

South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Report to:	Climate and Environment Advisory Committee 21 June 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment incl. Environmental Services and Licensing, Cllr Brian Milnes
Lead Officer:	Head of Climate, Environment and Waste, Bode Esan

Annual Progress Review of Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan

Executive Summary

1. This report presents the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee (CEAC) with a progress review on the Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan (ZCDNAP) 2020-25 at end of the 2021-22 financial year. Detailed progress updates are provided in the appendix.
2. Progress is largely on track, as can be seen in the table below.

Section	Number of actions	Red stalled	Amber delayed	Green on track
1 Reducing GHG emissions on the Council's estate and operations	9	0	2	7
2 Reducing district wide GHG emissions	17	0	1	16
3 Doubling nature	12	0	1	11

3. However, further action is likely to be needed to reach the targets and aspirations set out in the Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature strategies.
4. The Council has a target for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reductions of 45% on a 2018-19 baseline by 2025, and 75% by 2030. Several projects are underway which upon completion will deliver significant reductions in emissions. These will not deliver the necessary reduction by 2025, and so additional action to reduce emissions from the vehicle fleet by substituting a low carbon fuel for diesel is being considered as an interim measure.
5. The Council's ambitions for the district are expressed in the ZC and DN strategies in terms of aspirations – to reach net zero GHG emissions and double nature in

the district. The language chosen recognises that these targets will be reached only by action at all levels including households, businesses, all tiers of local government and national government and not by the Council alone. Although there is much that the Council can do to influence emissions and create the conditions for increasing biodiversity – as set out in Sections 2 and 3 - it is beyond the scope of this report to monitor progress towards these aspirations.

6. Meeting our targets, both for our own estate and operations, and the targets we aspire to for the district, will be challenging; we have done much of the ‘low-hanging fruit’ and meanwhile rapid population growth means that action is needed simply to stay still.
7. Further action in support of the targets is being developed, to include enabling others to do more both within and outside the Council, collaborating more effectively and entering into, or developing existing partnerships with other organisations better suited to addressing specific aspects of the work needed.
8. It is likely that in the medium term more resources, i.e., an expanded Climate and Environment team will be required to deliver this work.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that CEAC considers the report and advises the lead Cabinet Member for Climate and Environment accordingly.

Reasons for Recommendations

10. CEAC’s role is to advise Cabinet on policies, actions and resources required to deliver on the Council’s climate change and environmental ambitions and provide updates on progress towards achieving agreed targets and outcomes.

Details

11. Following adoption of separate Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature strategies in May 2020 and February 2021 respectively, a combined cross-Council action plan to deliver both strategies was received and noted by CEAC in July 2021. A mid-year update was presented to CEAC in November 2021. This report presents the end of year update for the combined action plan.

ZCDNAP Section 1: Actions to reduce GHG emissions from the Council’s estate and operations

12. This section should be considered alongside the next item on the agenda, the Council's Annual GHG Emissions Report.
13. As reported in the Annual GHG Emissions Report the Council's GHG emissions totalled 1667 tonnes CO₂e (gross) for 2021-22.
14. As can be seen in Figure 1 below, almost two thirds of the Council's GHG emissions come from fleet vehicles, (mainly refuse vehicles). The remaining one third is accounted for by office buildings – South Cambs Hall and Waterbeach Depot, 85 small sites (mainly communal rooms in our sheltered accommodation, external lighting etc), footway lighting and business travel.

