

Sustainability: Annual report 2023-24

June 2024



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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Introduction

Well beyond the pandemic, we are pleased to be able to report on a stabilised set of sustainability metrics, similar to last year's, but showing continued improvement.

The stabilising of working patterns and the effect of this on our utilities consumption and travel has allowed us to make targeted improvement measures with more certainty. We have continued our efforts ensure the energy our buildings use better reflects occupancy and are proud of the financial and carbon savings these measures are generating.

In last year's report we included Scope 3 emissions for the first time and continue to report on these here. This wider footprint is also stable and our work with suppliers to improve its accuracy has started. Over time, this will allow us to better target our efforts and include carbon impacts in a wider range of decision-making processes.

In a year of tighter budgets, we have continued to make progress with our Carbon Strategy and our ambitions for 2030. Work on the district heat network continues and most of our estate uses LED lighting. Measures like this improve not only the resilience of our estate, but also prepare us for a low carbon future.



Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Commissioner for Sustainable
Development



Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk
of the Senedd

Summary of Performance

In last year's report we talked about the increase in use of the estate following the pandemic, and a settling into new *Ways of Working*. These are very much now established, as are the energy-saving measures we have been implementing to ensure new working patterns are adopted as efficiently as possible.

We see in the data tables at the end of this report that sustainability metrics have been relatively stable for the past two years now; reflecting the new settled hybrid working pattern and use of the estate. We have been capitalising on this consistency to ensure utilities use continues to better reflect occupancy levels across the working week.

With resources slightly more limited this year, some of the capital works planned for the mid-term period of our Carbon Neutral Strategy will now await the availability of such funds. We have instead focussed on behavioural change and efficiency savings as we continue to drive down consumption.

We continue to plan ahead though, including supporting work with the district heat network being built around Cardiff, which will eventually supply our two largest buildings with low-carbon heat. We have also been making low-carbon travel as easy as possible for our Members and staff.



Publishing data which aligns with the Welsh Government’s carbon reporting guidance for the first time last year has meant a widening of our carbon footprint and given us a new area of focus to work on with suppliers. We will continue to report our core carbon footprint in this report for consistency, along with a range of other sustainability metrics in the data tables at the end.

Our work continues under the banner of a certified environmental management system which includes an annual audit by a UKAS-accredited body against the requirements of ISO14001. We were pleased this year to pass our certificate renewal visit by our auditing body, enabling us to continue displaying the 14001 logo.

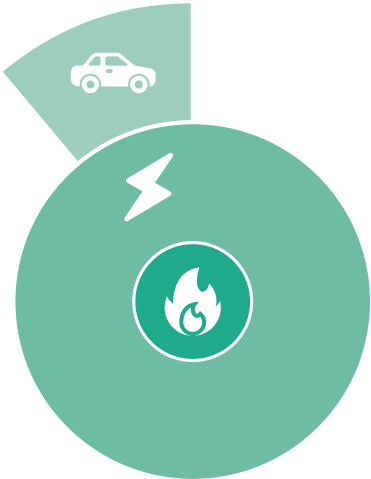


Carbon

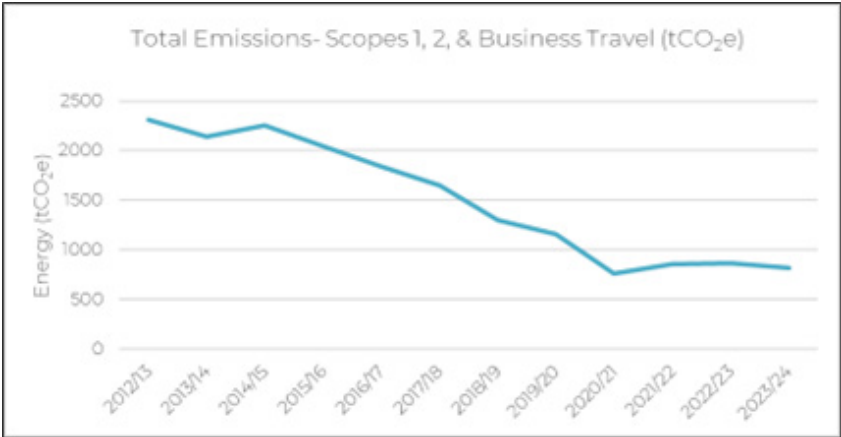
Our carbon footprint has been fairly consistent the past two years, reflecting the consistency in working patterns, but it has come down slightly in response to our efforts to reduce energy consumption.

