

Sustainability: Annual Report 2025-26

July 2026



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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Janet Finch-Saunders MS

Commissioner
with responsibility
for Sustainable
Development

Introduction

In this election year, our estate has been busier and some sustainability metrics increased as a result. However, we have minimised gas use and our core carbon footprint has dropped significantly, bringing us below our annual target.

Big-ticket items from our carbon strategy continue to progress. We are on the cusp of connecting to the district heat network and our Bay32 project aims to make our future office accommodation as sustainable and low carbon as possible.

Our wider scope 3 emissions increased this year due to the large amount of capital works being undertaken on the estate, in preparation for the seventh Senedd. We have made significant progress in improving the scope 3 reporting process, with our Ymlaen scheme intern designing a new system to improve reporting accuracy from suppliers. Whilst still in its infancy, this is going to help us report more accurate data in these emerging field of carbon reporting and give us greater clarity for areas to target in the future.

Summary of Performance

For 2025-26 we have seen a further increase in activity on the estate, particularly as we build up to the election for the Seventh Senedd. This has led to an increase in several sustainability metrics - including business travel, water use, and food waste production. Busier buildings and a warmer summer have led to slightly more electricity use, but efficiency measures have kept this smaller than it might have been.

After the very large rise in energy costs a few years ago, prices continue to drop and our spend on utilities reflects this. Despite similar consumption levels, bills are down about a third from where they were at their peak. The water industry goes against this trend, however, with rises across the industry being reflected in an increase in our bills of around 30%, despite similar levels of water use.

The new, Seventh Senedd will be larger, with more Members and more Support Staff. As such, we expect an increase in sustainability impacts. Our work over the forthcoming year will concentrate on minimising this impact and ensuring our long-term Carbon Strategy and Bay32 project are aligned to secure a low-carbon future for the organisation.

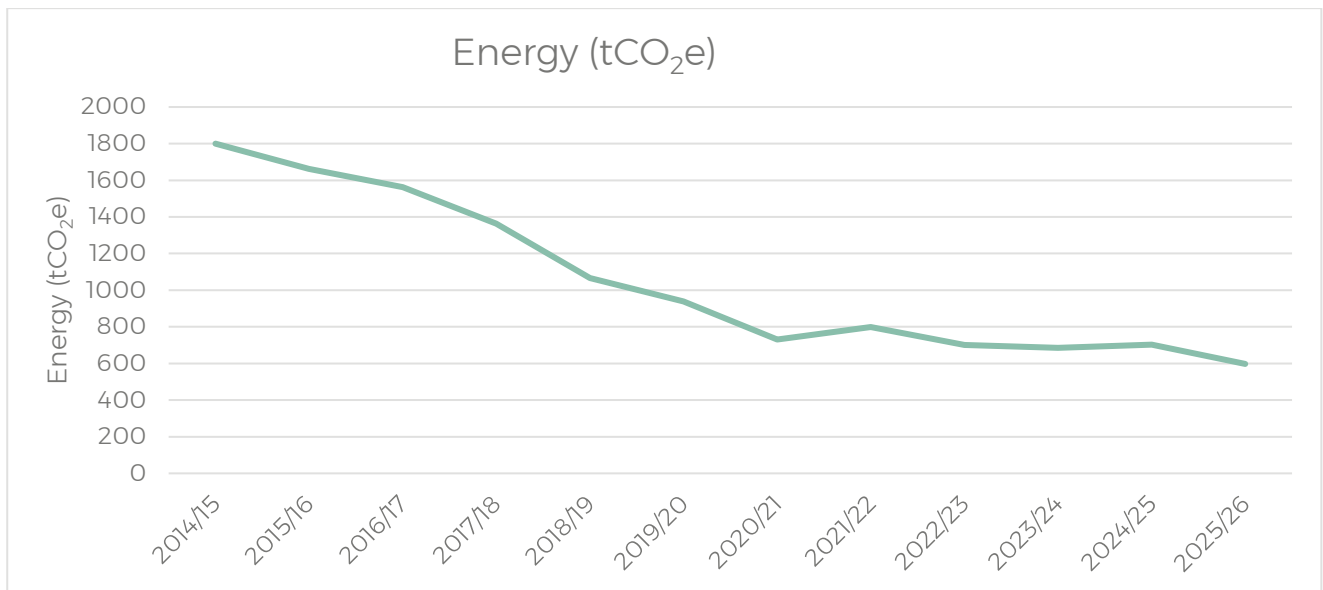
We continue to operate a certified environmental management system, which includes an annual audit by a UKAS-accredited body against the requirements of ISO14001.

