

**ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL CARBON EMISSIONS 2019/20  
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Scotland has some of the most ambitious targets and progressive legislation in terms of climate change in the world and the public sector is being promoted as playing a leading role towards achieving net zero by 2045. As with other public bodies it has been a requirement for Argyll & Bute Council to monitor, record and publish contributing factors towards climate change for the past 5 years. The most recent results from the national 'Reporting Requirements' has recently been published in March 2021 and covers the previous financial year for 2019/20.
- 1.2 Around 160 public bodies (Council's, Health Boards, Government) published data in the past year and across Scotland there was a general downward trend in carbon emissions across the board – some of it will be attributable to impact of COVID19 pandemic where certain sectors like travel and construction were less active for part of the year. However, the full impact of the pandemic will not be fully recognised until 2020/21 reporting period.
- 1.3 At Argyll & Bute Council we saw the carbon emissions generated by our business activities drop for the third year in a row. Our carbon footprint has reduced from 34,738 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2018/19 to 28,643 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019/20. This means around a 27% reduction in emissions since recording commenced in 2015/16. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this reduction such as direct interventions to make buildings more energy & heat efficient, replacing traditional lightbulbs with LED, moving to electric or hybrid vehicles and treating municipal waste in different ways. The overall national grid becoming more reliant upon renewable energy sources (over fossil fuel) has also had a material impact. This reduction over this period is in line with the national average.
- 1.4 Our Council also adopted its first De-Carbonisation Plan in November 2020 to recognise the importance of setting out a plan to achieve net zero by 2045. There are also ambitious interim targets of reaching a 75% reduction by 2030 which is only 9 years away. It is recognised that whilst there may be some rapid progression to reduce emissions in early years some of the more stubborn and difficult sectors like waste, travel or heating will require whole systems changes and change in cultural behaviour to achieve them. This report aims to highlight the current Council Carbon Footprint and support the actions outlined in the De-carbonisation plan.
- 1.5 Whilst there has been a downward trend in carbon emissions in our Council and across the Country as a whole the 'Reporting Requirements' will be changing later this year. Rosanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform has recently written to all Council Leaders & CEOs outlining that Local Authorities are required to play an increased leadership role by undertaking a number of key actions like; (1) setting a specific date for when our Council will meet emissions targets (2) Outlining how spending plans are aligned to

climate change (3) Publish progress on achieving climate targets and (4) Setting targets for reducing indirect emissions in the region. All of this will require to be underpinned by scientific research and evidence and we await the supporting guidance that will be published by the Government in Spring 2021 and will require to be implemented in 2022.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Policy & Resources Committee note and consider:-

- The publication of the Council's 2019/20 carbon emissions report and its continued positive trend highlighting that carbon dioxide equivalent emissions have reduced by 27% in past 5 years; and
- The recent letter from Rosanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform outlining that Climate Change 'Reporting Requirements' will be changing from next year and all departments will require to provide a routemap towards net zero and align budget to climate change activities as well as other amendments.

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**3.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 requires the 180 public bodies classified as major players to prepare an annual "Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties" (Schedule 2). Argyll and Bute Council is one of these organisations required to publish annual emissions since 2015. The most recent publication has been released in March 2021 for the reporting period 2019/20. It should be noted that only around 1 month of impact of the COVID 19 pandemic will be accounted in this most recent publication with the full impact more likely to be recognised in next year's publication.
- 3.2 As recommended by the short life working group on Climate Change and Environmental Action plus full Council in November 2020, the business of the Climate Change Board will now be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis. This is the first report outlining activities of the Climate Change Board and is useful to provide a baseline snapshot of what are the key contributors to Council emissions plus also successes and areas for improvement. The carbon footprint of the Council also aligns to De-Carbonisation Plan which was adopted by the Council in 2021 which starts to provide a routemap towards net zero by 2045. It should be noted that the reporting requirements solely record the emissions of the Council as a business and do not reflect overall or regional emissions like local industry, private sector, personal travel etc. As report elsewhere, as a region, Argyll and Bute has one of the most favourable regional carbon footprints due to large land mass, high forest cover, low number of industrial polluters and low population.
- 3.3 All members of the Climate Change Board are asked at monthly meetings if reports are to be escalated to Policy & Resources Committee so content should be varied across various departments. Certain reports such as the De-carbonisation Tracker and annual carbon emissions report (this report) will be consistent features.

