



REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
DATE:	21 st MARCH 2022
SUBJECT:	CARBON FOOTPRINT FY21/22
PURPOSE:	TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR FY21/22
KEY DECISION:	NO
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR PAUL SKINNER
REPORT OF:	CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT OFFICER
REPORT AUTHOR:	HEATHER PRESCOTT
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	N/A
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

SUMMARY

Boston Borough Council agreed an ambitious target to reduce their carbon emissions to net zero by 2040, with a minimum reduction of 45% by 2027, in line with the Carbon Reduction Plan and the strategic aim of the Corporate Strategy. This report and accompanying analysis seek to provide an annual update on our progress towards these targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Environment and Performance Committee note the findings of the Carbon Footprint for FY 21/22 in line with the Partnership's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions to net zero by 2040.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that members are kept abreast of progress towards our net zero targets and provide an understanding of the factors which have impacted this progress.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None - local authorities have a legal obligation to adapt to and mitigate climate change in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. The Council has also made a commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2040 with a minimum emissions reduction of 45% by 2027.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Climate Change is one of our greatest challenges, and local authorities have a crucial role to play in driving forward change and leading by example, to do what they can to effectively tackle this challenge and achieve a more sustainable future. As part of Boston Borough Council's commitment to reducing their carbon emissions, our annual Carbon Footprint has been recorded to enable monitoring of these emissions and guide us as we work towards our net zero ambition.

2. UPDATE TO CARBON FOOTPRINT

2.1 In FY21/22, Boston Borough Council's total emissions decreased by 32% compared to the baseline year (FY2018/19), however they increased compared to the previous year by 13%, going from 2,382 tCO₂e in FY20/21 to 2,688.85 tCO₂e in FY21/22.

2.2 In the FY20/21 Carbon Footprint significant reductions were made to emissions, largely as a result of impacts of the COVID pandemic such as reduced occupancy of buildings and agile working. Whilst we hoped to maintain these gains as far as possible, re-opening of leisure facilities and offices have resulted in an increase in electricity and in particular gas emissions this year.

2.3 In FY21/22, electricity emissions of 339.8 tCO₂e were recorded and represent a 25% increase from the previous year. These increases arose primarily from the Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre (GMLC), Municipal Buildings and Crematorium. Gas emissions of 698.1 tCO₂e were recorded and represent an 87% increase from the previous year. This has largely been caused by emissions from GMLC.

2.4 Gains have been retained however, and the behavioural shift towards online meetings and working from home has led to a further 10.5% reduction in emissions from Business Travel which were recorded as 5.1 tCO₂e, and a further 21% reduction in emissions from Commuter Travel which were recorded as 95.4 tCO₂e. This is a positive indicator that a long-term change to working behaviours has been achieved and should continue to be encouraged and supported through communications and training opportunities.

2.5 Water emissions for FY21/22 were recorded as 5.3 tCO₂e which represents a 60% reduction.

- 2.6** Emissions from other fuels were recorded as 5.9 tCO₂e which represent a reduction of 55%. This is likely due, in part, to the Biomass boiler at Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre requiring repairs which prevented it from running for part of the year.
- 2.7** Where actual activity data was unavailable, leased building, electricity and gas consumption was estimated from floor area and building type, leading to emissions from leased buildings remaining constant. Waste emissions also remained the same as the previous year due to waste data having to be estimated from approximate waste volume. Collection of more precise waste data would enable more insight into these emissions and is being explored.
- 2.8** Emissions from 25 new Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points located at car parks across the Borough were included in the footprint report this year for the first time. The electricity emissions recorded from these charge points totalled 0.94 tCO₂e.
- 2.9** Operational Fleet recorded emissions of 599.5 tCO₂e which represents a reduction of 7%. A significant piece of work has been undertaken by the Climate Change and Environment Team in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust (EST) over the last 12 months to complete a comprehensive fleet review and report which recommends a transition to low-carbon vehicles, alongside other measures such as improved telematics and driver training. A cross-Partnership Project Team has now been formed with a view to taking forward the recommendations set out in this report, in the short, medium and longer term. It is however, important to note that large scale transitions such as the decarbonisation of fleet can take numerous years to complete, and whilst such changes will make a large impact on our Carbon Footprint this will take time.
- 2.10** This financial year we have worked closely with the Midlands Net Zero Hub to secure professional consultancy support, at no cost to the Council, to identify a route to decarbonise some of our operational buildings. They are now assisting us with building an evidence base, with a view to making a funding application to the next Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation fund for heat decarbonisation of the Municipal Buildings, Crematorium and Guildhall as appropriate. Ongen reports have been produced and energy audits of these buildings have now been undertaken as part of building this case for funding. If our application is successful, the decarbonisation of these buildings will make a significant impact on gas and electric emissions recorded in the Carbon Footprint.
- 2.11** Alongside the work directly impacting on the Carbon Footprint itself, the Climate Change and Environment Team has been working on the wider policy framework to support delivery of the Council's net zero ambitions. A Climate Change Strategy has been developed and adopted across the Partnership to set out our collective commitment to tackling Climate Change and provide an overarching framework to reduce emissions both within and outside of the Partnerships' direct control. It is recognised that partnership working with many stakeholders across the sub-region will be required to achieve these common goals and the South East Lincolnshire Climate Action Network (SELCAN) has therefore been established as a key delivery mechanism for taking forward this strategy. SELCAN is comprised of members of the public, private and third sectors, and their remit is to drive strategic thinking and promote on the ground delivery and implementation of projects, to reduce emissions and build a more sustainable future across South and East Lincolnshire.

