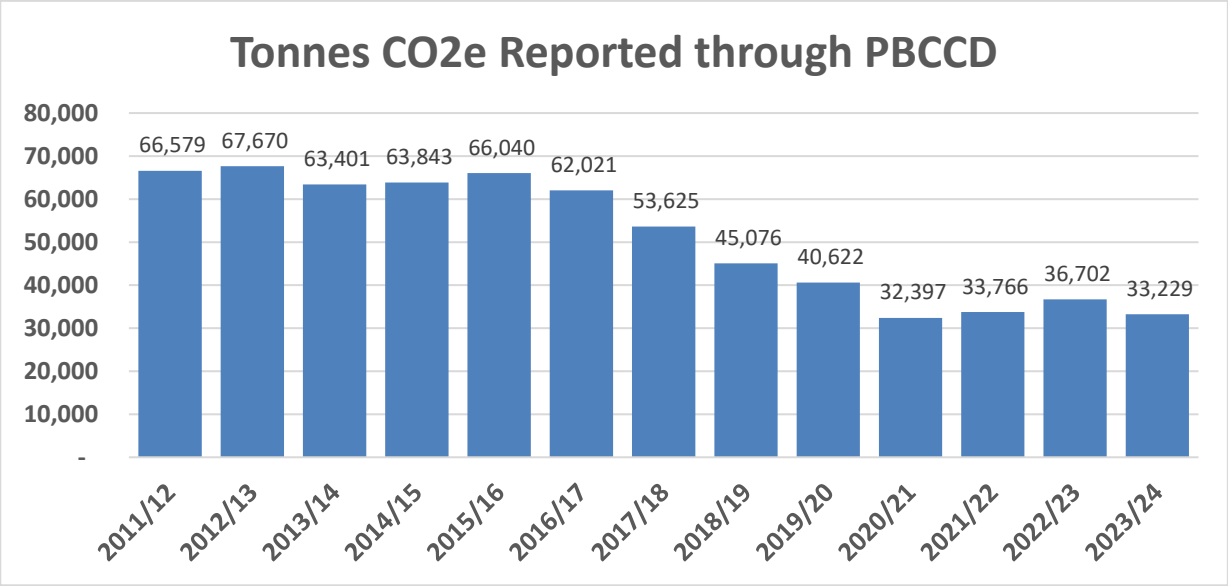
6.3 Emissions are categorised into groups of Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions. Reporting has previously focused largely on Scope 1 direct operational emissions arising from sources owned or controlled by the Council, e.g. emissions from boilers and fleet vehicles, and Scope 2 indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy used by the Council, e.g. electricity. The Council has control over the use of this energy, but the emissions generated from its production are created elsewhere.

6.4 As outlined in this report, public bodies are now required to report in their PBCCD Annual Report, where applicable, targets for their indirect emissions. This covers Scope 2 emissions from purchased electricity and heat and all other indirect Scope 3 emissions in the organisation's value chain.

6.5 Work is underway to develop a revised baseline for the Council which includes supply chain emissions. As this work is ongoing, the 2023/24 return does not include supply chain emissions

7 Report Highlights

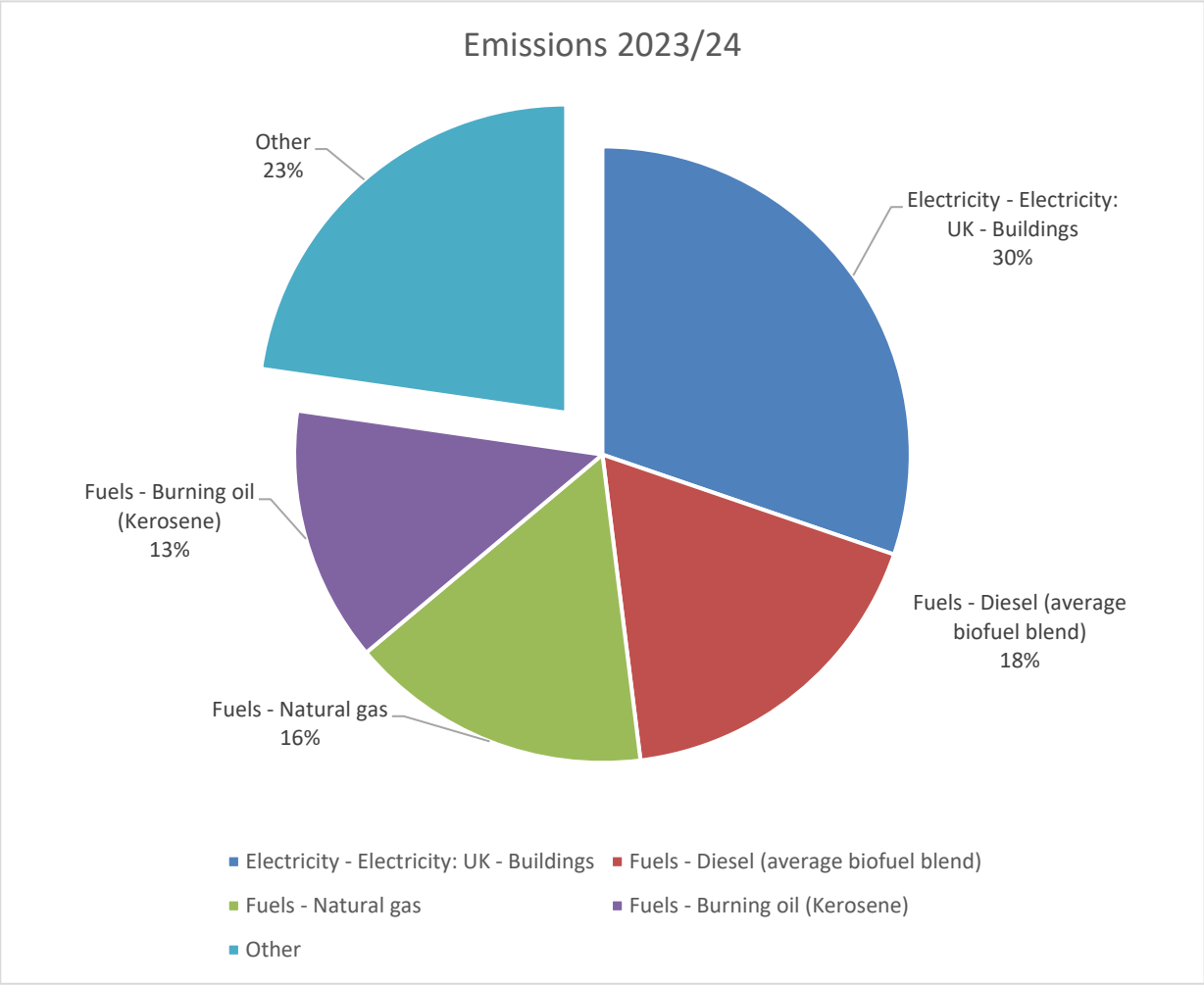
7.1 Total emissions have **fallen by 9.5%**, a **decrease of 3,473** tonnes of CO2e compared to 2022/23.



7.2 Within previous returns, additional categories have been added due to the identification of additional data sources. No additional categories have been added to the 2023/24 report, meaning this is a like for like comparison to the 2022/23 return.

7.3 Over three quarters (77.28%) of the total emissions reported within 2023/24 fall into 4 activities/elements:-

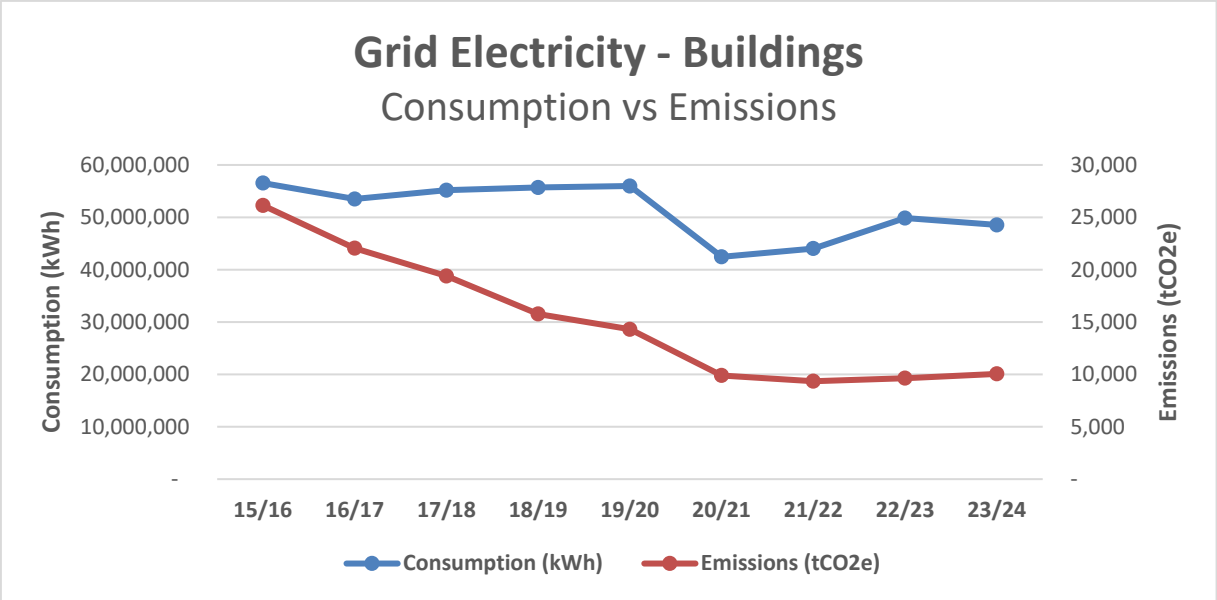
- Electricity consumed in our buildings (Grid Electricity to Buildings);
- Fleet (Diesel);
- Heating of our facilities (Natural Gas); and
- Burning Oil (Kerosene)



7.4 A summary of activities/elements proportions which make up the PBCCD total reporting of emission sources are listed as follows:-

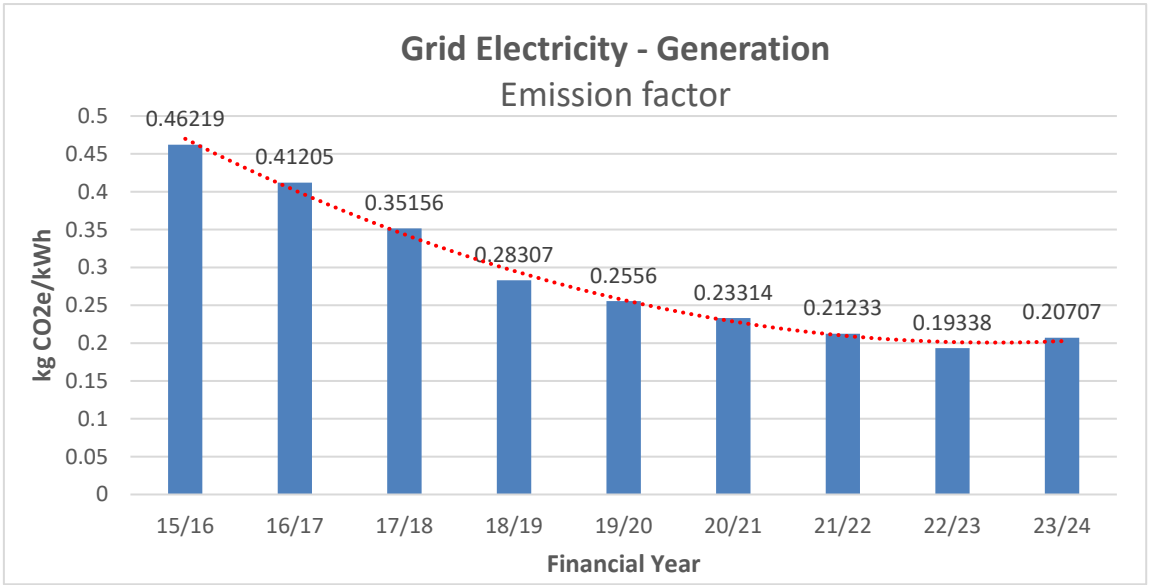
Title	% of Total
Electricity - Electricity: UK - Buildings	30.25%
Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend)	17.77%
Fuels - Natural gas	15.87%
Fuels - Burning oil (Kerosene)	13.39%
Electricity - Electricity: UK - Street Lighting	5.22%
Fuels - LPG - LPG off grid gas alternative	3.73%
Electricity - Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK - Buildings	2.62%
Transport - car - Average car - Unknown - Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - THC	1.86%
Fuels - Marine gas oil - Corran Ferry - Public Ferry Service	1.28%
Homeworking - Homeworking (office equipment + heating)	1.27%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill - Waste to landfill - Schools	1.15%
Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend) - In House Bus Project and Bus Operations	1.08%
Bioenergy - Wood pellets	1.06%
Fuels - Petrol (average biofuel blend) - exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops	0.69%
Transport - car - Average car - Unknown - Car Club	0.63%
Electricity - Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK - Street Lighting	0.45%
Transport - car - Average car - Unknown - Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - HLH and VJB	0.40%
Water - Water treatment - est. based on 95% of consumption	0.34%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill - Waste to landfill - Non Schools	0.31%
Water - Water supply	0.19%
Fuels - Gas oil	0.13%
Transport - car - Average car - Unknown - Car Hire - Travel Desk	0.13%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion - Energy from Waste - Schools	0.05%
Transport - public - Flights - Short-haul, to/from UK - Average passenger - Travel Desk	0.03%
Transport - public - National rail - Travel Desk/Self Service	0.03%
Waste - Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled - Mixed Recycling - Schools	0.02%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion - Energy from Waste - Non Schools	0.02%
Fuels - Petrol (average biofuel blend) - In House Bus Project and Bus Operations	0.01%
Waste - Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled - Mixed Recycling - Non Schools	0.01%
Waste - Organic: food and drink waste - Composting - Organic Food Waste - Schools	0.00%
Transport - public - Ferry - Average (all passenger) - Travel Desk	0.00%
Transport - public - Coach - Travel Desk	0.00%
Transport - car - Average car - Unknown - Car Hire - HLH/Non-Travel Desk - estimated by cost	0.00%
Waste - Organic: food and drink waste - Composting - Organic Food Waste - Non Schools	0.00%
Transport - public - Regular taxi - Travel Desk	0.00%

