The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**5**
Report No	**CCC/28/25**

Committee: **Climate Change**

Date: **5 November 2025**

Report Title: **Annual Report under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2024/25**

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

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report is the Highland Council's Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report for 2024/25. 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 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1;
ii. **Consider** and **note** progress against the organisation's emissions reductions targets; and
iii. **Agree to recommend** to the Council that the current carbon reduction targets are maintained until the evaluation of the carbon budgeting and analysis tools is complete. This will ensure future targets are informed by robust, data-led evidence, accurately reflecting the full impact of operational activities and avoiding the risk of setting unrealistic targets that could undermine engagement and progress toward Net Zero.

3 Implications

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

3.2 **Legal** - Public 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 reducing greenhouse gas emissions 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, setting 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).

In 2024, Scotland's interim emissions targets for 2030 and 2040 were repealed as the progress required to meet the 2030 target was deemed to be beyond what was credible. The Act was amended to replace interim targets with carbon budgets.

Carbon budgets are legally binding caps on greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland over five-year periods. This approach aligns Scotland with the UK, Wales, and Northern Ireland, all of which use carbon budgets to set binding milestones for emissions reductions on the way to their Net Zero emissions targets.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Scottish Carbon Budgets) Amendment Regulations 2025 were laid before the Scottish Parliament in June 2025 and are currently awaiting approval under the affirmative procedure. If adopted, the regulations will establish the following carbon budgets:-

- 2026-2030: Average emissions must be 57% lower than 1990 levels.
- 2031-2035: Average emissions must be 69% lower than 1990 levels.
- 2036-2040: Average emissions must be 80% lower than 1990 levels.
- 2041-2045: Average emissions must be 94% lower than 1990 levels.

5.4 The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 ("The 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 2024/25 under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) is attached as **Appendix 1**. All public bodies are required to submit annual reports by 30 November 2025 to be deemed compliant.

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, units such as miles, kWh, tonnes of waste or litres of fuel are converted into CO_2 equivalents (CO_2e) using the 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 mixed dry recyclates fell from 3.02kgCO_2e/tonne in 2023/24 to 1.74kgCO_2e/tonne in 2024/25 – a drop of 42%. This means that the same level of recycled waste in 2024/25 would emit 42% less CO_2e than in the previous year. This is due to advancements in recycling technologies which have led to lower energy consumption during sorting/reprocessing, higher material recovery rates and reduced contamination.

6.3 Emissions are categorised into:-

- Scope 1: Direct operational emissions arising from sources owned or controlled by the Council (e.g. boilers, fleet vehicles);
- Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased energy (e.g. electricity); and
- Scope 3: All other indirect emissions across the value chain, including the procurement of goods, works, and services, as well as construction activities

Historically, reporting has focused on Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. However, public bodies are now required to report, where applicable, on targets for indirect emissions, including Scope 2 and Scope 3.

6.4 Currently Scope 3 reporting under the PBCCD framework is voluntary or partially mandatory, but this is evolving. The Scottish Government is expanding mandatory Scope 3 reporting for public bodies, with certain categories set to become compulsory from November 2027, and further work planned to ensure comprehensive coverage. This change follows the Environmental Standards Scotland investigation into climate change delivery, which emphasised the need to address emissions across the entire value chain.

6.5 Supply chain emissions are excluded from the Council's 2024/25 PBCCD submission.

Work is currently underway to:

- establish a revised baseline; and
- develop robust monitoring and reporting of Scope 3 emissions, particularly for procurement-related emissions.

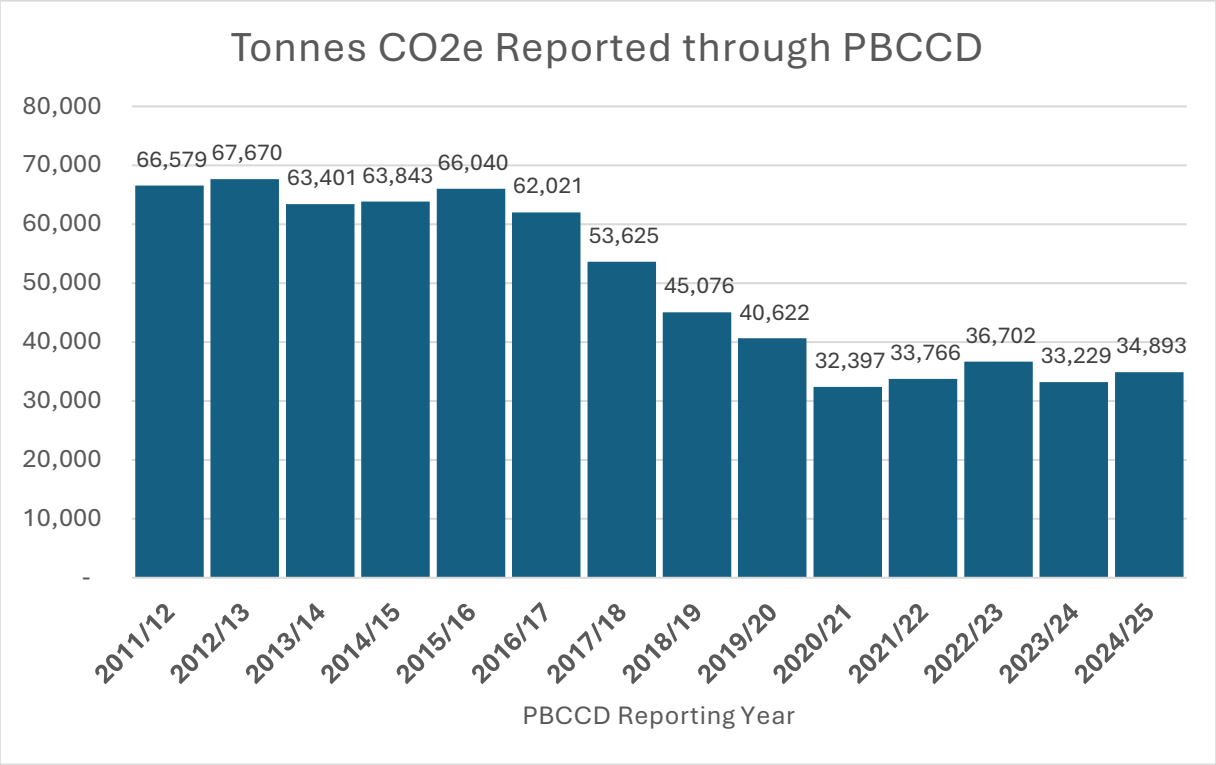
6.6 Scope 3 emissions are complex, and there is no universally accepted methodology for their calculation. Across the sector, tools and methodologies are being piloted to support more consistent and transparent reporting.

6.7 The Council is actively piloting several tools to build its capability to measure, report, and reduce Scope 3 emissions. This will be essential for:-

- understanding the full climate impact of Council operations;
- prioritising actions and resources effectively; and
- identifying opportunities for significant emissions reductions

7 Report Highlights

7.1 Total emissions have **increased by 1,664 tonnes** of CO_2e, representing a **5% rise** compared to 2023/24.

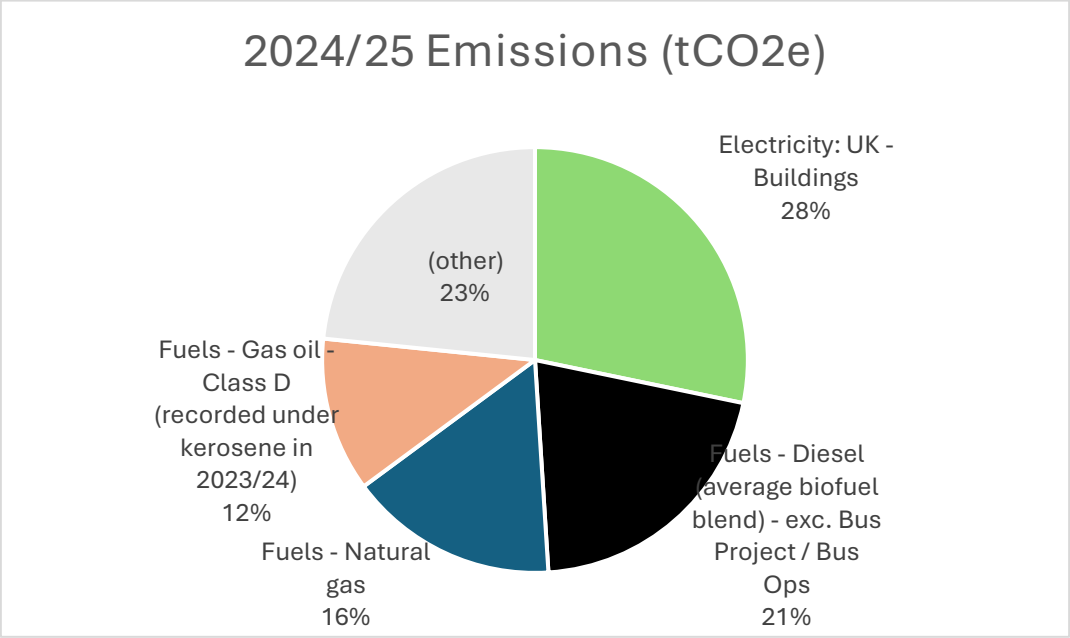


This follows a 9.5% reduction in emissions between 2022/23 to 2023/24, when emissions fell by 3,473 tonnes of CO_2e.

7.2 In previous years, increases in reported emissions were sometimes influenced by the inclusion of additional data sources. However, no new categories have been added to the 2024/25 report, meaning this year's submission represents a like-for-like comparison with the 2023/24 return. This provides a consistent basis for assessing year-on-year performance.