Carbon

Our core carbon footprint has decreased this year, with lower heating demand and less air travel both contributing to this. The UK electricity grid conversion factor also dropped this year, after two years at around the same level, due to an increase in use of renewables across the network. We have benefitted from this; our electricity consumption rising slightly but this component of our carbon footprint dropping.

After reporting being above our interim carbon target last year, we have dropped back below this year's target. These annual interim targets help track progress towards our original net carbon neutral goal of 2030, set out in our Goodbye Carbon Strategy published in 2021. Given changes to the carbon reporting landscape, both in Wales and wider UK since 2021, especially around offsetting and Scope 3 (supplier) emissions, we will be revising this strategy over the next year. This revision will come at a timely point in the organisation's evolution with us being able to take into account impacts from a larger Seventh Senedd, as well as a decision on the Bay32 project for future office accommodation.

Over the past year, we have been fortunate enough to have an intern improving our Scope 3 carbon data by working with suppliers and procurement teams to make this information more holistic and accurate. This has, in the first instance, led to a rise in this wider carbon footprinting data, as more has been included in the scope of the work. But this groundwork will enable us to make better-informed decisions around carbon when purchasing goods and services in future, and ensure we are operating a best practice model of carbon reporting. More information on this methodology can be found in the main Sustainability Annual Report.



Our core carbon footprint shows a slight reduction this year

Scope 3

Our wider scope 3 emissions have increased this year, primarily as a result of the expansion of the Senedd's main debating chamber.

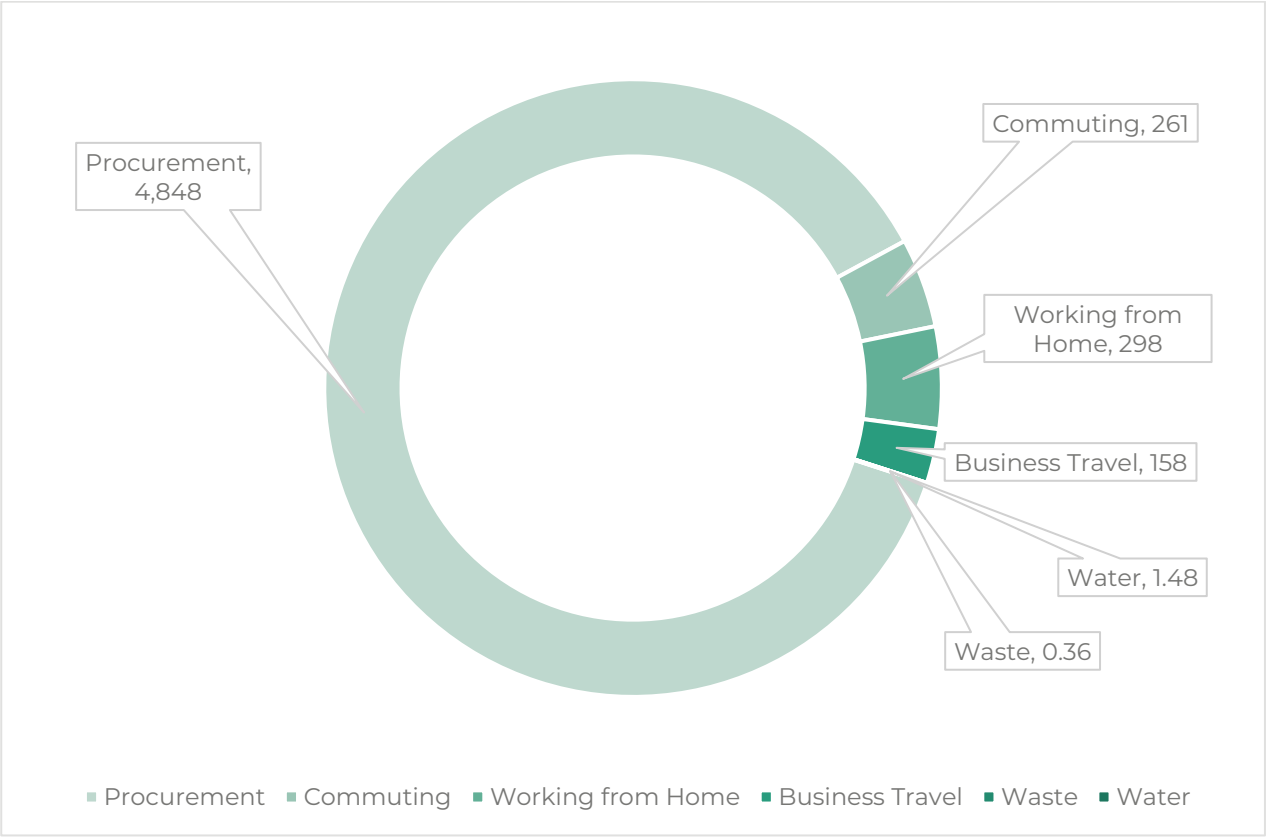
Since we started reporting Procurement emissions a few years ago, this has been the largest single component of our carbon footprint, similar to other public sector organisations. This can be clearly seen in the graph below. It is this section which has changed most this year. We have procured equipment, materials, and contractor time, all to enlarge the Senedd chamber and bring it up to more modern standards. We have also improved elements of it to future-proof it against further changes and improve its climate resilience with upgraded heating & cooling elements. As the case study shows, some great sustainability initiatives were included as part of the project, including the re-use of 70% of the Welsh oak in the desks, and the use of local contractors to conduct the work.