7.5 There has been a slight decrease (2.6%) in consumption of electricity within buildings in 2023/24 as seen in the following graph:-



In recent times the decarbonisation of the grid has resulted in electricity related emissions reducing year-on-year. However, for 2023/24, the emission factor for grid electricity has increased due to a higher reliance on fossil fuels in the energy mix. There is a degree of uncertainty whether this trend may continue or level off.

It demonstrates we can no longer depend solely on grid decarbonisation to meet our emissions reduction goals. Further reductions will require direct action, such as reducing the size of our estate, improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of on-site renewable energy.



7.6 A significant reduction in diesel consumption for fleet use has been recorded within this year's PBCCD return. 3.2 million litres was reported in 2022/23, compared to 2.35 million litres in 2023/24, a total reduction of 26.3%. In addition to a slight reduction in the conversion factor, this has resulted in a drop of 2,255 tCO2e from the previous year. This is due to a variety of reasons, including:-

- Route Optimisation (Waste Services);
- newer, more efficient engine specifications;
- the addition of electric bin lifts of refuse collection vehicles; and
- relatively milder winter, reducing gritting requirements

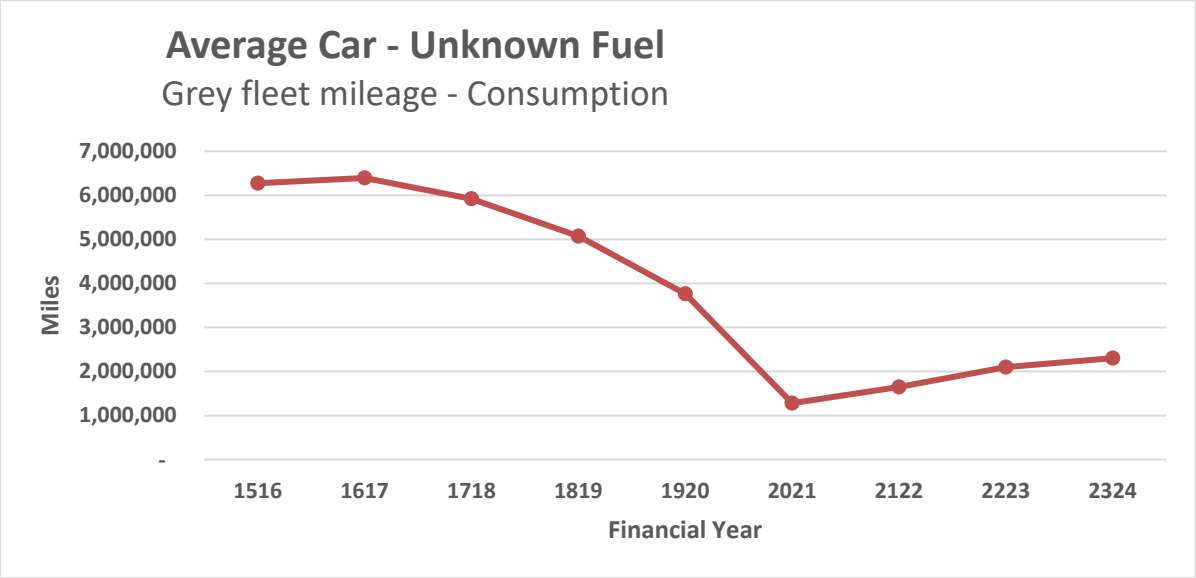
7.7 Car Club mileage has decreased by 6.3%, a reduction of 52.304 miles. Despite this, an additional 48.4 tCO2e has been emitted, an increase of 30**%.**

When Car Club was introduced, most vehicles were hybrid, with a small proportion of petrol vehicles and a small number of electric vehicles. The composition of vehicles within Car Club has changed and has dropped to only 40% of vehicles being hybrid, with the remainder comprising petrol and diesel vehicles (no Electric Vehicles remaining in the offering).

In terms of calculating emissions relating to Car Club, it has been necessary to switch to the same emission factor used for grey fleet (mileage reimbursement), rather than a 'Average Hybrid' factor.

7.8 Car Hire mileage has reduced from 200,922 miles in 2022/23, to 163,389 miles, a reduction of 19%.

Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) however has increased by 10% in comparison to the previous year, an increase of over 200,000 miles. This is the third consecutive rise since the Covid pandemic.



7.9 The expansion of the in-house bus service project has incurred an additional 220 tCO2e of emissions in comparison to the previous year. Diesel consumption has also risen by 164%.

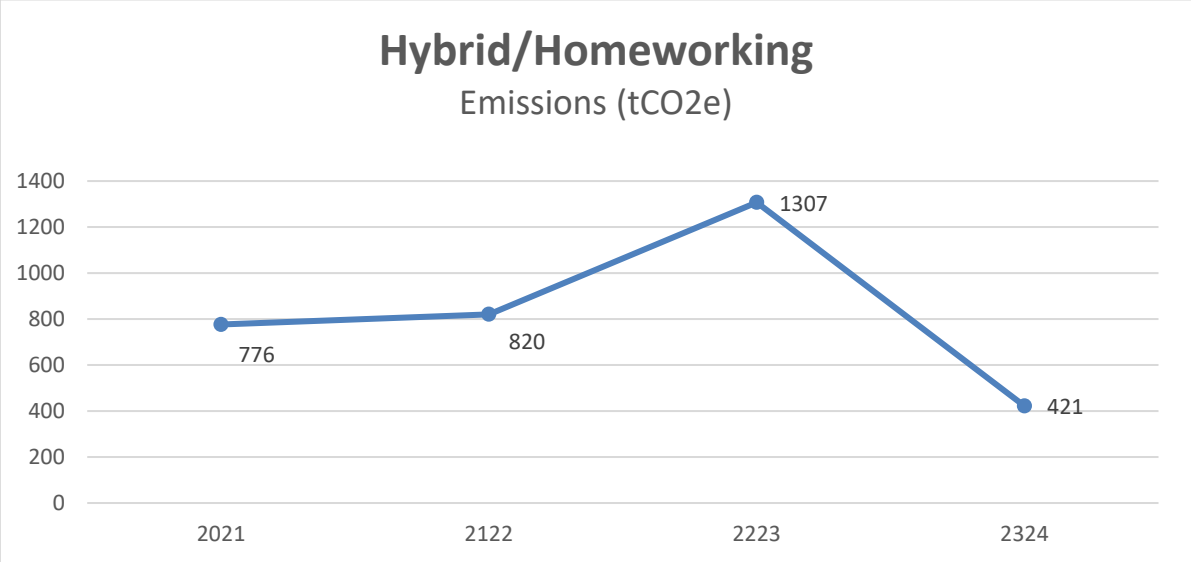
7.10 Energy from waste (EfW) – combustion was added within last year's PBCCD return and has contributed to a reduction in emissions as shown in the following table:-

(schools/non-schools combined)	Consumption (tonnes)			Emissions (tCO2e)		
	2022/23	2023/24	Change	2022/23	2023/24	Change
Waste to Landfill	2066	973	**-1093**	922	484	**-438**
Combustion - Energy from Waste	66	1109	**+1043**	1	24	**+23**

Although combined consumption fell by 50 tonnes, there is an enhanced effect on emissions reduction of 415 tCO2e.

7.11 Emissions arising from Home Working were introduced within the PBCCD in 2020/21 in response to the Covid pandemic. A figure of 33% of all staff was estimated in previous years and was subject to a change in calculation in 2022/23. This figure has been remodelled for the 2023/24 return due to the following:-

- there is an assumption that staff in education and social work are largely office/school based, therefore staff in education and social work have been removed from the calculation in terms of homeworking emissions; and
- due to a gradual return to office since the pandemic, the 33% estimate has been reduced to 25%. This lower quota of homeworking emissions is more consistent with other Scottish Local Authorities.



8 Highland Council Targets

8.1 The Council has adopted the Scottish Government's Net Zero by 2045 target, aiming to achieve this sooner, with key interim targets to reduce emissions by at least 75% by 2030 and by at least 90% by 2040.

8.2 To meet the 2030 target, the Council needs to reduce its operational emissions to 16,590 tCO2e, equivalent to 50% reduction from current emission levels.

8.3 An overview of Highland Council's annual progress towards its emissions reduction target of at least 75% by 2030 can be found in **Appendix 3.**

8.4 The Council's Route Map to Net Zero identified that an annual decrease of 8.5% was required to meet the 2030 target of at least 75% below baseline. It should be noted, the Route Map was developed prior to the finalisation of 2022/23 data.

Considering an increase in emissions was reported in the Council's 2022/23 return, the reduction required annually was adjusted to 10.5% to meet the trajectory required to achieve the 2030 target.

Whilst total emissions have reduced, the reduction required annually requires further adjustment to 10.9% for the Council to remain on target.

9 Scope 3 Emissions

9.1 In response to the Environmental Standards Scotland Investigation, published in September 2024, the Scottish Government is seeking to enhance Scope 3 emissions reporting, with the proposed introduction of mandatory reporting for Local Authorities set to begin in November 2027 (covering the 2026/27 reporting year).

9.2 In preparation, work has already been initiated with respect to assessing procurement related supply chain emissions and evaluation of appropriate approaches and methodologies.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive – Place
Date:	4 October 2024
Author:	Andrew Morgan, Climate Change Coordinator
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft PBCCD Report 2023/24 Appendix 2 - Comparison data from 2022/23 and 2023/24 Appendix 3 - Annual Progress towards 2030 target

Appendix 1

Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, Report for 2023/24 Financial Year

Section 1 – Profile of Body

1a Name of reporting body

The Highland Council

1b Type of body

Local Government

1c Highest number of full-time equivalent staff in the body during the report year

8,407

1d Metrics used by the body

(no data provided)

1e Overall budget of the body

Budget	Budget Comments
£712,000,000	Revenue

1f Report type

Reporting type	Report year comments
Financial/Calendar/Other	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024

1g Context

The Highland Council is the largest local authority in the UK, with a landmass similar in size to Belgium. The Highlands are largely rural in nature, covering an area of 26,484 sq. km with a population density of 9 people per sq km.

Highland had the 7th highest population in 2022, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The National Records of Scotland reported population figures of 235,710 for Highland on 30 June 2022. This is an increase of 12.8% from 2001 and a decrease of 0.1% since 2021.

Key statistics:-

- Number of Council Houses – 15,143
- Length of roads maintained – 6,771 km
- Harbours and marinas – 91
- Bridges – 1,400
- Schools – 199

Our non-domestic property portfolio covers around 750 sites with utility supplies. This includes:

- Primary & Secondary Schools (922 buildings over 194 sites including High Life Highland buildings, Public Private Partnership Schools & Wick Campus)
- Council Offices (99 buildings over 61 sites)
- Depots (128 buildings over 39 sites)
- Other (e.g. Social Work Facilities) (725 buildings over 444 sites)

Section 2 – Governance

2a How is climate change governed in the body?