7.3 Over three quarters (77%) of the total emissions reported within 2024/25 fall into 4 activities/elements:-

- Electricity: UK – Buildings;
- Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend) - exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops;
- Fuels - Natural gas; and
- Fuels - Gas oil - Class D (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)



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

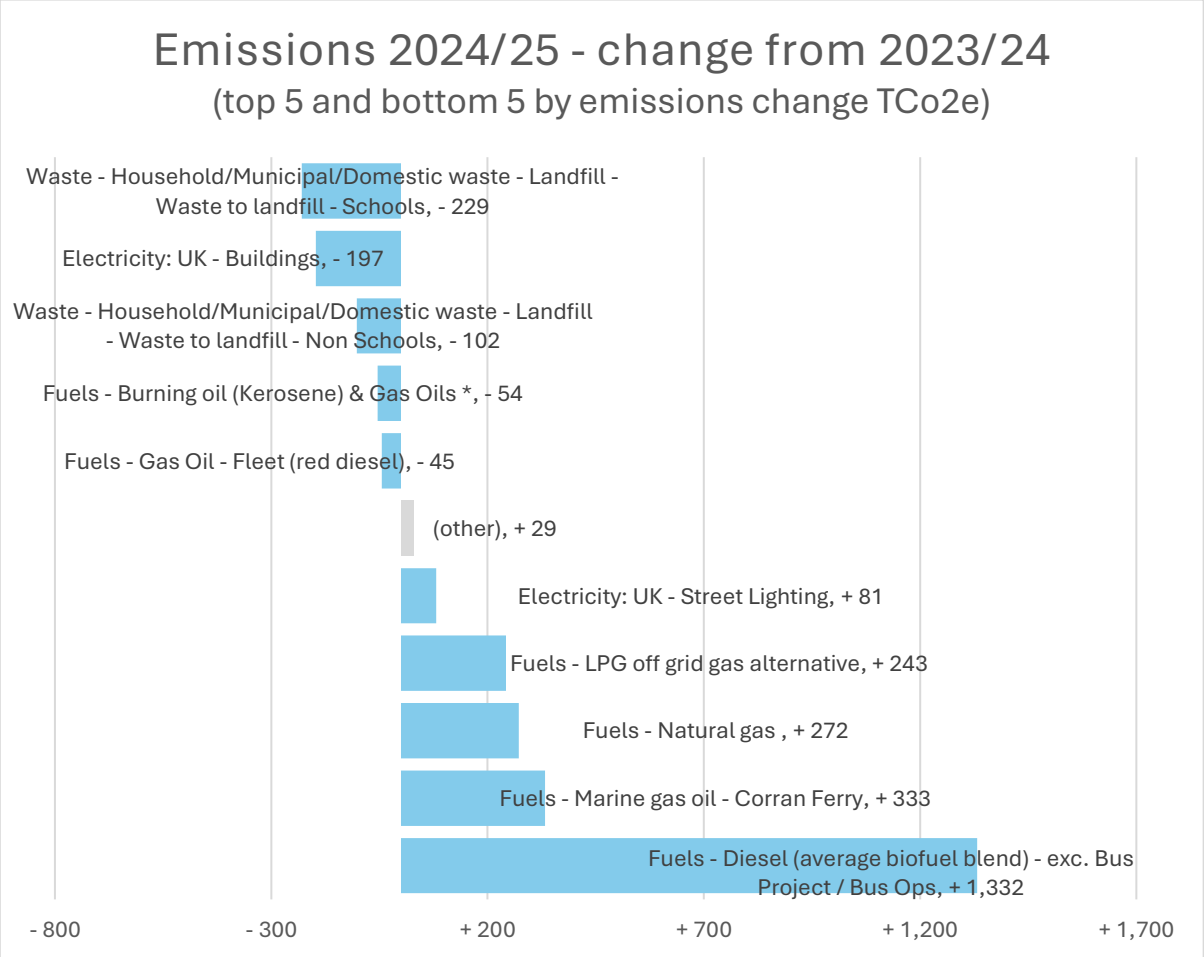
Source / Emission Factor Used	% of Total
Electricity: UK – Buildings	28.249%
Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend) - exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops	20.744%
Fuels - Natural gas	15.890%
Fuels - Gas oil - Class D (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)	11.726%
Electricity: UK - Street Lighting	5.203%
Fuels - LPG off grid gas alternative	4.253%
Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK – Buildings	2.497%
Fuels - Marine gas oil - Corran Ferry	2.178%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - THC	1.693%
Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend) - In House Bus Project and Bus Ops	1.211%
Bioenergy - Wood pellets - Heat from Biomass	1.136%
Homeworking - Homeworking (office equipment + heating)	1.089%
Fuels - Petrol (average biofuel blend) - exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops	0.681%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Car Club	0.618%
Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK - Street Lighting	0.460%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill - Waste to landfill - Schools	0.436%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - HLH and VJB	0.412%
Fuels - Burning oil (Kerosene) - Heating, road maintenance, cylinders	0.392%
Fuels - Gas oil - Class A2 (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)	0.319%
Water - Water treatment - Based on 95% of water consumption	0.272%
Fuels - Gas oil - General "Oil" (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)	0.156%
Water - Water supply	0.135%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Car Hire - Travel Desk	0.131%
Transport - public - National rail - Travel Desk/Self Service	0.035%
Transport - public - Flights - Average passenger - Travel Desk	0.029%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion - Energy from Waste – Schools	0.022%

Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion - Energy from Waste - Non Schools	0.011%
Waste - Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled - Mixed Recycling – Schools	0.009%
Waste - Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled - Mixed Recycling - Non Schools	0.005%
Waste - Organic: food and drink waste - Composting - Organic Food Waste - Schools	0.003%
Transport - public - Coach - Travel Desk	0.003%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Car Hire - HLH/Non-Travel Desk - estimated by cost	0.002%
Transport - public - Ferry - Average - Travel Desk	0.001%
Waste - Organic: food and drink waste - Composting - Organic Food Waste - Non Schools	0.001%

7.5 The most significant increases in emissions between the 2023/24 and 2024/25 reporting years are:-

- Diesel used by fleet: an increase of 1,332 tonnes CO_2e; and
- Corran Ferry (Marine Gas Oil): an increase of 333 tonnes CO_2e

The chart below presents a graphical summary of the top and bottom five contributors to emissions change. All other emission sources have been grouped into an 'other' category, which collectively contributed an additional 29 tonnes of CO_2e.



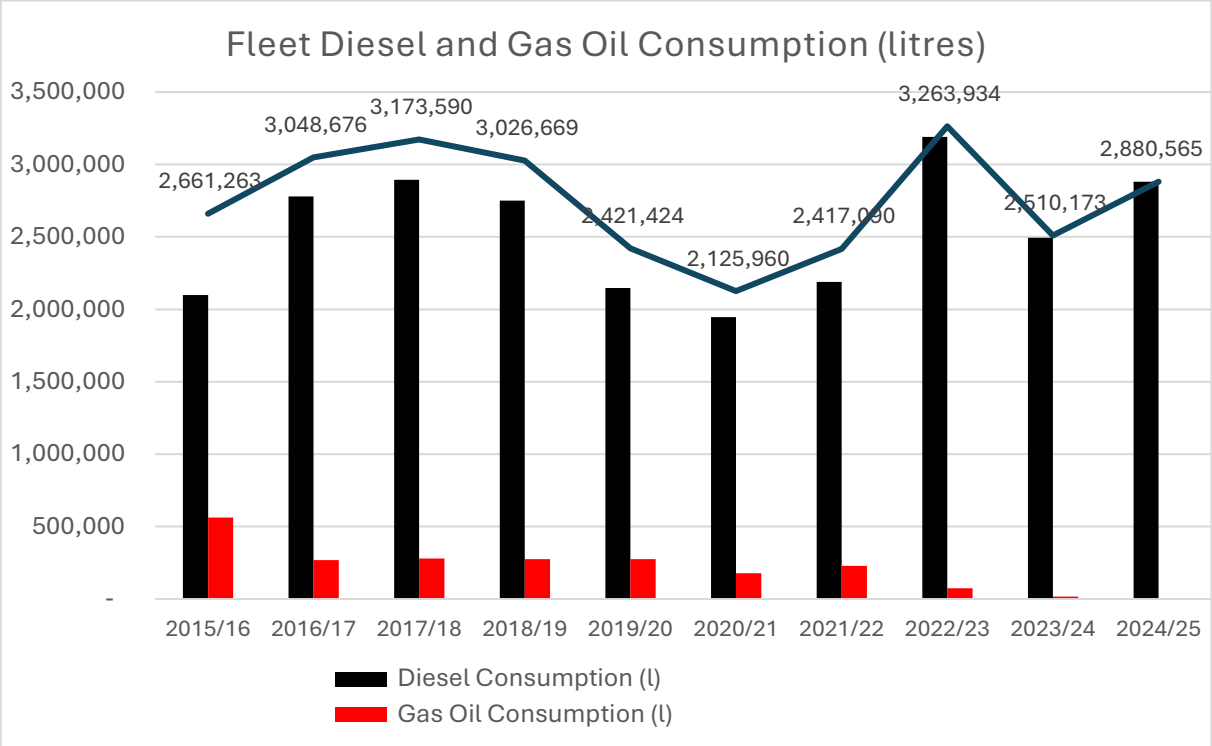
**** Fuels – Burning oil (Kerosene) & Gas Oils - see section 7.6 of this report***

7.6 In previous PBCCD returns, a single category, 'burning oil - kerosene,' was used to capture all oils used, including those used for heating, road maintenance and cylinders. For the 2024/25 return, more granular data has enabled the separation of these fuels into distinct categories, improving transparency and accuracy.

Source / Emission Factor Used	2023/24 Consumption (kWh)	2024/25 Consumption (kWh)	Consumption – Change	Consumption - Change %
Fuels - Burning oil (Kerosene) - Heating, road maintenance, cylinders	18,024,983	553,849	- 873,550	-5%
Fuels - Gas oil - Class D (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		15,952,154		
Fuels - Gas oil - Class A2 (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		433,548		
Fuels - Gas oil - General "Oil" (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		211,882		
Source / Emission Factor Used	**2023/24Emissions (tCO_2e)**	**2024/25 Emissions (tCO_2e)**	**Emissions - Change**	**Emissions - Change %**
Fuels - Burning oil (Kerosene) - Heating, road maintenance, cylinders	4,448.08	136.67	- 54	-1%
Fuels - Gas oil - Class D (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		4,091.57		
Fuels - Gas oil - Class A2 (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		111.20		
Fuels - Gas oil - General "Oil" (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		54.35		

7.7 Diesel consumption through Fleet has increased from 2.5m litres in 2023/24, to 2.9 million litres in 2024/25, representing a 15.5% rise. This follows a significant 26.3% reduction in the previous reporting year.