Most of the scope 3 components have changed little since last year, but Business Travel is one area which has reduced. We have seen a slight reduction in the use of air travel; by far the most impactful mode for carbon. We will continue to work to discourage its use where possible, including promoting the travel hierarchy to all new Members and Support Staff.

The fabulous work from our Ymlaen Intern during 2025/26 saw significant improvements to the way we manage supplier emissions. Whilst we have yet to fully implement a system to improve the accuracy of procurement data, we

have been trialling one with our top 25 suppliers. This work will continue in order that we can move away from spend-based emissions for all major suppliers in the near future.

Scope 3 Carbon (tCo2e), 2025-26



Carbon Reduction Strategy – Progress

Progress has continued with the measures targeted in Goodbye Carbon- our carbon strategy which takes us through to 2030. After significant contractual, due diligence and infrastructure work, we are ready to connect to the Cardiff heat network; the largest single-ticket item for carbon reduction in the strategy. Heat is due to be supplied to the Senedd and Ty Hywel buildings in Spring 2026, within the mid-term period we had hoped for, allowing us to fully operate the system prior to the winter heating period.

We have continued with further roll-out of LED lighting in a few areas of the estate; all helping to minimise electricity consumption and lower our carbon footprint. The conversion factor for electricity has changed again this year, for the better- lowering as a result of more renewables use in the national grid.

We continue to promote active and healthy travel, which has a small impact on our carbon footprint. We have a range of sustainable travel measures in place, including cycle-to-work and pool bike schemes, electric vehicle (EV) charge points and an EV salary sacrifice scheme. We will be raising awareness of these shortly after the seventh Senedd election; hoping to capture new Members and their Support Staff.

In our previous report, we mentioned the feasibility study for refurbished AHUs (air-handling units) for Ty Hywel, our main office building. Whilst conducted, this work is not currently being progressed as we progress with the Bay32 project which is assessing options for our future office accommodation. Sustainability is at the heart of this project with us actively targeting the lowest possible embodied and operational carbon measures we can.