Member oversight

In May 2019, The Highland Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and agreed the Council would establish a Climate Change Working Group reporting directly to full Council. In June 2022, Members agreed to reflect the significance of the climate change agenda by replacing the Climate Change Working Group with a Climate Change Committee. The remit of the Climate Change Committee is outlined below:

General

1.1 To provide advice and guidance on the climate, ecological, and environmental sustainability agenda, and identify, support and champion climate and ecological progress across the Council whilst providing an appropriate level of critical challenge for the organisation.

Specific

2.1 Public Bodies Climate Reporting Duties - As set out in The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 including emissions baselining and monitoring.

2.2 Oversight of the Net Zero Strategy, Action Plan and Programme, including the development of related strategies, policies and approaches, including the setting and scrutiny of performance targets associated with the following Programme workstreams:

- Built Estate and Energy/Asset Management
- Social Housing (HRA)
- Sustainable Staff Travel
- Waste and Circular Economy
- Procurement and Community Wealth Building
- Planning, Land Use and Environment
- Capital Programme & Net Zero Funding Strategy

2.3 Responses to external policies and consultations.

2.4 Policy considerations and project progress and achievements in relation to climate and environmental related matters such as Just Transition, Adaptation, Land Reform, Food Growing and Land Use, Biodiversity etc.

2.5 To support and champion Highland's high-quality environment, air, land, water, food products and renewable energy resources to bring appropriate commercial opportunities, maximise income whilst raising awareness of the need to protect and enhance our critical environmental assets.

2.6 Review and monitoring of climate impact of Council policies.

2.7 Oversight of internal and external communication and engagement, and partnership building in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2.8 Promotion of Climate Change and Ecological issues and actions through the delivery of presentations at committee and oversight of development of internal and external facing events.

To consider and make recommendations to The Highland Council and / or any other appropriate strategic committee in relation to these matters, including any proposed changes or developments to Highland Council policy & strategy.

Further details of the terms of reference and the powers and duties delegated to the Committee are set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/25340/scheme_of_delegation.pdf

Further information including membership of the Committee, dates of meetings and Committee Papers can be found here:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20003/committee_information/1001/climate_change_committee

Net Zero Programme Governance Model

During the reporting year, the governance model outlined below, was accountable for the development, success, direction and overall management and delivery of the Council's Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan:

The Council is the governing body for the Strategy and Action Plan. The Climate Change Committee is responsible for the oversight of the Strategy, Action Plan and programme, including setting and scrutiny of performance targets.

The Programme Board is the strategic decision-making body at officer level, providing general direction and support to the Net Zero Strategy Group. The Board oversee progress and direction of climate and ecological emergency actions, managing risks and opportunities iteratively. The Programme Board is Chaired by the Depute Chief Executive.

The Net Zero Strategy Group is the delivery mechanism in respect of strategy development and implementation, and will be accountable for developing a detailed, fully costed Action Plan. The Net Zero Strategy Group comprises senior managers working across Council services and connects all the Thematic Groups.

Eight thematic groups fulfilled a set function, of which details are set by the Net Zero Strategy Group covering: Built Estate & Energy; Procurement & Community Wealth Building; Social Housing/HRA; Planning, Land Use & Environment; Waste; Fleet & Staff Travel; Circular Economy; and Net Zero Funding Strategy & Capital Programme.

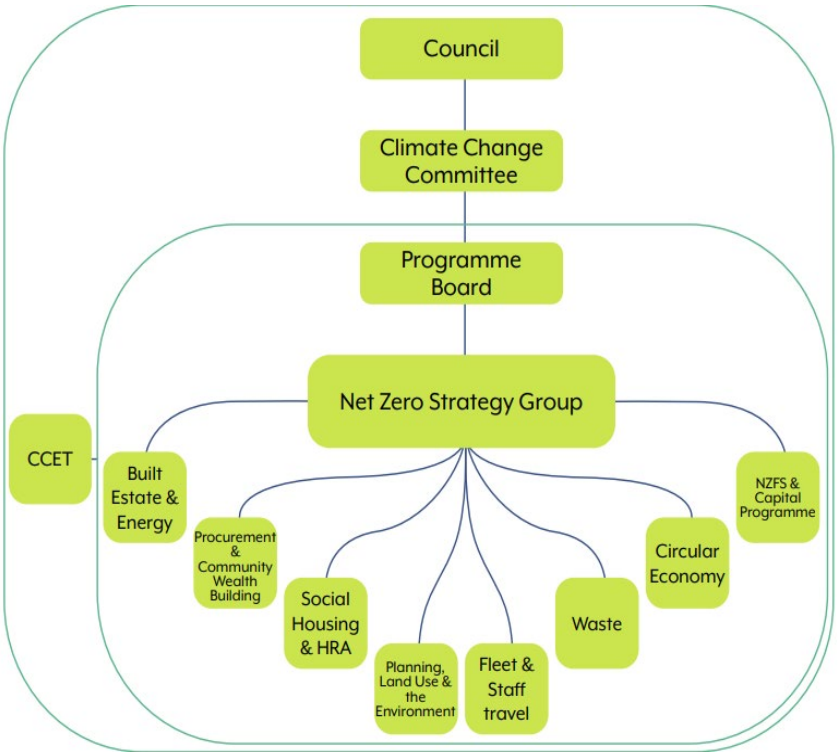
The Council's Operational Delivery Plan was approved by Council on 9 May and covers 2024 – 2027. The Plan is structured under six portfolio themes: Person Centred Solutions; Workforce for the Future; Reconfiguring our Asset Base; Corporate Solutions; Income Generation; and Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation. Governance will be provided by Portfolio Boards and "To support our Net Zero Strategy" has been included in the Responsibilities section of the Terms of Reference for each of the Portfolio Boards. The Governance Model for the Net Zero Programme was outlined in a report to the Climate Change Committee in August 2024: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83734/4_net_zero_programme_and_thematic_group_leads_update

Officer support

The Board, Net Zero Strategy and Thematic Groups is supported by the Climate Change and Energy Team (CCET). A core function of the team is the provision of guidance/knowledge transfer on climate change, adaptation, and sustainability measures.

Adaptation

The Highland Adapts initiative, developed by The Highland Council, was officially launched in 2020/21 to deliver a place-based partnership approach to climate change adaptation in Highland. Further information regarding Highland Adapts is outlined in the Adaptation section of this report.



2b How is climate change action managed and embedded in the body?

During the reporting period, the Council's Net Zero Strategy set out the Council's approach to addressing the climate emergency and contributing towards Scotland's nationally legally binding target to become Net Zero by 2045. The Strategy focuses on Council operations and provides a framework for reducing corporate emissions and preparing for the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

During the reporting period, the Depute Chief Executive was the Programme Sponsor for the Net Zero Programme and held overall accountability and responsibility for the successful delivery of the Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan.

As outlined in section 2a, the Programme Board is the strategic decision-making body at officer level, providing general direction and support to the Net Zero Strategy Group. The Board will oversee progress and direction of climate and ecological emergency actions, managing risks and opportunities iteratively. Executive Chief Officers from each Directorate sit on the Board, which is chaired by the Depute Chief Executive. The remit and responsibilities of the Board include to:

- Act as champions for the Programme and ensure Services are aware of their responsibilities with respect to delivering the Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan.
- Ensure staff resources are made available to the development and delivery of the Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan.
- Align strategic and operational objectives of each Directorate/Service with the Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan (including Service Plans and Service level Carbon Budget targets).

The Climate Change & Energy Team provides guidance/knowledge transfer to support decision-making and the integration of climate change, adaptation, and sustainability measures into Council operations. During the reporting year, the team sat within the Depute Chief Executive's Service A restructure is currently underway, and the team now reports to the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During the reporting year, the Climate Change Impact Assessment was developed and tested with the intention of it to be embedded into the Council’s new Integrated Impact Assessment tool. Online training and guidance resources have been produced alongside the assessment tool, whilst a number of staff engagement sessions and member workshops were rolled out to communicate the new assessment to staff and members. The full Integrated Impact Assessment went live on the Council’s Granicus platform on 1.7.24.

A revised approach to the Net Zero Programme was developed during the reporting period and has been incorporated into the six portfolios of the Delivery Plan 2024-27. The Net Zero Energy Investment and Innovation Portfolio has a number of workstreams, programmes and projects designed for the Council to deliver best practice achieving Net Zero emissions, generating and distributing energy, maximising available commercial opportunities to generate income from energy creation and distribution, and fostering strategic investment in energy initiatives. The Assistant Chief Executive – Place is the sponsor for the Net Zero Energy Investment and Innovation Portfolio.

The Council structure chart can be found here:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15917/council_structure

Further information regarding the functions of each Council service can be found here:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4610/know_your_council.pdf

The Council also has a network of internal net zero ambassadors to help support and implement low-carbon behaviour change initiatives throughout the organisation.

2c – Does the body have specific climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives in its corporate plan or similar document?

Wording of objective	Name of document	Document Link
A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Excellence Accelerate our response to the climate and ecological emergency. Make the most of the financial and environmental opportunities arising from the huge renewable energy potential in the Highlands.	Our Future Highland, Administration Programme 2022 - 2027	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/494/our_priorities
A Sustainable Highland Environment and Global Centre for Excellence Accelerate our response to the climate and ecological emergency. Make the most of the financial and environmental opportunities arising from the huge renewable energy potential in the Highlands.	Our Future Highland, Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4620/corporate_plan_2022-27.pdf
To lead the transition to a net zero organisation, ensuring the Council acts as an exemplar to the wider Highland community, basing decisions on reliable data. Delivering an ambitious, transformative Net Zero Strategy and action plan, including a focus on adaptation and community wealth building. Maintaining an ongoing review of current renewable technology, ensuring energy generated in region contributes to local investment, enabling the Highlands to maximise potential investment to improve energy efficiency of properties and support those in extreme fuel poverty.	Deputy Chief Executive Service Plan 2023-24	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/82588/8a_depute_chief_executive_s_service

We will deliver on the Council's Net Zero Ambitions and enabling place-based planning for future energy capacity and security – maximising the opportunities available to us in the following ways: • Ensuring Highland Council is an organisation that models best practice in achieving Net Zero emissions, managing to reduce its consumption of energy. • Expanding the means by which we can generate and distribute energy, using new technologies, enabling renewable sources and meeting the needs of residents and visitors. • Maximising the commercial opportunities available to the council to generate income from energy creation and distribution. • Fostering strategic investment in energy initiatives and consolidating the importance of the region in enabling national energy security, releasing income streams and ensuring returns on investment.	Delivery Plan 2024-27	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28497/delivery_plan_2024-2027

2d Does the body have a climate change plan or strategy?

The Council's Net Zero Strategy was approved by Members on 29 June 2023 and can be found here: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/27438/net_zero_strategy

A revised approach for the future delivery of the Net Zero Strategy was approved by the Climate Change Committee in May 2024: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83318/3_net_zero_action_plan_-_proposed_revised_approach

2e Does the body have any plans or strategies covering the following areas that include climate change?