A small proportion of this increase can be attributed to the phasing out of Gas Oil (commonly referred to as Red Diesel).

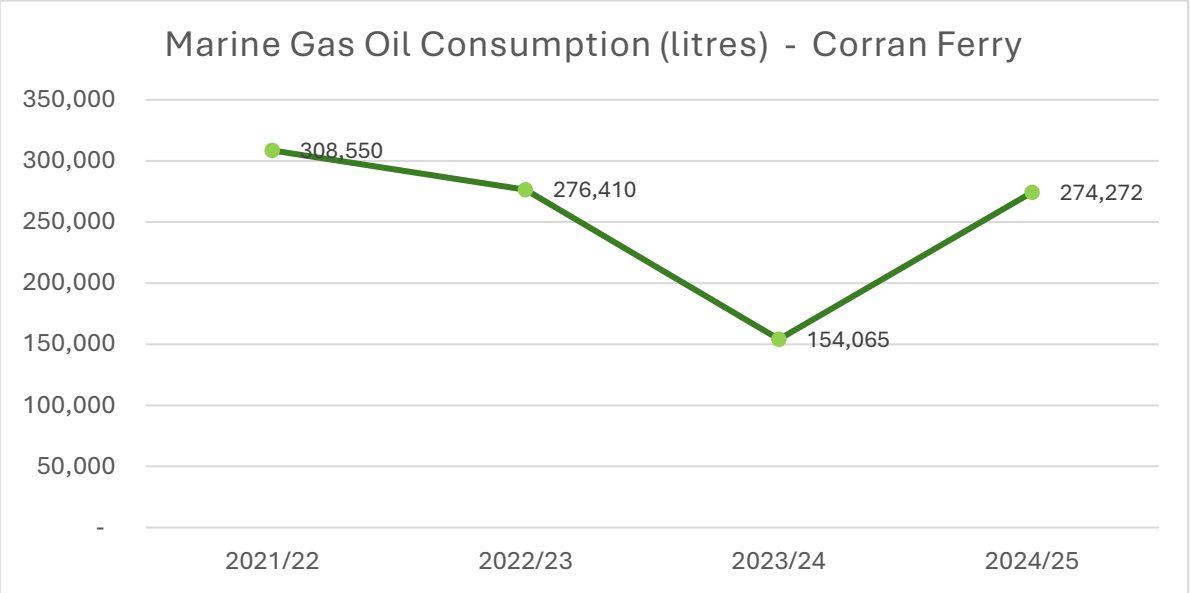


The rise in diesel consumption during 2024/25 is linked to several operational factors:-

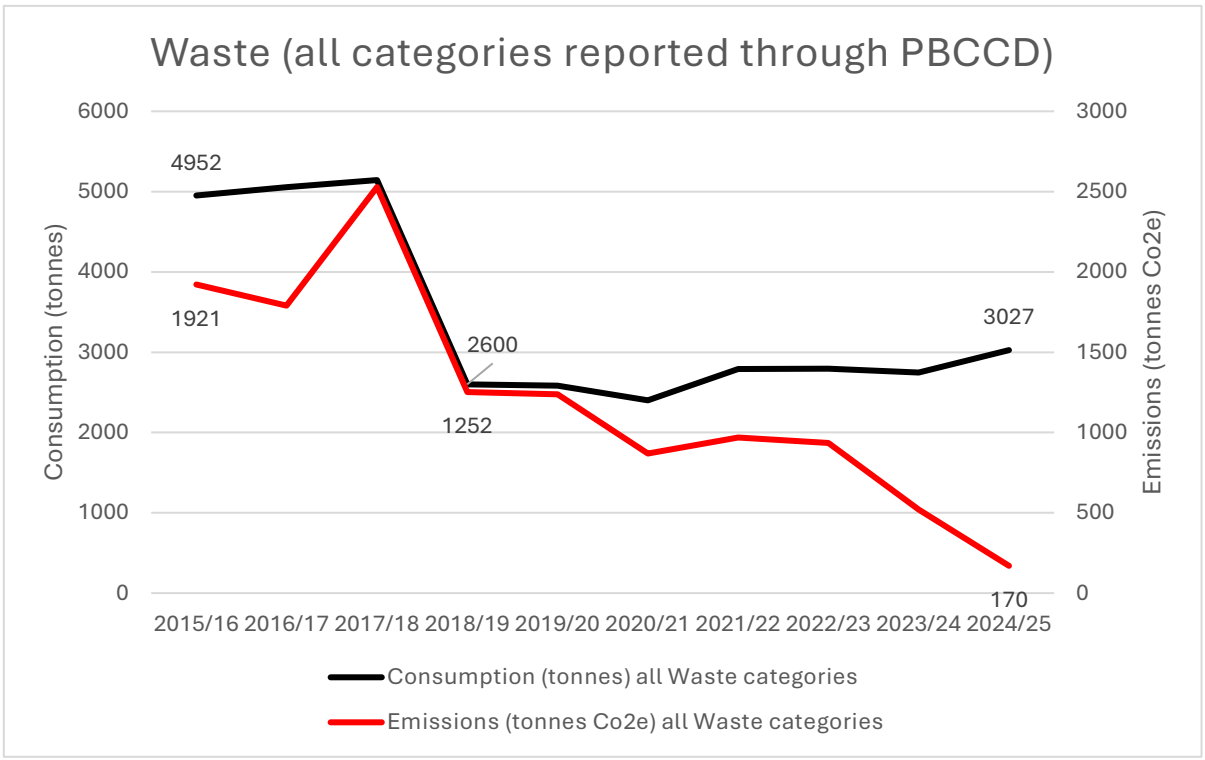
- expansion of food waste collections, requiring seven additional vehicles operating five days per week;
- longer refuse collection routes, particularly in urban areas, due to new housing developments;
- a mild winter, which enabled a higher volume of roads maintenance works;
- increased capital works within the Roads service; and
- an ageing fleet, contributing to reduced fuel efficiency.

7.8 Marine Gas Oil (MGO) consumption for the Corran Ferry has also increased significantly, rising by 78% compared to 2023/24**.** However, this increase reflects a return to normal service levels, as the previous year saw reduced operations due to service disruptions. When compared to 2022/23, MGO consumption has decreased by 1%.

It is important to note that the MGO category for Corran Ferry was first introduced in the 2021/22 PBCCD return, following the identification of a data gap. As such, historical trend data prior to 2021/22 is not available.



7.9 A significant reduction in waste-related emissions has been observed since the 2018/19 reporting year. Whilst overall waste consumption has slightly increased, emissions have fallen from 1,252 tonnes CO_2e to 170 tonnes CO_2e in 2024/25.



This substantial drop is primarily attributed to:-

- A shift away from landfill waste disposal to combustion (energy from waste).
- Changes in UK Government emission conversion factors, as detailed in section 6.2 of this report.

In 2024/25, Waste to Landfill (Non Schools) reported zero waste, while Landfill (Schools) reported 306 tonnes CO_2e, which is less than half of the previous year's figure, and 11% of the total consumption recorded in this category during 2015/16.

8 Highland Council Targets

8.1 The Council has adopted the Scottish Government's Net Zero by 2045 target, with the ambition to achieve this ahead of schedule. The Council has also committed to 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 must reduce its operational emissions to 16,590 tCO_2e.

8.3 The Council's Net Zero Strategy and Route Map, developed prior to the availability of 2024/25 data, identified that achieving the 2030 target would require an average annual emissions reduction of 8.5%, equivalent to approximately 2,000 tonnes of CO_2e per year.

To contextualise this reduction, 2,000 tCO_2e is approximately equivalent to:-

- operating 40 primary schools for a year;
- 537 of the Council's diesel fuelled vans travelling 10,000 miles per annum;
- nearly 2.5 years of running the Corran Ferry on Marine Gas Oil; and
- 14,112 cars travelling the NC500 route

8.4 Following analysis of the 2024/25 PBCCD return, the required trajectory to meet the 2030 target has been revised upward. The Council must now achieve an average annual reduction of 13.8%, equivalent to around 3,661 tCO_2e per year over the next five years.

While this represents a steeper reduction, the development of the carbon analysis and budgeting toolkit is a positive step that will allow future savings from current projects to be built into forward projections.

8.5 It is therefore recommended that the reduction target is not reviewed again until the toolkit evaluation is complete, allowing improved use of data to inform future targets. This approach will help avoid climate fatigue from setting targets perceived as unattainable, while ensuring that all impacts from operational activity are accurately modelled and evaluated to demonstrate genuine progress toward Net Zero.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive – Place
Date:	6 October 2025
Author:	Andrew Morgan, Climate Change Coordinator
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft PBCCD Report 2024/25 Appendix 2 – Comparison data from 2023/24 and 2024/2 Appendix 3 – Annual progress towards 2030 target

Boundary Info

Emissions source/activity		
Owned estate	Are any buildings owned by the public body?	Yes
Natural gas	Is natural gas used to heat any of the owned estate	Yes
Other heating & fuels	Are other heating fuels used on any of the owned estate	Yes
Managed services	Are building services managed on behalf of another public body that shares or leases space?	Yes
Leased premises - public	Are building services managed and provided by another public body?	Yes
Leased premises - private	Are building services managed and provided by a private landlord?	Yes
Purchased heat and steam	Is heat or steam purchased to supply any of the owned estate	No
Fleet and equipment	Are any vehicles or fossil-fueled machinery or equipment owned or leased, excludes short-term or infrequent hires?	Yes
Refrigerants/F-gases	Are there any air conditioning or refrigeration systems that require refrigerant gas top-ups?	No
Medical gases	Are medical gases used?	No
Business travel - private	Do staff undertake business travel by private car?	Yes
Business travel - flights	Do staff undertake any business travel by plane?	Yes
Homeworking	Do any staff work from home - including hybrid?	Yes
Supply chain	Are any goods or services purchased?	Yes
Land use	Are more than 10 hectares of land owned or managed for public services provision, including for research or recreation?	Yes

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1a Name of reporting body
The Highland Council
1b Type of body
Local Authorities
1c Highest number of full-time equivalent staff in the body during the reporting year
8559
1d Metrics used by the body
(blank)
1e Overall budget of the body
£712,000,000 (Revenue)
1f Reporting Type
Financial/Calndar/Other Apr 2024 to Mar 2025
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 2024, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The National Records of Scotland reported estimated population figures of 237,290 for Highland in mid-2024. This is an increase of 13.6% from 2001 and an increase of 0.33% since 2023.

