Report To:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date:	16th JULY 2026
Subject:	CARBON FOOTPRINT UPDATE
Purpose:	TO PROVIDE ANNUAL UPDATES ON THE CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR FY22/23, FY23/24 & FY24/25
Key Decision:	NO
Portfolio Holder:	CLLR CLAIRE RYLOTT
Report Of:	CHRISTIAN ALLEN, SERVICE DIRECTOR REGULATORY
Report Author:	HEATHER PRESCOTT, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER
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 Environment Policy and missions of the Sub-Regional Strategy 2024/25-2028/29. This report and accompanying analysis seek to provide annual updates for FY22/23, FY23/24 and FY24/25, on our progress towards these targets.

Recommendations

That the Committee note the findings of the Carbon Footprints for FY22/23, FY23/24 & FY24/25 and our progress against the Council's Net Zero target.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Council has made a commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2040 with a minimum emissions reduction of 45% by 2027. This recommendation ensures that members are kept abreast of progress towards our net zero targets and provided with an understanding of the factors which have impacted this progress.

Other Options Considered None.

1. Background

1.1 Climate Change mitigation and adaptation is one of our greatest challenges, and local authorities have a crucial role to play in driving forward change and leading by example, to effectively tackle this issue and achieve a more sustainable future for both our organisation and communities.

1.2 As part of Boston Borough Council's commitment to reducing their carbon emissions, the carbon footprint has been updated for financial years 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, with a view to monitoring our progress towards our net zero targets.

1.3 It is necessary to acknowledge the delay in the reporting of the carbon footprints over the last couple of years. This was unfortunately due to a change in the Carbon Trusts' business model which resulted in them stopping support for future updates of the footprint toolkit. Alternative options were explored however they would have required significant changes to the initial methodology used and re-baselining of the footprint.

1.4 The Carbon Trust have since agreed to support annual updates via a futureproofed and robust toolkit solution that ensures alignment with latest industry standards, and which will enable continued consistency and continuity of emissions reporting going forward. This solution will enable the reporting of data for FY25/26 in the coming months and, going forward, the intention is that the annual update reports will be brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee each September.

2. Report

Carbon Footprint FY2022/23

2.1 In FY22/23, Boston Borough Council's total emissions decreased by 28% compared to the baseline year (FY2018/19), however they increased slightly compared to the previous year by 3%, going from 2,688.85 tCO2e in FY21/22 to 2,768.3 tCO2e in FY22/23.

2.2 Emissions from gas decreased by 17.5% going from 698.1 tCO2e in FY21/22 to 575.6 tCO2e in FY22/23. This was primarily due to the old gas boilers at the Municipal Buildings and Guildhall being replaced with two energy efficient units, reducing gas consumption by an estimated 55%.

2.3 Emissions from electricity decreased from 339.8 tCO2e in FY21/22 to 304.3 tCO2e in FY22/23; a reduction of 10.5%. These reductions were from a number of sites including St. John's Rd Depot and from car park lighting.

2.4 Emissions arising from water consumption increased from 5.1 tCO_2e in 2021 to 7 tCO_2e in FY22/23 and whilst this appears to be a significant percentage increase, the small tonnages involved in this category should be noted (32% equating to 1.7 tCO_2e). The emissions arising from waste remained fairly consistent in FY22/23 at 9.1 tCO_2e, a reduction of 1%.

2.5 Emissions from fleet decreased by 34%, from 599.5 tCO2e in FY21/22 to 392.4 tCO2e in FY22/23.

2.6 Commuter travel recorded an emissions reduction of 45% in FY22/23, going from 95.4 tCO2 to 51.6 tCO2e, however emissions from business travel increased by 7.6 tCO2e to 12.7 tCO2.This indicates that employees have continued to work in a more agile manner than prior to COVIDI9 and have been making conscientious decisions around when to travel.

2.7 A change to the methodology that calculates how leased buildings data is recorded led to a significant increase in emissions recorded for the FY22/23, however no significant changes to our leased assets have occurred since the baseline year (2018-2019). This methodology will therefore be carefully analysed when the updated toolkit solution is developed, to ensure that the most accurate method of calculation and reporting is adopted.