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Adaptation	Highland Council Corporate Risk Register	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/81729/item_7_review_of_corporate_risks	Refreshed on a quarterly basis	Risks relating to Climate Change and the Ecological Emergency are detailed under CR7.
Business travel	Travel & Subsistence Policy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandtransformation/downloads/file/400/travel_and_subsistence_policy	2020 Onwards	Policy setting out procedures required to be followed when arranging business and staff travel with specific aims to reduce travel where possible and promote use of more sustainable forms of travel.
Staff Travel	Travel & Subsistence Policy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandtransformation/downloads/file/400/travel_and_subsistence_policy	2020 Onwards	Policy setting out procedures required to be followed when arranging business and staff travel with specific aims to reduce travel where possible and promote use of more sustainable forms of travel.
Energy efficiency	Local Housing Strategy (LHS)	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18724/local_housing_strategy	2017-2022 & 2023-2028	Sets out the strategic direction, policies & plans that will enable Highland Council and partners to deliver high quality housing and housing services across Highland.
Fleet transport	Approach to Sustainable Business Travel	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/82045/9_approach_to_sustainable_business_travel	2023-2030	Sets out the approach to Sustainable Business Travel and how the changes to behaviour and practice will contribute to the Council's overall Net Zero targets.
ICT	Digital Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/1041/digital_strategy	2022-27	Sets out the next phase of digital development for the Council.
Renewable energy	Highland Renewable Energy Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1009/highland_renewable_energy_strategy_may_2006	2006 Onwards	Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance adopted November 2016.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Sustainable/renewable heat	LHEES	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/1097/the_local_heat_and_energy_efficiency_strategy https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/1097/the_local_heat_and_energy_efficiency_strategy	2024-2045	The Strategy underpins an area-based approach to heat and energy efficiency planning and delivery. It sets out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving their energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. Action Plan to be considered by Climate Change Committee in November 2024.
Waste management				
Water and sewerage	Highland Wide Local Development Plan, p.116-120	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan	2012-2032	Our vision for the whole Highland Region (excluding Cairngorms National Park) setting out how land can be used by developers for the next 20 years.
Land Use	Growing our Future - Community Food Growing Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22921/growing_our_future_-_a_food_strategy_for_highland	2022-27	Highland's first food growing strategy supporting community empowerment, the health and prosperity strategy, helping to achieve net zero targets and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.
Other (please specify in comments)	Performance Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/4620/draft_corporate_plan_2022-27	2022-27	The Performance Plan provides the framework for the delivery & monitoring of the Council's programme "Our Future Highland". This sets out the Council's ambition to establish the foundations of a brighter and more sustainable future for Highland Communities through five key strategic priority outcomes grouped under the themes of People, Place and Economy.
Land Use	Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2050	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/23582/highland_indicative_regional_s	2020-2050	Broad level strategy for land use and management of assets and infrastructure.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
		patial_strategy_to_2050_-_refined		
Land Use	Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan	2022-2042	Sets out policies and land allocations to guide development in the Inner Moray Firth area.
Land Use	West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/582/west_highland_and_islands_local_development_plan	2019-2039	WestPlan focuses on where development should and should not occur in the West Highlands and Islands area over the next 20 years.
Land Use	Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/283/caithness_and_sutherland_local_development_plan	2018-2038	CaSPlan sets out our vision and development strategy for the counties of Caithness & Sutherland for 2018-2038.
Land Use	Area Place Plans: Fort William 2040, Skye & Raasay Investment Plan & Inverness Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/23582/highland_indicative_regional_spatial_strategy_to_2050_-_refined	Various	Broad level strategy for land use and management of assets and infrastructure.
Land Use	Local Flood Risk Management Plan for Highland & Argyll Local Plan District (LPD01) and Findhorn, Nairn & Speyside Local Plan District (LPD05)	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/81/flooding/3	2022-28	Flood Risk Management Plans to coordinate efforts to tackle flooding in LPD01 & LPD05.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Land Use	Highland-Wide Local Development Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan	2012-2032	Our vision for the whole Highland Region (excluding Cairngorms National Park) setting out how land can be used by developers for the next 20 years.
Land Use	Tree Management Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/27420/tree_management_strategy	2023 Onwards	Strategy detailing how the Council will manage its own tree resource.
Adaptation	Adapting to the impacts of climate change in Highland	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3584/adapting_to_climate_change.pdf	Updated 2012	The Council is currently developing an Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan to safeguard the Council against the effects of climate change and to ensure continuity of services.
Other (please specify in comments)	Joint Procurement strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/82117/13_joint_procurement_strategy	2023-2026	Climate Change, Net Zero & Circular Economy are one of the six key themes within the joint procurement strategy.
Other (please specify in comments)	Local Transport Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/762/highland_local_transport_strategy_draft_document.pdf	2010/11 - 2013/14	Strategy to guide policy and investment on transport within Highland Council and also within partner bodies involved in the delivery of transport infrastructure and transport services throughout the Highland area.
Other (please specify in comments)	Local Transport Strategy: Case for Change	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/26887/local_transport_strategy_case_for_change_-_full_report.pdf	01/03/2023	The Case for Change report is the first stage in the process of preparing the next Local Transport Strategy for Highland.
Energy efficiency	Heating Policy for Non-Domestic Buildings	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/82267/7_heating_policy_for_non-domestic_estate	2024 onwards	This policy sets out Highland Council's management approach to the provision of heating to our non-domestic property estate. It aims to comply with Health and Safety requirements, provide appropriate standards of thermal

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
				comfort conditions for staff, whilst minimising both carbon emissions and utility-related expenditure.
Other (Please Specify in Comments)	Delivery Plan 2024-27	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28497/delivery_plan_2024-2027	2024-27	Our operational Delivery Plan shows how the Council will deliver on Our Future Highland commitments, through a major programme of transformation for our people and places, working in collaboration with others to create a vibrant and sustainable Highland area.
Land Use	Draft Ecology Strategy and Action Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83175/item_11_draft_ecology_strategy_and_action_plan	2024 onwards	The Strategy sets out a suite of actions that will see the Council manage the estate more effectively for biodiversity; influence others through the implementation of policy and guidance; and work with our communities, regional and national partners and stakeholders to engage in collective action to tackle the ecological emergency together.
Other (please specify in comments)	Community Wealth Building Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83863/item_6_community_wealth_building_strategy	2024-27	The CWB Strategy sets out a 3-year vision that we will create an inclusive economy by retaining greater wealth and maximising spending within and for the communities of the Highlands, through harnessing organisational power and enabling community led activity.
Other (please specify in comments)	Community Benefit Policy (Procurement)	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83794/9_highland_community_benefit_policy_procurement	2024 onwards	Highland Council is committed to securing, meaningful, environmental, social, and economic value through all our procurement activity. This policy will ensure Community Benefits are routinely considered and Community Benefit clauses are included in all works, goods and services frameworks or contracts, where it is proportionate and relevant to do so.
Renewable energy	Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83522/item_10_social_values_	2024 onwards	This Charter is designed to set out what the area expects from renewables investment alongside what we, as public/private/community sector partners, will do to support

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
		charter_for_renewables_investment		and enable this contribution. It aims to: • Embed an approach to community wealth building into Highland • Maximise economic benefits from our natural environment and resources • Engage and involve relevant stakeholders to understand how we can continually improve our impact • Unlock economic opportunities for the area

2f What are the body's top 5 priorities for climate change governance, management and strategy for the year ahead?

1. Ensure climate change is fully embedded into all six Portfolios within the Council's Delivery Plan "Our Future Highland"
2. The Net Zero Strategy Group will lead on the development and delivery of projects that support the Council's climate change ambitions.
3. The Council's Capital Spend Policy and Governance framework will embed Net zero principles, aligning with the Highland Investment Plan.
4. Deliver mandatory climate literacy training for all members of staff. Elected members will be strongly encouraged to fully participate in training.
5. Develop carbon budgeting and approve emission reductions targets for all services.

2g Has the body used the Climate Change Assessment Tool (a) or equivalent tool to self-assess its capability / performance?

The Climate Change team conducted a trial of the CCAT tool in 2015 and a session using the tool was held with the Senior Management Team in May 2018. As referenced in section 4, during the reporting year, Highland Council has begun the process of Adaptation Benchmarking with the help of the Scotland Adapts Capability Framework and the Benchmarking Working Group.

The Net Zero Strategy approved in June 2023 highlights the following priority actions:

- The Council will adopt Zero Waste Scotland's Climate Change Assessment Tool to establish an annual self-assessment of our performance to date and to ensure we comply with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to meet carbon emissions reduction targets and report to the Scottish Government.
- Undertake an annual audit to review progress against the Strategy and Action Plan.

During reporting year 2023/24, the Council's Internal Audit team looked at the plans the Council has in place to ensure it meets its obligations as set out in Climate Change legislation. The report highlighting findings and recommendations can be found here: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/82235/4f_deputy_chief_executive_s_%E2%80%93_climate_change_plans_and_implementation_limited_assurance

Section 3 – Emissions and Projects

3a Emissions from the start of the year which the body uses as a baseline (for its carbon footprint) to the end of the report year

Reference year	Year	Year type	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total	Units
Baseline Year	2011/12	Financial/Calendar/Other	24,913.00	37,031.00	4,635.00	66,579.00	tCO_2e
Year 1 carbon footprint	2012/13	Financial/Calendar/Other	25,218.00	38,234.00	4,218.00	67,670.00	tCO_2e
Year 2 carbon footprint	2013/14	Financial/Calendar/Other	21,024.00	37,858.00	4,519.00	63,401.00	tCO_2e
Year 3 carbon footprint	2014/15	Financial/Calendar/Other	20,847.00	38,722.00	4,274.00	63,843.00	tCO_2e
Year 4 carbon footprint	2015/16	Financial/Calendar/Other	22,629.00	39,323.00	4,088.00	66,040.00	tCO_2e
Year 5 carbon footprint	2016/17	Financial/Calendar/Other	20,899.00	36,969.00	4,153.00	62,021.00	tCO_2e
Year 6 carbon footprint	2017/18	Financial/Calendar/Other	21,226.00	24,983.00	7,416.00	53,625.00	tCO_2e
Year 7 carbon footprint	2018/19	Financial/Calendar/Other	19,849.00	19,946.00	5,281.00	45,076.00	tCO_2e
Year 8 carbon footprint	2019/20	Financial/Calendar/Other	18,493.00	17,533.00	4,596.00	40,622.00	tCO_2e
Year 9 carbon footprint	2020/21	Financial/Calendar/Other	16,593.00	12,504.00	3,300.40	32,397.40	tCO_2e
Year 10 carbon footprint	2021/22	Financial/Calendar/Other	18,688.70	11,480.20	3,597.40	33,766.30	tCO_2e
Year 11 carbon footprint	2022/23	Financial/Calendar/Other	20,884.88	11,415.37	3,846.88	36,702.10	tCO_2e
Year 12 carbon footprint	**2023/24**	**Financial/Calendar/Other**	**18,283.13**	**11,787.57**	**3,158.71**	**33,229.41**	**tCO_2e**

3b Breakdown of emissions sources

Emission Factor Year 2023

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill	Scope 3	206	tonnes	497.04471	kg CO2e/tonnes	102.39121	Waste to landfill - Non Schools
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill	Scope 3	767	tonnes	497.04471	kg CO2e/tonnes	381.23329	Waste to landfill - Schools
Waste	Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled	Scope 3	142	tonnes	21.28081	kg CO2e/tonnes	3.02187	Mixed Recycling - Non Schools
Waste	Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled	Scope 3	381	tonnes	21.28081	kg CO2e/tonnes	8.10799	Mixed Recycling - Schools
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion	Scope 3	381	tonnes	21.28081	kg CO2e/tonnes	8.10799	Energy from Waste - Non Schools
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion	Scope 3	728	tonnes	21.28081	kg CO2e/tonnes	15.49243	Energy from Waste - Schools
Waste	Organic: food and drink waste - Composting	Scope 3	27	tonnes	8.91242	kg CO2e/tonnes	0.24064	Organic Food Waste - Non Schools
Waste	Organic: food and drink waste - Composting	Scope 3	117	tonnes	8.91242	kg CO2e/tonnes	1.04275	Organic Food Waste - Schools
Fuels	Marine gas oil	Scope 1	154,065	litres	2.77139	kg CO2e/litres	426.97401	Corran Ferry - Public Ferry Service
Water	Water supply	Scope 3	620,537	cubic metres	0.10000	kg CO2e/cubic metres	62.05370	
Water	Water treatment	Scope 3	589,510	cubic metres	0.19000	kg CO2e/cubic metres	112.00690	est. based on 95% of consumption

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Electricity	Electricity: UK	Scope 2	48,549,038	kWh	0.20707	kg CO2e/kWh	10053.25759	Buildings
Electricity	Electricity: UK	Scope 2	8,375,293	kWh	0.20707	kg CO2e/kWh	1734.30776	Street Lighting
Electricity	Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK	Scope 3	48,549,038	kWh	0.01792	kg CO2e/kWh	869.76143	Buildings
Electricity	Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK	Scope 3	8,375,293	kWh	0.01792	kg CO2e/kWh	150.04430	Street Lighting
Bioenergy	Wood pellets	Scope 1	32,721,814	kWh	0.01074	kg CO2e/kWh	351.43228	
Fuels	LPG	Scope 1	5,784,820	kWh	0.21450	kg CO2e/kWh	1240.82077	LPG off grid gas alternative
Fuels	Natural gas	Scope 1	28,822,632	kWh	0.18293	kg CO2e/kWh	5272.49312	
Fuels	Burning oil (Kerosene)	Scope 1	18,024,983	kWh	0.24677	kg CO2e/kWh	4448.08363	
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	163,389	miles	0.26817	kg CO2e/miles	43.81562	Car Hire - Travel Desk
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	2,302,695	miles	0.26817	kg CO2e/miles	617.50796	Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursment) - THC
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	780,256	miles	0.26817	kg CO2e/miles	209.23930	Car Club
Transport - public	Regular taxi	Scope 3	121	passenger.km	0.14861	kg CO2e/passenger.km	0.01798	Travel Desk
Transport - public	Ferry - Average (all passenger)	Scope 3	5,977	passenger.km	0.11270	kg CO2e/passenger.km	0.67360	Travel Desk
Transport - public	Coach	Scope 3	22,804	passenger.km	0.02718	kg CO2e/passenger.km	0.61984	Travel Desk
Transport - public	Flights - Short-haul, to/from UK - Average passenger	Scope 3	53,561	passenger.km	0.18592	kg CO2e/passenger.km	9.95791	Travel Desk
Transport - public	National rail	Scope 3	280,419	passenger.km	0.03546	kg CO2e/passenger.km	9.94449	Travel Desk/Self Service

