

Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy Progress Report Year 2



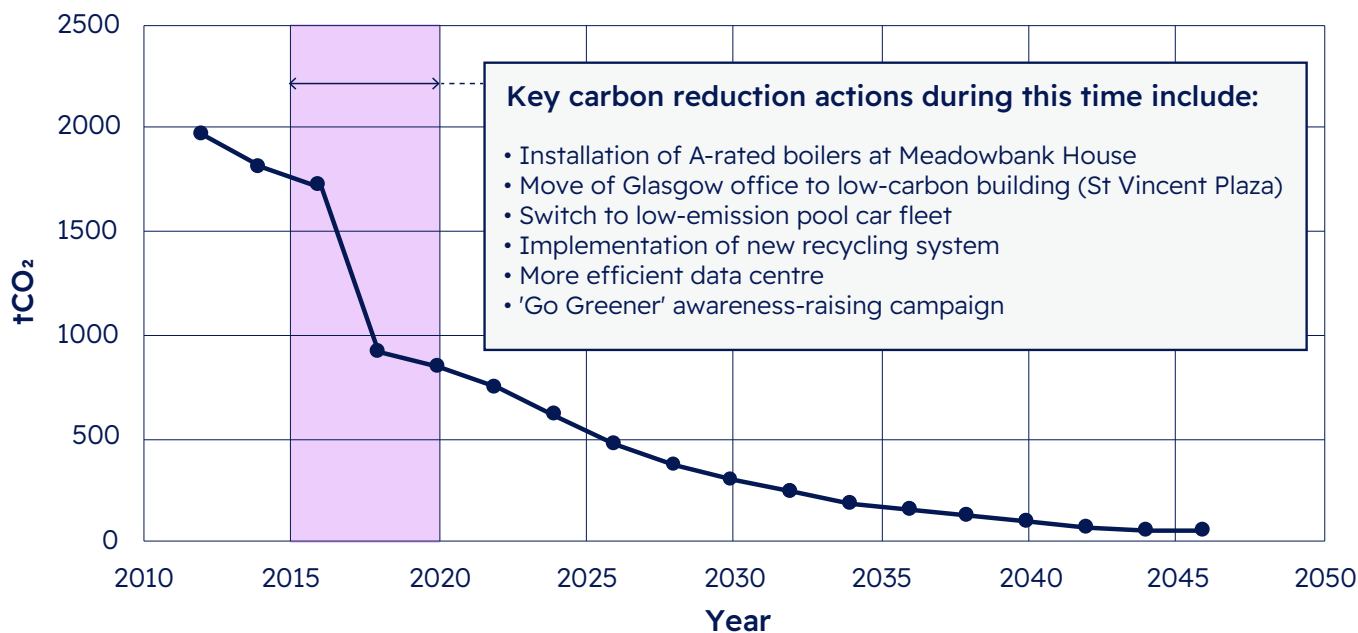
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Introduction

Registers of Scotland ('RoS')'s [Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#) ('SCCS') was published in September 2021 and has a central goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2045 and net zero direct emissions by 2040.

With reference to emissions during our baseline year (2012-13) and known emissions between then and the publication date, the SCCS graphically illustrates an approximate pathway towards net zero:



This pathway is based on the average required annual reductions between the publication date and 2045, which equate to 11% per year. 2022-23 is the first full year since the publication of the SCCS, and is therefore the first year for which progress against the 11% target has been fully assessed.

The SCCS commits to a series of outline actions - categorised under 7 key themes - to aid progression towards net zero between 2021 and 2026. In addition to their role in reducing corporate carbon emissions, the SCCS highlights that these actions contribute to the achievement of wider sustainability interests, as defined by the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The SCCS also commits to an expansion of our operational reporting boundary during the 5-year lifespan of the document. The purpose of expanding our boundary is to realise our opportunity to influence carbon emissions beyond those arising from our immediate operations, with a particular focus on emissions related to purchased goods and services, staff commuting and home working. It is acknowledged in the SCCS that expanding our boundary will initially lead to an increase in our carbon footprint.

This progress report will firstly set out achievements under each themed action area during year 2 of the SCCS, and will also detail a variety of supporting actions that have been undertaken during the same period. The report will secondly assess the outcome of these actions in relation to the central goal of carbon reduction. Lastly, the report will set out our future approach to carbon targeting, action planning, monitoring and reporting.

