

Annual Carbon Footprint Report 2019-20

To: Environment and Sustainability Committee

Meeting Date: 14 January 2021

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director, Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Key decision: No

Outcome: To enable monitoring of progress against our targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Recommendation: Members are asked to accept the 2019-20 annual carbon footprint report as a record of the Council's greenhouse gas emissions in that year.

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1. Background

- 1.1 Data has now been gathered on the Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the financial year April 2019 to March 2020. This year 2019-20 was prior to the publication of the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy. The vast majority of the year was also prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic which changed ways of working for many people from March 2020 onwards.
- 1.2 In February 2020, the Council adopted a fourth corporate objective to deliver net zero carbon for Cambridgeshire by 2050, and in May 2020, Full Council approved the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy and associated Action Plan.
- 1.3 The Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy contains a commitment to a number of targets, including reducing our 'scope 1' (direct) emissions by 50% by 2023 (compared to 2018 levels), reduce our 'scope 3' (indirect) emissions by 50.4% by 2030, and to deliver Government's net zero carbon target for Cambridgeshire by 2050. In order to monitor progress against these targets, it is necessary to measure the Council's carbon footprint each year.
- 1.4 The Action Plan commits the Council to publishing annual carbon footprint calculations to demonstrate progress, and also includes additional agreed actions to identify ways to improve the data provision for carbon footprinting, in order to enable greater accuracy, fill gaps and further expand the scope of what we can report on in future.
- 1.5 The full findings are presented in the attached report (Appendix A). As well as presenting the Council's organisational carbon footprint, the report also looks, separately, at the carbon footprint of the whole county, beyond the Council's own operations.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1. County-wide emissions. CO₂ emissions from the county of Cambridgeshire in 2018 (the most recent year of data available) were just over 4.5 million tonnes. This is a reduction of 1.8% since the previous year. This 4.5m tonnes does not include emissions of other, non-CO₂ GHGs such as methane (CH₄) or nitrous oxide (N₂O), which are not broken down by local authority area in the published statistics. Across the whole UK, CO₂ accounts for 81% of all GHG emissions. Last year's CUSPE report found that total GHG emissions (including all gases) for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined, were 6.1million tonnes. Both of those figures exclude emissions from peatland, which are thought to be very large across the county, although the exact figure is currently unknown. Our action plan has identified that further research is required in this area.
- 2.2. Council's own emissions. CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) emissions from Cambridgeshire County Council (as an organisation) were 206,579 tonnes in 2019-20, which includes indirect ("scope 3") emissions from our supply chain partners and contractors. This is very similar to the previous year (1% increase), which is reflective of the fact that the reporting year 2019-20 was prior to the implementation of the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy in May 2020.
- 2.3. In gathering the data for this report, some gaps were identified. There has been some improvement on this since the previous year, but there is more to do. The biggest gaps are

in our 'scope 3' (indirect) emissions, which accounts for the largest share, but is also where we have the least control, since much of the required data lies with other organisations.

- 2.4. The majority of the Council's 'scope 1' (direct) GHG emissions is from burning gas and oil for heating buildings. This accounts for 1,403 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent ("CO₂e"), out of a total of 2,240 tonnes CO₂e in scope 1. Gas consumption increased by 16% compared to the previous year, likely to be due to increased heating requirement because of more days with colder weather. Since this reporting year 2019-20 was prior to the commencement of our low carbon heating programme, we expect to see greater reductions of emissions from heating from 2021-22 onwards after the first projects will be completed.
- 2.5. Our gross 'scope 2' (electricity) emissions were 5,183 tonnes CO₂e. This is 10% lower than the previous year, despite the amount of electricity we used being about the same. The lower emissions is due to the UK electricity grid becoming greener (less coal and more renewables). However, the net emissions for scope 2 were zero, because the Council continues to purchase 100% renewable electricity through its supply contract. 61% of the Council's electricity consumption is for street lighting.
- 2.6. Transport accounts for 10,606 tonnes CO₂e in 2019-20, the majority of which is in scope 3 (contractors' vehicles and employees' own vehicles) but a small amount is in scope 1 (CCC fleet vehicles). Employees' business travel (mileage claims) in 2019-20 accounted for 1,803 tonnes CO₂e in scope 3. The number of miles travelled was lower than in 2018-19. Employee commuting is estimated at 5,155 tonnes CO₂e, which is 13% lower than the previous year. This is based on the annual travel survey.
- 2.7. As the Council is the Waste Authority, treatment and disposal of waste from Cambridgeshire residents is responsible for a large share of our scope 3 (indirect) emissions. In 2019-20 this was 56,516 tonnes CO₂e, a reduction of 1% compared to 2018-19.
- 2.8. Construction materials for building projects, mostly building new schools, accounted for the largest share (almost half) of all our emissions.
- 2.9. Some other scope 3 emissions are not included in this report as we do not have the data to calculate them. This is a problem common to many organisations, and for that reason it is common for organisations to report on scopes 1 and 2 only. However, for the purposes of greater transparency and accuracy, we have also reported all scope 3 emissions where known.
- 2.10. The Council is currently working on a project in partnership with University College London, funded by the Local Government Association through their innovation programme, to research ways to identify more scope 3 emissions in future through procurement mechanisms.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live
There are no significant implications for this priority.

- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050
The report above sets out the implications for this priority in all paragraphs. This entire report is about how we are taking the first steps towards net zero with our own emissions, as well as using our influence to drive down emissions across the county where we can.

4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications
There are no significant implications within this category. However, some staff time will be needed to further improve data collection in future.
- 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
There are no significant implications within this category. However, separately, we are exploring whether we may be able to improve data collection on emissions through future procurements.
- 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement
A cross-party Member Advisory Group was involved in developing the Climate Change and Environment Strategy.
- 4.7 Public Health Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes
Name of Officer: Gus de Silva

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Elsa Evans

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes
Name of Officer: Bethan Griffiths

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Emma Fitch

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health Yes
Name of Officer: Kate Parker / Iain Green

Source documents

- [Cambridgeshire County Council Climate Change and Environment Strategy](#)
- [UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics](#)
- [UK local authority carbon dioxide emissions national statistics](#)
- [UK Government carbon conversion factors for company reporting](#)
- [CUSPE 2019 Net Zero Cambridgeshire report](#)
- Appendix A – CCC Carbon Footprint Report 2019-20