

Suffolk County Council
Corporate Carbon Footprint 2024-5
Public Statement

Context

In March 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency alongside the ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions from its own operations by 2030, and to work with partners toward the aspiration of Suffolk achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

An annual update on progress is produced. This paper summarises the update for the period 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025.

The full report can be found in the papers for the Cabinet meeting on 27th January 2026, [Agenda Item 9](#).

Please note that we continually seek to improve the accuracy, and expand the range, of our monitoring processes. The figures in this report were based on the best data available at the time, but may not match the figures used in later reports, if more accurate or complete data has become available in the meantime. Figures within this report from previous years have been updated where applicable, in line with the best available information at the time of this report's production.

Classifying emissions

Emission releasing activities are classified into three ‘scopes’ which are defined in the internationally accepted GHG Protocol and are described in the table below. Scope 3 emissions are more difficult to account for, because the required data often lies with the supply chain in other organisations. As a result, there is a higher degree of estimation in the Scope 3 category.

Scope	Definition
1: Direct Emissions (Energy)	Emissions that occur directly from sites or assets owned by the organisation. e.g. gas boilers; fleet vehicles
2: Indirect Emissions (Energy)	Emissions that occur elsewhere from energy purchased for use in the organisation’s sites or assets e.g. electricity, heat or steam
3: Indirect Emissions (Other)	All Indirect emissions that occur within the value chain as a result of the organisation’s activity, but are not directly owned by the organisation. e.g. employee commuting, purchased goods & services, waste disposal

Figure 1 - Definitions of the Scopes used within the footprint

Standard conversion factors have been used to assess the carbon footprint of each activity and building. The conversion factors are published by DEFRA on an annual basis and reflect the carbon intensity of a range of carbon sources. The footprint has been calculated following the approach set out by the GHG Protocol.

Suffolk County Council’s Carbon Footprint

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Scope 1	6,971	7,054	7,119	5,035	3,912	3,884
Scope 2	9,290	7,783	6,814	4,995	5,154	4,914
Scope 3	17,900	15,463	17,371	16,670	17,083	17,446
Total	34,161	30,300	31,304	26,700	26,150	26,243

Figure 2 - Measured Carbon Footprint (tonnes CO₂e).

Figure 2 summarises emissions covered by this footprint, which come from:

- Energy, refrigerant and water use across all buildings including non-academy schools
- Waste produced in our five main offices
- Electricity used by streetlighting the Council is responsible for
- Fuel used in Council vehicles
- Fuel use in planes, trains and private cars for travel on council business
- Home to school transport
- Fuel use by staff for commuting and working from home.

These figures do not represent the full Council carbon footprint – only a subset of Scope 3 emissions are included. In particular, emissions from the Council’s supply chain are excluded, which are estimated to be 9 times as large as the reported emissions.

Understanding the figures

Figures for previous years have been updated as we have sourced better data. This includes the inclusion of additional upstream energy emissions under Scope 3, and revised figures for energy use at buildings and grey fleet mileage for 2023/24. Additions have been applied across all years, so that trends reflect actual changes.

The emissions reported within the footprint relate to probably less than 10% of the total emissions associated with the Council's operations. The figures reported include most of the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions but only a very small proportion of the 'scope 3' emissions associated with products and services purchased.

The drop in 20/21 largely reflects the impacts of the pandemic on working practices.

Target 2028

Suffolk County Council is due to be replaced in April 2028 through the Local Government Reorganisation programme. While the majority of delivery functions will continue, the organisational boundaries will no longer apply. Suffolk County Council has therefore adopted an interim target of a 63% reduction on Scopes 1 & 2 by the end of 2027/28, in line with our projected route to 2030.

Scope 1 & 2 Emissions

Scope 1 and 2 covers the emissions where the Council has the most control. The largest areas within this grouping are:

Scope 1: Consumption of gas, oil, wood and refrigerants across Council owned buildings (including schools, libraries and fire stations); Consumption of fuel within pool cars and fleet vehicles, including fire.