SHORT TERM TARGET:
(2021-2023)



Behavioural change and
good housekeeping

100

2023: 100% complete



BMS improvements
(three buildings)

59

2025: 60% complete



Monitoring- additional
meters and software

52

2023: 100% complete



LED lighting: continued
replacement and review of
controls

30

2025: 95% complete



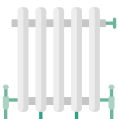
= 241 TONNES OF CARBON
SAVED PER YEAR

MEDIUM TERM TARGET:
(2023-2026)



Refurbishment of
AHUs (air-handling units)

42



Connect to district heating
network

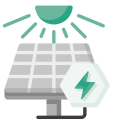
132

2025: 95% complete



Revert Ty Hywel to passive
ventilation

97



Install solar PV
(Senedd and Ty Hywel)

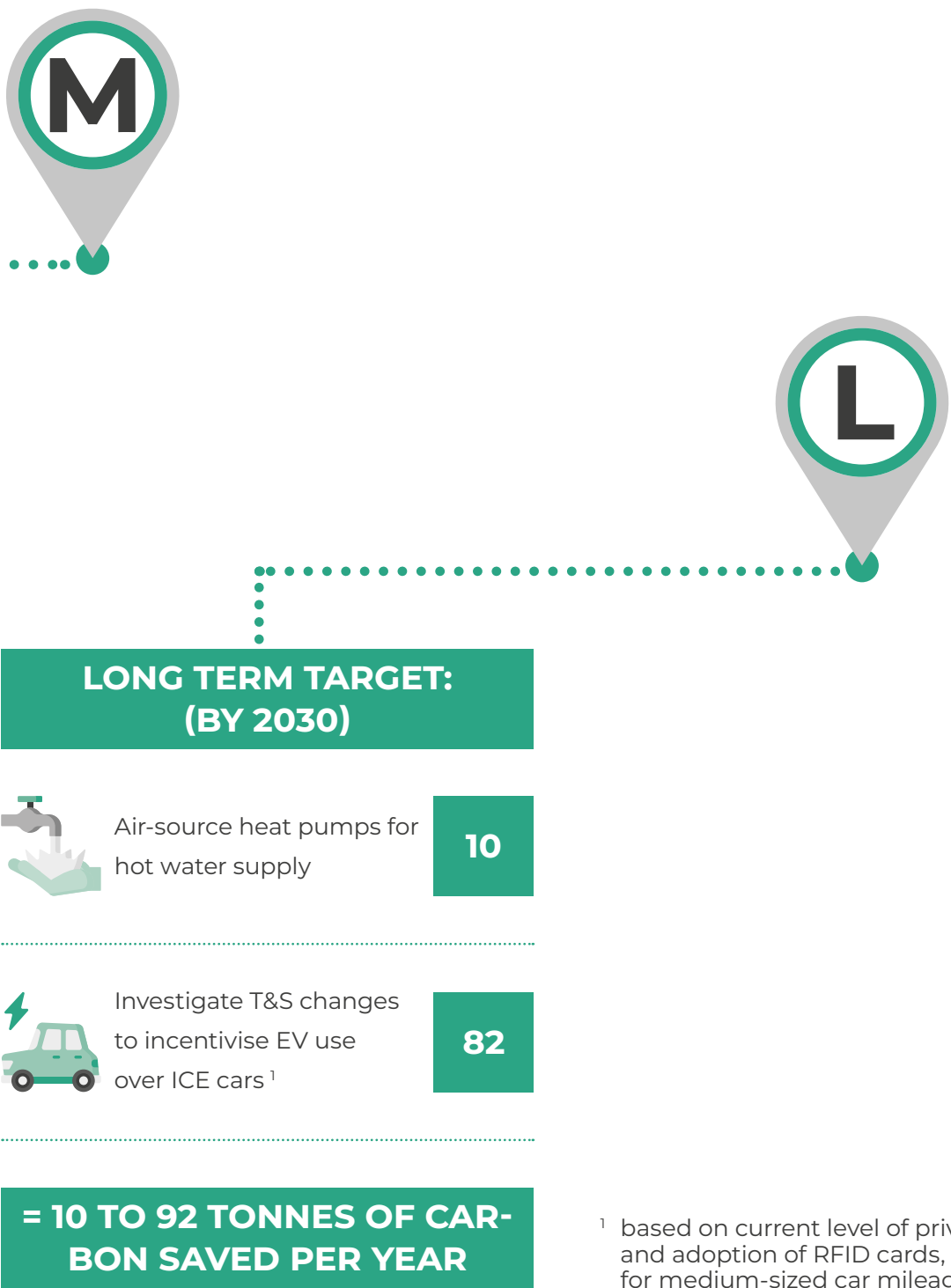
60

= 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 2025-26.

