

Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2025

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

- 1.1 The purpose of the paper is to provide the committee with an update on the College's annual emissions report and progress toward emissions reduction targets.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The College has completed its annual mandatory Public Bodies Climate Change Duties reporting for the 11th consecutive year. This report shows a decrease in baseline emissions compared to 2023/24, to 46% of the 2014/15 baseline. This means that the 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy's target to halve emissions by 2025 has been achieved. This decrease has been in part due to a decrease in the carbon-intensity of emissions factors used in reporting, including in air travel and electricity generation. Additionally, the SHARC wastewater heat pump required repair during 2023/24 – leading to comparatively higher gas consumption. The full submission is contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The report also includes commuting, homeworking and supply chain emissions, however, these emissions are outside of the Sustainability Strategy's baseline for targets and should be viewed separately.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the progress made to reduce College emissions against pre-pandemic levels and in the context of the Sustainability Strategy's target.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Since 2014/15 all public bodies in Scotland are required to report their greenhouse gas emissions for the previous year, through Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) reporting.
- 4.2 The scope of emissions reporting has increased over time. Notably homeworking emissions were added in 2020/21 and the College also included supply chain and staff commuting emissions in 2021/22 for the first time. Student commuting emissions were also added in 2022/23. These have led to

increases in the total emissions reported, however, this reflects growing expectations from government and improved reporting quality and not real-world emission increases.

- 4.3 Borders College's 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy included a target to reduce emissions to 50% of a 2014/15 baseline by 2025. For the purposes of PBCCD, this baseline includes emissions from heating, electricity, water, refrigerant leaks, waste and business travel. In 2014/15 this totalled 806 tCO₂e.
- 4.4 All colleges in Scotland have a joint target to reach net zero emissions by 2040 or earlier, through Scottish College's Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency.

5.0 Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2024/25

- 5.1 Borders College's Director of Estates & Facilities and Sustainability Project Manager have completed the College's PBCCD report for 2024/25, which is due for submission by 30th November 2025.
- 5.2 The report demonstrates a decrease in emissions from baseline categories compared to previous years, totalling 374.67 tCO₂e. This decrease has been observed across all baseline emissions categories and is either due to reduced consumption or a decrease in the carbon-intensity of emissions factors used in reporting, including in air travel and electricity generation.
- 5.3 The report demonstrates a decrease in overall emissions reported, to 2631.61 tCO₂e, predominantly due to a decrease in student commuting emissions. This was calculated differently to previous years, using full time equivalent student figures rather than total students. This change was made to make reporting more accurate and to avoid overreporting emissions.
- 5.4 Supply chain data from 2023/24 was included in place of 2024/25 data as errors in the more recent data could not be resolved prior to the reporting deadline. As in previous years, these are reported on a spend-based metric in line with the rest of the sector, and as such can only be interpreted at a high level. Scottish Government guidance does not encourage the inclusion of targets for supply chain emissions on this basis and it is hoped that the accuracy of supply chain emissions data will improve in future.
- 5.5 The table below summarises total emissions and emissions from baseline categories since the last year of normal operations prior to the COVID pandemic (2018/19). The Grand Total figures are inclusive of the additional reporting elements for commuting and supply chain emissions. The Baseline Total only includes figures included in the 2014/15 baseline to allow for monitoring:

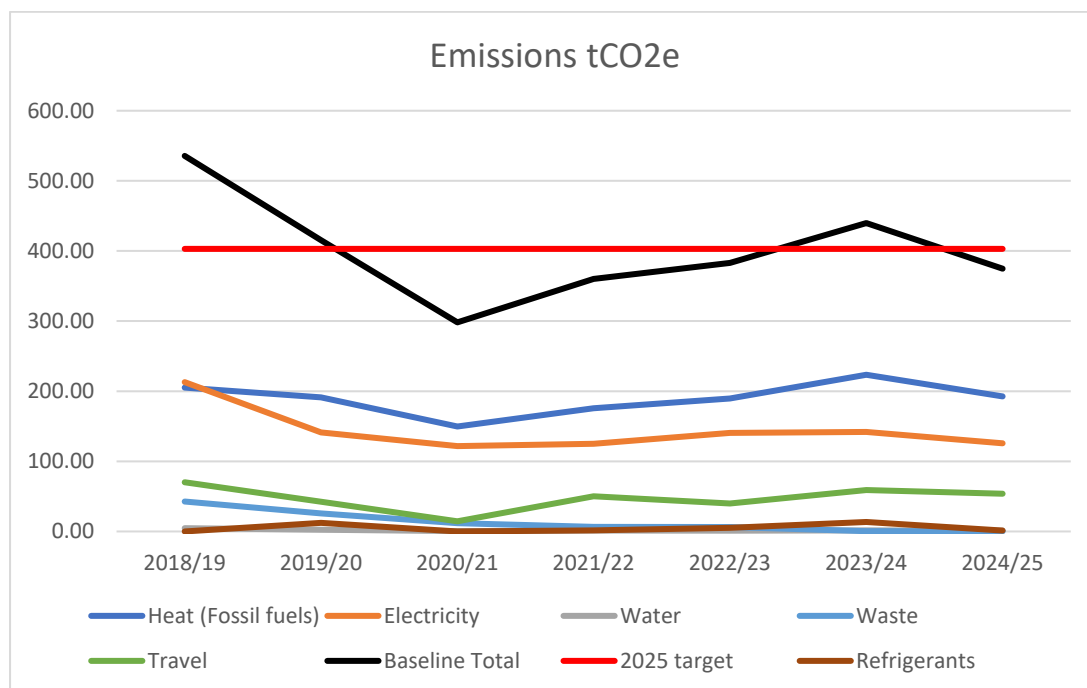
	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	
Grand Total	535.60	415.31	353.54	2272.61	5977.19	4095.80	2631.61	tCO2e
Baseline Total	535.60	415.31	298.19	360.17	382.87	439.92	374.67	tCO2e
% Baseline	66%	52%	37%	45%	48%	55%	46%	

5.6 As demonstrated above, baseline emissions have fallen to 46% of baseline meaning the 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy's 2025 target to reduce emissions by 50% has been achieved. This has been taken into account when setting the targets included in the new 2025-30 Sustainability Strategy.

5.7 Notable trends include an increase in business travel distances. This included 232,287km of flights (up from 141,831km in 2023/24) and 56,327km rail travel (up from 10,110km in 2023/24). This did not lead to an increase in emissions, however, as the emissions factor used to calculate emissions from air travel decreased significantly this year.

5.8 The amounts of heating fuels, water, refrigerants and waste all decreased compared to the previous year – contributing to emissions savings. The amount of electricity increased, however, likely due to the SHARC system operating for the full year, after being repaired in 2023/24. A reduction in the electricity generation emissions factor meant that electricity emissions still decreased.

5.9 The below graph tracks baseline emissions since the last year of normal operations prior to the COVID pandemic:



- 5.10 Changes to emissions beyond the scope of the Sustainability Strategy's targets include an increase in homeworking emissions, due to updated estimates and a decrease in student commuting emissions through an updated methodology using full time equivalent rather than total student numbers.
- 5.11 In addition to emissions data, the PBCCD report records College action on governance, procurement and climate adaptation in the context of climate change. The 2025/34 report includes minor updates as the College continues to develop its approach to climate adaptation and risk, plus additional detail added to the governance tab. The full submission is contained in Appendix 1.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 Significant funding will be required to deliver projects to continue to reduce emissions from College operations to achieve net zero targets. This will include the removal of fossil fuel heating systems and replacement of the remaining internal combustion engine powered vehicles (e.g. minibuses).
- 6.1.2 Such projects, including those designed during the 2022/23 hydraulic modelling study at Galashiels, will also need to account for potential changes in the College's wider estate which may dictate the timing of their deployment and related funding applications.

6.2 Learner Implications

No direct implications.

6.3 Staff Implications

No direct implications.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

No direct implications.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

- 6.5.1 Baseline emissions from 2024/25 have fallen below the College 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy's 2025 target. This is being accounted for in new targets included in the draft 2025-30 Sustainability Strategy.
- 6.5.2 Remaining longer term actions will include the removal of fossil fuel heating from all campuses and the replacement of remaining internal combustion engine vehicles. The impact of the upcoming estates rationalisation on emissions will also need to be monitored to encourage savings and prevent increased emissions.

- 6.5.4 Efforts to improve the quality and accuracy of reporting data will continue to develop. This could include steps to improve the accuracy of supply chain emissions data, which is currently spend-based.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 No direct risks from the contents of the report, this report provides data and information relevant to the historic risk of not meeting the strategic targets agreed by the College, which have been achieved.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Borders College's 2024/15 PBCCD report has shown a decrease in baseline emissions compared to 2023/24. This was due to numerous factors including reduced consumption and decrease emissions factors in some areas, leading to the achievement of the 2020-25 Sustainability Strategy's 50% emissions reduction by 2025.
- 8.2 Further action will be required to meet the College's longer-term net zero obligations and funding for such actions is being sought where available. The College's new 2025-30 Sustainability Strategy has attempted to account for these actions and changes to the College's wider estate.

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20/11/2025

Previous Committee Approvals:

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