Delivery of Themed Actions

Energy Use and Water Management

The SCCS sets out an aim “to manage and reduce energy and water consumption through improved efficiency. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we:

- Completed an LED lighting installation programme at our Meadowbank House (‘MBH’) office
- Introduced a Winter Heating Strategy and a Building Utilisation Strategy at MBH to reduce heating demands during the colder months and space availability based on average daily utilisation levels
- Introduced improved heating controls (including time clocks) at MBH to make the process of heating more efficient
- Undertook a network equipment refresh and decommissioned VDI servers to reduce electricity demand
- Factored last year’s MBH Net Zero Feasibility Study recommendations into preparatory work on the emerging Estates Strategy

Waste and Circular Economy

The SCCS sets out an aim to “minimise waste and maximise recycling by purchasing smarter and engaging with our staff”. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we:

- Continued to work with Kinross Wooden Products to manage our surplus furniture with minimal environmental impacts and significant social and economic benefits. So far, a cumulative total of over 44 tonnes of furniture had been remanufactured and supplied back into the general marketplace as an alternative to items made with virgin materials, to the benefit of jobseekers, disadvantaged young people and various charitable and community organisations. This has led to an estimated carbon saving of 126 tonnes since the outset of the partnership.
- Continued to work with Restore Technology, who collected over 5 tonnes of end-of-life IT equipment during year 2 for re-use, refurbishment or recycling
- Recorded an average recycling rate of 69% at MBH and 56% at our St Vincent Plaza (‘SVP’) office

Digital Innovations

The SCCS sets out an aim to “minimise our use of paper and utilise digital technology”. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we introduced a new system for monitoring paper use; moving forward, this will provide more accurate, detailed insights into printing activities and will allow us to better-assess the associated environmental impacts.

Sustainable Travel and Staff Commuting

The SCCS sets out an aim to “encourage active and sustainable travel for commuting and business travel”. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we:

- Revised our Green Travel Policy and commenced production of an accompanying procedures document to strengthen governance of travel
- Undertook cross-organisation collaboration to plan the reintroduction of an online Cycle Forum
- Concluded our active travel locker trial with a view to full rollout, and began trial of additional overnight secure storage option
- Began to implement a new streamlined approach to travel bookings

Sustainable Procurement

The SCCS sets out an aim to “measure and reduce the environmental impact of our supply chain by working with suppliers and contractors”. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we:

- Worked with Mitie, our hard services contractor, to agree arrangements for measuring and reducing emissions associated with service delivery
- Embedded sustainability requirements in the specification, evaluation and monitoring arrangements for key new contracts
- Commenced revision of our Sustainable Procurement Policy to enhance future contract-related sustainability benefits

Biodiversity

The SCCS sets out an aim to “protect and enhance biodiversity on our estate and contribute further afield”. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we:

- Added wildflower plugs to MBH’s sedum roof
- Installed nesting and habitat boxes at MBH to support local bird, bat and insect populations
- Installed 3 new picnic benches at SVP to encourage colleagues to enjoy the outdoors
- Commenced the production of a Biodiversity Duty Report for the 3-year period between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2023, detailing the above measures alongside a range of other arrangements in place across RoS to further the conservation of biodiversity

Green Recovery: Hybrid Working

The SCCS sets out an aim to capture emissions associated with hybrid working and identify opportunities for reduction. In relation to this aim, during year 2 of the SCCS we:

- Collaborated with Home Energy Scotland to share a home energy efficiency elearning tool with colleagues and to run an online workshop
- Engaged with the Sustainable Scotland Network to assess options for future approaches to home working emission calculations

Delivery of Supporting Actions

To support and extend delivery under these themed action areas, a variety of additional actions were carried out during year 2 of the SCCS:

- We continued a regular communications programme to help ensure that sustainability maintains an ongoing presence in colleagues' minds. Digital engagement was undertaken in various ways, ranging from blogs and business notices to online workshops and Sustainability Forum discussions and an online Climate Week workshop in collaboration with Home Energy Scotland. We also reintroduced in-person events, including plant and seed swaps and a Dr Bike session. Our sustainability communications programme is underpinned by a new Sustainability Communications Work Plan, introduced during year 2 of the SCCS, which is developed and delivered as a partnership activity between the Sustainability Team, the Internal Communications Team and Environmental Working Group members.
- We introduced a building energy management system at MBH, enabling the introduction and monitoring of projects which are expected to reduce carbon emissions
- We developed a 'benefits realisation' process to enable a better understanding of the outcomes of our carbon reduction interventions, to inform future decision-making
- We undertook a Climate Change Advisory Review with the Scottish Government's Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance, assessing current and potential future measures for governing our approach to carbon management and the wider sustainability agenda
- We signed a Social Impact Pledge, committing to investigate opportunities to use our unique position within Scottish society to encourage and support others to achieve net zero
- We worked with our new MBH tenants, NatureScot, to explore opportunities to enhance external and internal green infrastructure. We also began to develop relationships with other tenants at SVP, with a view to creating a building-wide sustainability working group.
- We continued to investigate opportunities to embed sustainability considerations more fully into organisational decision-making
- We continued to engage in the national agenda for climate resilience, to support our development of a Climate Risk and Adaptation Plan

Outcomes of Action Delivery

Various positive outcomes have resulted from the delivery of the actions described above; in undertaking resource efficiency and nature conservation actions in a way that promotes wellbeing and equity, we have helped RoS to become more sustainable. This includes progress in terms of carbon reduction; as set out in our [Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report 2022-23](#), we have been able to quantify some of the carbon savings generated by the actions described above. For example, we estimate that the reduction in electricity use resulting from the LED lighting programme, the network equipment refresh and the decommissioning of VDI servers will lead to an annual carbon footprint 27 tonnes lower than it would otherwise have been.

However, as set out in that report and as explained more fully in our internally-reported 2022-23 Carbon Footprint KPI Update, the carbon reduction rate recorded for the first full financial year of the SCCS is 1%, which falls significantly short of the 11% target. This shortfall was not unexpected – rather than being evidence-based, the 11% target was a theoretical calculation and was also set before our carbon footprint was expanded to include home working emissions, which now dominate the footprint and are relatively difficult to control. To respond to this, an alternative approach to carbon targeting, action planning, monitoring and reporting is required.

Future Approach

During year 2 of the SCCS, we developed a better understanding of our likely pathway towards net zero. In addition to gaining evidence that an 11% annual reduction was unrealistic in the early stages of the pathway, two significant developments occurred which further emphasised the need for a revised approach.

Firstly, [new climate change reporting guidance](#) was published, which advised that home working emissions of Scottish public sector bodies should now be calculated using a UK Government emission factor; this method assigns a much higher carbon emission rate to home working than the Scottish Government calculation which has been used to date. Home working emissions calculated using the previous methodology already presented a challenge; emissions calculated using this new methodology present an even larger one. We are currently investigating alternative options, to ensure that the methodology we use is as accurate and representative as possible.

Secondly, a recently-concluded Scottish Government-commissioned research project carried out by ClimateXChange has provided advice for Scottish public bodies to measure emissions from purchased goods and services; this allows us to move forward with our commitment to add this emission source to our footprint.

Adding emissions from purchased goods and services will require an expansion of our reporting boundary. It will also be necessary to recalculate our annual targets, to account for this new emission source and to accommodate the additional carbon that is likely to be associated with the new method for calculating home working emissions.

To accommodate these changes and any further changes in future years, we will produce an SCCS Update at the start of 2024-25 and on an annual basis thereafter. This document will firstly report on progress during the previous financial year; shifting to financial year reporting will align SCCS reporting with processes already in place for internal and external carbon reporting.

The SCCS Update will also clarify the reporting boundary for the year ahead, specifying any changes from the previous year's boundary and explaining how meaningful comparisons can continue to be made between years.

The SCCS Update will then confirm the target for the year ahead and targets for subsequent years, specifying any changes from previously-set targets and using the best evidence available to show a clear pathway to net zero.

Finally, the SCCS Update will set out key future actions, with a particular focus on demonstrating how our journey to net zero will progress.¹

¹ Target setting, pathway creation and action planning will be based on current statutory requirements and estate arrangements, and will therefore be subject to change