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	2,351,089	litres	2.51206	kg CO2e/litres	5906.08577	
Fuels	Gas oil	Scope 1	16,214	litres	2.75541	kg CO2e/litres	44.67620	
Fuels	Petrol (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	109,532	litres	2.09747	kg CO2e/litres	229.74043	exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops
Homeworking	Homeworking (office equipment + heating)	Scope 3	1,262,800	FTE Working Hour	0.33378	kg CO2e/FTE Working Hour	421.49891	3,608 employees (office based) 25% FTE estimate, 7h/day, 200 annualised days/FTE
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	142,870	litres	2.51206	kg CO2e/litres	358.89857	In House Bus Project and Bus Operations
Fuels	Petrol (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	1,872	litres	2.09747	kg CO2e/litres	3.92647	In House Bus Project and Bus Operations
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	996	miles	0.26817	kg CO2e/miles	0.26709	Car Hire - HLH/Non Travel Desk - estimated by cost
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	490,979	miles	0.26817	kg CO2e/miles	131.66461	Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - HLH and VJB
							33,229.408	

3c Generation, consumption and export of renewable energy

Technology	Renewable Electricty		Renewable Heat		
	Total consumed by the body (kWh)	**Total exported (kWh)**	**Total consumed by the body (kWh)**	**Total exported (kWh)**	**Comments**
Biomass			32,579,689		Actual consumption data
Biomass			36,777,517		Actual consumption data
Ground Source Heat Pump			214,552		Estimate based on sites regularly measured.
Solar PV	861,330				Estimate based on available data.
Wind	10,000				Estimated – Unmetered solution for Off-Grid schools
Hydro	218,645				HydroNess

3d Organisational Targets

Name of target	Type of target	Target	Units	Boundary/scope of target	Year used as baseline	Baseline figure	Units of baseline	Target completion year	Progress against target	Comments
Carbon emission reduction target	Percentage	75	total % reduction	Other (please specify in comments)	2011/12	66,579	tCO2e	2029/30	33,229	Scope 3 emissions associated with procurement are not included at present
Carbon emission reduction target	Percentage	90	total % reduction	Other (please specify in comments)	2011/12	66,579	tCO2e	2039/40	33,229	Scope 3 emissions associated with procurement are not included at present
Net Zero	Percentage	100	total % reduction	Other (please specify in comments)	2011/12	66,579	tCO2e	2044/45	33,229	As above. The net zero target will also require options for sequestration.

3da How will the body align its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emission reduction targets?

The Net Zero Strategy includes the following priority actions in relation to embedding Net Zero/Climate Change into decision-making processes:

- Adopt carbon budgeting across the organisation and introduce service-level targets.
- Introduce Climate Change Impact Assessment tool into the decision-making process.
- Review structure and governance of the Capital Programme.
- Strategic allocation of resources that help secure a net zero and climate-resilient Council.
- Align the Scheme of Delegation with the actions set out within the Net Zero Strategy.

3db **How will the body publish, or otherwise make available, it's progress towards achieving its emissions reduction targets?**

All progress is made available through Committee reporting. The link to Climate Change Committee papers can be found here: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20003/committee_information/1001/climate_change_committee

3e **Estimated total annual carbon savings from all projects implemented by the body in the report year**

Emissions source	Total estimated annual carbon savings (tCO_2e)	Comments
Electricity	176	Salix Projects inc. LED Lighting

3f Detail the top 10 carbon reduction projects to be carried out by the body in the report year

Project name	Funding source	First full year of CO_2e savings	Are these savings figures estimated or actual?	Capital cost (£)	Operational cost (£/annum)	Project lifetime (years)	Primary fuel/emission source saved	Estimated carbon savings per year (tCO_2e/annum)	Estimated costs savings (£/annum)	Behaviour Change	Comments
Street Lighting Lot 3	Salix	2024/2025	Estimated	564,305		25	Electricity: UK	122	77,041.12	No	Estimated savings from business case
Inverness Museum and Art Gallery	Salix	2024/2026	Estimated	84,752		25	Electricity: UK	9	5,961.44	No	Estimated savings from business case
Phase 4 Lot 1 West Coast Primary Schools	Salix	2024/2027	Estimated	25,167		25	Electricity: UK	6	3,765.33	No	Estimated savings from business case
Phase 4 Lot 4 - Noss PS LED works	Salix	2024/2028	Estimated	57,839		25	Electricity: UK	7	8,283.08	No	Estimated savings from business case
Phase 4 Lot 3 - Aviemore PS and Lundavra	Salix	2024/2029	Estimated	121,843		25	Electricity: UK	15	17,451.72	No	Estimated savings from business case

Project name	Funding source	First full year of CO_2e savings	Are these savings figures estimated or actual?	Capital cost (£)	Operational cost (£/annum)	Project lifetime (years)	Primary fuel/emission source saved	Estimated carbon savings per year (tCO_2e/annum)	Estimated costs savings (£/annum)	Behaviour Change	Comments
Phase 4 Lot 1 West Coast PS Wick HS Pitch LED's	Salix	2024/2030	Estimated	5,865		25	Electricity: UK	1	563.55	No	Estimated savings from business case
Inverness Museum and Art Gallery	Salix	2024/2031	Estimated	73,313		25	Electricity: UK	8	10,432.52	No	Estimated savings from business case
Ben Wyvis Primary School LED Works	Salix	2024/2032	Estimated	63,768		25	Electricity: UK	7	9,057.16	No	Estimated savings from business case

3g Estimated decrease or increase in the body's emissions attributed to factors (not reported elsewhere in this form) in the report year

(blank)

3h **Anticipated annual carbon savings from all projects implemented by the body in the year ahead**

Emissions source	Total estimated annual carbon savings (tCO_2e)	Comments
Electricity	15	Salix funded project - various

3i **Estimated decrease or increase in emissions from other sources in the year ahead**

(blank)

3j **Total carbon reduction project savings since the start of the year which the body used as a baseline for its carbon footprint**

(blank)

3k **Supporting information and best practice**

Highland Council has developed an interactive webface interface (the "Energy Benchmarking Tool") that permits the performance of all non-domestic properties to be individually assessed in terms of energy efficiency, utility cost and carbon emissions. This project directly supports and informs decisions with regard to achieving net zero, investment in buildings (to improve Energy/Net Zero performance) and asset rationalisation considerations.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/276/energy_use_in_our_buildings

Section 4 – Adaptation

4a **Has the body assessed current and future climate-related risks?**

The Highland Council produced the Adapting to Climate Change in Highland report in 2012. This report contained an assessment of the potential risks and opportunities of different climate change scenarios for the Highlands, as well as identifying priority action areas: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3584/adapting_to_climate_change.pdf

Climate Change has been identified as a risk on the Council's Corporate Risk Register: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/81729/item_7_review_of_corporate_risks

The Highland Council considers current and future climate-related risks in a number of its development and planning processes, primarily through the use of UKCP18 climate change scenarios to predict changes to various risks to new developments and current infrastructure. Areas of focus include flood risk management, coastal and marine planning, and sustainable design, which all have specific planning guidelines and supplementary guidance associated with them aimed at assessing future climate resilience as part of the planning process.

There are other strategies in place for managing climate-related risks, for example, the Resilience Team conducts regular risk assessments at a variety of geographic scales across Highland, in collaboration with partner agencies including the NHS, SEPA, Police and Fire Services and other local authorities in the region. These response plans cover a number of areas which are expected to be influenced by climate change.

A key priority outcome from the adaptation section of the Council's Net Zero Strategy, (approved June 2023) is to undertake a Council-wide Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment.

The Highland Council is an active partner in the Highland Adapts (HA) partnership. Highland Adapts was formally established in 2021 when nine founding partners comprising of The Highland Council, NatureScot, NHS Highland, Zero Waste Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Changeworks, Sniffer, and the Highland and Islands Climate Hub committed to work together to drive transformational action towards a prosperous climate-ready Highland. These organisations agreed to distribute power throughout the partnership and recognised that knowledge sharing, and collaboration are key to everything HA does.

HA has been developing a community of practitioners in the Highlands and supporting their work. They are currently developing the first Highland Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment that will value formal data and evidence such as academic research and data provided by major organisations, alongside local knowledge and lived experiences from Highland communities.

The current Highland Adapts objectives are to:

- Develop a strong knowledge and evidence base, setting out the climate risks and opportunities that will affect the region.
- Facilitate information sharing through a range of resources.
- Identify opportunities to reduce and overcome these climate risks.
- Develop a shared Adaptation Strategy and suite of action plans.
- Support others to use plans to form the basis of projects and activities across the public sector, community, land management and business sector plans, strategies, and investments.
- Support the public sector to embed climate change adaptation throughout their business.
- Support community climate change action.

Highland Risk & Opportunity Assessment Objectives:

- Identify and prioritise the risks and opportunities from climate change to Highland's society, economy, and environment between now and 2080.
- Lay the foundation for a transformational approach to climate adaptation and resilience for the region.
- Support a Just Transition to a net zero and climate-resilient economy, in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

The risk and opportunity assessment will support regional and local decision making and will enable partners to identify priorities for further action at the community level. Further work will be required to agree specific adaptation actions that are needed to address the risks and opportunities that are identified. The assessment will also identify areas for undertaking additional analysis on sectors or regions of concern or interest.

The Highland Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment methodology builds on the UK's Climate Change Risk Assessments and the Climate Ready Clyde Risk Assessment. Methods borrowed from these assessments are merged with novel approaches developed to best support the Highland region in alignment with Highland Adapts' principles.

The Highland Economic Risk Assessment is a complementary assessment undertaken by Paul Watkiss Associates. The timeline of this assessment runs parallel to that of the broader assessment. This economic assessment aims to understand the current and future economic costs of climate change, and potential opportunities for green financing, the circular economy and skills development. The approach is based on similar analysis undertaken as part of Glasgow City Region's Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment, which undertook and published an Economic Assessment of the Costs and Benefits of Climate Change.

4b What arrangements does the body have in place to manage climate-related risks?

From its role as a planning authority, the Highland Council takes steps to manage climate related risks by shaping and coordinating development and the corresponding infrastructure and services. This is primarily managed through the outcomes, strategies, planning policies and proposals that seek to ensure that any development and activity aligns with climate change outcomes. It also then informs planning advice and the determination of planning applications, which are each tested in terms of their compliance with the Development Plan, notably the strategy and local and national policies for climate change. A review of our Local Development Plan has commenced with a view to aligning the Plan with the recently published NPF4. Our Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy recognises the impact of climate change to the Highlands and the need to adapt and mitigate to these challenges. It also supports key developments that will act as a catalyst for responding to climate change.

There are particular examples of more detailed guidance that shape decisions that affect climate change, such as Onshore Wind Energy, Local Transport Strategy and Development Briefs for specific sites. These can identify specific measures for tackling climate change in particular types of development or geographical areas. The Highland Council continues to monitor its policies to ensure that climate change measures are being fully supported.

The service has over the last few years provided essential support to the successful identification of the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport and is now working to ensure its delivery and, in doing so, confirming Highlands ongoing role as a major contributor to national decarbonisation and climate change response.

Reviews of the risks to existing infrastructure are carried out on a per project basis, with the support of relevant Council services such as the Flood Risk Management Team as well as external partners such as SEPA. Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance released in November 2016 assists with identifying and designing onshore wind energy projects that can be supported through planning and hence are more likely to gain consent, be implemented and contribute towards renewable energy targets. The Highland Council continues to add further guidance to it through a continuing programme of landscape sensitivity appraisals and identification of strategic capacity.

The Council's Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy provides a strategic approach to woodland, including new native and productive woodland planting across Highland.

During the reporting year the Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) was developed with a focus on ensuring climate, biodiversity and adaptation/resilience impacts stemming from Council plans, strategies, policies, projects etc are negated or mitigated, thereby lessening our impact on the climate and environment and making sure our organisation and communities are adapted and resilient to the future impacts of climate change. Development and testing of the CCIA was completed in April 2024 and approved by members at the May Climate Change Committee.