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



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



Energy

After the volatility of a couple of years ago, energy prices continue to fall. In response to feedback from stakeholders, we have kept set-points consistent across our estate, following some reductions when prices were at their peak.

This has allowed us to compare more closely to last year, including how well the buildings respond to outside temperatures and notice the savings from more energy-efficient equipment being installed.

Gas use has come down again this year- to a level comparable to two years ago. The colder year we had last year, and increased gas consumption, was reflected in Degree Days data- showing there was indeed a demand for more heating. However, that has come down this year, with the drop in gas consumption even exceeding the drop in Degree Days (20% vs 11%). Wholesale gas costs have come down as well; combined with lower consumption we saw gas spend drop significantly (30%+).

Electricity consumption increased slightly for this period- up 2% on last year. A number of variables have contributed to this, including a warmer summer in 2025 than 2024 (more than doubling of the number of Cooling Degree Days), and the boilers for the Pierhead building being out of service; requiring electricity to heat some of the building. Given these factors, the 2% increase is lower than what may have been expected, testament to further efficiency measures including the installation of more LED lights on the estate. Electricity costs also dropped this year, with our spend almost 30% lower than in 2024/5.

We continue to purchase our energy via a government framework, over a long purchasing window. This offers economies of scale as we buy alongside much of the rest of the public sector, and the purchasing strategy irons out fluctuations in the market; allowing us to more accurately forecast spend.

Over the forthcoming year, one significant change to energy consumption will be the connection of our two largest buildings (Tŷ Hywel and the Senedd) to the Cardiff Heat Network. This will provide us with a resilient, local supply of low-carbon energy and help to further decrease our carbon footprint.

Waste, Water and Other Resources

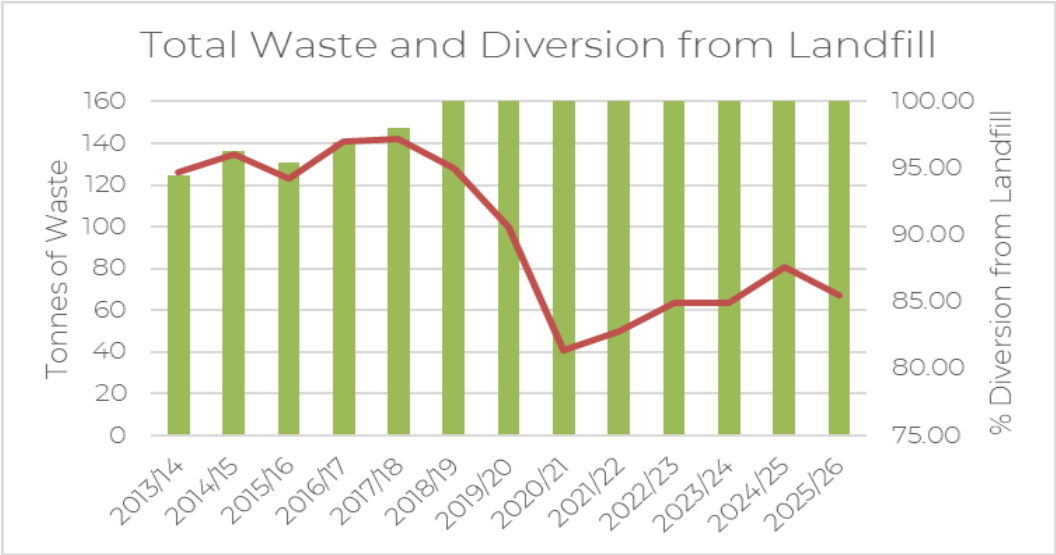
Waste production has dropped this year- down to the overall tonnage we were seeing two years ago. All waste was sent for recycling or energy recovery, and none to landfill. However, we have increased the percentage being recycled.