Scope 1 emissions show a noticeable reduction in response to the gas saving measures, whilst Scope 2 emissions show a slight rise, despite a reduction in electricity use, because of the rise in the UK Government's carbon conversion factor for electricity. (N.B- all the electricity we buy is from a 100% renewable tariff, but we continue to use this UK grid conversion factor for reporting.) Scope 3 emissions are down slightly from last year, but with a delay in claims reporting we expect they may rise slightly as more travel data is finalised before the next report.

Our work last year to calculate our wider Scope 3 emissions- the impact of purchased goods & services- meant we were able to report Welsh Government-aligned figures for the first time in our main Sustainability Annual Report. With extensive occupancy data, a legacy in part from the pandemic, we have been able to calculate a *home working* carbon figure as part of this. Our biennial travel survey allows us to produce a footprint for *employee commuting*, another component, and conversion factors for spend on *goods & services* allows further carbon figures to be produced. This is not something that is being widely calculated in this level of detail yet, but prepares us well for becoming a net zero organisation. Just seeing this data gives us the starting point for tackling these emissions, with our efforts due to be focussed on working with suppliers next to make the footprint more accurate before seeking to reduce it.



Our old Carbon Footprint- Scopes 1 (primarily gas), Scope 2 (electricity), Scope 3 - just the business travel element.



Our new Carbon Footprint- Scopes 1 (primarily gas), Scope 2 (electricity), Scope 3- business travel, goods and services bought.

Our core carbon footprint, on which our Strategy was based, is something we'll continue to report alongside our new Scope 3 data.

Our core carbon footprint is down this year (Scopes 1, 2, and water, waste and business travel aspects of 3). This has been primarily a result of our reductions in electricity and gas use, and is on track to meet the 2030 level targeted in our Strategy.

N.B. - all the electricity we buy is from a 100% renewable tariff, but we continue to use this UK grid conversion factor for reporting.

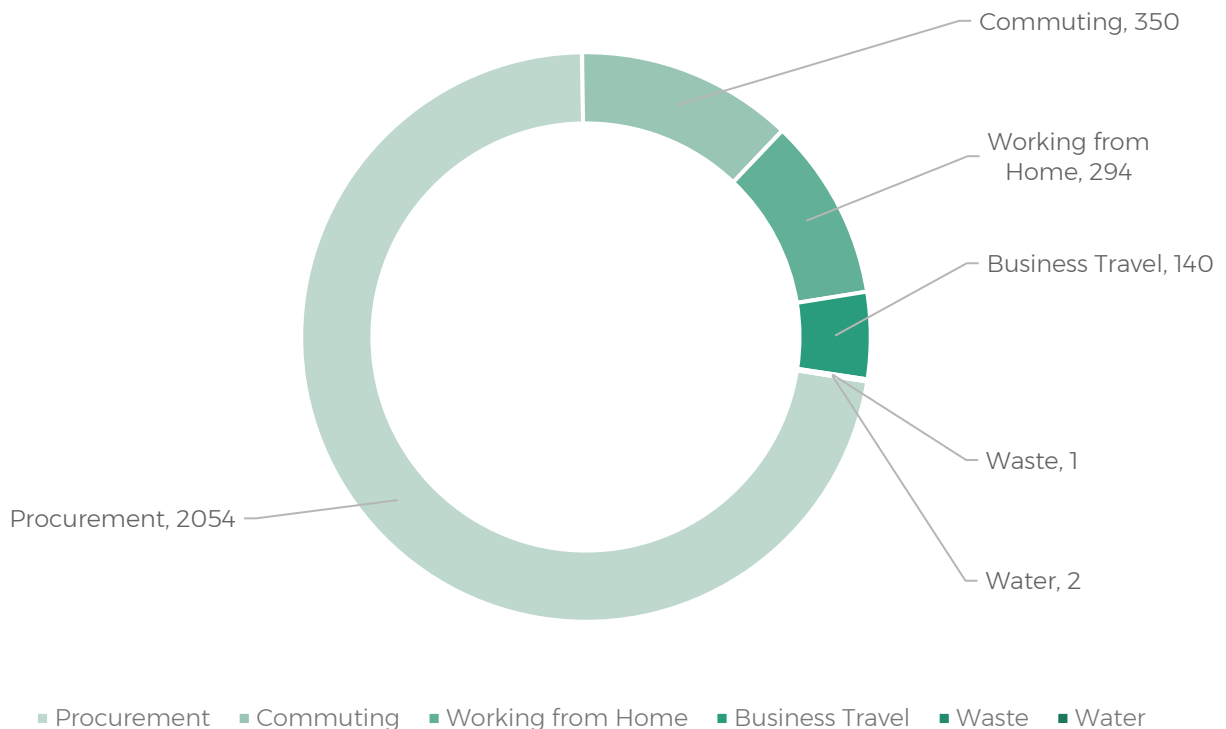
Scope 3

Our wider Scope 3 emissions are similar to last year, the first year they were fully calculated and published. We are proud of our work in doing this; reflecting our commitment to be an exemplar organisation for tackling carbon and ensuring the highest standards of transparency.