Key statistics:-
- Number of Council Houses – 15,203
- Length of roads maintained – 6785.4 km
- Length of footpaths maintained - over 1,700 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 (916 buildings over 194 sites including High Life Highland buildings, Public Private Partnership Schools & Wick Campus)
- Council Offices (99 buildings over 60 sites)
- Depots (129 buildings over 40 sites)
- Other (e.g. Social Work Facilities) (740 buildings over 447 sites)

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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, on the Net Zero Strategy, Action Plan and Programme, including the setting and scrutiny of performance targets relating with the following Programme workstreams:

- Built Estate and Energy/Asset Management
- Social Housing (HRA)
- Fleet, 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

The Committee meets quarterly and makes recommendations to Full Council and other strategic committees. 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, Energy, Investment & Innovation Governance Model

The Council's Delivery Plan "Our Future Highland" (2024-2027), approved in May 2024, includes six portfolio themes:

- Person Centred Solutions
- Workforce for the Future
- Reconfiguring our Asset Base
- Corporate Solutions
- Income Generation
- Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation

Governance is provided by Portfolio Boards, each Chaired by an Assistant Chief Executive or Chief Officer. The Terms of Reference for these Boards include a specific responsibility to "Support the Net Zero Strategy".

- The Highland Council is the governing body for the Net Zero Strategy and the "Our Future Highland" Delivery Plan.

- The Climate Change Committee provides oversight of the Net Zero Strategy, including scrutiny of performance targets.

- The Net Zero, Energy, Investment & Innovation Portfolio Board is the strategic officer-level decision-making body, Chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place. The Board meets six-weekly and provides direction and manages risks and opportunities.

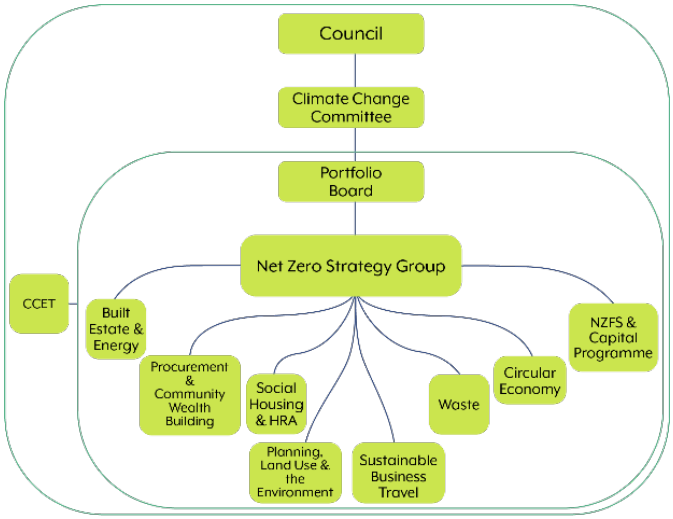
- The Net Zero Strategy Group leads on strategy development and delivery. It comprises senior managers from across Council services and connects eight Thematic Groups:

    - Built Estate & Energy
    - Procurement & Community Wealth Building
    - Social Housing/HRA
    - Planning, Land Use & Environment
    - Waste
    - Sustainable Business Travel
    - Circular Economy
    - Net Zero Funding Strategy & Capital Programme.

Adaptation

The Highland Adapts initiative, co-developed by The Highland Council, was 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.

A draft Adaptation Strategy is currently in development and will be presented to the Climate Change Committee in August 2025. Upon approval, a Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment and Adaptation Action Plan will be developed to guide the Council's approach to building resilience within the organisation and across the region.



2b How is climate change action managed and embedded in the body?
As highlighted in Section 2a, the Council's Delivery Plan "Our Future Highland" (2024–2027) includes Net Zero, Energy, Investment and Innovation (NZEII) as one of six core portfolio themes. This ensures that climate action is not siloed but embedded within the Council's broader transformation agenda.

The Delivery Plan commits the Council to delivering its Net Zero ambitions and enabling place-based planning for future energy capacity and security. This will be achieved by:

- 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.

Portfolio Structure and Governance

The NZEII Portfolio comprises twelve programmes and projects grouped under three strategic workstreams:

- Net Zero Delivery: Net Zero Programme, Heat Networks
- Energy Estate: Energy Efficient Council, Solar PV Council Estate, Energy Billing Management, Energy Efficient Homes
- Investment and Innovation: Battery Storage, Utility Scale Solar PV, Solar PV Commercial Estate, EV Infrastructure, Longman Green Energy Hub (Joint Venture), Investment Pipeline

The Portfolio and all associated workstreams are sponsored by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Net Zero, Energy, Investment and Innovation Portfolio Board drives the Council's ambitious agenda toward achieving Net Zero and becoming a climate-ready organisation. Operating within the wider Council governance structure, the Board provides strategic direction, decision-making, risk management, and oversight of all activities within the Portfolio.

Board Responsibilities

The Board oversees delivery across the following areas:

- Net Zero Programme implementation
- Transition of the Council's non-domestic and domestic property estate
- Development of a pipeline of energy efficiency project
- Funding strategies to maximise opportunities
- Expansion and optimisation of Solar PV assets on the Council's non-domestic estate
- Scrutiny of energy expenditure to support cost-saving initiatives
- Battery storage investment model development
- Delivery of utility-scale Solar PV (Longman site)
- Solar PV deployment on leased commercial properties
- Enhanced EV infrastructure through joint procurement
- Development of Heat Networks
- Renewable energy project pipeline (hydrogen, wind, hydro, including community schemes)

In line with its scope, the Board is responsible for:

- Leading with purpose and maintaining momentum to deliver project outcomes
- Commissioning and approving Business Cases and delivery plans
- Monitoring progress and ensuring continued viability of investments
- Ensuring resource availability
- Managing risks and issues, and authorising remedial actions
- Resolving escalated matters and applying change controls
- Communicating project information across stakeholder groups
- Providing policy direction and guidance to Sponsors/SROs
- Reporting to Climate Change, Corporate Resources, and Housing & Property Committees

A standard Portfolio Management approach is applied across the Delivery Plan to ensure consistency, transparency, and successful delivery. Coordination is provided by the Corporate Portfolio Management Office within the Corporate Cluster, focusing on risk management, timescales, savings and income targets, resource allocation, expenditure, and benefits realisation.

Progress is monitored through a standardised reporting framework coordinated by the Corporate Portfolio Management Office. Key performance indicators (KPIs), delivery milestones, and benefit realisation metrics are tracked and reported to relevant committees to ensure transparency and accountability.

Operational Oversight

The Net Zero Strategy Group, meeting six-weekly, is responsible for:

- Operational development and delivery of the Net Zero Strategy and Programme
- Leading Thematic Groups and integrating proposals into work programmes
- Monitoring delivery of Thematic Group Action Plans
- Reviewing and updating the Strategy in response to market conditions and innovations
- Overseeing communications and engagement activities
- Identifying capability and capacity gaps across services
- Promoting cross-service collaboration
- Reviewing plans, policies, and procedures to align with adaptation, mitigation, and sustainability goals

The Strategy Group is tasked with bringing five proposed projects for inclusion in the Net Zero Programme to each meeting of the Climate Change Committee.

Officer Leadership and Support

The Climate Change and Energy Team (CCET) provides dedicated support to the Portfolio Board, Strategy Group, and Thematic Groups. The team's core functions include:

- Technical guidance on climate change, adaptation, and sustainability
- Emissions monitoring and statutory reporting
- Internal engagement and capacity building
- Partnership coordination and external funding support
- Supporting services to develop and deliver projects that accelerate the Council's transition to Net Zero.

Following a recent restructure, the CCET sits within the Place Cluster and reports to the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

- https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15917/council_structure
- https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4610/know_your_council.pdf

Climate Change Impact Assessment

The Council's Net Zero Strategy sets out a clear commitment to embed climate change considerations into all aspects of decision making. A key priority of the Strategy is the introduction of a Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA).

The CCIA was introduced in July 2024 as a core component of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool. The CCIA aims to ensure that proposals are assessed for their impact on emissions, biodiversity, and resilience, enabling informed decisions and appropriate mitigation or adaptation actions.

It is intended to be applied at the earliest stages of proposal development, ensuring climate considerations are embedded from the outset, not as an afterthought, into the shaping, designing, and delivering of services, policies, and projects. This proactive approach enables the Council to anticipate risks, identify opportunities, and embed climate resilience from the initial stages.

The purpose of the CCIA is to ensure that climate implications are visible and understood at the point of decision-making. It is not designed to prevent projects from progressing, but rather to eliminate the risk of decisions being made without awareness of their climate impacts.