We also saw an increase in food waste being composted- largely due to increased activity on the estate, through increased use of the canteen and of demand for event catering.

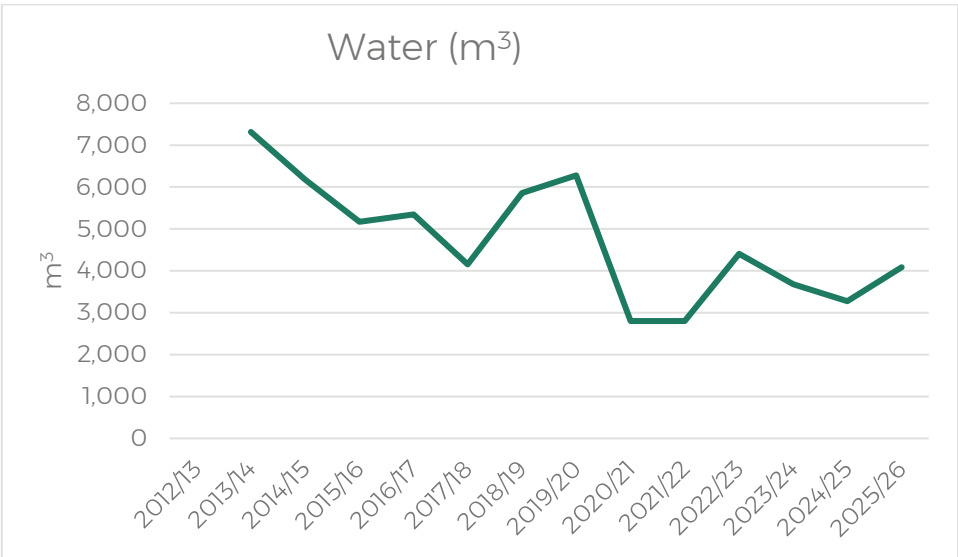
Over the forthcoming year, especially as we make changes to our estate in preparation for the changing Senedd, we will again review the availability and awareness of recycling bins around our buildings and encourage Members, staff and visitors to recycle as much as possible.

Water consumption has increased slightly, by around 12%, again this is largely a response to increased activity on the estate over the past year. Water costs however have risen significantly; 30% increase for supply and sewage charges over the past 12 months. This is a direct price rise by our supplier and is broadly indicative of rises across the sector. With only single suppliers available in each area, we can only target efficiency savings to lower our spend here.

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 continue 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 tonnage has dropped this year



Water use fluctuates over time in response to variables such as events, building occupancy, and maintenance, with a slight increase this year

Travel

After a rise in travel emissions last year, particularly an increase in air travel, we have seen a slight reduction this year. Overall travel mileage and claims costs are higher than some years, however; a pattern we have previously witnessed in the year preceding an election.