The Scope 3 graph below details a slight rise in procurement emissions- a result of the better categorisation of spend than last year. Home working shows a slight reduction though, reflecting a very slight increase in occupancy of the estate. Business travel shows a reduction, but after final claims have been processed we expect a similar figure to last year.

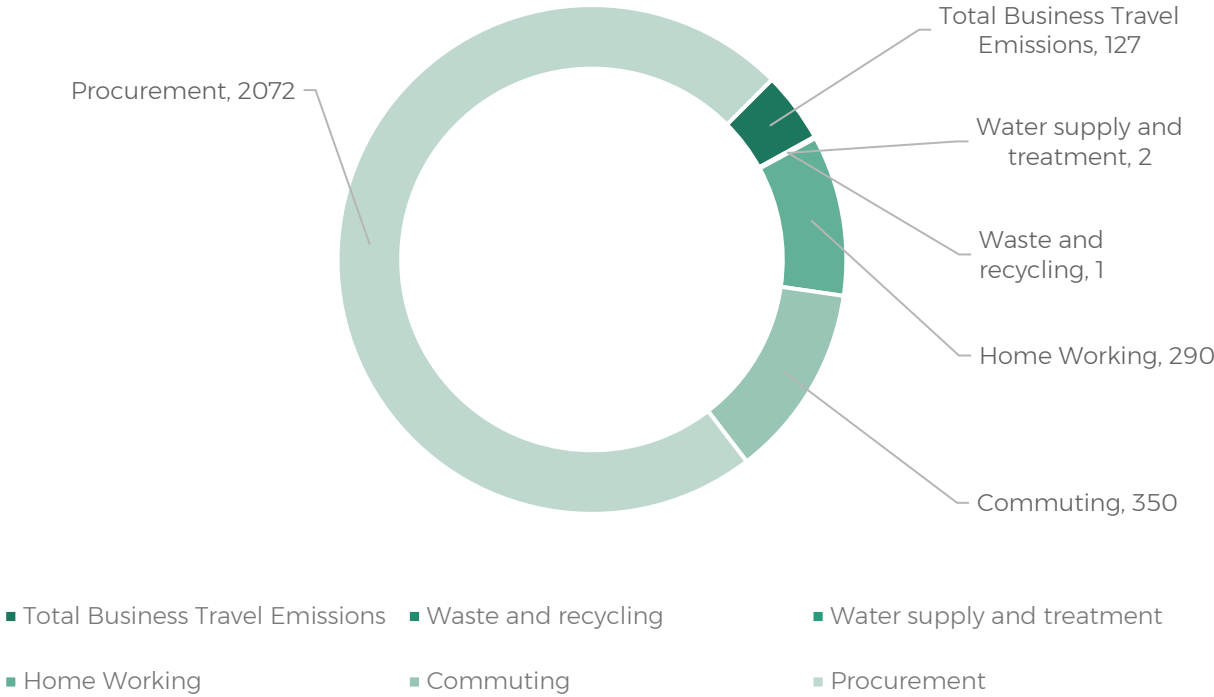
We are now working with some of our top suppliers from the procurement slice to more accurately calculate their emissions, before looking to reduce them.

Scope 3 Carbon, 2022-23 (tCO₂e)



Our 2022-23 scope 3 emissions

Scope 3 Carbon (tCo2e), 2023-24



Our 2023-24 scope 3 emissions


Carbon Reduction Strategy - Progress


We have continued our progress with the measures outlined in the ‘Goodbye Carbon’ strategy document. Although resources have been slightly more limited, we have still managed to switch some of the remaining light fittings over to LEDs. Our Facilities team have been working with Cardiff Council and their contractor to prepare our estate for connection to the district heating scheme. And the electric vehicle (EV) salary sacrifice scheme was launched- helping members and staff to make the switch to low-carbon transport where a car is required.


Over the next financial year, 2024-25, we plan to continue with improvements detailed in the roadmap but also to make lifecycle replacements which will deliver sustainability benefits. Newer technology allows us choose more energy-efficient equipment, which will further help on our journey to being net carbon neutral.