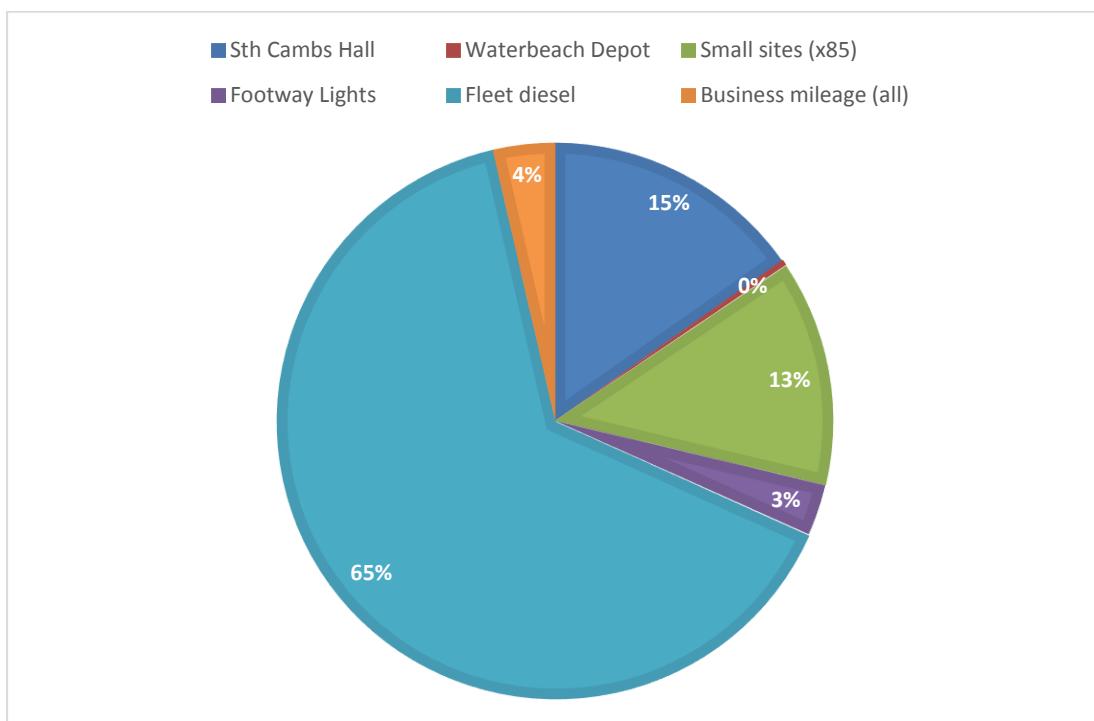


Figure 1 Breakdown of SCDC GHG emissions (gross) 2021-22

15. Figure 2 shows the change in gross GHG emissions since 2018-19

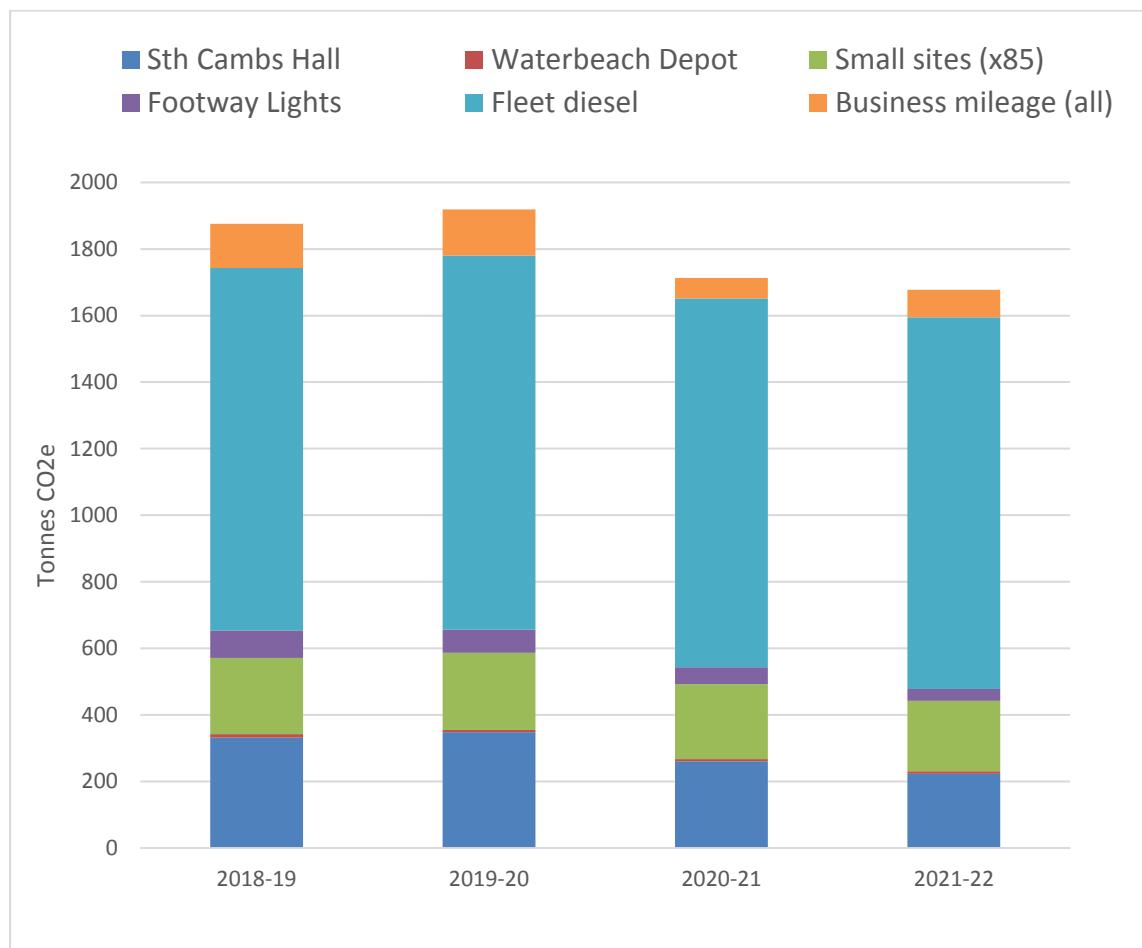


Figure 2 SCDC GHG emissions (gross) 2018-19 to 2021-22

16. The Council's interim targets are for reductions in *net* GHG emissions. There is no standard protocol as to what 'net' means in GHG accounts. For the purpose of this report, the net figure takes account of electricity purchased on a green tariff and electricity generated on-site from solar PV and exported to the grid. Figure 3 below shows net GHG emissions totals taking and the required trajectory to reach the target reduction of 45% on 2018-19.