The assessment was integrated into the Councils new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool located on the Granicus platform which went live on 1st July 2024 along with a roll out of training and workshops for staff and members who use the tool. A tailored Climate Change Impact Assessment training module and guidance was also developed and released alongside the CCIA.

The Flood Risk Management Team manages a dynamic risk-based system of watercourse inspections and implements remedial / maintenance works as necessary to reduce flooding. Monthly targets for priority inspections are met and monitored using performance indicators. The Council's second Local Flood Risk Management Plan covering the period from 2022 to 2028 was published in December 2022. The plan is seen as an important response to the climate emergency and focuses on understanding the risks from all sources of flooding whilst setting out the immediate actions required to adapt to future flood risk and ensure we are resilient to the effects of flooding. The publication of the Local Flood Risk Management Plans has helped to raise awareness of flood risk in communities and the riparian responsibilities towards watercourse maintenance. The Local Flood Risk Management Plan (LFRMP) has also identified high risk areas where the development of a Flood Protection Study (leading to a Flood Protection Scheme) should be carried out.

The Infrastructure, Environment and Economy Service is delivering Flood Protection Studies in accordance with the LFRMP, taking into account climate change scenarios when assessing future flood risk. Development of a Highland-wide Surface Water Management Plan will assess surface water flooding issues in the highest priority areas. The Highland Council makes use of Scottish Government's initial 'Dynamic Coast' and subsequent Dynamic Coast 2 research at a strategic level within the current review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan as one of a number of data sources informing which sites to prefer for development. The Pilot Pentland Firth & Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan was published in March 2016. It was a collaboration between Marine Scotland, the Highland Council and Orkney Islands Council. Its policies include flooding, well-being and quality of life and amenity of coastal communities. It identifies resilience to climate change as one of its key overarching objectives. It provided guidance for the subsequent, proposed eleven statutory regional marine plans around Scotland, of which three would cover the Highland local planning authority area. The responsibility lies with Scottish Ministers to agree to take forward any of the proposed three Highland Regional Marine Plans; whilst the Highland Council will be one of the key organisations involved, it is not within its remit to progress these.

As a member of the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership (HILRP), the Council and its resilience team participate in dealing with emergencies together with the partners, to plan for, and respond to, all kinds of events, which are regularly tested in joint exercises and during real emergencies. The HILRP sits within the North of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership which manages the Community Risk Register published in 2023 and highlights risks that have the highest likelihood and potential to have significant impact, causing disruption to the North of Scotland Region and its communities.

The Council maintains the General Emergency Plan (current Plan runs from 2019-2024) that maps out the organisation and management structure of the Council's response to an UNUSUAL (level 2) or MAJOR (level 3) INCIDENT. These include climate related emergencies. Continued within this is the requirement to provide advice and guidance on the preparation of community resilience plans, particularly related to flooding. Individual resilience, in the event of significant impacts arising from severe weather events, has been promoted through Corporate Communications. The Council also maintains a suite of Service Business Continuity Plans and a Corporate Business Continuity Plan to ensure the continued delivery of its critical functions during disruption caused by severe weather. These are tested on an annual basis.

4c What action has the body taken to adapt to climate change?

The Highland Council has taken the following actions to adapt to climate change:

- Employed a full time fixed-term Climate Change Coordinator with the remit to lead on adaptation workstreams.
- Hosted an adaptation workshop with elected members designed to provide an overview of the national, regional, and organisational context of climate change adaptation and highlight case studies across the organisation.
- Begun the process of developing Adaptation Benchmarking with the help of the Scotland Adapts Capability Framework and the Benchmarking Working Group.
- Developed the second Local Flood Risk Management Plan and continued to deliver the actions identified within this plan.
- Begun the process of developing Climate Literacy Training that incorporates adaptation and resilience as a key component. Mandatory training will be delivered to all staff, whilst Elected Members will be strongly encouraged to participate in training.
- Collaborated with Highland Adapts on the development of a regional climate risk and opportunity assessment that will support regional and local decision making and will enable partners to identify priorities for further action at the community level.
- Engaged with other public bodies throughout Scotland through a public sector networking lunch exchanging knowledge and best practice on climate change and adaptation actions.
- Developed a regional Local Climate Impacts Profile and media analysis to help map out and assess the region's exposure to the weather and current and historical climate change impacts.
- Continued engagement with local communities to raise awareness of adaptation and resilience actions through the Resilience Team, Corporate Communications and Community Support. Regular review and testing of emergency response and business continuity arrangements, including holding a Severe Weather emergency response exercise for Council Senior Managers on 18th September 2023.
- Implementation of the policies set out in the Council's new Tree Strategy.
- Started process to develop a Council Ecology Strategy and implemented actions to improve the biodiversity value of the Council estate
- Partnered with St Andrew's and Edinburgh Uni with regard to coastal habitat mapping and salt marsh restoration.
- Implemented the Council's Nature Restoration Fund allocating 50% of the NRF to community biodiversity enhancement projects and the remaining 50% to greening the council's estate with the aim of mitigating and minimising our impact on climate change. This included the recruitment of a Greenspace Officer to deliver these projects.
- Relaunched the Species Champions Initiative to enable elected Members to advocate for at risk species during the course of their duties.
- Drafted and consulted on Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance to maximise opportunities presented by NPF4 Policy 3.
- Completion of the Caol and Lochyside Flood Protection Scheme in Fort William which was formally opened by the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 31 August 2023. The 2km long scheme which consists of a 1.2km embankment and 800m flood wall has been designed to prevent flooding from both tidal and fluvial sources in the Caol and Lochyside areas north of Fort William.
- The Highland Council is a key partner in the Flow Country Partnership which has been leading a campaign to secure World Heritage Site status for the Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland. The Partnership formally submitted the formal nomination dossier to UNESCO in February 2023 making the in-depth case for designating the 190,000-hectare site as the world's first peatland World Heritage Site.

If successful, the World Heritage Site will provide a range of benefits and ensure the continued protection and conservation of this unique landscape that stores some 400 million tonnes of carbon. It will continue to act as a carbon sink and draw down CO2 from the atmosphere for generations to come as well as creating new economic and cultural opportunities for the area's rural communities.

4d Objective – Understanding the effects of Climate Change and their impacts on the natural environment.

- The Council has completed development of its second Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-2028 that draws together multiple datasets to support flood risk management in the Highlands.
- Development has begun on the Adaptation Benchmarking Tool with the help of the Scotland Adapts Capability and the Benchmarking Working Group. Alongside the recent LCLIP media analysis this will better inform and help the Council understand the effects of climate change on the region and its natural environment.

Objective – Support a healthy and diverse natural environment with capacity to adapt.

- The Council's Tree Management Strategy was approved in summer 2023. This strategy sets out how the Council will manage and expand its own tree resource with particular focus on how this resource will be pivotal in achieving net zero and tackling biodiversity loss.
- Nature Restoration Fund allocated to community and Council biodiversity projects, including new tree planting at a variety of sites, e.g. Torvean Park and Merkinch Local Nature Reserve and removal of invasive New Zealand Pygmy weed in Bught Park, Inverness.
- As a key partner in the Flow Country Partnership, a formal nomination dossier was submitted to UNESCO in February 2023 making the case for the site to become the world's first peatland World Heritage Site. This would ensure the continued protection and conservation of this unique landscape that stores some 400 million tonnes of carbon.
- Recruited the Council's first Planning Ecologist to provide specialist advice to the Planning Authority and to ensure that planning applications for major development take cognisance of NPF4 policies in respect of biodiversity and that impacts on biodiversity are mitigated and appropriate enhancement strategies implemented.
- The Highland Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026 has the aim of building resilience in the region's natural environment and biodiversity to current and future impacts of climate change.
- The Council supports the NW2045 Regional Landuse Partnership, which engages with land managers to recognise the importance of and safeguard natural capital and ecosystem services.

Objective – Sustain and enhance the benefits, goods, and services that the natural environment provides.

- The Community Food Growing Strategy 2022-2027 sets out the vision that, by 2027, Highland Communities are resilient, empowered and supported to grow their own food through existing and new approaches to growing. This has led to the ongoing development of a revised allotment policy that incorporates net zero, adaptation and resilience, and the circular economy at its core.
- The Highland Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026 sets out actions to increase access to and participation with green and blue infrastructure services and activities to benefit health.
- Instigation of the Ecology Strategy and Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance.
- The Highland Council's role is a key partner in the Flow Country Partnership to secure World Heritage Site status for the Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland. World Heritage Site status would provide a range of benefits and ensure the continued protection and conservation of this unique landscape that stores some 400 million tonnes of carbon. It will continue to act as a carbon sink and draw down CO2 from the atmosphere for generations to come as well as creating new economic and cultural opportunities for the area's rural communities.

Objective – Understand the effects of climate change and their impacts on buildings and infrastructure.

- The Adaptation Benchmarking Tool and associated LCIP media analysis has provided enhanced understanding of the impacts of climate change on buildings and infrastructure in the region.
- Highland Adapts work on the Climate Risk and Opportunities Assessment as well as its ongoing development of a strategy and action plan will highlight critical areas for action across partner agencies. The regional risk assessment will provide data and guidance to support informed decision making.

Objective – Increase the resilience of buildings and infrastructure networks to sustain and enhance the benefits and services provided.

- The review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan to align it with the new NPF4 will place greater emphasis on adapting and building the resilience of buildings to climate change within the planning process.
- Work is ongoing to improve the region's privately owned and privately rented domestic properties to improve energy efficiency measures. The Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS), which is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered and managed by Highland Council, aims to reduce fuel poverty by reducing energy costs, carbon emissions and improving comfort levels to the household. The team is in the 12th year of delivering energy efficient projects across Highland and has been the recipient of a range of national and regional awards throughout that time.
- The Council published its Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and high level Delivery Plan in December 2023 and is currently developing the detailed LHEES delivery plan. The detailed delivery plan outlines an approach to energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation.
- The Council continues to leverage external funding to support the delivery of energy efficiency projects across all tenures, current sources of external funding; Scottish Government, Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding, Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) and private investment.
- Ongoing work to ensure compliance with EESSH2 is progressing with an estimated £9m spent this year towards improving the energy efficiency of its housing stock.

Objective – Understand the effects of climate change and their impacts on people, homes, and communities.

- The Adaptation Benchmarking Tool and associated LCIP media analysis work has provided enhanced understanding of the impacts of climate change on people, homes and communities across the region.
- Highland Adapts work on the Climate Risk and Opportunities assessment as well as its ongoing development of a strategy and action plan will highlight critical areas for action across partner agencies. The regional risk assessment will provide data and guidance to support informed decision making.

Objective – Increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to enable people to adapt to future extreme weather events.

- Ongoing progress is underway by the Resilience Team and Flood Risk Management Team to work with communities and partner organisations to develop local community resilience plans as set out in the Council's General Emergency Plan and HILRP remits.
- Individual resilience measures, in the event of significant impacts arising from severe weather events, are promoted through the Councils Resilience and Corporate Communications Team.

- Continued engagement with local communities to raise awareness of adaptation and resilience actions through the Resilience Team, Corporate Communications and Community Support.

Objective – Support our health services and emergency responders to enable them to respond effectively to the increased pressures associated with a changing climate.

- The Council's General Emergency Plan requires the Resilience Team, in collaboration with local emergency responders, to put in place a comprehensive evaluation strategy to assess performance after each training exercise/event and real-life responses to UNUSUAL (Level 2) and MAJOR (Level 3) INCIDENTS. These incidents include, but are not limited to, severe weather resulting in overnight power outages/road closures and/or giving rise to large scale impacts; major wildfires; major flooding; any incident involving mass casualties etc.

4e What arrangements does the body have in place to review current and future climate risks?

The Highland Council uses the UKCP18 climate change scenarios to inform future planning decisions and incorporates any changes in these scenarios into the relevant decision-making processes.

The Resilience Team is continually assessing the Council's preparedness to a variety of risks related to climate change. As a Category 1 partner of the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership, the Council is also involved in reviewing and contributing to the North of Scotland Risk Preparedness Statement, and ensuring multi-agency civil contingency work is prioritised accordingly, including to new and emerging risks. The Resilience Team, through the community resilience planning process, is helping communities to assess their own unique risks and prepare contingency plans for these risks. This includes risks from severe weather and other risks which will be exacerbated by future climate change, although the plans are more generic and do not specifically reference future climate risks.

Highland Adapts is developing a Place-based climate risk assessment for Highland which will help the Highland Council plan for potential climate risks and build resilience.