**SHORT TERM TARGET:
(2021-2023)**


 Behavioural change and good housekeeping **100**


2023: 100% complete 


 BMS improvements (three buildings) **59**

2023: 50% complete 

 Monitoring- additional meters and software **52**


2023: 100% complete 


 LED lighting: continued replacement and review of controls **30**


2024: 80% complete 


= 241 TONNES OF CARBON SAVED PER YEAR


**MEDIUM TERM TARGET:
(2023-2026)**

 Refurbishment of AHUs (air-handling units) **42**

 Connect to district heating network **132**

2024: 50% complete 

 Revert Ty Hywel to passive ventilation **97**

 Install solar PV (Senedd and Ty Hywel) **60**

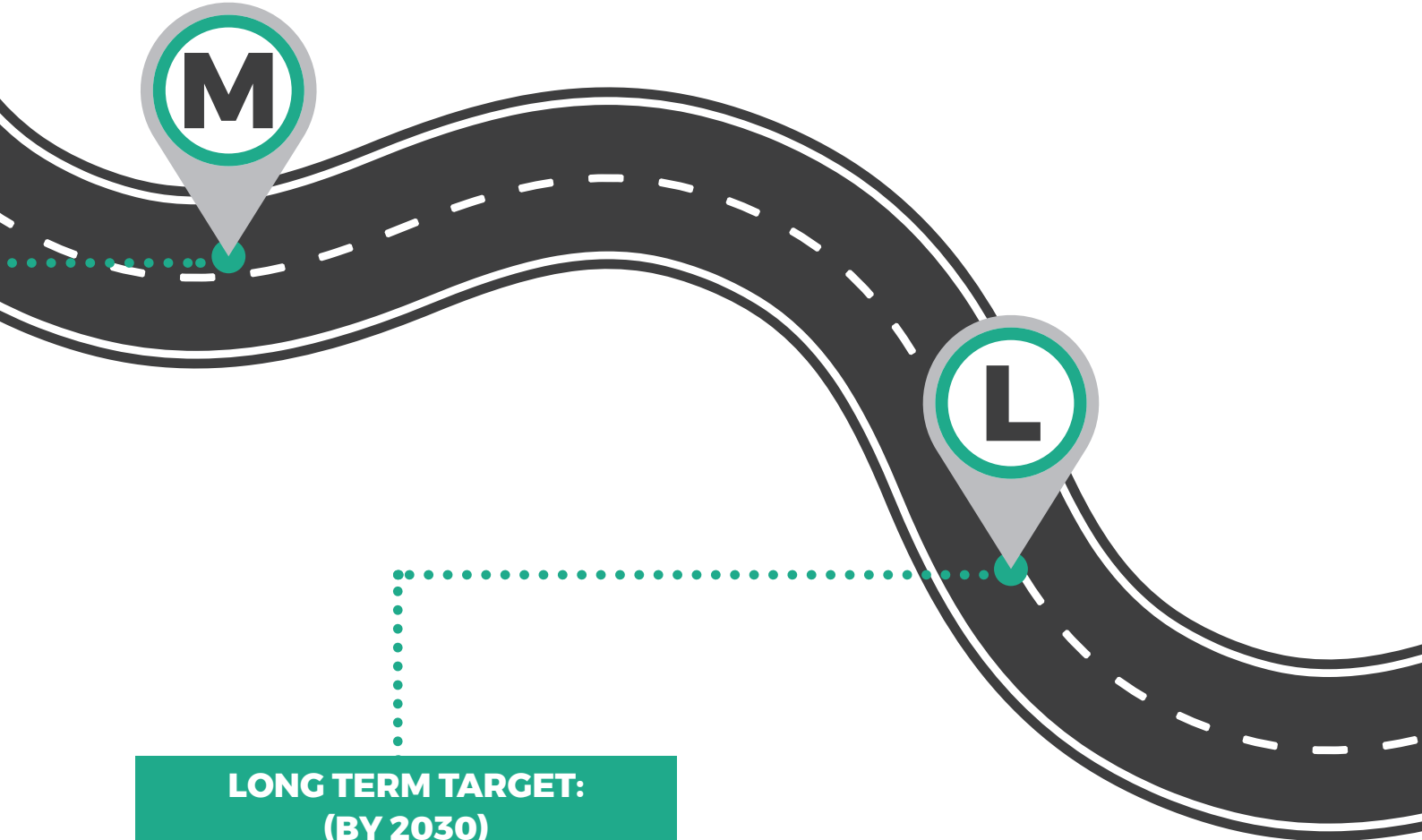
= 331 TONNES OF CARBON SAVED PER YEAR

Carbon reduction


Below is a summary of the key milestones in our Carbon Neutral Strategy 2021-2030.


Progress against our short term targets has been updated for 2024.

The full Strategy is available on our website: www.senedd.wales



**LONG TERM TARGET:
(BY 2030)**

 Air-source heat pumps for hot water supply **10**

 Investigate T&S changes to incentivise EV use over ICE cars ¹ **82**

= 10 TO 92 TONNES OF CARBON SAVED PER YEAR

¹ based on current level of private car claims and adoption of RFID cards, carbon figure for medium-sized car mileage.