2.12 A Sustainable Products Policy has also recently been adopted across the partnership which highlights the damaging environmental impacts resulting from our consumption and disposal of single use products; and sets out the Partnership's commitment to discontinuing the procurement of these items as far as possible, sourcing the best alternative solutions where single use products cannot be eradicated completely. Improving our resource and waste management and seeking more sustainable options to reduce the waste we generate as an authority will ultimately provide environmental and health benefits resulting from reduced pollution levels, and whilst not all of the benefits of adopting this policy will be captured within the Carbon Footprint, it does seek to assist us with meeting our net zero targets and also to improve our accountability as a community leader.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Whilst some increases in carbon emissions have been recorded in the Carbon Footprint for FY21/22, it is important to note that the overall trajectory is very positive and we are still on track to meet our net zero targets despite the challenges of a partial return to pre-pandemic behaviours, with emissions reduced by 32% when compared to the baseline year.

3.2 This has been a year of transitions and although we have not achieved a further reduction to our emissions this year, we have additional planned projects in the pipeline to assist us in reducing our carbon emissions further in the coming years, and although some of these projects are longer term, they seek to target and address our most heavily emitting areas which will be crucial to successfully meeting our targets.

3.3 GMLC is responsible for 20% of the carbon footprint and so the Climate Change and Environment Team is keen to see opportunities to decarbonise the site as part of the redevelopment proposals currently being considered. This is also likely to have a beneficial impact on utility costs if it can be achieved.

3.4 Members should be aware that the Carbon Footprint is a very useful benchmarking tool but it isn't without limitations and the Climate Change and Environment Team are looking to address all Council activities which have an environmental impact, as well as decarbonising our key operations. The Team cannot however deliver the vast array of carbon reduction and sustainability measures required to tackle these issues in isolation, and therefore a multi-departmental approach will be required if we are to meet our net zero by 2040 target and effectively tackle Climate Change across our region. The rollout of Carbon Literacy training to staff has started across the Partnership and will give all officers the opportunity to learn more about the challenges ahead and the impact and contributions towards tackling this that all service areas can make.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Annual monitoring of our Carbon Footprint aims to assist us in meeting our net zero targets and the aspirations of our Climate Change Strategy, whilst providing reputational benefits through our accountability as a community leader, setting a positive example for others to follow.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

Our ambition seeks to align our Carbon Footprinting methodology as far as possible across the partnership and undertake annual monitoring of reductions to our carbon emissions to enable mitigation and adaptation to climate change and delivery of environmental benefits across the subregion.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Environmental awareness and accountability are listed as a priority in the Corporate Strategy.

STAFFING

None.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Part of our commitment to reaching our net zero targets is to undertake an annual footprinting exercise. Local authorities have a legal obligation to produce plans to adapt to and mitigate climate change in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 and failure to do so could result in a legal challenge being made.

DATA PROTECTION

None.

FINANCIAL

External funding opportunities will be sought together with ensuring that future expenditure within existing Council budgets seeks to include carbon savings as part of the procurement and delivery.

RISK MANAGEMENT

None.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director Regulation.

REPUTATION

Monitoring of our carbon emissions show our commitment to meeting both our net zero targets and environmental aims, enhancing our reputation as a community leader and setting a positive example for others to follow.

CONTRACTS

None.

CRIME AND DISORDER

None.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

None.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Reducing our carbon emissions also delivers positive outcomes for the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities through impacts such as improved air quality.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Commitment to our agreed Carbon Reduction Target of achieving net zero by 2040 will be crucial alongside the work of all other authorities, businesses and individuals in the global battle to reduce our carbon emissions and limit climate change to temperature increases of well below 2% in line with the Paris Agreement. Failure to do so would be catastrophic to the environment with extreme weather events expected to become more frequent and severe. Rising sea levels and huge losses to biodiversity could lead to water and food shortages amongst many other negative impacts on life as we know it. It is a global problem of which we can only make a small contribution, but we must seek to reduce our operational footprint as far as possible.

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS <i>This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.</i>	
Health	<i>The monitoring of our Carbon Footprint and reducing our carbon emissions will deliver positive outcomes for the natural environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities through impacts such as improved air quality and reduced contamination of the food web, which thereby minimise health hazards across the district.</i>
Wellbeing	<i>The monitoring of our Carbon Footprint supports a more sustainable future for our operations which will lead to improved wellbeing for staff and ultimately residents.</i>
Local Leadership	<i>The monitoring of our Carbon Footprint highlights our commitment to meeting our net zero targets and environmental aims, enhancing our reputation as a community leader and setting a positive example for others to follow.</i>

ACRONYMS

None.

APPENDICES Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -	
APPENDIX A	<i>Footprint Analysis Presentation</i>

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
<i>Corporate Strategy</i>	https://www.boston.gov.uk/media/21456/Corporate-Strategy-2020-to-2024/pdf/Corporate Strategy 2020 to 2024.pdf?m=638016045039800000

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Heather Prescott Climate Change & Environment Officer
Signed off by:	Christian Allen Assistant Director Regulatory
Approved for publication:	CLr Paul Skinner

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