**4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That Policy & Resources Committee note and consider:-
- 4.1.1 The publication of the Council's 2019/20 carbon emissions report and its continued positive trend highlighting that carbon dioxide equivalent emissions have reduced by 27% in past 5 years; and
- 4.1.2 The recent letter from Rosanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform outlining that Climate Change 'Reporting Requirements' will be changing from next year and

all departments will require to provide a routemap towards net zero and align budget to climate change activities as well as other amendments.

## 5.0 BACKGROUND

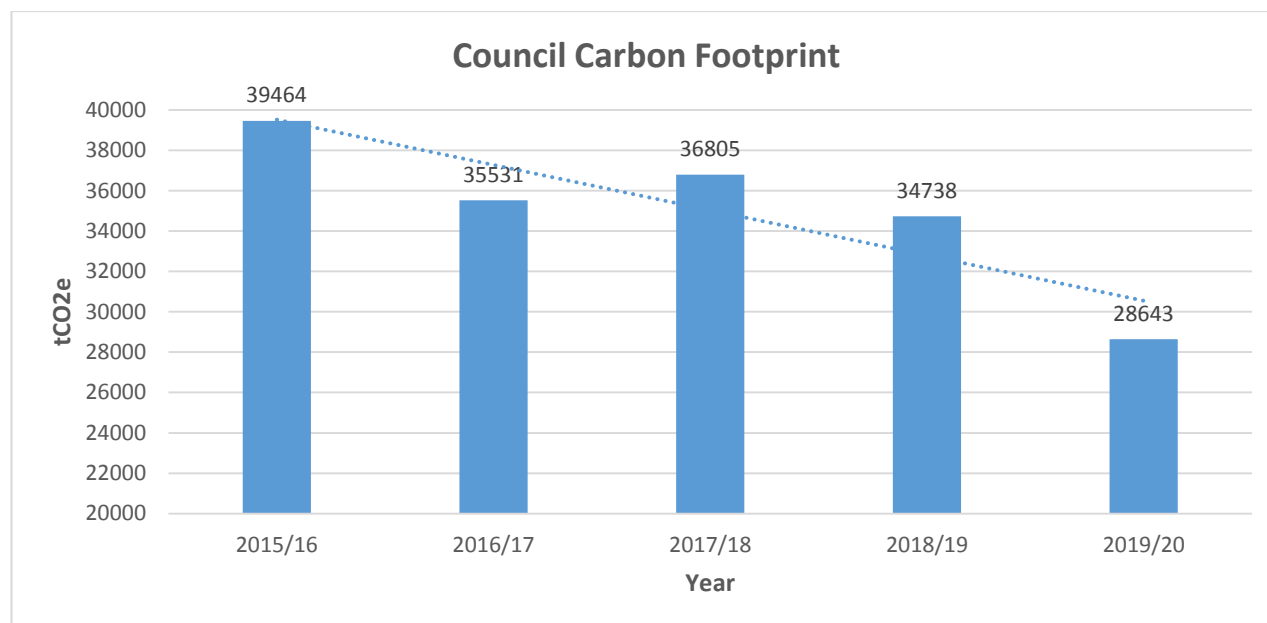
5.1 Since 2015/16 Argyll & Bute Council has published data on its Carbon Emissions annually based on a nationally agreed framework of indicators. There has been an evolution of indicators over the years but most have stayed consistent so a general trend has been able to be formed as outlined in the table below. It should be noted that not all activities produce direct greenhouse gas emissions, however for the purposes of reporting activities are given a 'tons of carbon dioxide equivalent' rating so they can be more easily compared. This is industry standard approach.