Energy

Last year we reported a reduction in gas consumption, reducing reliance on foreign imports and preparing us for the impact of higher prices. Those prices have now been realised, delayed from the changes in the wider market because of the long-term contracts under which our energy is purchased.

This has meant though that, despite efforts to reduce consumption across our utilities, energy costs have more than doubled this year. This, unfortunately, is not surprising, given we saw the unit cost for electricity more than doubling, and even tripling for gas.

As requested by the Commission, we have continued to implement energy saving measures and adjustments to heating demand in the buildings, and air-conditioning provision in the summer. Although the summer was milder so demand for A/C was less, there was a 5% reduction in electricity. Similarly, our heating saving measures reduced gas use by 7%. Set within the context of reduced public sector budgets, our savings measures have supported us to realise savings of £50,000.

The measures we've taken in recent years have included lowering set-points, but also switching off heating to lower-occupancy areas of the building; encouraging staff to work in heated flexible working areas. This has helped lower usage, emissions and bills and ensured the buildings better respond to occupancy changes. We recognised at the time that the changes had an impact on our staff when they are in the building. We worked quickly to issue communications and mitigate any issues, and will continue to do so.

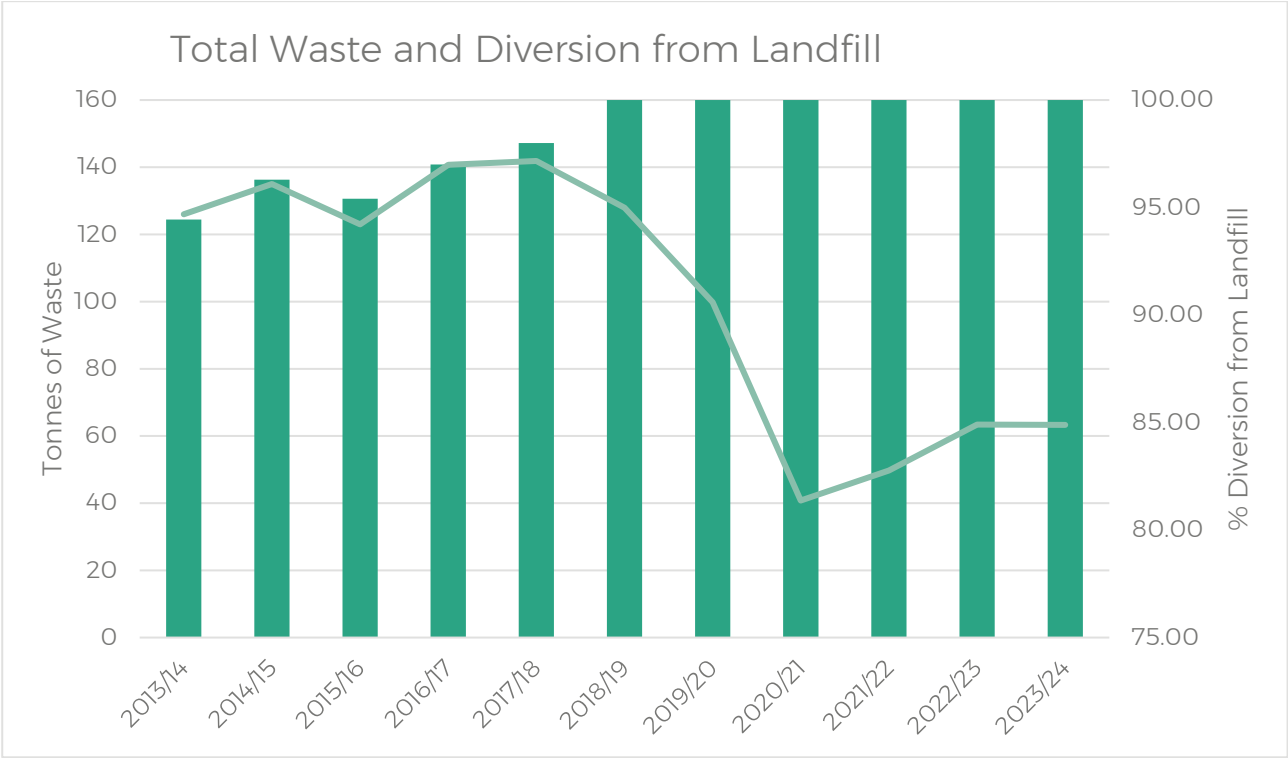
Waste, Water and Other Resources

Waste production figures have been almost exactly the same as last year. Some costs have actually reduced slightly, lowering our overall expenditure. We continue to divert all waste away from landfill; being either directly recycled or sent to the nearby energy-from-waste plant.