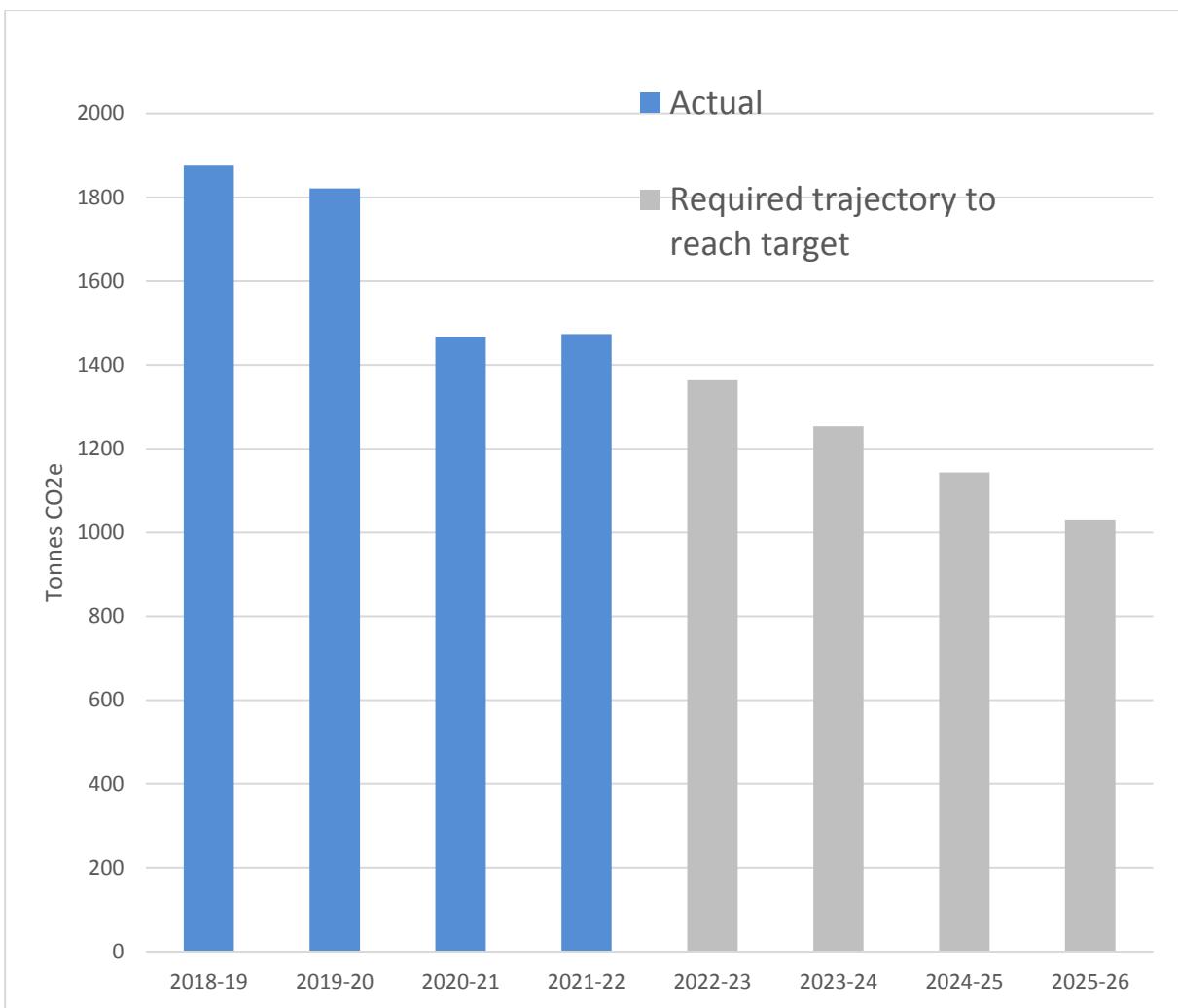


Figure 3 SCDC GHG emissions (net) 2018-19 to 2021-22 with required trajectory to reach 45% reduction target shown in grey

- 17. The ZCDNAP shows actions to tackle emissions on the Council's estate and operation in Section 1. As can be seen by the RAG (red, amber and green) ratings, progress has been made on all actions.
- 18. To achieve the GHG emissions reductions required for the 45% reduction target further action will be needed. This might include using HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) fuel - certified as low carbon because from renewable feedstock - in place of diesel for