**Table 1- Annual Emissions with Baseline**

Reference Year	Year	Scope1	Scope2	Scope3	Total	Units	Comments
Baseline carbon footprint	2015/16	10767.7	11701.3	16995	39464	tCO2e	
Year 1 carbon footprint	2016/17	9146.4	9790.3	16593.8	35531	tCO2e	
Year 2 carbon footprint	2017/18	9437.6	7797.8	19569.4	36805	tCO2e	Municipal waste to landfill is the Council's largest contributor to its carbon footprint; despite a reduction in municipal waste to landfill, the significant increase in the relevant carbon emissions factor has caused an upturn in scope 3 emissions.
Year 3 carbon footprint	2018/19	8937.4	5862.49	19938.13	<b><u>34,738</u></b>	tCO2e	This represents a 12% reduction in 3 years
Year 4 Carbon Footprint	2019/20	8849	4687	15107	<b><u>28643</u></b>	tCO2e	

5.2 There is a positive (downward) trend across the Council as highlighted below.

## Graph 1 – Annual Carbon Emissions

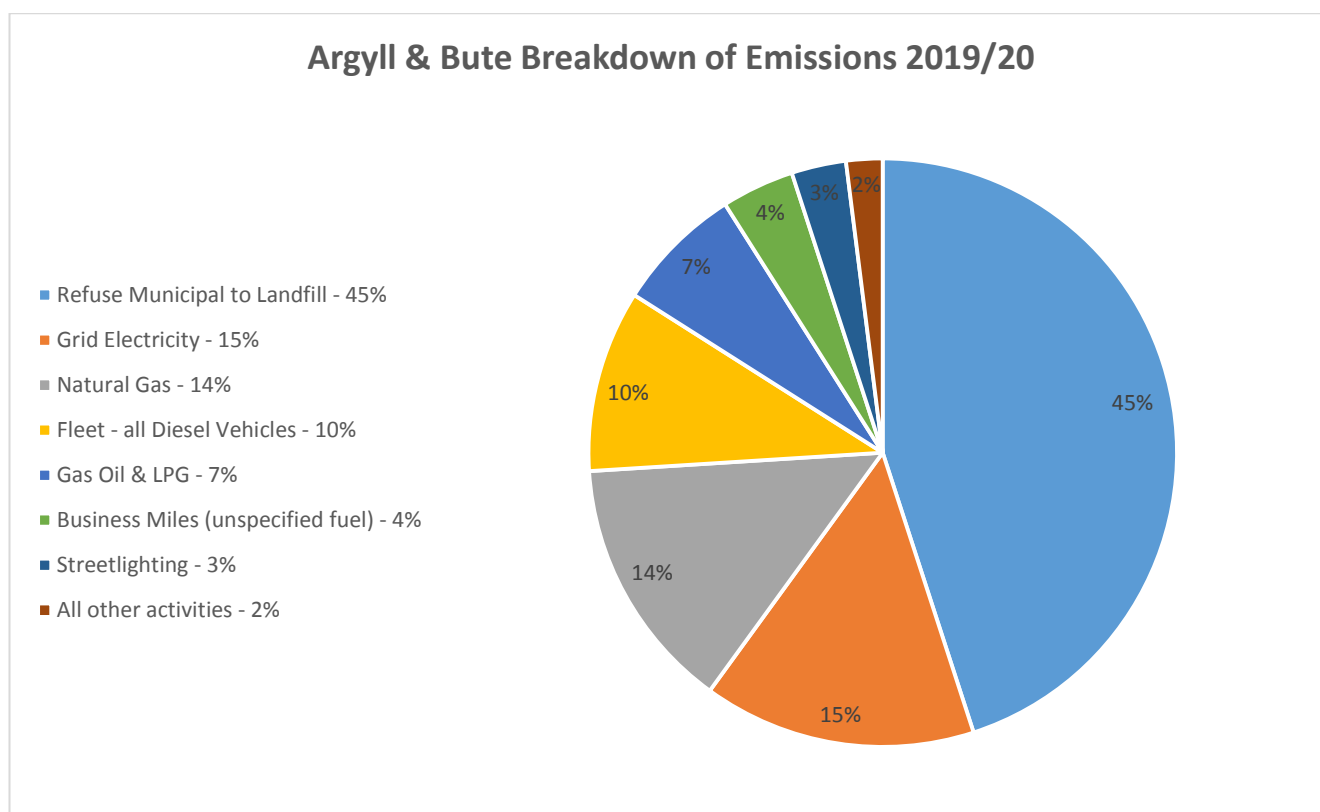


5.3 All activity of the Council is monitored so it is important to understand the breakdown of emission sources. All departments have a responsibility and role to play in monitoring and reducing carbon emissions.