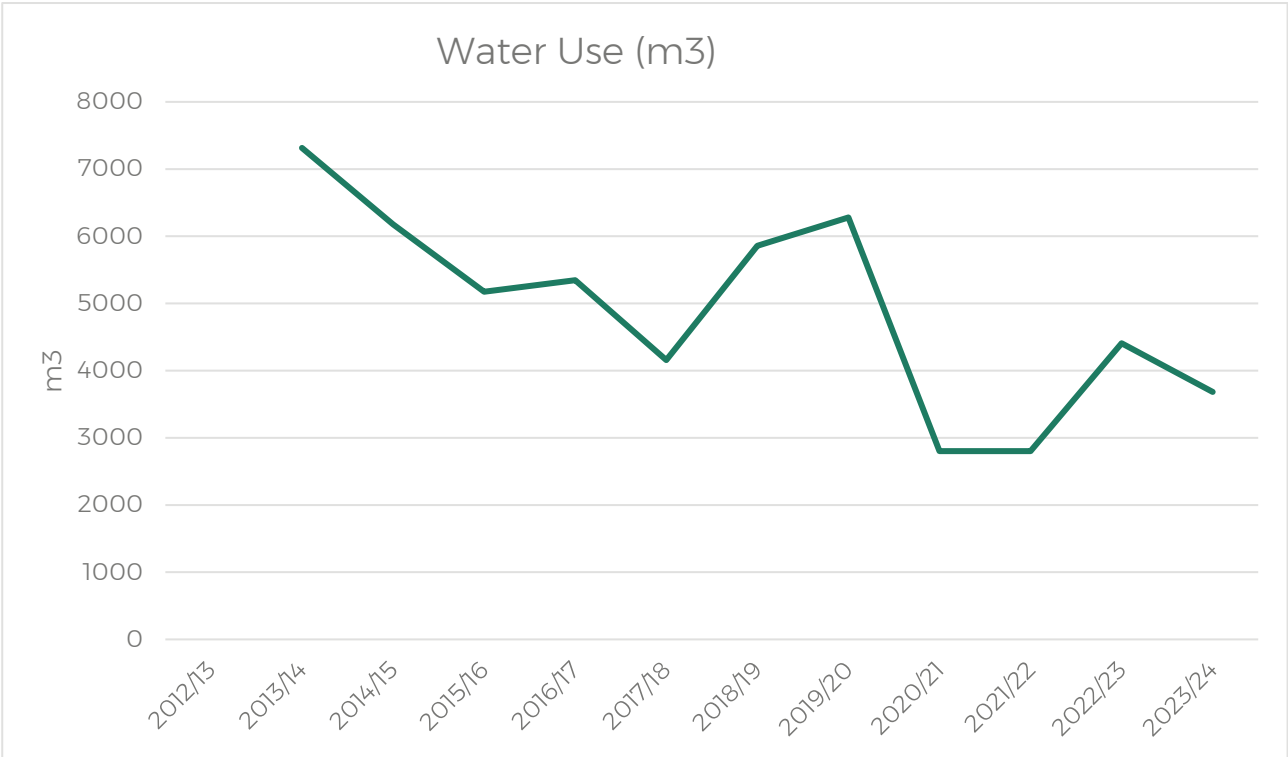
One action for us in the forthcoming year will be compliance with new workplace recycling legislation. For many years we have been recycling all of the waste streams the new law requires, meaning some small changes to the way those wastes are separated on site will be sufficient.

Water use is down slightly this year- a small cost saving over last year and around a 15% reduction in consumption. This follows a rise last year as the estate became more fully occupied. Again water use is a function of building occupancy and tends to fluctuate accordingly- both as a result of staff occupancy and attendance of visitors and the general public to our buildings. Any fixtures and fittings which require replacement are now done so with water-minimising options a priority.

We continue to procure goods like stationery and our utilities through centrally-coordinated Welsh Government frameworks. Sustainability staff are involved in the development of specifications and tender reviews for all major contracts; ensuring standards such as Fair Trade and FSC are specified wherever relevant. We have also been continuing to request that new suppliers calculate the carbon footprint of goods where possible, in order to help us more accurately calculate our own footprint.