As part of the development of the Council's Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan, the Climate Change and Energy Team received funding for the 2022/23 financial year for new staff resources to assist in the delivery of the project. As part of this, a full-time officer has been appointed to work through the Adaptation Scotland Capability Framework and embed adaptation within the Council. Their role is focussed on working with service heads to identify operational risks and create an Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan to help build a climate-ready Council.

4f What arrangements does the body have in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the adaptation actions?

There are different strategies for monitoring and evaluation depending on the specific nature of the threat or sector being addressed. This can be in the form of implementing policies or strategies in response to national legislation, that contain specific indicators as required. As much of the future climate change adaptation considerations are done through risk assessment processes, the monitoring and evaluation processes are included as part of individual project requirements.

During the reporting year, a Climate Change Impact Assessment was developed, as part of the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (introduced July 2024), that incorporates a section on adaptation and resilience both internally and externally. This will be used to identify areas of both positive and negative impact in Council proposals and require mitigating actions to be put in place where required. Ongoing monitoring will be built into these actions. Highland Adapts is developing a high-level dataset which will provide baseline data which can also be used to monitor and evaluate different adaptation actions.

4g What are the body's top 5 climate change adaptation priorities for the year ahead?

1. Develop a Corporate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan that will focus on embedding Adaptation throughout the Council's processes and procedures and ensure that services are suitable and resilient to present and projected climate change. This will use the Adaptation Scotland's Capability Framework for the public sector and will be a comprehensive plan that will have resilience at the core.
2. Undertake a Council-wide risk and opportunity assessment.
3. Incorporate adaptation considerations into the Council's Risk and Resilience Group.
4. Embed Adaptation into internal Carbon Literacy Training.
5. Continue to work with Highland Adapts to support the production of a regional wide climate risk and opportunity assessment. Take an evidence-based and place-centred approach to inform the region's adaptation actions.

4h Supporting information and best practice

- Progress has been made on the Community Food Growing Strategy 2022-2027 that was agreed by members in February 2022. The vision for this strategy is that, by 2027, Highland Communities are resilient, empowered and supported to grow their own food. The strategy and associated guidance aim to inspire, empower and support communities in the Highlands who want to grow their own food, through existing opportunities and new approaches to growing.
- As a key partner in the Highland Environment Forum, it continues with actions set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan 21-26 with the aim of building resilience in the regions biodiversity and mitigating the current impacts of climate change particularly in dealing with the threat of invasive species moving north due to the warmer climate. This has been strengthened through the addition of several new positions in the Environment Team and funding sources being secured.
- The Council's new Tree Strategy was launched in 2023 and sets out how the Council will manage and expand its own tree resource with particular emphasis on how this resource will be pivotal in the Council achieving net zero and tackling biodiversity loss.
- Facilitated best practice sharing between key partners involved in the Caithness and Sutherland Green Finance Initiative and the Flow Country World Heritage Site partnership.

Section 5 – Procurement

5a How have procurement policies contributed to compliance with climate change duties?

The Council is guided by internal policy covering sustainable procurement and community benefits at a strategic and operational level, contributing positively and progressively to duties and commitments under Scottish Climate commitments. Policy is sufficiently agile to contribute to broader climate positive aspirations which support global energy transition, application of meaningful circular economy measures and a net zero future. Strategic and practical guidance is provided at key stages: identification of need, specification development, selection/award and contract management. Policy/guidance assists procurers to proactively address key aspects of the duties: mitigation (ensuring reduction in greenhouse gases/enhancing carbon storage), adaptation (e.g. flood prevention) and maximising added social, economic and environmental value.

The Commercial and Procurement Shared Service (CPSS)
Embraces the procurement function in: Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and The Highland Council. Refreshed in 2023, the 2023-2026 Joint Procurement Strategy remains aligned to: i) Scottish Model of Procurement (balance of quality, cost and sustainability) ii) National Performance Framework iii) Public Service Reform Agenda and iv) Scottish Government aspirations to: "support Scotland's economic growth by delivering social and environmental benefits, supporting innovation and promoting public procurement processes and systems which are transparent, streamlined, standard, proportionate, fair and business-friendly"

The Council's Procurement Mission Statement commits to "deliver procurement outcomes that support the wider strategic aims of the Councils and the communities they serve, furthering local and national priorities to the fullest extent possible." These aims converge with the National Performance Framework outcome "valuing, enjoying, protecting and enhancing our environment" and wider vision for the environment..
Policy/strategy/guidance emphasises a commitment (beyond mandatory thresholds) to identify: "leverage opportunities (including social, economic and environmental value) aligned to the needs and priorities of our communities"

Policy
"The partner councils aim to act as a role model within the public sector by carrying out activities in a responsible and sustainable manner, considering how the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area can be improved by working with all sectors of the business community to achieve increased prosperity. As responsible and ethical buyers, the partner councils aim to embed the key principles of sustainability into procurement activity for the benefit of society, the economy and the environment." The policy statement appears prominently in sourcing strategies and tender documents guiding procurers and bidders. Embedded and reinforced communication leads to climate positive measures receiving early, considered focus resulting in higher quality, more innovative bids aligned to local/national priorities and climate change duties.

Policy/guidance reinforces messaging that not all sustainability measures solely achieved through community benefits. Outcomes can be specified as contractual conditions e.g. particular eco standards (or equivalent), product composition and opportunities to introduce circular economy measures. Methods of production, lifecycle costing, environmental performance, reduction of packaging (particularly single use plastic) wastewater standards/accreditation and production methods at any stage of the lifecycle of supply or service promoted.

Zero Waste Scotland Circular Procurement Guidance and Best Practice is promoted in policy/guidance. Procurers are encouraged to consider utilising community benefits and the specification to maximise environmental wellbeing. In addition, the Edinburgh Science Net Zero Toolkit (https://thenetzerotoolkit.org/about/) strongly promoted (locally and nationally) to prospective bidders and the wider business community as a free resource to support their own journeys to a net zero future. Other sustainability tools include: i) Sustainability Test, ii) Prioritisation Tool and iii) Lifecycle Impact Mapping. Policy/guidance recognises that councils have influence and responsibilities beyond the geographic areas they serve. Sustainable procurement measures/community benefits can be captured at the following levels: Local (Council/area specific); National (Scotland/UK) and Global (e.g. fairly traded/ethically sourced goods/carbon emission reduction.) Guidance prompts that many national strategic objectives are addressable locally (employment & skills, Real Living Wage, health and wellbeing, poverty, biodiversity, reduced road miles/reduced carbon emissions etc.) As an overarching theme, sustainable procurement strongly recognised as a means of increasing prosperity. Prosperity of the (local) economy; Prosperity of (local) people; Prosperity of (local) places and Prosperity of the (local) environment.

In support of the Council's journey to Net Zero, a strategic commitment has been made that procurement activity will be undertaken in a way that will secure net zero emissions through a Just Transition and promote a circular economy. The journey to reduce emissions and support climate change and resilience is primarily centred on people and wellbeing and will enable the Council to action opportunities to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area including benefit to nature.

The procurement function aspires to act as an enabler and will: 1. support the creation of enabling conditions to reduce emissions; 2. support climate change adaptation to reduce risk and vulnerability to climate change; 3. strengthen climate resilience, enhancing well-being and the capacity to anticipate and respond successfully to change; 4. enhance biodiversity through conservation, protection and promotion; and 5. support transition to a circular economy

The Council employs a demand management approach and look for ways to improve how we buy, what we buy, how much we buy and explore opportunities to reduce volumes where possible, as this can have a positive impact on emissions and waste involved throughout the supply chain. In terms of governance and accountability, The Council report ongoing progress against these commitments in quarterly reports to the Strategic Procurement Board and within each Council Annual Procurement Report. Methods of measuring and monitoring outcomes achieved are being explored to further support tracking of progress and enablement of identification of further opportunities for Climate Change, Net Zero & Circular Economy outcomes.

5b How has procurement activity contributed to compliance with climate change duties?

Fleet -As part of the Sustainable Business Travel (SBT) thematic group work the procurement and reduction of the light fleet is key to helping the council meet its goals as agreed. The basis of procurement will be to replace all light vehicles with ULEV variants where average daily journey distances and recharging infrastructure allows. The SBT action plan also highlights the need to reduce the light fleet size by 20% based on the benchmark figure from 2019. This will be achieved by detailed investigations of the fleet to identify those vehicles that are underutilised and therefore no longer required.

Coastal Change Adaptation – Nairn Beach – Procurement of a Consultant to survey, model and provide advice on coastal erosion risk at Nairn Beach. Surveys included Vegetation surveys, Biodiversity surveys and Dune health assessments. The outcome of the report identified potential mitigating measures which could be implemented to address future dune erosion and consequent flood risk. Some of the measures specifically included small scale nature-based interventions now, which would reduce future damage and also the need to intervene in the future with larger scale, more carbon intense solutions.

Gynack Burn, Kingussie – Fluvial Audit - Procurement of a Consultant to survey, model and provide design of nature-based riverbank erosion protections. The implementation of those designs will reduce flood risk downstream in the village of Kingussie. Reduced flooding means reduce clean-up operations and therefore reduced carbon (dehumidifier and heater running impacts, waste plasterboard, carpets, flooring and other building material). Reduced sediment transport also results in reduced interventions to clear out bridges of sediment and so reduces carbon impacts of machinery operation.

Knockbain Burn – Screen improvement – Improved culvert screen arrangement will lead to reduced flooding (see impacts mentioned above). Design included green banking rather than hard engineered structure.

CCTV Surveys – Regular annual CCTV and jetting of culverted watercourses by external contractor. This preventative work reduces instances of flooding in the future due to blocked culverts. Requirement for reporting is now electronic rather than paper copy reports for each culvert. Culvert locations are grouped together for reduced transportation.

Waste - The Waste Service works closely with corporate colleagues to ensure sustainability and climate change duties are both well specified and assessed as part of the public procurement process. Tendering activities within the service place a particular focus on delivering best practice resource efficiency and circular economy outcomes. The Waste Service has in place an active contract management and monitoring regime to ensure commitments made and continuous improvement is being achieved through service spend.

Managed Print - The Council has agreed to reduce with the supplier the number of print devices by approximately a third and this will in turn create reductions in energy use under the electricity utilities framework. This, along with working on behavioural change, will realise an overall number of hard copies being printed compared to previous years.

EV Infrastructure Framework: EV Infrastructure Framework: Partnership working – EV infrastructure framework scoped in the reporting year. Initial stages of the competitive dialogue process commenced with the publication of a Prior Information Notice in December 2022, a Contract Notice on PCS in May 2024 with a contract award expected in April 2025. The framework embraces the business needs of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council and The Highland Council. The initiative will optimise delivery of future electric vehicle infrastructure at pace and scale under an innovative commercial partnership business model harnessing expertise and funding where possible. Specifically for fleet depots the successful bidder will be expected to produce investment business cases for fleet deport locations to include the private investment funding to install sufficient new EV Fleet chargers that will be competitive and aid in boosting the transition to EV fleet vehicles.

National Frameworks - via participation in User Intelligence Groups, the Council works in close collaboration with Scotland Excel (SXL) to improve sustainability credentials in the development of new national frameworks. Comprehensive sustainability test carried out by SXL for each new framework e.g policies on managing waste, minimising carbon footprint, fair work, innovation and commitments to delivering community benefits explored and subject to robust contract/supplier management. Extensive use made of national frameworks. SXL Contracts Register lists each operative framework and contains a summary of sustainability considerations representing a minimum standard which can be enhanced through purchasing decisions made in “call offs” In any framework involving delivery of supplies, increasingly superior emissions class of vehicles/ willingness to work towards a particular standard during engagement promoted. Food related frameworks incorporate reduced packaging/waste and circular economy principles. Scottish Government Frameworks and Contracts cover a wide range of goods and services. Sustainability standards represent a minimum which can be enhanced through purchasing decisions made in “call offs.” Utilities Electricity - Promoting greener power, Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates at fixed rates; range of Energy Efficiency Services as additional services and opportunities to sell energy back to the grid. Natural Gas – sustainable measures and energy performance guarantee option to ensure a range of energy conservation measures. Water – intelligent water management programme for reducing usage with associated reduction in CO2.

5c Supporting information and best practice

The Procurement & Community Wealth Building thematic group is one of the eight thematic groups leading on the development of the Council's Net Zero Strategy. A data led approach will be taken in respect of influencing choices and options with regards to Procurement. Work commissioned by the Shared Procurement Service has now concluded in respect of a supply chain and carbon analysis study. This provides a full analysis of supply chain emissions at a granular level and data that will be used to identify trends/carbon 'hotspots' for Highland Council, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. The next phase will consider implementation/processes in terms of how we use the data/tools developed under phase 1 to make carbon footprint and cost choices e.g. carbon budgeting.