**Table 2 - Breakdown of emission sources**

Emission Source	Emissions (tCO2e)	Comments
Refuse Municipal to Landfill	12,968	~45% of total carbon footprint
Grid Electricity	4,208	~15% of total carbon footprint
Natural Gas	4,101	~14% of total carbon footprint – mainly used as heating source in buildings
Fleet – all Diesel Vehicles	2,769	~10% of total carbon footprint – bin lorries, cars, vans
Gas Oil & LPG	1,979	~7% of total carbon footprint – mainly for building heating
Business Miles (unspecified fuel)	1,091	~4% of total carbon footprint - 171,299 more miles than 2017/18
Streetlighting	882	~3% of total carbon footprint
All other activities	645	~2 % of total carbon footprint includes collections for recycling, water treatment, tyre processing, glass / WEE recycling

## Graph 2 – Breakdown of emission sources



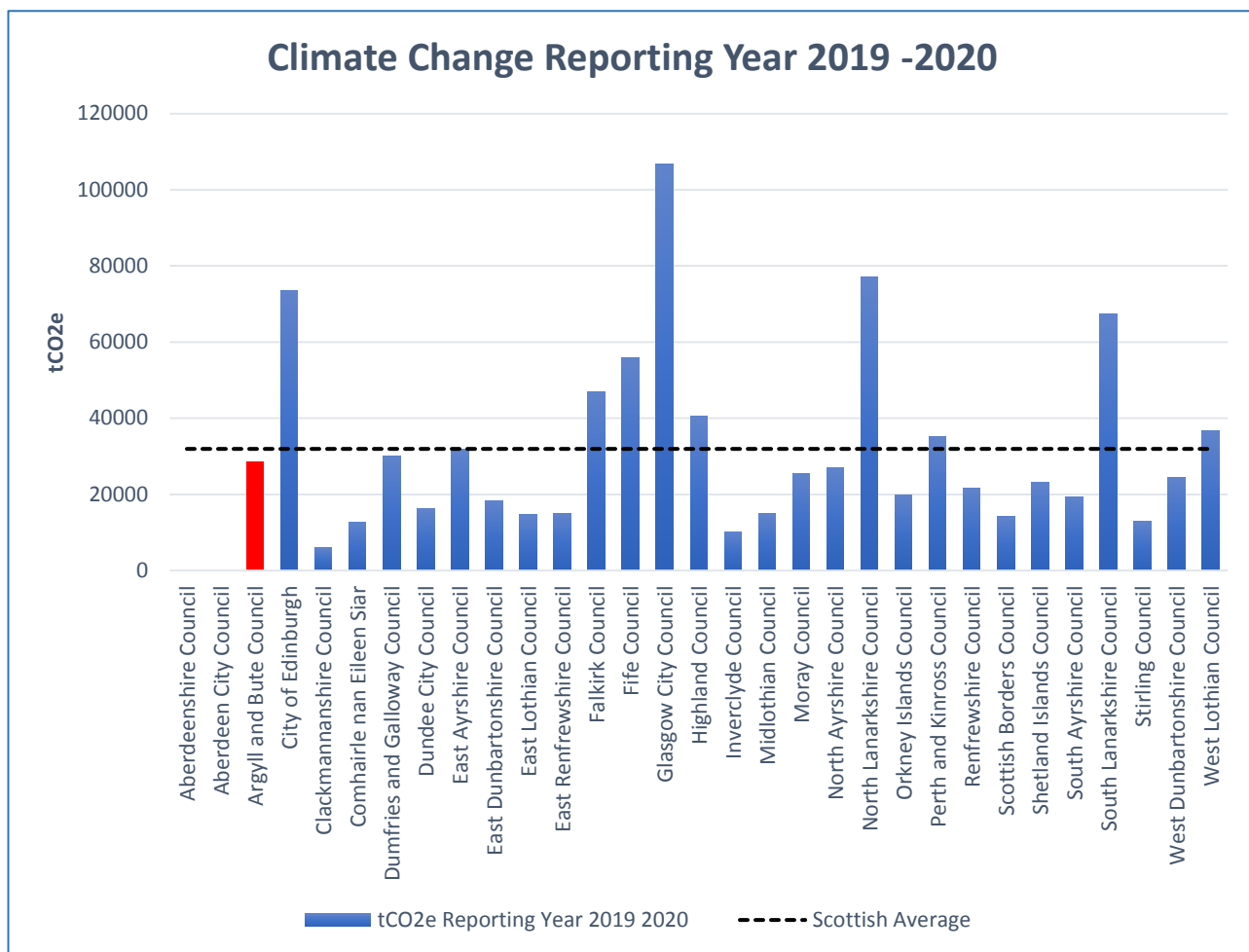
5.4 The relative sources of emissions by activity have remained fairly consistent for several years with processing municipal waste being responsible for around half of the entire emissions. Whilst overall all emission sources have reduced the proportions have remained relatively consistent. Future projects like Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) Landfill Ban, switching to greener ways heat and power buildings and fleet replacement with low emissions vehicles will obviously have a significant impact on overall carbon footprint.