Waste metrics have stabilised and we continue to divert all materials from landfill



Our water use has fluctuated over time in response to variables such as events, building occupancy, and maintenance, but shows a long-term downward trend

Travel

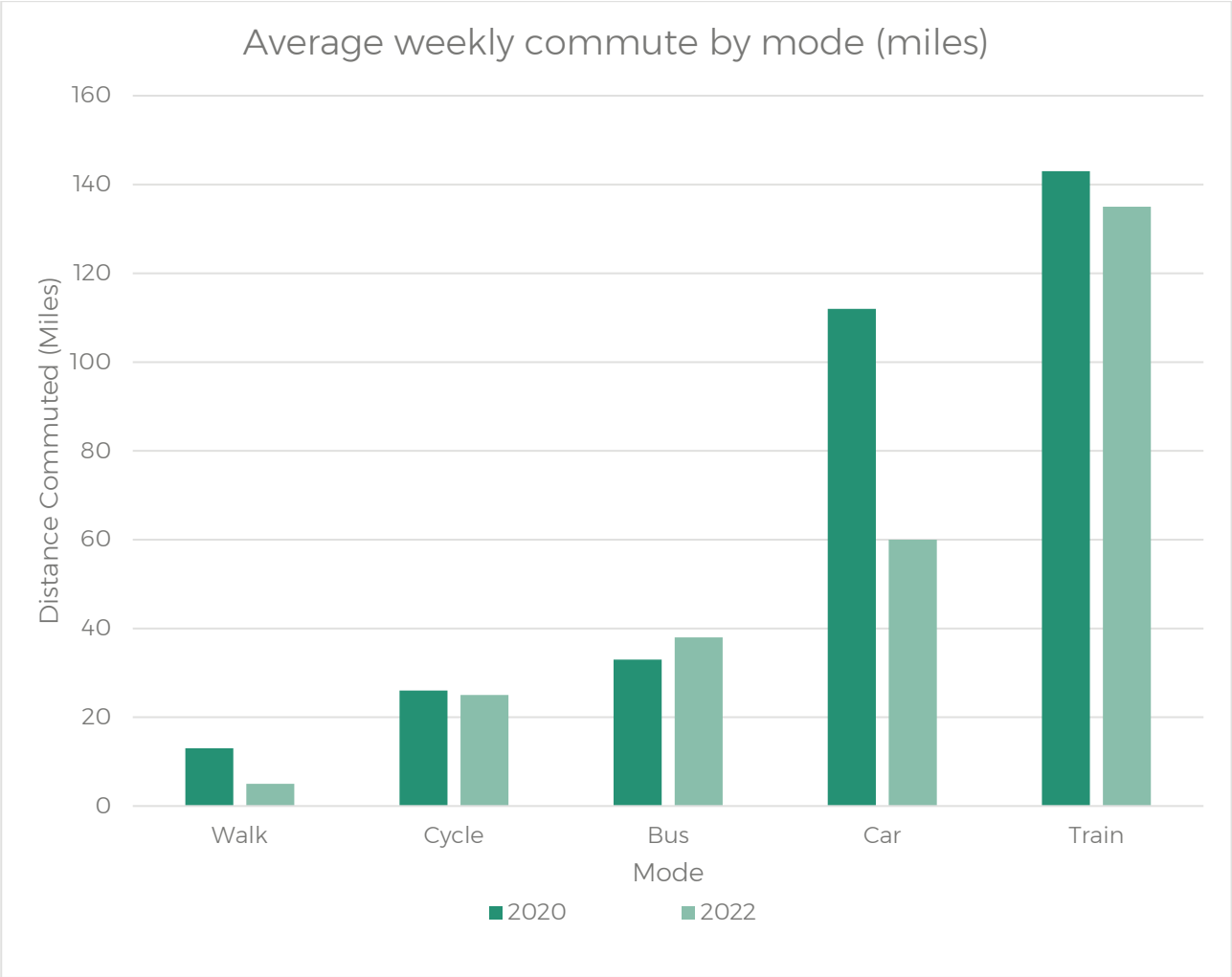
Travel numbers dropped significantly during the pandemic. This year's figures are similar to last year's, but they're still only about two-thirds of what they were before the pandemic.

Virtual and hybrid meetings and training sessions are now commonplace. Our estate has extensive hybrid facilities and Members continue at times to join both committees and the main plenary sessions remotely from their constituencies when it's more appropriate to do so. This flexibility for Members helps reduce travel impacts.

The electric vehicle (EV) salary sacrifice scheme which we launched at the end of the last financial year is now fully up & running. Given market conditions have raised prices since we began implementation, the scheme has not yet seen the numbers of participants initially envisaged. However we are satisfied that it is one option amongst many we offer for lower-carbon travel.

One option for business travel is the Senedd's pool car. A few years ago we switched this to a vehicle which ran primarily on electricity but with a petrol back-up generator. This year, given improvements to technology which allow us to travel one length of Wales without charging, we have switched to a fully-electric car.

We continue to be a member of the Public Service Board (PSB) group for active travel and have achieved the Healthy Travel Employer charter mark. This reflects our extensive facilities for those walking and cycling to work, as well as facilities for EV drivers and even e-bike users. Being part of this PSB group also helps maintain forward momentum as we share best practice in this field with other public sector organisations.