the vehicle fleet. A small-scale pilot with this fuel has been completed and a larger pilot is being developed.

ZCDNAP Section 2: Actions to support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the district

- 19. Total CO₂ emissions for South Cambridgeshire were 1,213,000 tonnes for 2019. Figure 4 shows the breakdown by sector, (most recent data available). Note this only shows CO₂, the most important GHG, accounting for about 76% of total GHG emissions. Data on other GHGs is not shown as it is not so readily available.

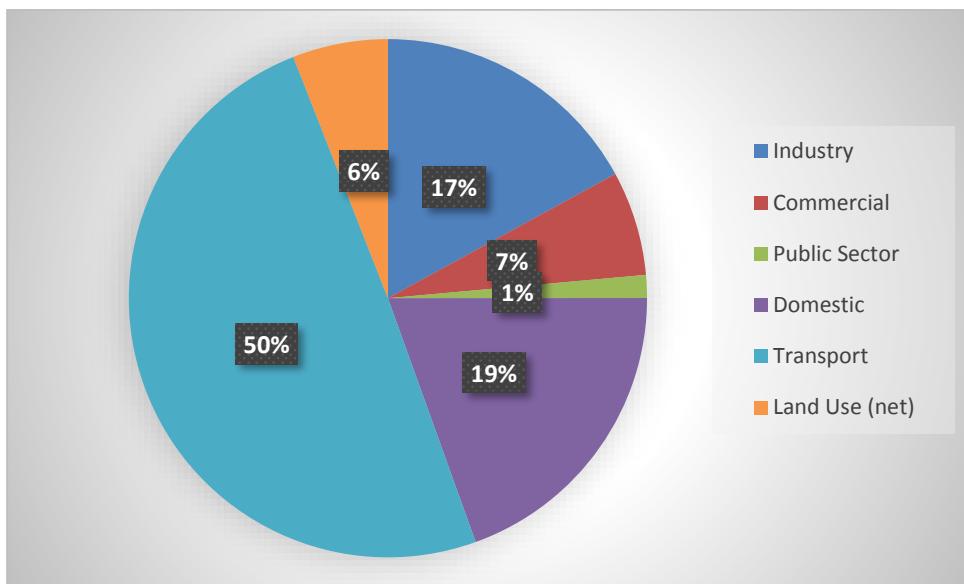


Figure 4 South Cambridgeshire CO₂ emissions by sector, 2019, (BEIS)