Scope 2: Electricity use across Council owned buildings (including schools, libraries and fire stations) and Council owned streetlighting and traffic lights.

The report focusses on these emissions, while also updating on wider impacts (Scope 3). The Council's decarbonisation plan is delivered on an invest to save basis, whereby investment needs to provide both carbon and financial savings, which means we focus on those emissions where the Council pays the bills.

Progress and forecast for 2028 - Scope 1&2

Figure 3 below shows progress to date and projected for these emissions. It shows the **annual budget cap** (grey bars) required to meet the target with a linear year on year reduction, **emissions to date** (solid green/ orange lines) and the **forecast emissions** given planned projects (dotted lines).

In 2022 the Council moved to a 100% renewable energy supplier, supported by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO). Fig. 3 shows the decarbonising impact of the Council moving to a renewable electricity supply (green line), but also shows the emissions associated with the grid average carbon intensity for electricity used (orange line). The renewable energy

tariff still draws electricity from the grid, but acts as a driver for more rapid grid decarbonisation. The footprint in Figure 2 uses the carbon intensity for grid electricity.

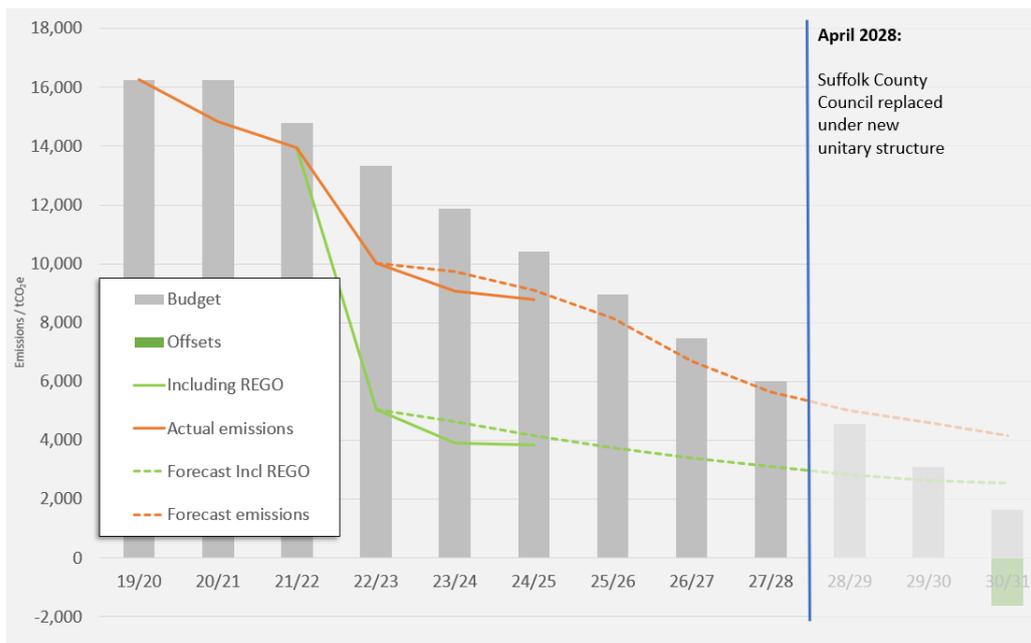


Figure 3 - Scope 1/2 emissions and Forecast Pathway

Emissions within Scopes 1 and 2 have reduced by 46% on the 19/20 baseline for (a 76% reduction when taking into account the renewable energy tariff).

The 2027/28 forecast, shown in dotted lines in Figure 3, is for a reduction from baseline of 65% (or 81% accounting for REGO). These forecasts only take account of savings where we have a clear and funded plan for achieving them, so should represent a minimum achievable reduction. This puts a reductions in line with the linear pathway to net zero emissions by 2030, but many of the most challenging reductions will be within the residual 35%.