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 Renewable Energy 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 Renewable Energy 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, Performance Plan 2022 – 2027	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4620/corporate_plan_2022-27.pdf

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/84543/item_7_corporate_risk_register	Refreshed on a quarterly basis	Risks relating to Climate Change and the Ecological Emergency are detailed under HCR2, HCR6, HCR7, HCR8 and HCR9.
Business travel	Travel & Subsistence Policy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/peopleandtransformation/downloads/file/400/travel_and_subsistence_policy	2020 Onwards	Policy setting out procedures 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 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.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
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 Council's approach to Sustainable Business Travel.
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.
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/download/meetings/id/84056/item_10_the_local_heat_and_energy_efficiency_strategy_lhees_delivery_plan_update	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. The LHEES Delivery Plan Strategic Approach and draft Delivery Plan was agreed by Council in December 2024.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Waste management	Waste Management Service Update	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83797/12_waste_management_service_update	2024 onwards	This service update outlines the roll out of twin stream recycling across the Highlands, enabled by the Recycling Improvement Fund. The Council is currently in the process of developing a Waste Strategy that will cover 2025-30.
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.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
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_spatial_strategy_to_2050_-_refined	2020-2050	Broad level strategy for land use and management of assets and infrastructure.
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

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
				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	Adaptation Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/84055/item_9_strategic_approach_to_climate_change_adaptation	2025 Onwards	The Council is developing a Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan to safeguard the Council against the effects of climate change and to ensure continuity of services. This will be presented before the Climate Change Committee in August 2025.
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 is one of the six key themes within the Joint Procurement Strategy.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Other (please specify in comments)	Local Transport Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/29476/highland_local_transport_strategy_2025_to_2035	2025-35	This Local Transport Strategy (LTS) sets out the future policy direction and focus for how The Highland Council will maintain, manage and improve the transport system in Highland over the 10-year period from 2025 to 2035. It covers the movement of people and goods and considers all modes of transport across 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 comfort conditions for staff, whilst minimising both carbon emissions and utility-related expenditure.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
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	Ecology Strategy and Action Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/29967/ecology_and_strategy_action_plan_nov_2024	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.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
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.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Renewable energy	Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83522/item_10_social_values_charter_for_renewables_investment	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 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.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Land Use	Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/27148/highland_nature_biodiversity_action_plan_2021_%E2%80%93_2026	2021-2026	This Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan, is the fourth biodiversity action plan for Highland since 2006, and focuses on where positive biodiversity action can be taken to conserve and enhance important habitats and species. This action plan was developed as a partnership approach by Highland Council and multiple organisations across the region.
Other (please specify in comments)	Sustainable Tourism Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/29523/sustainable_tourism_strategy_2024_to_2030	2024-30	The Sustainable Tourism Strategy provides the strategic direction for the Council in working towards transitioning to a more economically sustainable and climate conscious tourism sector.

Topic area	Name of document	Link	Time period covered	Comments
Other (please specify in comments)	Net Zero Communication and Engagement Strategy	https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83735/5_net_zero_-_communications_and_engagement	2024 onwards	The Net Zero Communications and Engagement Strategy has been developed to raise awareness and engage with the wide range of stakeholders to accelerate the Council's transition to Net Zero and to become a climate-ready organisation. Effective communication and engagement will be fundamental to the success of the Council's Net Zero Programme and this strategy outlines our approach.

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

1. Restructure Net Zero Strategy Group to ensure its membership reflects the Council's revised organisational structure and promotes the cross-Council service collaboration required to meet the Council's Net Zero targets.
2. Develop carbon budgeting and approve emission reduction targets for all services.
3. Develop methodology for thematic group leads to maintain a live pipeline of potential projects for external funding.
4. The Net Zero Strategy Group will lead on the development and delivery of projects that support the Council's climate change ambitions.
5. Integrate Net Zero into financial decision-making frameworks, including the Capital Programme/ Highland Investment Plan.

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 continued its Adaptation Benchmarking process with support from Adaptation Scotland's Capability Framework.

The Net Zero Strategy, approved in June 2023, sets out 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.
- An annual audit will be undertaken to review progress against the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Since the Strategy's approval, the Council has undertaken two audits:

An audit, published in September 2023, focused on the plans the Council has put in place to ensure that it meets its obligations as set out in Climate Change duties: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/82235/4f_deputy_chief_executive_s_%E2%80%93_climate_change_plans_and_implementation_limited_assurance

An audit, to be published in November 2025, looked to ensure that processes were in place to identify external funding streams relating to net zero deliverables, with awareness of these across key staff to ensure the Council was well placed to maximise access to external funding. The audit also assessed how well external funding streams were integrated with existing capital schemes and governance arrangements.

2h Supporting information and best practice

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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	4,401.85	36,702.09	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

Reference year	Year	Year type	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total	Units
Year 13 carbon footprint	2024/25	Financial/Calendar/Other	20,477.22	11,672.25	2,743.34	34,892.81	tCO_2e

3b Breakdown of emissions sources

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Bioenergy	Wood pellets	Scope 1	35,019,703	kWh	0.01132	kg CO2e/kWh	396.42304	Heat from Biomass
Electricity	Electricity: UK	Scope 2	47,605,593	kWh	0.20705	kg CO2e/kWh	9856.73797	Buildings
Electricity	Electricity: UK	Scope 2	8,768,485	kWh	0.20705	kg CO2e/kWh	1815.51476	Street Lighting
Electricity	Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK	Scope 3	47,605,593	kWh	0.01830	kg CO2e/kWh	871.18235	Buildings
Electricity	Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK	Scope 3	8,768,485	kWh	0.01830	kg CO2e/kWh	160.46327	Street Lighting
Fuels	Burning oil (Kerosene)	Scope 1	553,849	kWh	0.24677	kg CO2e/kWh	136.67332	Heating, road maintenance, cylinders
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	2,880,565	litres	2.51279	kg CO2e/litres	7238.25493	exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops ** 1,797,252 AllStar + 1,083,313 drawn from site bonds

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Fuels	Diesel (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	168,150	litres	2.51279	kg CO2e/litres	422.52564	In House Bus Project and Bus Operations (AllStar - do not use site fuel)
Fuels	Gas oil	Scope 1	15,952,154	kWh	0.25649	kg CO2e/kWh	4091.56798	Class D
Fuels	Gas oil	Scope 1	433,548	kWh	0.25649	kg CO2e/kWh	111.20073	Class A2
Fuels	Gas oil	Scope 1	211,882	kWh	0.25649	kg CO2e/kWh	54.34561	General "Oil"
Fuels	LPG	Scope 1	6,918,058	kWh	0.21450	kg CO2e/kWh	1483.92344	LPG off grid gas alternative
Fuels	Marine gas oil	Scope 1	274,272	litres	2.77139	kg CO2e/litres	760.11468	Corran Ferry - Public Ferry Service CiA
Fuels	Natural gas	Scope 1	30,314,907	kWh	0.18290	kg CO2e/kWh	5544.59649	
Fuels	Petrol (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	113,985	litres	2.08440	kg CO2e/litres	237.59033	exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops
Homeworking	Homeworking (office equipment + heating)	Scope 3	1,138,200	FTE Working Hour	0.33378	kg CO2e/FTE Working Hour	379.90840	8,559 FTE minus 62% (school/social care). 25% estimate WFH. 7h/day, 200

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
								annualised days/FTE
Transport – car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	170,184	miles	0.26860	kg CO2e/miles	45.71142	Car Hire - Travel Desk
Transport – car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	2,199,094	miles	0.26860	kg CO2e/miles	590.67665	Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - THC
Transport – car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	802,923	miles	0.26860	kg CO2e/miles	215.66512	Car Club
Transport – car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	2,946	miles	0.26860	kg CO2e/miles	0.79130	Car Hire - HLH/Non Travel Desk - estimated by cost
Transport – car	Average car - Unknown	Scope 3	534,592	miles	0.26860	kg CO2e/miles	143.59141	Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - HLH and VJB
Transport – public	Coach	Scope 3	32,803	passenger.km	0.02717	kg CO2e/passenger.km	0.89126	Travel Desk
Transport – public	Ferry - Average (all passenger)	Scope 3	2,702	passenger.km	0.11270	kg CO2e/passenger.km	0.30452	Travel Desk

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Transport – public	Flights - Short-haul, to/from UK - Average passenger	Scope 3	54,117	passenger.km	0.18592	kg CO2e/passenger.km	10.06143	Travel Desk
Transport – public	National rail	Scope 3	345,999	passenger.km	0.03546	kg CO2e/passenger.km	12.26912	Travel Desk/Self Service
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion	Scope 3	608	tonnes	6.41061	kg CO2e/tonnes	3.89765	Energy from Waste - Non Schools
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion	Scope 3	1,175	tonnes	6.41061	kg CO2e/tonnes	7.53247	Energy from Waste - Schools
Waste	Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill	Scope 3	306	tonnes	497.04416	kg CO2e/tonnes	152.09551	Waste to landfill - Schools
Waste	Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled	Scope 3	271	tonnes	6.41061	kg CO2e/tonnes	1.73728	Mixed Recycling - Non Schools
Waste	Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled	Scope 3	515	tonnes	6.41061	kg CO2e/tonnes	3.30146	Mixed Recycling - Schools
Waste	Organic: food and drink waste - Composting	Scope 3	30	tonnes	8.88386	kg CO2e/tonnes	0.26652	Organic Food Waste - Non Schools
Waste	Organic: food and drink waste - Composting	Scope 3	122	tonnes	8.88386	kg CO2e/tonnes	1.08383	Organic Food Waste - Schools
Water	Water supply	Scope 3	587,620	cubic metres	0.08000	kg CO2e/cubic metres	47.00960	

Emission Type	Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
Water	Water treatment	Scope 3	558,239	cubic metres	0.17000	kg CO2e/cubic metres	94.90063	Based on 95% of water consumption

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			35,019,703		Actual consumption data
Ground Source Heat Pump			214,552		Estimate based on sites regularly measured.
Solar PV	1,026,963				Actual generation data
Wind	10,000				Estimated – Unmetered solution for Off-Grid schools
Hydro	261,132				Hydro Ness

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 emissions reductions 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.
- Climate Change Impact Assessment process in place as part of the decision-making process.
- 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.

The Council's Net Zero Programme is focused on developing and delivering projects that will reduce emissions, increase operational efficiencies and deliver budget savings. This includes aligning spend with energy efficiency improvements.

Highland Council is seeking to establish a toolkit capable of assessing all types of projects within its Capital Programme, ensuring that a whole-life carbon assessment is embedded in decision-making alongside cost, asset, and contract management. A pilot is underway to assess the functionality of a number of tools.