As the number of days a week staff commute to the office dropped, we saw a change in the distance-by-mode statistics, most obvious in car drivers.

Biodiversity

With our small, urban, estate, we are limited by the impact we can have on the wider biodiversity of the area, but this hasn't stopped us making improvements where possible.

We continue to maintain a new larger garden strip in the Ty Hywel car park, including two small ponds and blossoming trees. We maintain the land alongside the Senedd building; reducing cuts of this grassland area to annual interventions has allowed it to produce a wide range of flora, including two varieties of orchids. As a result the wildflower strip also now attracts a range of insects, including damsel flies and butterflies.

Some of the insects we now have visiting the wildflower strip



Our relatively new Bug Hotels area continues to be a success- the south-facing hotels were running at around 75% occupancy last summer with a mix of solitary bees and spiders present. The remains of the Senedd Christmas tree continue to be added in front of the more formal hotels each January, allowing for further diversity and a second use for the tree.

The Pierhead Bees project continues to run well and has been a catalyst for some of the biodiversity measures on the wider Cardiff Bay estate. We have actively planted pollinator-friendly plants in our garden area, and the project has helped to inspire some of the school groups who've visited the apiary and taken the enthusiasm back to their own gardens.

As a Commission, we have little impact on biodiversity beyond our estate, but where we can make positive choices, such as the purchasing of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified timber, this is always prioritised as part of our sustainability impact assessment (SIA) tool.



Other Impacts

Whilst the sphere of influence of our Members covers every part of the lives of people in Wales, the Senedd Commission's operations are relatively confined, primarily to our buildings in Cardiff Bay and a small office in North Wales.

These sites are not deemed at immediate risk from climate change impacts, with the Bay for example being protected to some extent by the Cardiff Bay Barrage. However our Carbon Neutral Strategy includes measures such as solar panels which provide further protection against an uncertain future.

On a wider sustainability note, the Senedd Café achieved the Family Café Standard this year, awarded by Kids in Museums. This award recognises both the family-friendly and environmentally-friendly features of the venue. The process to achieve the award was carried out in partnership with our catering contractor, themselves keen to lower our sustainability impact. Where possible all foodstuffs, both for the café and wider catering service, are procured from within Wales. Whilst we do not directly impact rural communities from our estate, this is one area where we can have a small positive impact on this sector. In this vein, the catering service also achieved the Soil Association's Food for Life bronze award this year; demonstrating their commitment to providing sustainably sourced, fresh and healthy foods.

Other Stakeholders

Our sustainability work is not always confined to the estate, Members, their Support Staff and Commission staff, but brings us into contact with other parties with a consideration for the environment.

We have worked with the Welsh Youth Parliament and continue to support engagement activities with many school groups and other young people. This includes work around the role of the Senedd, but also activities like visits to the Pierhead Bees to learn about pollinators and biodiversity.

We work closely with other public sector organisations to share best practice, especially the other UK parliaments. These forums help with consistency in responding to policy and staying ahead of the curve. Given overlaps in suppliers, it will also help ensure we are taking a consistent approach with the supply chain in tackling our scope 3 emissions in the future.

Environmental Management

The Senedd Commission has maintained a formal environmental management system (EMS) for more than a decade.

We believe in transparency as well as setting the highest standards for ourselves, which is why we maintain an EMS which is externally-audited against the requirements of ISO14001. This management standard requires a range of measures to be demonstrated, including controls on key environmental impacts, compliance with legislation, and a programme of internal audits. We have a team of trained internal auditors checking the physical site and our operational controls to ensure continued compliance throughout the year. The auditors also check for pollution risk and look for efficiency savings where possible.

We continue to work with other public sector bodies in Wales, as well as the other UK parliaments, in order to share best practice in continual environmental improvement.



Appendix A – Data Tables

Key Performance Indicators	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total net greenhouse gas emissions scopes, 1, 2, 3 (business travel, water, waste) tCO ₂ e	1,654	1,296	1,150	764	870	844	835*
Total energy emissions, tCO ₂ e	1,364	1,066	962	730	799	701	686
NEW- Total Scope 3 Emissions (travel, WfH, goods & services, commuting)						2,841	2,813*
Total waste (tonnes)	142	128	100	41	50	63	63
Total water consumption, m ³	4,158	6,064	6,281	2,802	3,191	4,408	3,684
Total business travel emissions, tCO ₂ e	207	174	180	24	67	140	148*
Paper Use (million sheets)	2.92	2.73	2.33	0.86	0.65	1.97	2.05

* Excludes MS and MSSS travel March 2024 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.



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