5.5 The Council have also invested in generating own sources of renewable heat and energy as outlined this year below:-

**Table 3 - Generation, consumption and export of renewable energy**

TECHNOLOGY	Renewable Electricity		Renewable Heat	
	Total consumed by the organisation (kWh)	Total exported (kWh)	Total consumed by the organisation (kWh)	Total exported (kWh)
Solar PV	882843	0		
Wind	15000	135000		
Biomass			4678800	0
Air Source Heat Pump			130000	0

**Graph 3 – Benchmarking of Council Carbon Emissions**



5.6 The graph above highlights Argyll and Bute Council’s carbon emissions in relation to other local authorities who have published their 2019/20 at this point (others should publish in coming weeks). It is very difficult to make a direct comparison as population, physical size, internal processes (particularly waste treatment) and geographic factors all have a material impact on overall emissions.

**Future Reporting Requirements (Roseanna Cunningham MSP letter)**

5.7 Whilst the current suite of indicators and reporting methodology has been in place for 6 years there is proposed to be an overhaul in next 12 months. This was delayed by the pandemic but Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, has issued a letter to all Council Leaders & Chief Executives in February 2021 confirming an amendment order will be made to the Reporting Requirements and apply from the report year ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 (ie this year). The letter is contained within **Appendix A**.

5.8 Whilst full guidance on the changes has not yet been produced (expected in coming weeks) the letter and other early feedback outlines a number of key aspects that will require to be considered by the Climate Change Board and future Policy & Resources Committee such as:-

- Setting a target date for Council achieving net zero direct emissions;

- Setting targets for reducing indirect or regional emissions (based on scientific data);
- Producing spending plans and use of resources that are connected to achieving emissions targets (Carbon Budgeting); and
- Publicising and reporting on achievement of emission reduction targets.

5.9 The Climate Change Board will consider the new guidance and reporting requirements once published and report back to Policy & Resources committee. There may be requirement for additional specialist or scientific analysis depending on the nature of changes.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 It is a requirement to publish annual carbon emissions for the Scottish Government. This report highlights our overall emissions for most recent period 2019/20 and outlines that changes to this process will be forthcoming in future months due to change in The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Policy – Downward trend in emissions is consistent with climate change policy and action at local, national and international level.

6.2 Financial – Indication that new reporting duties from next year will require budget / finance plans aligned to emission reduction targets.

6.3 Legal - None

6.4 HR - None

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – N/A

6.6 Equalities – protected characteristics – None

6.7 Socio-economic Duty – N/A

6.8 Islands – N/A

6.6 Risk - NA

6.7 Customer Service – N/A

**Douglas Hendry**  
**Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services**

19<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Councillor Robin Currie**  
**Council Leader**

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## **APPENDIX A –**

Rosanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform outlining change to Climate Change 'Reporting Requirements' dated 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021