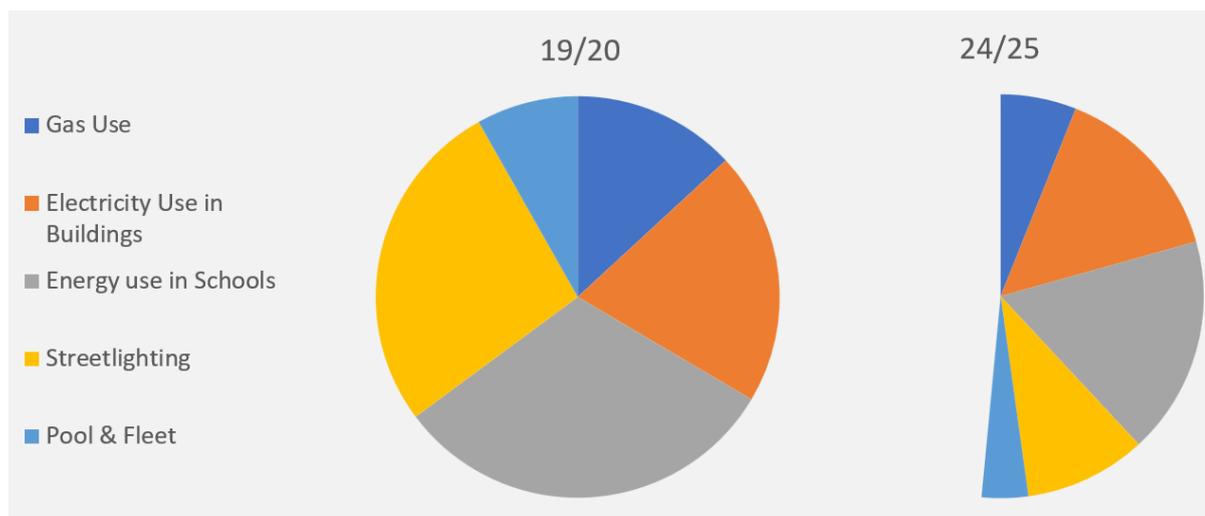


Figure 4 - The Changing Make-up of Scopes 1&2

Since 2019/20, emissions from Scope 1 & 2 have reduced by 7,463 tonnes CO₂e (12,377 tCO₂e accounting for REGOs). Figure 4 shows how the different activities that fall under Scopes 1 & 2 have contributed to this reduction. The main contributing factors are:

- Streetlighting Programme (26% of the reduction)
- Reduced gas use across buildings (23%)
- Grid Decarbonisation (15%)
- Reduced electricity use across buildings (9%)
- Reduced fleet emissions (9%)

Ongoing work to reduce emissions

Progress made to date reflects many of the ‘low hanging fruit’ from efficiency measures and enhanced energy management, which have delivered significant energy savings with a short payback period. As progress is made, the remaining emissions become progressively harder to tackle, but also we identify new opportunities. Substantial ongoing programmes of work will further reduce our emissions, feeding into the projections in Figure 3.

Improvements to heating controls at Endeavour House in early 2025 have reduced the gas heating use by over 42% without impacting electricity use, saving an estimated £30k each year.

The Council’s first car park solar array has recently completed construction at Beacon House in Ipswich, formed of three solar canopies with bifacial panels (which are more efficient due to being able to absorb sunlight on both sides) and supported by batteries. The new array is expected to provide annual savings of more than £50k.

A solar array with battery storage was installed at Gatacre Road in Ipswich, at a building hosting a records archive area as well as the Eastern Angles Theatre, taking the building effectively “off grid” for a number of days across the Spring and Summer.

New lighting at Northgate Sports Centre, and new solar installations planned for an additional 14 libraries across the next year, will reduce running costs at key community buildings.

Scope 3 Emissions

Scope 3 covers the supply chain, leased assets, and staff activity. The majority of emissions in these areas are not currently included in reporting. Figure 5 shows a breakdown of the key areas that are reported on. (See Annex 1 for a full list).