- 20. The Council controls less than 0.2 percent of GHG emissions from the South Cambridgeshire district. The ZCDNAP shows actions to support the aspiration to halve these in the present decade in Section 2. Halving these would be a proportionate contribution to international efforts to mitigate climate change. As can be seen by the RAG ratings, progress has been made on all actions.
- 21. It is difficult to quantify the impact of the Council's actions on GHG emissions for the district. However, some general points can be made about the areas of greatest impact:

Housing

- 22. As a social landlord, the Council owns around 8% of domestic properties in South Cambridgeshire (5,200 out of 67,000). As a result of past investment in energy improvement including solid wall insulation and air source heat pumps these are relatively energy efficient compared to the average for all properties, even though their age profile is relatively old, (only 3% built since 2002 with most between 40 and 100 years old). Further improvements in energy efficiency of these properties is a key area of opportunity for the Council with route maps to net zero requiring almost all GHG emissions from housing to be eliminated by a combination of improved energy efficiency and replacement heating systems.
- 23. The Council has further influence on GHG emissions from housing as the authority with responsibility for enforcing the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for private rented sector (PRS) properties. The MEES are the key means by which energy performance in this historically poor-performing sector can be improved. Work has started by the Council to look at how we can use our powers to improve energy efficiency in this sector.

24. The Council is also able to influence GHG emissions from owner-occupied properties. Working in collaboration with our neighbouring councils through the Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership, we have bid successfully for £8.5M of UK Government funding through Local Authority Delivery (LAD) schemes. This will deliver energy improvements to over 100 of the least energy efficient properties, occupied by lower income households. We will continue to pursue further funding opportunities.

Transport

25. Transport accounts for 50% of CO₂ emissions from South Cambridgeshire. This is almost entirely from road traffic, with major roads running through the district a key factor explaining the high figure.
26. Two aspects of the Council's work in this area stand out. The first is planning policy where the Council's role in deciding location of development has a huge impact on future emissions from transport.
27. The second area is our own fleet, especially refuse collection vehicles where we are developing a long-term programme of work to replace conventional vehicles with electric vehicles powered by on-site solar PV and battery storage system (Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network, WREN). As well as reducing the impact of the Council's own transport emissions we hope that by sharing our knowledge as these projects progress, we can give confidence to others to embark on similar initiatives.

ZCDNAP Section 3: Actions to support doubling nature

28. The Doubling Nature strategy outlines the Council's approach to supporting the aspiration to double nature in the county, as originally articulated by Natural Cambridgeshire, (Cambridgeshire's partnership of organisations, businesses and people aiming to bring about improvements in the local natural environment).
29. The ZCDNAP shows actions to tackle emissions on the Council's estate and operation in Section 3. As can be seen by the RAG ratings, progress has been made on all actions.

Implications

30. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

31. Financial resources for the actions in the Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan have been assigned through the Council's usual budgetary processes.

Staffing

32. Staffing for the actions in the Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan have been assigned through the Council's usual processes.

Climate Change

33. The action plan sets out the actions the Council is taking to mitigate climate change.

Consultation responses

34. The action plan has been the subject of internal consultation.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Being green to our core

35. The action plan sets out the actions the Council is taking to mitigate climate change and double nature.

Background Papers

Mid-year Progress Report on Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plans, 23 Nov 2021

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s124794/Zero%20Carbon%20and%20Doubling%20Nature%20Report%20CEAC.pdf>

Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan report to CEAC, 13 July 2021

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s122603/210713%20ZC%20and%20DN%20Action%20Plan%20report%20to%20CEAC.pdf>

Doubling Nature Strategy report to Cabinet, 03 February 2021

https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s120629/210203%20Cabinet%20Doubling%20Nature%20Strategy_.pdf

Zero Carbon Strategy report to Full Council, 21 May 2020

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s116330/200521%20Zero%20Carbon%20Strategy%20Report%20to%20Council%20FINAL.pdf>

Appendix

Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan 2020-25 (2021-22 revision) Progress update at 31 March 2022.

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