2.8 Emissions from other fuels are from the use of biomass boilers at Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre (GMLC) and the Princes Royal Sports Arena (PRSA). As noted in my report for FY21/22, the boiler at GMLC was not in use for much of the year due to the requirement for repairs to be undertaken, and it was therefore anticipated that emissions from this category would therefore increase for FY22/23. This increase was recorded as 11.6 tCO2e and shows a reduction from the FY20/21 data when both boilers were being used throughout winter.

<u>Carbon Footprint FY2023/24</u>

2.9 In FY23/24, Boston Borough Council's total emissions decreased by 35% compared to the baseline year (FY2018/19) and an emissions reduction of 8% was recorded compared with the previous year, going from 2,768.3 tCO2e in FY22/23 to 2,546 tCO2e in FY23/24.

2.10 Emissions from gas decreased by 33% in FY23/24, going from 575.6 tCO2e In FY22/23 to 385.1 tCO2e. This was a result of the old gas boilers at the Municipal Buildings and Guildhall being replaced with two energy efficient units, and the full impact of these improvements having been fully captured in this years' reporting.

2.11 Emissions from electricity also achieved significant reductions in FY23/24 with a decrease of 28.5%, taking us from 304.3 tCO2e to 217.5 tCO2e. Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre, the Municipal Buildings and footway lighting all contributed to the reductions made which were achieved as a result of LED lighting upgrades, particularly those undertaken at the Municipal Buildings.

2.12 Emissions from waste remained constant for FY23/24, however the Sustainable Products Policy is supporting cultural changes which will likely impact this data in the longer term. The policy is already supporting us to identify and improve procurement practises through measures such as the introduction of a corporate partnership wide PPE contract with one supplier.

2.13 Emissions from water increased by 1.6 tCO2e in FY23/24, which is a very small increase suggesting fluctuations in use. Officers are, however, exploring opportunities to have a water audit undertaken, which would provide a better understanding of our usage and highlight any opportunities for efficiency improvements, such as identification of leaks or changes to tariffs.

2.14 Emissions from fleet recorded a small increase of 5%, with emissions going from 392.5 tCO2e in FY22/23 to 413.2 tCO2e in FY23/24.

2.15 Business and commuter travel both recorded small increases to emissions of 1.9 tCO2e and 0.7 tCO2e respectively for FY23/24, indicating that changes to travel patterns resulting from COVID19 have now stabilised at a more consistent level.

2.16 Emissions arising from other fuels rose by 12.4 tCO2e in FY23/24 which was anticipated as the boilers were in full working order and used throughout this year.

2.17 Emissions from leased buildings remained consistent in this reporting year with a 1.26% increase registered.

Carbon Footprint FY2024/25

2.18 In FY24/25, Boston Borough Council’s total emissions were recorded as 2201.7 tCO2e. This figure represents a percentage reduction of 13.5% compared with the previous year and a reduction of 44.25% since the baseline year (FY2018/19), meaning that we are very close to meeting our interim net zero target.

2.19 Further reductions to gas emissions were achieved in FY24/25 with a reduction of 74% being recorded, taking us from 385.1 tCO2e to 99.4 tCO2e. This was largely due to Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre having moved into the leased buildings category of the footprint, and due to continued gains from boiler upgrades.

2.20 Emissions from electricity fell by 21% to 171 tCO2e in FY24/25. This category of emissions was also impacted by Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre becoming a leased building.

2.21 In FY24/25 emissions from waste were reduced by 6.7 tCO2e, whilst water emissions were reduced by 6.5 tCO2e to just 2.1 tCO2e.

2.22 Emissions from our fleet rose by 8.7% in FY24/25 and reducing emissions from this category will be an area of focus in the coming years, as we work towards our long term net zero target. Monitoring of the efficiency and carbon reduction savings achieved by the introduction of the Lightfoot Telematics system at East Lindsey will be undertaken, and will inform whether this system may be suitable for roll out to Boston Borough Council fleet.