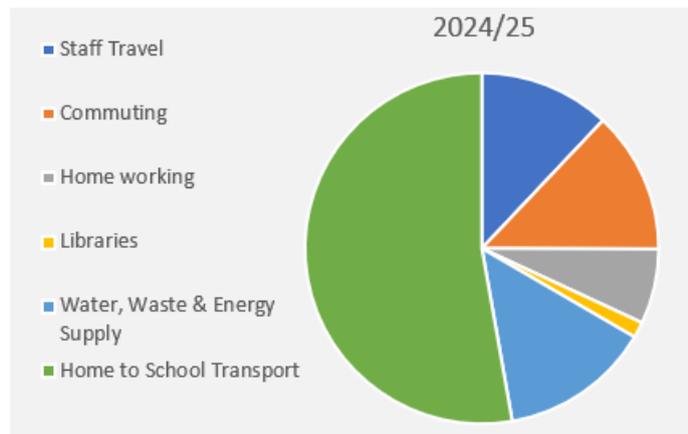


Figure 5 - The Breakdown of Reported Scope 3 Emissions

Data has been collated across these areas to help us get a full picture of the Council's impacts. While we can have reasonable confidence in the overall proportions of this picture, we are not yet able to track annual changes reliably. The majority of Scope 3 emissions are not captured in our annual reporting (see Annex 1) due to the costs involved in data collection.

The Scope 3 emissions which are tracked annually have increased by 2% over the last year, for an overall reduction of 3% since baseline. The main factor behind the most recent increase is not any change in Council activities, but, as in the previous year, an increase in the standard conversion factor for emissions from bus travel, which has impacted the figure for home to school transport, but does not reflect a real-world change. Increased staff mileage in their own vehicles (grey fleet) is another factor behind the rise, principally resulting from growing demand for care services.

The Council's footprint is impacted by the choices made by staff – from travel to contract management, recycling to diet. Staff engagement is key in ensuring the positive impacts of the Council's transition are maximised, both for the Council and for staff. For example, staff choosing to commute by cycling or public transport can save money on fuel and parking charges and improve health and wellbeing by increased physical activity. We continue to support staff to maximise the opportunities of more sustainable operations.

Emissions within Scope 3 are both harder to influence, and harder to monitor accurately. The figures for Scope 3 emissions should be treated with a degree of caution. In particular, a high proportion of the figures are based on estimated data that we are unable to update each year.

Scope 3 – Our Supply Chain

Emissions associated with the goods and services purchased by the Council make up an estimated 94% of the total footprint. These emissions are difficult to account for because the required data lies outside the organisation. A spend-based analysis has been utilised to estimate total impacts, as well as to identify the contracts with the highest emissions or carbon intensity. This allows us to target our resources at supporting efficiency gains where they are most impactful.

The [Climate Change Commercial Ask](#) details the expectations on suppliers to work with the Council in reducing emissions. Requirements are under ongoing review, in concert with external stakeholders, to ensure that expectations are both achievable and impactful. Currently, 49% of our top 100 suppliers have a carbon reduction plan published on their website.

Local businesses can access support through the [Carbon Charter](#) business advice platform, providing expert guidance on understand carbon impacts, carbon footprint measurement, and implementing reduction plans.

Emissions Breakdown (tonnes CO₂e) ^(a)