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
Total	176	

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 4	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	487,462		25	Electricity: UK	109	69142.4	No	Estimated savings from business case
Phase 4 - Lot 6 Brora Library	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	11,788		25	Electricity: UK	1	1827.28	No	Estimated savings from business case
Inverness Royal Academy	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	225,573		25	Electricity: UK	26	32019.4	No	Estimated savings from business case
Phase 4 lot 5 - Milton Of Leys PS	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	56,350		25	Electricity: UK	7	8102.9	No	Estimated savings from business case
Caithness House - LED Upgrades	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	63,423		25	Electricity: UK	7	9005.36	No	Estimated savings from business case
Durness Primary School - LED's	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	16,388		25	Electricity: UK	2	2326.24	No	Estimated savings from business case
Kinlochbervie HS & PS	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	86,193		25	Electricity: UK	10	12232.92	No	Estimated savings from business case
Raigmore Community Centre	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	5,284		25	Electricity: UK	1	803.46	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
Plockton Sports Pitch LED	Salix	2024/25	Estimated	15,870		25	Electricity: UK	2	2406.83	No	Estimated savings from business case

3g Estimated decrease in the body's emissions attributed to factors (not reported elsewhere in this form)
(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
Total	15	

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. Extensive work is ongoing to deliver a data driven approach to provide the same level of monitoring and evaluation across social housing stock and fleet.

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

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

If yes, provide a reference or link to any such risk assessment(s).

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.

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 Strategic Approach to Climate Change Adaptation was agreed by the Climate Change Committee in November 2024:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/84055/item_9_strategic_approach_to_climate_change_adaptation

Climate Change has been identified as a risk within the Council's Corporate Risk Register, and includes reference to adaptation requirements as per the Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (in development):
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/84543/item_7_corporate_risk_register

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.

The Council's Flood Risk Management Team is developing a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan, which will be completed in 2025. This will assess and identify the coastal communities and areas of coast most at risk from the impacts of climate change through coastal erosion and sea level rise.

There are other strategies in place for managing climate-related risks, for example, the Resilience Team collaborates with partner agencies, including the NHS, SEPA, Police and Fire Services and other local authorities in the region, to risk assess and identify capability gaps. This process informs the allocation of resources, training needs and development of response arrangements to contend with the increased risk of those emergencies associated with climate change.

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, Verture (formerly 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. This is due to be completed by the end of 2025.

The Highland Adapts objectives during this reporting period 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 during this reporting year:

- 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, and was published in Summer 2024. This economic assessment states the current and future economic costs of climate change, and potential opportunities for green financing, the circular economy and skills development. The overall risk assessment 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.

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

Provide details of any climate change adaptation strategies, action plans and risk management procedures, and any climate change adaptation policies which apply across the body¡

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 Plans has commenced with a view to aligning the single, replacement Plan with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). We have been gathering evidence for the new Plan and preparing the Evidence Report. This is a required step which must pass a Gate Check before we can proceed with formally preparing the Proposed Plan, including drafting its policies and proposals as part of our up-to-date local planning response to climate considerations. 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. Some of our policy responses have already been partially developed through the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2, which was adopted in June 2024.

There are particular examples of more detailed guidance that shape decisions that affect climate change, such as Onshore Wind Energy, Local Transport Strategy (a new LTS was approved in February 2025), The Flow Country World Heritage Site Planning Position Statement and Development Briefs for specific sites. These guide the consideration of development and in some cases the approach to mitigation and/or 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 has added further guidance to it through a programme of landscape sensitivity appraisals and identification of strategic capacity. Through preparation of the new Local Development Plan we will consider which aspects of our guidance remain valuable, which require updating and whether the content should be part of the Plan or sat alongside in non-statutory planning guidance.

In November 2024, the Council adopted the Ecology Strategy and Action Plan. The Strategy recognises that the ecological emergency is a constantly evolving issue, and the Strategy will be kept as a live and agile document. Actions will be regularly reviewed to adapt to new or revised threats, incorporate new actions and activities, and consider new and emerging opportunities and projects to drive forward the Council's response to the ecological emergency including climate change impacts and adaptation opportunities.

The Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) - developed in the previous reporting year - are now in full usage. The 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 Council approved a new Flood Risk Management Policy in May 2024 which updated the previous Flood Prevention Policy, and which fully accords with the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

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 works collaboratively with partners to anticipate, plan for, respond to, and recover from, the consequences of disruptive events, including severe weather, wildfire and drought. These arrangements are regularly tested by joint exercising and in actual emergencies. The HILRP sits within the North of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership which manages the Community Risk Register (CCR). The CCR is reviewed

annually and highlights risks that have the highest likelihood and potential for significant impact, causing disruption to the North of Scotland Region and its communities.

The Council maintains the General Emergency Plan (currently under review) that maps out the organisational and management structure of the Council's response to an UNUSUAL or MAJOR INCIDENT. These include climate related emergencies. The Council also maintains and regularly reviews Corporate Risk Assessments, including risks affected by climate change impacts and adaptation solutions. 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. The Council recently resumed its Resilience Group meetings - combining this with the Corporate Risk Management Group meetings - to form one Risk and Resilience Group comprised of senior staff from across the Council to discuss, review and embed risk and resilience into all Council operations. The first meeting of the newly merged Risk and Resilience Group met in March 2025.

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

Include.details.of.work.to.increase.awareness.of.the.need.to.adapt.to.climate.change.and.build.the.capacity.of.staff.and.stakeholders.to.assess.risk.and.implement.action¡.The.body.may.wish.to.make.reference.to.the.Scottish.Climate.Change.Adaptation.Programme..(»the.Programme‹)¡

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. The post commenced in April 2024. Work has been progressing on producing a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan. A Strategic Approach to Climate Adaptation report was presented before the Climate Change Committee in November 2024, while the draft Strategy is due to be completed in Summer 2025. The Action Plan as well as a corporate Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment will then follow.
- Hosted a Climate Change and Adaptation workshop delivered by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society to senior managers and service leads to provide an overview of the national, regional, and organisational context of climate change and adaptation and to highlight the importance of embedding this across the organisation.
- During this reporting period, continued in the process of developing Adaptation Benchmarking with the help of the Scotland Adapts Capability Framework and the Benchmarking Working Group.
- Continued to deliver the actions identified within the second Local Flood Risk Management Plan; and approved a new Flood Risk Management Policy - which updated the previous Flood Prevention Policy.
- The Council's Flood Risk Management Team has started to develop the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP), which should be published in 2025.

- Continued 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 by attending various conferences, gatherings and webinars exchanging knowledge and best practice on climate change and adaptation actions.
- Completed 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 progression of business continuity arrangements.
- The Council adopted the revised Biodiversity Planning Guidance (BPG) as non-statutory planning guidance in May 2024, to maximise opportunities presented by NPF4 Policy 3.
- Completed and published a Council Ecology Strategy in November 2024, and identified actions to improve the biodiversity value of the Council estate. In relation to comments made regarding climate change adaptation, more explicit reference has been made in the Strategy to the importance of nature-based solutions in helping the region adapt to environmental challenges, especially sea level rise, and coastal erosion. Reference to opportunities related to blue carbon have also been strengthened, such as the salt marsh code, reflecting the increasing importance of blue carbon ecosystems in the fight against climate change.
- Continued 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, while this was still available.
- Relaunched the Species Champions Initiative to enable elected Members to advocate for at risk species during the course of their duties.
- The Highland Council is a key partner in the Flow Country Partnership which successfully secured World Heritage Site status for the Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland in July 2024 after many years of hard work to obtain this achievement. 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. 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.
- Recruitment of a Nature Conservation Officer to green Council Estate

- HC MOU agreed for developers to deliver upfront Biodiversity Enhancement and compensatory plating to encourage landscape restoration at scale.
- Mapping of Nature Networks to safeguard impacts of climate change on species and habitat connectivity.

4d Where applicable, what contribution has the body made to helping deliver the programme?
Provide.any.other.relevant.supporting.information

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

- The Council has continued the implementation of its second Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-2028 that draws together multiple datasets to support flood risk management in the Highlands. Along with the approval of a new Flood Risk Management Policy, which replaced the previous Flood Prevention Policy.
- Development of the draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, including completion of the LCLIP will better inform and help the Council understand the effects of climate change on the region and its natural environment.
- Development of the Highland-wide Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP). Within The Highland Council area, the coastal zone is home to much of the population, and contains significant infrastructure such as roads, railway lines, bridges, harbours etc. These coastal areas help to drive the economy within the Council area and as such a more adaptive approach is required to ensure our communities and infrastructure remain resilient in the future. The CCAP will provide an overview of the risks across The Highland Council coastal area, identifying locations and infrastructure that are least resilient to climate change and rising sea levels, providing a framework and flexible approach to address these risks over time.

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

- The Council's Ecology Strategy and Action Plan was approved in November 2024. This strategy sets out how the Council will manage and enhance biodiversity across the region with particular focus on achieving net zero and tackling biodiversity loss using nature-based solutions.
- 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, the formal application to UNESCO successfully achieved World Heritage Status in July 2024 - thus becoming the world's first peatland World Heritage Site. This will ensure the continued protection and conservation of this unique landscape that stores some 400 million tonnes of carbon.
- The newly appointed Planning Ecology Team is dedicated to providing 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. Achievements this reporting period include: beginning work to design and coordinate nature networks across Highland and to improve ecological connectivity on our own estate; identifying and developing projects to install species specific infrastructure to provide safer access for wildlife to move across the landscape, for example amphibian ladders in drainage channels, otter ledges under bridges and badger culverts under roads; seeking nominations for Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs) from communities and stakeholders across Highland. The list of LNCSs will be developed and expanded over time as they become aware of new sites; 'Statutorily Protected Species' Supplementary Guidance is also in the process of being updated; Amenity Services are continuing to identify areas of greenspace that can be managed more effectively for biodiversity. Successful initiatives, such as the six wildflower roundabouts in Inverness, continue alongside new initiatives to increase the area of greenspace set aside for nature. These include new ways to manage greenspace, for example, reducing management, only cutting paths through larger greenspaces, reducing cutting and creating wildflower and wildlife corridors.
- The Council continues to support the NW2045 Regional Landuse Partnership, which engages with land managers to recognise the importance of and safeguard natural capital and ecosystem services.
- The Council is a signatory to the Edinburgh Declaration.