In the reporting period, the Commercial and Procurement Shared Service (CPSS) continued to engage actively and positively in the net zero/sustainable procurement agenda at a local, regional and national level e.g. via working groups, User Intelligence Groups and statutory consultations. Options continue to be developed and challenged in cross-functional teams e.g. “Climate Friendly” criteria options and assessment of how impacts can be reliably monitored and reported upon.

Go Awards Scotland- CPSS were finalists in the Social Value category in a ceremony held in October 2023.

Section 6 – Validation

6a Internal validation process

Corporate emissions data is compiled by a variety of teams across the Council. This data is validated by each Service prior to being provided to the Climate Change & Energy team. The Climate Change & Energy Team then provides an additional 'sense check', scrutinising the data for consistency with previous year's reporting. Requirements for the data are carefully discussed with each team, and a written process tailored to each specific team has been developed to ensure consistency in the type and scope of data provided each year, along with an agreed person responsible for delivering the data to the Climate Change & Energy Team. Data is stored securely with both the service providing the data, and with the Climate Change & Energy Team. Data on staff travel is subject to internal scrutiny through the Communities and Place Service and by Executive Chief Officers for each Council Directorate. As our understanding improves it is becoming increasingly clear that a more focused means of managing our day-to-day carbon emissions needs to be established across the Services with a fully embedded behaviour change and carbon literacy programme initiated to ensure a Council-wide understanding of the impact they can have on carbon emissions.

6b Peer validation process

Informal peer validation has taken place with Scottish Borders Council (Climate Change Officer). This primarily involved emission source gap analysis and methodology check.

6c External validation process

N/A

6d No Validation Process

N/A

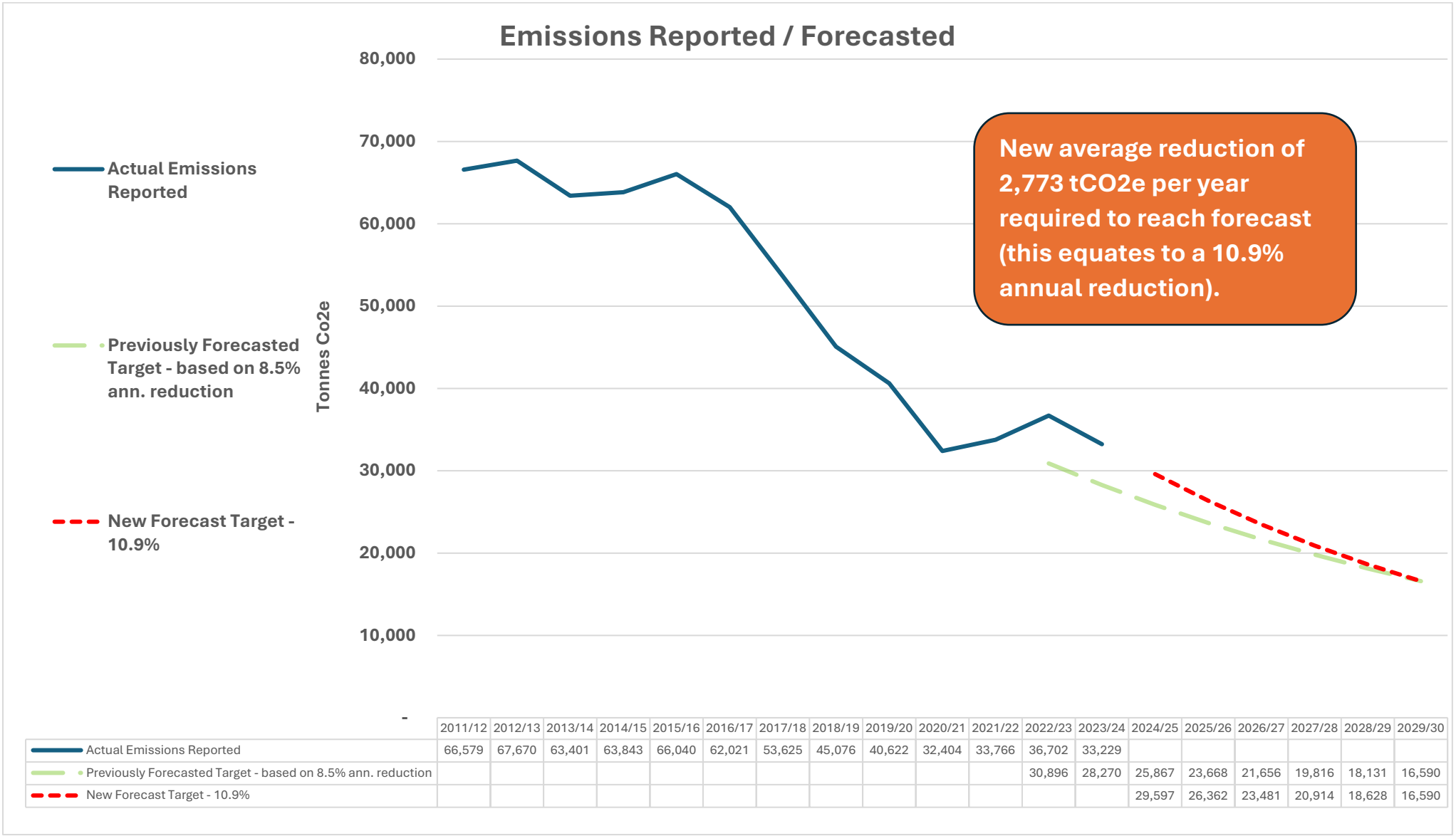
6e Declaration

Name:	
Role in the body:	
Date:	

Appendix 2.

		Consumption					Emissions (tCO2e)				
Emission Type	**Emission source**	**2022/23**	**Units**	**2023/24**	**Units**	**Change**	**Change (%)**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**Change**	**Change (%)**	**Comments**
Scope 1 Emissions												
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	3,190,647	litres	2,351,089	litres	-839,558.0	-26.3%	8,161.2	5,906.1	-2,255.1	-27.6%	
Fuels	Natural gas	31,972,815	kWh	28,822,632	kWh	-3,150,183.0	-9.9%	5,836.3	5,272.5	-563.8	-9.7%	
Fuels	Burning oil (Kerosene)	1,662,447	litres	18,024,983	kWh			4,222.8	4,448.1	+225.3	+5.3%	(change of measurement unit)
Fuels	LPG	575,575	litres	5,784,820	kWh			896.2	1,240.8	+344.6	+38.5%	LPG off grid gas alternative (change of measurement unit)
Fuels	Marine gas oil	276,410	litres	154,065	litres	-122,345.0	-44.3%	767.1	427.0	-340.2	-44.3%	Corran Ferry - Public Ferry Service
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	54,117	litres	142,870	litres	+88,753.0	+164.0%	138.4	358.9	+220.5	+159.3%	In House Bus Project and Bus Operations
Bioenergy	Wood pellets	34,622,082	kWh	32,721,814	kWh	-1,900,268.0	-5.5%	364.6	351.4	-13.1	-3.6%	
Fuels	Petrol (average biofuel blend)	123,615	litres	109,532	litres	-14,083.0	-11.4%	267.2	229.7	-37.5	-14.0%	exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops
Fuels	Gas oil	73,287	litres	16,214	litres	-57,073.0	-77.9%	202.2	44.7	-157.5	-77.9%	
Fuels	Petrol (average biofuel blend)	1,294	litres	1,872	litres	+578.0	+44.7%	2.8	3.9	+1.1	+40.4%	In House Bus Project and Bus Operations
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	10,166	litres	-	-	-10,166.0	-100.0%	26.0		-26.0	-100.0%	Stores / Workshops Heating
Scope 2 Emissions												
Electricity	Electricity: UK	49,854,575	kWh	48,549,038	kWh	-1,305,536.6	-2.6%	9,640.9	10,053.3	+412.4	+4.3%	Buildings
Electricity	Electricity: UK	9,176,169	kWh	8,375,293	kWh	-800,876.4	-8.7%	1,774.5	1,734.3	-40.2	-2.3%	Street Lighting
Scope 3 Emissions												
Electricity	Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK	49,854,575	kWh	48,549,038	kWh	-1,305,536.6	-2.6%	881.9	869.8	-12.2	-1.4%	Buildings
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	2,098,402	miles	2,302,695	miles	+204,293.0	+9.7%	576.3	617.5	+41.2	+7.1%	Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursment) - THC
Homeworking	Homeworking (office equipment + heating)	3,836,448	FTE Working Hour	1,262,800	FTE Working Hour	-2,573,648.0	-67.1%	1,307.3	421.5	-885.8	-67.8%	3,608 employees (office based) 25% FTE estimate
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill	1,462	tonnes	767	tonnes	-695.0	-47.5%	652.4	381.2	-271.1	-41.6%	Waste to landfill - Schools
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	832,560	miles	780,256	miles	-52,304.0	-6.3%	160.8	209.2	+48.4	+30.1%	Car Club
Electricity	Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK	9,176,169	kWh	8,375,293	kWh	-800,876.4	-8.7%	162.3	150.0	-12.3	-7.6%	Street Lighting
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	447,122	miles	490,979	miles	+43,857.0	+9.8%	122.8	131.7	+8.9	+7.2%	Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - HLH and VJB
Water	Water treatment	586,755	cubic metres	589,510	cubic metres	+2,755.0	+0.5%	111.5	112.0	+0.5	+0.5%	est. based on 95% of consumption
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill	604	tonnes	206	tonnes	-398.0	-65.9%	269.5	102.4	-167.1	-62.0%	Waste to landfill - Non Schools
Water	Water supply	617,637	cubic metres	620,537	cubic metres	+2,900.0	+0.5%	61.8	62.1	+0.3	+0.5%	
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	200,922	miles	163,389	miles	-37,533.0	-18.7%	55.2	43.8	-11.4	-20.6%	Car Hire - Travel Desk
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion	44	tonnes	728	tonnes	+684.0	+1,554.5%	0.9	15.5	+14.6	+1,554.6%	Energy from Waste - Schools
Transport - public	Flights - Short-haul, to/from UK - Average passenger	62,017	passenger.km	53,561	passenger.km	-8,456.0	-13.6%	9.5	10.0	+0.4	+4.6%	Travel Desk
Transport - public	National rail	316,440	passenger.km	280,419	passenger.km	-36,021.0	-11.4%	11.2	9.9	-1.3	-11.5%	Travel Desk/Self Service
Waste	Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled	373	tonnes	381	tonnes	+8.0	+2.1%	7.9	8.1	+0.2	+2.1%	Mixed Recycling - Schools
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion	22	tonnes	381	tonnes	+359.0	+1,631.8%	0.5	8.1	+7.6	+1,631.9%	Energy from Waste - Non Schools
Waste	Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled	148	tonnes	142	tonnes	-6.0	-4.1%	3.1	3.0	-0.1	-4.1%	Mixed Recycling - Non Schools
Waste	Organic: food and drink waste - Composting	113	tonnes	117	tonnes	+4.0	+3.5%	1.0	1.0	+0.0	+3.6%	Organic Food Waste - Schools
Transport - public	Ferry - Average (all passenger)	9,198	passenger.km	5,977	passenger.km	-3,221.0	-35.0%	1.0	0.7	-0.4	-35.1%	Travel Desk
Transport - public	Coach	13,835	passenger.km	22,804	passenger.km	+8,969.0	+64.8%	0.4	0.6	+0.2	+63.9%	Travel Desk
Transport - car	Average car - Unknown	15,114	miles	996	miles	-14,118.0	-93.4%	4.2	0.3	-3.9	-93.6%	Car Hire - HLH/Non Travel Desk - estimated by cost
Waste	Organic: food and drink waste - Composting	28	tonnes	27	tonnes	-1.0	-3.6%	0.2	0.2	-0.0	-3.6%	Organic Food Waste - Non Schools
Transport - public	Regular taxi	-	passenger.km	121	passenger.km	+121.0		-	0.0	+0.0		Travel Desk
							Total	**36,702.1**	**33,229.4**	**-3,472.7**	**-9.5%**	

Appendix 3 – Emissions Reported / Forecasted



	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Actual Emissions Reported	66,579	67,670	63,401	63,843	66,040	62,021	53,625	45,076	40,622	32,404	33,766	36,702	33,229						
Previously Forecasted Target - based on 8.5% ann. reduction												30,896	28,270	25,867	23,668	21,656	19,816	18,131	16,590
New Forecast Target - 10.9%														29,597	26,362	23,481	20,914	18,628	16,590