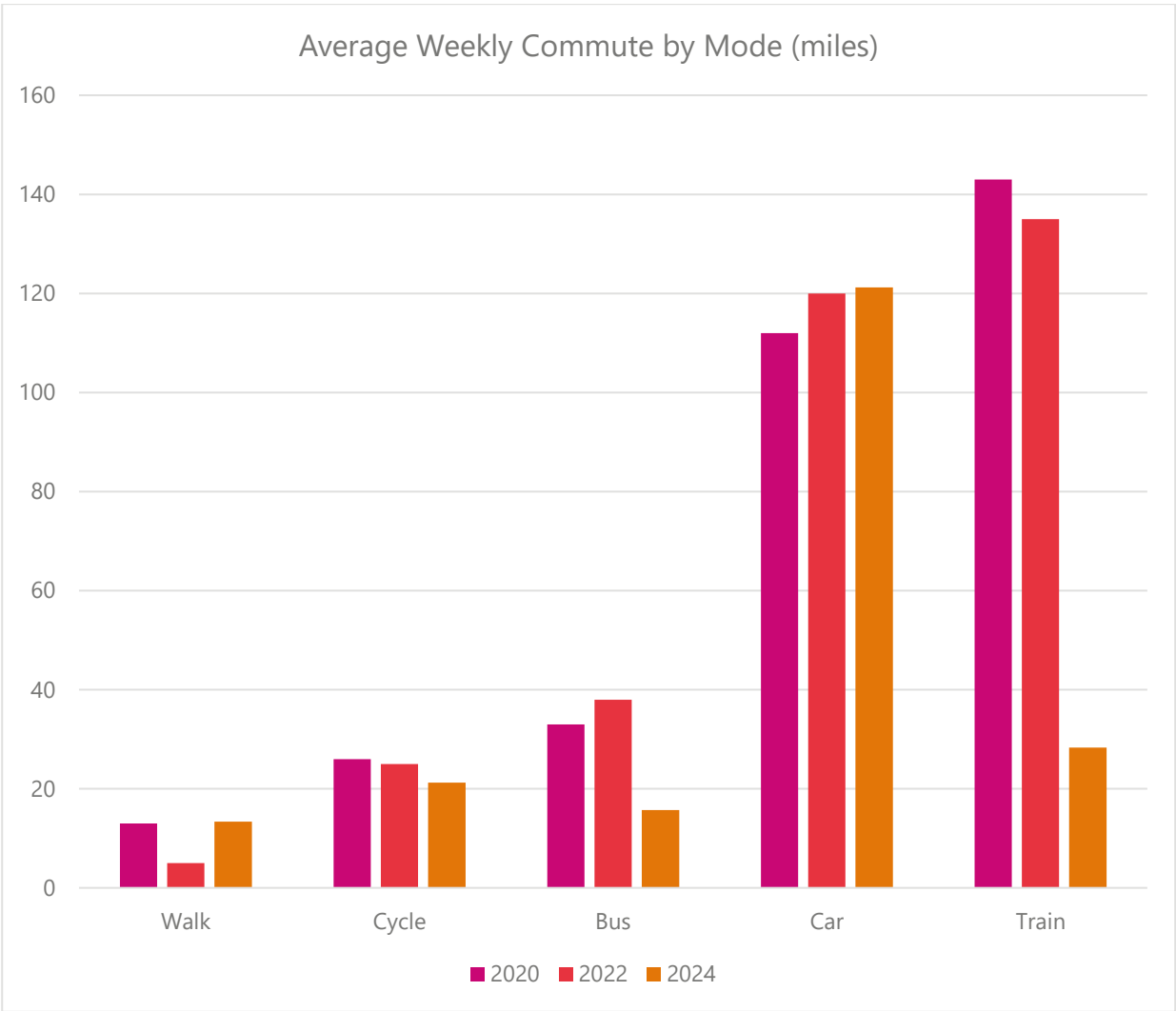
We continue to promote the travel hierarchy to staff and Members but will investigate more active measures to reduce emissions in the new Senedd.

Electric vehicles (EVs) are a mode of low-carbon transport which we continue to support. We operate an EV pool car for business trips and engagement activities. This not only reduces emissions in the areas we visit but also promotes this technology. We have charge points on the estate for EV drivers; these are now fully-occupied on business days. We also operate a salary sacrifice scheme for EVs, particularly to promote low-emission travel for those who have to drive for work, including Members' travel around their constituencies.

We continue to support hybrid working and have extensive IT systems in place to do so, from hybrid meetings rooms to ever-improving virtual meeting technology.

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 e-bike users.

We will hold our annual Green Week on the estate a few weeks after the election, using this opportunity to actively encourage take-up of sustainable travel modes by new Members and Support Staff.



Our biennial Travel Survey data shows more efficient cars are used, but public transport use has dropped significantly since the pandemic

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 wherever possible.

These include physical measures around the buildings and in procurement; making responsible decisions around sourcing of raw materials- specifying options like FSC timber.