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.
- Council approval and adoption of the Ecology Strategy and Action Plan, as well as the 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.
- Mapping of Nature Networks to safeguard impacts of climate change on species and habitat connectivity
- Recruitment of a Nature Conservation Officer to green Council Estate
- HC MOU agreed for developers to deliver upfront Biodiversity Enhancement and compensatory plating to encourage landscape restoration at scale.

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.
- A Kingussie Flood Protection project was started by the Flood Risk Management Team focussing on The Gynack Burn, which flows through Kingussie, and overtops during high rainfall events, resulting in flood damage to roads, railway, parks and buildings within the village. Previous modelling work by the Council has established the main cause of the problem being reduced capacity under road and rail bridges due to build up of sediment and gravel beneath the bridges. Flooding leads to costly and energy intensive clear up operations as well as increased watercourse maintenance works to remove the large build-up of sediment that has raised the bed of the channel. The works proposed involve the stabilisation of the banks of the Gynack Burn further upstream where erosion is prevalent. The methods proposed were green bank protection providing a natural response, reducing sediment load in the watercourse. The works at Kingussie on the Gynack Burn were stopped however due to excessive cost of proposed remedial actions. Alternative potential improved resilience is now being considered instead.
- The development of the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) will assist in meeting this objective, particularly for vulnerable coastal communities.

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

- Ongoing review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan to align it with NPF4 will place greater emphasis on adapting and building the resilience of buildings to climate change within the planning process.
- Work is continuing to improve the region's domestic properties to improve energy efficiency and alleviate fuel poverty. The Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS), which is funded by the Scottish Government is delivered and managed by Highland Council, the programme aims to reduce fuel poverty by delivering thermal improvements, reducing heat loss, reducing energy costs, carbon emissions and improving comfort levels to private household. The team is in the 12th year of delivering energy efficiency 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) in December 2023 and subsequently published the LHEES delivery plan, both documents will be subject to regular review. The LHEES 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 includes; Scottish Government, Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding schemes and private investment.

- Ongoing work to ensure compliance with EESSH2 is progressing with circa £16.94m spent in 24/25 towards improving the energy efficiency of its housing stock. Significant external funding has been leveraged for 25/26 energy efficiency works.

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.
- The development of the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) will also help to meet this objective.

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

- The Resilience Team and Flood Risk Management Team, assisted by partner agencies, continue to work with communities to encourage and enable them to develop their own Community Resilience Plans.
- There is ongoing engagement with local communities by the Resilience Team, Corporate Communications and Community Support to raise awareness and promote adaptation and resilience measures. This includes directing communities to sources of external funding to enhance their resilience.
- Business Continuity advice is provided on the Council's website to help SME's manage disruption caused by climate-related risks.
- Regular meetings have been established between the Council and the Highland & Islands Climate Hub to discuss areas of joint work and to keep each other informed of current/ future developments and projects.

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

- Highland Council works collaboratively with NHS Highland, emergency responders and other partners through the Highland & Islands Local Resilience Partnership. Resilience Partnership meetings, at tactical and strategic levels, are held regularly to identify any emerging risks and capability gaps. This ensures all agencies have a joint understanding of risk, and that established processes are in place for the sharing of appropriate information and resources.
- In response to an emergency, the Council, NHS Highland and the emergency services adhere to the JESIP principles for joint working, i.e. there are pre-agreed strategies to support multi-agency co-location, communication, co-ordination, joint understanding of risk and shared situational awareness.
- The Council regularly participates in joint training and exercising with NHS Highland and the emergency services to foster relationships, enhance knowledge and test response and recovery arrangements. Exercises and real-life incidents are routinely debriefed to identify any learning.

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.

As a Category 1 partner of the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership, the Council is 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.

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

Highland Council is in the process of developing a Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan and to fully embed adaptation to help build a climate-ready Council. This will include the development of a corporate Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment and ensuring adaptation is embedded into business continuity plans across the local authority.

4f What arrangements does the body have in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the adaptation actions?
Please.provide.details.of.monitoring.and.evaluation.criteria.and.adaptation.indicators.used.to.assess.the.effectiveness.of.actions.detailed.under.Question.0(c).and.Question.0(d)¡

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. The forthcoming Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan will include robust monitor, review and evaluation processes to ensure that adaptation actions undertaken throughout the Council are impactful and effective.

During the previous 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 has now been implemented and is operational. The CCIA is helping 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?

Provide.a.summary.of.the.areas.and.activities.of.focus.for.the.year.ahead¡

1. Complete and publish the Climate Adaptation Strategy
2. Complete the Corporate Climate Risk & Opportunity Assessment
3. Develop and implement the Climate Adaptation Action Plan
4. Embed Adaptation across Council services
5. Continue to collaborate with Highland Adapts to support regional adaptation efforts, including the development of a region wide Climate Risk and Opportunity Assessment.

4 h Supporting information and best practice

Provide.any.other.relevant.supporting.information.and.any.examples.of.best.practice.by.the.body.in.relation.to.adaption¡

- 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. The Council's updated allotment policy was agreed by committee in March 2024 and is currently being implemented.

- 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 Ecology Strategy and Action Plan was approved in November 2024. This strategy sets out how the Council will manage and enhance biodiversity across the region with particular focus on achieving net zero and tackling biodiversity loss using nature-based solutions. Following comments made relating to climate change adaptation, more explicit reference was made in the Strategy to the importance of nature-based solutions in helping the region adapt to environmental challenges, especially sea level rise, and coastal erosion. Reference to opportunities related to blue carbon were also strengthened, such as the salt marsh code, reflecting the increasing importance of blue carbon ecosystems in the fight against climate change.

- Best practice was demonstrated in the Flow Country World Heritage Site partnership and successful World Heritage Status application. This was a significant and sustained effort which will ensure the protection and restoration of important peat bogs and associated habitats.

- The Council became a signatory to the Highland Charter for Climate, Nature and Health, which was relaunched in 2024 in partnership with Highland Adapts, the Highland Environment Forum, Highlands and Islands Climate Hub, and Highland Green Health Partnership. The Charter is a pledge to put climate, nature, and the benefits of green and blue health at the centre of decision-making and action, so that the natural environment and people have improved health, wellbeing, and resilience.

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5a How have the 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 are 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 the procurement activity contributed to compliance with climate change duties?

The following is illustrative of procurement activity i) mitigating CO2 conscious of adaptation ii) improving energy efficiency and in many cases iii) incorporating meaningful social/economic and environmental criteria:

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 model and provide advice on coastal erosion risk at Nairn Beach. This work built on previous assessments undertaken on the beach. This time the focus was on the impact that existing relic defences are having on beach dynamics and how they contribute to future coastal erosion and flood risk reduction. The outcome of the report identified potential maintenance and extension to the existing defences which could be implemented to address future dune erosion and consequent flood risk, showing how artificial defences can work in tandem with natural coastal features to protect communities.

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: Highland, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils partnered with EZO in the development of a 20-year contract to provide EV charging infrastructure (EVCI) for the north of Scotland. The contract is estimated to be worth £300 million, with Highland Council acting as the lead authority. The large-scale project will accelerate the region's transition to Net Zero and see a minimum of 570 new charging points installed across the north of Scotland by 2028, more than doubling the existing EV infrastructure and further enhancing the region's charging network. EZO will also adopt and maintain all existing council-owned public charging points in the region. A critical element of this partnership is to enable

charging provision for everyone who lives, works and visits the region, regardless of the destination with connecting urban, rural and remote communities being a key element to this partnership. The partnership has the opportunity to develop depots across the region to enable Council electric fleets to flourish, as well as Gilt-Edged sites (large traffic flow but limited or no charging provision currently), to encourage the wider population to make the move to Zero Emission vehicles with confidence in the ability to find a charger where and when required.

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 Council is underway in respect of a supply chain and carbon analysis study. This will provide 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.

Internally, CPSS continue to contribute to themed corporate climate groups. Activity feeds into the Climate Change Plan supporting enabling actions to integrate actions

into systems and processes, build internal and supplier awareness, knowledge and capacity building of climate positive/circular economy principles.

Four specific commodity areas continue to be targeted for specific action to minimise the Council's carbon footprint in: i) Food ii) Building Maintenance Materials iii) Road Maintenance and iv) Office Materials.

Sustainable Procurement and Community Benefits Policy guides sustainable procurement at a strategic and operational level, contributing positively and progressively to duties and commitments under Scottish Climate commitments. A template Climate Clause evolved to encourage suppliers to explore the Edinburgh Science Net Zero Toolkit (https://thenetzerotoolkit.org/about/) as a free resource to support their own journeys to a net zero future. The reach of the toolkit amplified via the Supplier Development Programme (https://www.sdpscotland.co.uk/) Relationships with Edinburgh Science and the Supplier Development Programme deepened in the reporting period.

Forward pipeline of procurements for FY2025-2026 reviewed opportunities to include climate friendly criteria identified. Projects reviewed on a continuous basis.

Go Awards Scotland- CPSS secured a "highly commended" award in the Social Value category in a ceremony held in October 2024.

Effective Collaboration/Partnership Working - CPSS has strengthened relationships with Edinburgh Science, the Supplier Development Programme, community planning partners, the local business community, local third sector interface organisations, Aberdeen Social Enterprise Network and Social Enterprise Scotland to raise awareness of and capability within the 3rd sector re sustainable procurement/community benefits/net zero. Approach ensures as far as possible, social value is aligned to community priorities. If social/economic value can be supported by the local 3rd sector, this allows increased scope for procurers and suppliers to address "environmental measures" and the net zero agenda.

[illegible]

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.