Scope (2)	Grouping	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
1	SCC Vehicles (Diesel)	1,170	745	804	760	585	537
1	SCC Vehicles (Petrol)	116	34	66	87	49	46
1	SCC Buildings (Gas & Oil) ⁽³⁾	2,126	2,565	2,592	1,875	1,418	1,477
1	Schools (Gas & Oil) ⁽⁴⁾	3,124	3,266	3,223	2,137	1,706	1,671
1	Refrigerants ⁽⁵⁾	434	428	434	176	154	154
SCOPE 1 TOTAL		6,971	7,038	7,119	5,035	3,912	3,884
2	SCC Buildings (Electricity)	3,220	2,713	2,452	2,132	2,313	2,301
2	Schools (Electricity)	1,811	1,260	1,198	1,093	1,116	1,084
2	Street & Traffic lights	4,259	3,810	3,164	1,770	1,724	1,530
SCOPE 2 TOTAL		9,290	7,783	6,814	4,995	5,154	4,914
SCOPES 1 & 2 TOTAL		16,261	14,821	13,933	10,030	9,066	8,798
3	Libraries (Gas & Electricity)	394	303	336	316	270	254
3	Grey Fleet ⁽⁶⁾	1,284	493	1,198	1,607	1,760	2,055
3	Air and Train Travel	45	41	40	40	48	39
3	Staff Commuting ⁽⁷⁾	3,762	0	2,037	2,557	2,621	2,278
3	Home working ⁽⁷⁾	0	2,818	1,118	1,108	1,205	1,205
3	Water	174	121	61	67	53	45
3	Waste	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	School transport ⁽⁸⁾	8,896	8,758	8,692	8,218	8,684	9,203
3	Electricity T&D ⁽⁹⁾	805	679	614	468	456	444
3	WTT for all fuels ⁽¹⁰⁾	2,535	2,244	3,270	2,284	1,981	1,921
SCOPE 3 TOTAL		17,900	15,463	17,371	16,670	17,083	17,446
TOTAL ⁽¹¹⁾		34,161	30,284	31,304	26,700	26,150	26,243
SUPPLY CHAIN EMISSIONS ⁽¹²⁾							
Contracted Highways Delivery ⁽¹³⁾		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12,222	N/A
Vertas Group		N/A	N/A	1,595	N/A	1,417	1,207
Remaining Supply Chain ⁽¹⁴⁾		N/A	N/A	376,340	367,671	374,089	398,302
ESTIMATED TOTAL IMPACTS							438,000

Notes

Some figures for preceding years have changed from previously published reports. This reflects better data becoming available, principally corrections to previous billing.

1. All emissions are shown in terms of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent, allowing easy comparison of different greenhouse gases.
2. Emissions are grouped by scope, according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.
 - Scope 1: Direct Emissions
 - Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heat or steam
 - Scope 3: Other Indirect emissions
3. SCC buildings includes all properties where the Council pays the energy bills, apart from LA maintained schools and libraries which are shown separately. Figures also include a small value for wood fuel.
4. Figures also include a small value for wood fuel.
5. Refrigerant Figures for 19/20 are estimated where real data is not available.
6. Grey fleet refers to mileage undertaken by SCC staff in their own vehicles for Council business, and claimed on expenses.
7. Commuting & homeworking figures are based on a travel to work survey and assumptions around homeworking patterns.
8. In the absence of accurate data across contracts, estimates of fuel use for school transport have been extrapolated from a more detailed estimate of one area of the county.
9. Emissions associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity through the national grid.
10. Emissions associated with the production, processing and delivery of all fuels.
11. The scope of these emissions relates to around 6% of the Council's total footprint. Most fossil fuel use and purchased electricity (scope 1 and 2 emissions) is included but only a very small proportion of the 'scope 3' emissions due to a lack of available data on emissions from the supply chain.
12. Total supply chain emissions have been estimated at 498,000 tCO₂e. SCC is working with the largest suppliers to better understand the impacts of contracted delivery, with results to date shown here
13. M Group have been providing Highways services to Suffolk County Council since October 2023. The baseline figure was calculated for Scopes 1,2 and 3 for the period from the contract start until September 2024. 2024/25 figures are yet to be confirmed.
14. We have undertaken a spend based analysis of the full supply chain, where we cannot base an analysis on estimates of consumption data. This line indicates the likely scale of supply chain emissions, but specific figures and inter-annual trends are not substantially responsive to local activity, and should be treated with caution. Improved data will be adopted as it becomes available.