We continue to promote diversity of habitat to encourage biodiversity on our estate. The garden strip thrives and is filled with pollinator-friendly plants along with a small pond and fruit trees which are currently blossoming. Continuing the limited cutting regime of the land alongside the Senedd has allowed it to produce a wide range of flora, including two varieties of orchids. This area now attracts a range of insects, including damsel flies and butterflies.

The bug hotels area has several years' worth of Christmas tree trunks in various states of decay, with additional holes drilled in to support nesting insects. The little hotels themselves, sited on the south-facing wall above the log pile are very popular with solitary bees and fascinating to watch!

After a difficult year for the Pierhead Bees in 2024, we were encouraged to see honey stores much higher towards the end of the summer in 2025. More favourable weather and growing conditions had meant stocks were higher in our two hives and we were able to take a honey crop for the first time in a couple of years. The honey sales generate a small amount of cash which is able to be put back into the project to ensure its own sustainability.

Goal	Action	Progress
Embedding biodiversity in decision-making	We continue to operate an ISO14001-certified environmental management system, including an action plan containing biodiversity measures.	Successfully audited again in January 2026 against the requirements.
	Conduct sustainability risk assessments for large procurement contracts, including biodiversity considerations	Complete, ongoing. We continue to conduct these assessments and look for biodiversity relevant in new contracts.
	Modify sustainability impact assessment tool to include biodiversity considerations.	In progress.
Safeguard important species	Installation of swift boxes on Ty Hywel	Completed, May 2019, though yet to be occupied.
	Installation of bug hotels to encourage solitary bees.	Complete, 2022. Now being well used in summer months. 2025/26- new tree trunks added with holes for insects to nest.
Restore & create habitats	Change mowing regime for land alongside Senedd to annual cuts.	Complete, ongoing. By cutting only once a year we see a wide variety of insects and plants populating the area.
	Extend Ty Hywel garden strip and include pollinator-friendly plants and second pond.	Complete, ongoing. We maintain this new garden area and it is now thriving with planted and naturally-germinated plants.
Improve evidence & understanding	Recommence pollinator surveys of wildflower strip and garden area.	In progress. We have started these but need a few years' worth of data to provide value.
	Investigate feasibility of providing climate literacy training to key staff.	In progress. Training package now complete. Due to be rolled out to staff during 2026/27.

Climate Change Adaptation & 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.

We are currently protected from some of the worst climate change impacts but are preparing for a changing climate. For example, our Cardiff Bay estate is protected to some extent by the Cardiff Bay Barrage. Longer term, our Carbon Neutral Strategy includes measures such as solar panels which provide further protection against an uncertain future.

Our actions over the past year included the following:

- Worked with Cardiff Harbour Authority and other stakeholders to improve flood awareness
- Conducted feasibility study for lifecycle replacement of the air-handling units which cool our main office building (Ty Hywel). This will now be taken up under the Bay32 mantle.
- Developed a climate literacy training programme.
- Promoted sustainable and self-supported travel options.

Our actions for this coming year include

- Development of the Bay32 solution, to include both sustainability and climate resilience features.
- Complete a drainage study of one of our buildings to assess preparedness for extreme rainfall events and use this as an example for further buildings (left from last year).
- Roll-out of climate literacy training.

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.

Our work to support the sustainable expansion of the Senedd chamber included engagement with the local architecture school. Students were able to learn about the development of the Chamber, how materials were re-used and local contractors employed, and even quiz one of the architects on their design.

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	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Total net greenhouse gas emissions scopes, 1, 2, 3 (business travel, water, waste) tCO ₂ e	1,150	764	861	859	851	891	757
Total energy emissions, tCO ₂ e	962	730	799	701	686	703	598
NEW- Total Scope 3 Emissions (travel, WfH, goods & services, commuting)				2,841	2,879	3,530	4,848
Total waste (tonnes)	100	41	50	63	63	80	67
Total water consumption, m ³	6,281	2,802	3,191	4,408	4,227	3,759	4,198
Total business travel emissions, tCO ₂ e	180	24	67	140	163	193	158
Paper Use (million sheets)	2.33	0.86	0.65	1.97	2.05	1.97	1.53

* Excludes MS and MSSS travel January to March 2025 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.







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