2.23 Business travel recorded a very small increase of 2.7% to emissions for FY24/25 and emissions from commuter travel continued to reduce by 11.8%. It should be noted that these categories now represent very small tonnages of CO2e when compared with the overall footprint (15tCO2e and 46.1 tCO2e respectively).

2.24 Emissions from other fuels were reduced to zero for FY24/25 due to Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre having moved into the leased buildings category this year and due to a new woodchip supplier being sought for the biomass boiler at the Princess Royal Sports Arena.

2.25 Emissions from leased buildings remained consistent with an increase of just 0.03% being recorded as a result of Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre being brought into this category. This category would likely have recorded an emissions reduction had there been no changes to the assets considered.

3. Conclusions

3.1. The carbon footprints for FY22/23-FY24/25 indicate that we are well on track to meeting our net zero targets, with substantial reductions being achieved in a number of key areas, such as gas consumption. Overall to date, we have achieved a 44.25% reduction in emissions since the baseline year (2019) meaning we are very close to achieving our interim target of a 45% reduction by 2027.

3.2. Members should also 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 deliver the vast array of carbon reduction and sustainability measures required to tackle these issues in isolation, and therefore a multi-departmental approach continues to be required if we are to meet our net zero by 2040 target and successfully adapt and mitigate to climate change across our sub-region.

3.3. Carbon reductions will always be achieved through a mixture of measures including fabric and lighting upgrades, disposal and/or decarbonisation of inefficient assets, modernisation and efficiency of operations, training, and cultural changes; and it should be noted that some areas of the footprint which take longer term planning and investment to decarbonise, such as fleet, contribute significantly to the overall footprint and will be crucial to address in the coming years if we are to continue to achieve the necessary emissions reductions to meet our longer-term net zero aspirations.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

Annual monitoring and reporting 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 and enabling mitigation and adaptation to climate change and delivery of environmental benefits across the sub-region.

Corporate Priorities

The four overarching missions of the Sub-Regional Strategy 2024/25-2028/29 include ‘Ecology and Ecosystem’ - protecting our ecosystems and making good use of natural assets, and ‘Moving and Living Well’ – great places connected by zero carbon public transport and promoting active travel, with Environment also listed as a priority.

Staffing

None. This work is currently encompassed with the existing Climate Change and Environment Team.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None.

Data Protection

None.

Financial

The delivery of Net Zero has financial implications which need to be managed through the normal process for agreement of budgets within the Council and with mindfulness around the financial constraints that apply.

A small Carbon Reduction Reserve assists with delivering some smaller projects with annual cost savings as a result going back into the fund for future schemes. External funding opportunities will also be sought as opportunities arise.

Risk Management

None.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Consultation with Key Officers and portfolio holder have been undertaken.

Reputation

Monitoring and reporting of our annual carbon footprint highlights 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

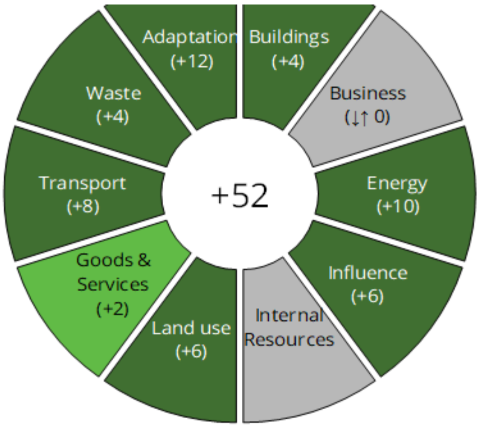
An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken with no impacts identified as a result of this report.

Health and Wellbeing

Improving our sustainability and reducing our carbon emissions 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 2ºC 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.



Commitment to the reporting of our carbon footprints have wide reaching benefits to almost all areas of our operation. Having a particular influence on transport, buildings, waste, energy, and land use, our influence as a community leader, and supporting our approach to climate mitigation and adaptation.

Acronyms

BBC – Boston Borough Council
GMLC – Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre
PRSA – Princess Royal Sports Arena
tCO2e – Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent
EV – Electric vehicle

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1	Carbon Footprint Analysis FY22-23/FY24-25 Comparison with baseline year

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Chronological History of this Report

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

Report Approval

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