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

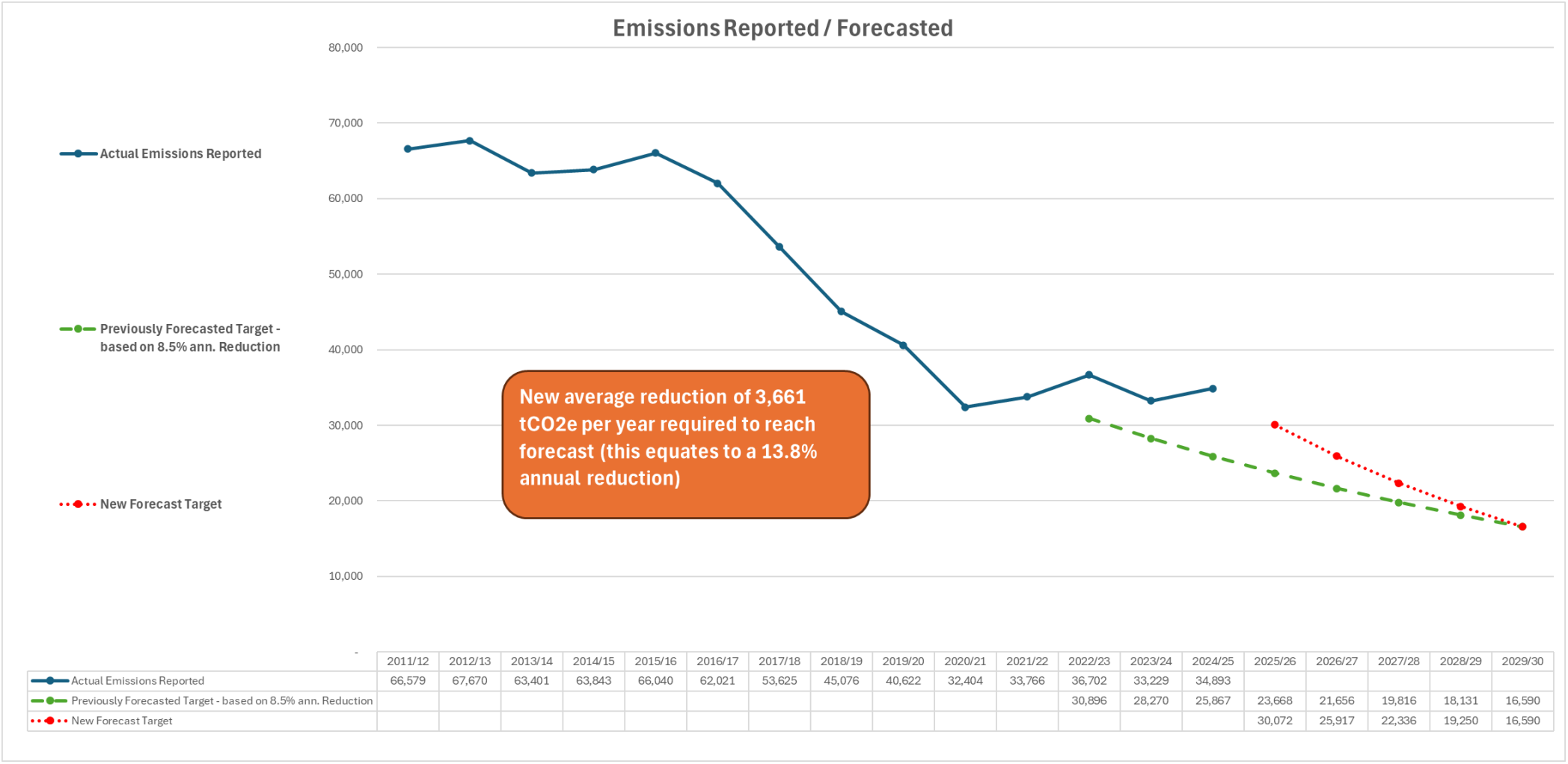
N/A

6e Declaration

Name:	
Role in the body:	Assistant Chief Executive - Place
Date:	

Source / Emission Factor Used	2023/24 Consumption	2024/25 Consumption	Units	Consumption - Change	Consumption - Change %	2023/24Emissions (tCO_2e)	2024/25 Emissions (tCO_2e)	Emissions - Change	Emissions - Change %
Scope 1									
Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend) - exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops	2,351,089	2,880,565	litres	+ 529,476	+ 23%	5906.09	7238.25	+ 1,332	+ 23%
Fuels - Natural gas	28,822,632	30,314,907	kWh	+ 1,492,275	+ 5%	5272.49	5544.60	+ 272	+ 5%
Fuels - Burning oil (Kerosene) - Heating, road maintenance, cylinders	18,024,983	553,849	kWh	- 873,550	-5%	4448.08	136.67	- 54	-1%
Fuels - Gas oil - Class D (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		15,952,154	kWh				4091.57		
Fuels - Gas oil - Class A2 (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		433,548	kWh				111.20		
Fuels - Gas oil - General "Oil" (recorded under kerosene in 2023/24)		211,882	kWh				54.35		
Fuels - LPG off grid gas alternative	5,784,820	6,918,058	kWh	+ 1,133,238	+ 20%	1240.82	1483.92	+ 243	+ 20%
Fuels - Marine gas oil - Corran Ferry	154,065	274,272	litres	+ 120,207	+ 78%	426.97	760.11	+ 333	+ 78%
Fuels - Diesel (average biofuel blend) - In House Bus Project and Bus Ops	142,870	168,150	litres	+ 25,280	+ 18%	358.90	422.53	+ 64	+ 18%
Bioenergy - Wood pellets - Heat from Biomass	32,721,814	35,019,703	kWh	+ 2,297,889	+ 7%	351.43	396.42	+ 45	+ 13%
Fuels - Petrol (average biofuel blend) - exc. Bus Project / Bus Ops	109,532	113,985	litres	+ 4,453	+ 4%	229.74	237.59	+ 8	+ 3%
Fuels - Gas Oil - Fleet (red diesel)	16,214	0	litres	- 16,214	-100%	44.68	0.00	- 45	-100%
Fuels - Petrol (average biofuel blend) - Bus Project / Bus Ops	1,872	0	litres	- 1,872	-100%	3.93	0.00	- 4	-100%
Scope 2									
Electricity: UK - Buildings	48,549,038	47,605,593	kWh	- 943,446	-2%	10053.26	9856.74	- 197	-2%
Electricity: UK - Street Lighting	8,375,293	8,768,485	kWh	+ 393,192	+ 5%	1734.31	1815.51	+ 81	+ 5%

Source / Emission Factor Used	2023/24 Consumption	2024/25 Consumption	Units	Consumption - Change	Consumption - Change %	2023/24Emissions (tCO_2e)	2024/25 Emissions (tCO_2e)	Emissions - Change	Emissions - Change %
Scope 3									
Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK - Buildings	48,549,038	47,605,593	kWh	- 943,446	-2%	869.76	871.18	+ 1	+ 0%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - THC	2,302,695	2,199,094	miles	- 103,601	-4%	617.51	590.68	- 27	-4%
Homeworking - Homeworking (office equipment + heating)	1,262,800	1,138,200	FTE Working Hour	- 124,600	-10%	421.50	379.91	- 42	-10%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Car Club	780,256	802,923	miles	+ 22,667	+ 3%	209.24	215.67	+ 6	+ 3%
Transmission and distribution - Electricity: UK - Street Lighting	8,375,293	8,768,485	kWh	+ 393,192	+ 5%	150.04	160.46	+ 10	+ 7%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill - Waste to landfill - Schools	767	306	tonnes	- 461	-60%	381.23	152.10	- 229	-60%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Grey Fleet (mileage reimbursement) - HLH and VJB	490,979	534,592	miles	+ 43,613	+ 9%	131.66	143.59	+ 12	+ 9%
Water - Water treatment - Based on 95% of water consumption	589,510	558,239	cubic metres	- 31,271	-5%	112.01	94.90	- 17	-15%
Water - Water supply	620,537	587,620	cubic metres	- 32,917	-5%	62.05	47.01	- 15	-24%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Car Hire - Travel Desk	163,389	170,184	miles	+ 6,795	+ 4%	43.82	45.71	+ 2	+ 4%
Transport - public - National rail - Travel Desk/Self Service	280,419	345,999	passenger.km	+ 65,580	+ 23%	9.94	12.27	+ 2	+ 23%
Transport - public - Flights - Average passenger - Travel Desk	53,561	54,117	passenger.km	+ 556	+ 1%	9.96	10.06	+	+ 1%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion - Energy from Waste - Schools	728	1,175	tonnes	+ 447	+ 61%	15.49	7.53	- 8	-51%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Combustion - Energy from Waste - Non	381	608	tonnes	+ 227	+ 60%	8.11	3.90	- 4	-52%
Waste - Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled - Mixed Recycling - Schools	381	515	tonnes	+ 134	+ 35%	8.11	3.30	- 5	-59%
Waste - Mixed dry recyclates - Recycled - Mixed Recycling - Non Schools	142	271	tonnes	+ 129	+ 91%	3.02	1.74	- 1	-43%
Waste - Organic: food and drink waste - Composting - Organic Food Waste - Schools	117	122	tonnes	+ 5	+ 4%	1.04	1.08	+	+ 4%
Transport - public - Coach - Travel Desk	22,804	32,803	passenger.km	+ 9,999	+ 44%	0.62	0.89	+	+ 44%
Transport - Average car - Unknown - Car Hire - HLH/Non Travel Desk - estimated by cost	996	2,946	miles	+ 1,950	+ 196%	0.27	0.79	+ 1	+ 196%
Transport - public - Ferry - Average - Travel Desk	5,977	2,702	passenger.km	- 3,275	-55%	0.67	0.30	-	-55%
Waste - Organic: food and drink waste - Composting - Organic Food Waste - Non	27	30	tonnes	+ 3	+ 11%	0.24	0.27	+	+ 11%
Waste - Household/Municipal/Domestic waste - Landfill - Waste to landfill - Non Schools	206	0	tonnes	- 206	-100%	102.39	0.00	- 102	-100%
Transport - public - Taxi	121	0	passenger.km	- 121	-100%	0.02	0.00	-	-100%



	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	34,893					
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															30,072	25,917	22,336	19,250	16,590