

# **Sustainability:** Annual Report 2021-22

June 2022



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

In this second year of the pandemic, our staff have remained working from home for the most part, only recently returning to the estate. Our sustainability impacts for this year reflect that.

Having published our Carbon Neutral Strategy last year, we are pleased to be able to report we have already begun making the changes to our estate that will mean as our future way of working as a Parliament and Commission are established, it will be a low-carbon one.

We continue our work to promote hybrid and remote means of working, maximising the wellbeing and environmental benefits this brings. We are taking steps to ensure that active and low-carbon travel to and from the Senedd and our places of work is easier than ever. In our contracts we are beginning to capture more accurate carbon data from our suppliers to ensure our reporting is increasingly holistic and accurate.

Work continues to ensure the monitoring data we gathered from the first lockdowns is used to make the buildings more efficient and flexible; able to adapt to changing working patterns and occupancy numbers and minimise energy use accordingly.



**Manon Antoniazzi**

Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd



**Janet Finch-Saunders MS**

Commissioner for Sustainable Development





# Summary of Performance

This is the first year of our new Carbon Neutral Strategy, but it still hasn't been a *normal* year in terms of building occupancy and use of our estate.

Last year we wrote about how we had achieved the primary goal of our previous carbon reduction strategy, even before the global pandemic hit. In this second year of the pandemic, use of the buildings has remained low but has slowly started to increase as restrictions have eased and guidance has allowed for more office-based working where appropriate. The work of the Senedd has continued in a hybrid format, with Members able to join key Plenary debates and Committee sessions remotely- reducing use of resources in the offices and lowering our travel footprint.

It is this hybrid way of working which we envisage continuing now into the long-term future. And so, as Members and staff return to the buildings in greater numbers, and in-person Senedd business and events begin again in earnest, and noting that the Welsh Government officials will be working from a mix of central offices, regional hubs and home, we expect an equilibrium to be reached by most of our colleagues and visitors that allows their own needs to be met whilst meeting those of the organisation. In achieving this balance we recognise the importance of continuing to maximise and capture the sustainability benefits of flexible working, to ensure the new way of working helps us achieve our carbon goals.

To this end, whilst we have continued to maintain our estate to ensure it is ready to support the work of the Senedd in whatever format that takes, we have also pressed ahead with the improvements outlined in our Carbon Neutral Strategy. We have begun work on making the buildings even more efficient, making low-carbon working and travel as easy as possible, and further improved the biodiversity capacity of our grounds.



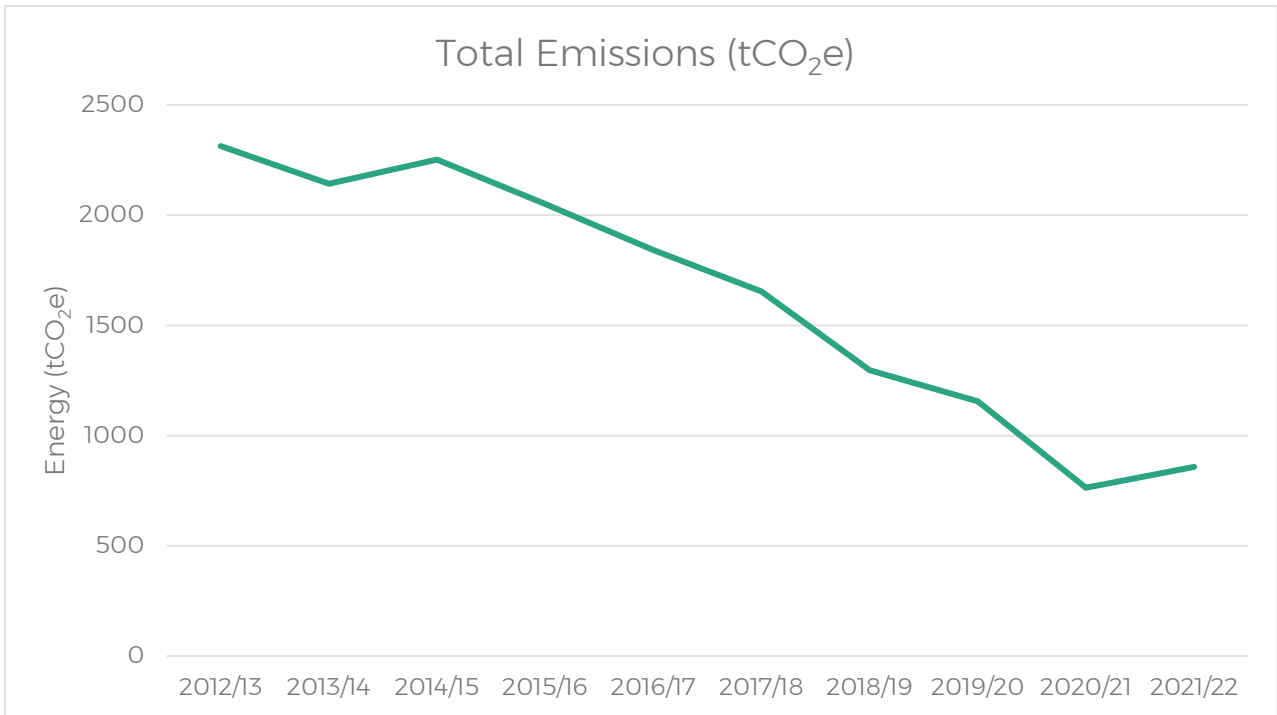
# Carbon Neutral Strategy - Progress

By far our biggest driver now, especially given the Senedd's recognition of the Climate Emergency, is our carbon footprint. This year we have published our strategy to be *net carbon neutral* by 2030 (available on our website [here](#)), and work has already begun on the actions it contains, as detailed in the later sections of this report.

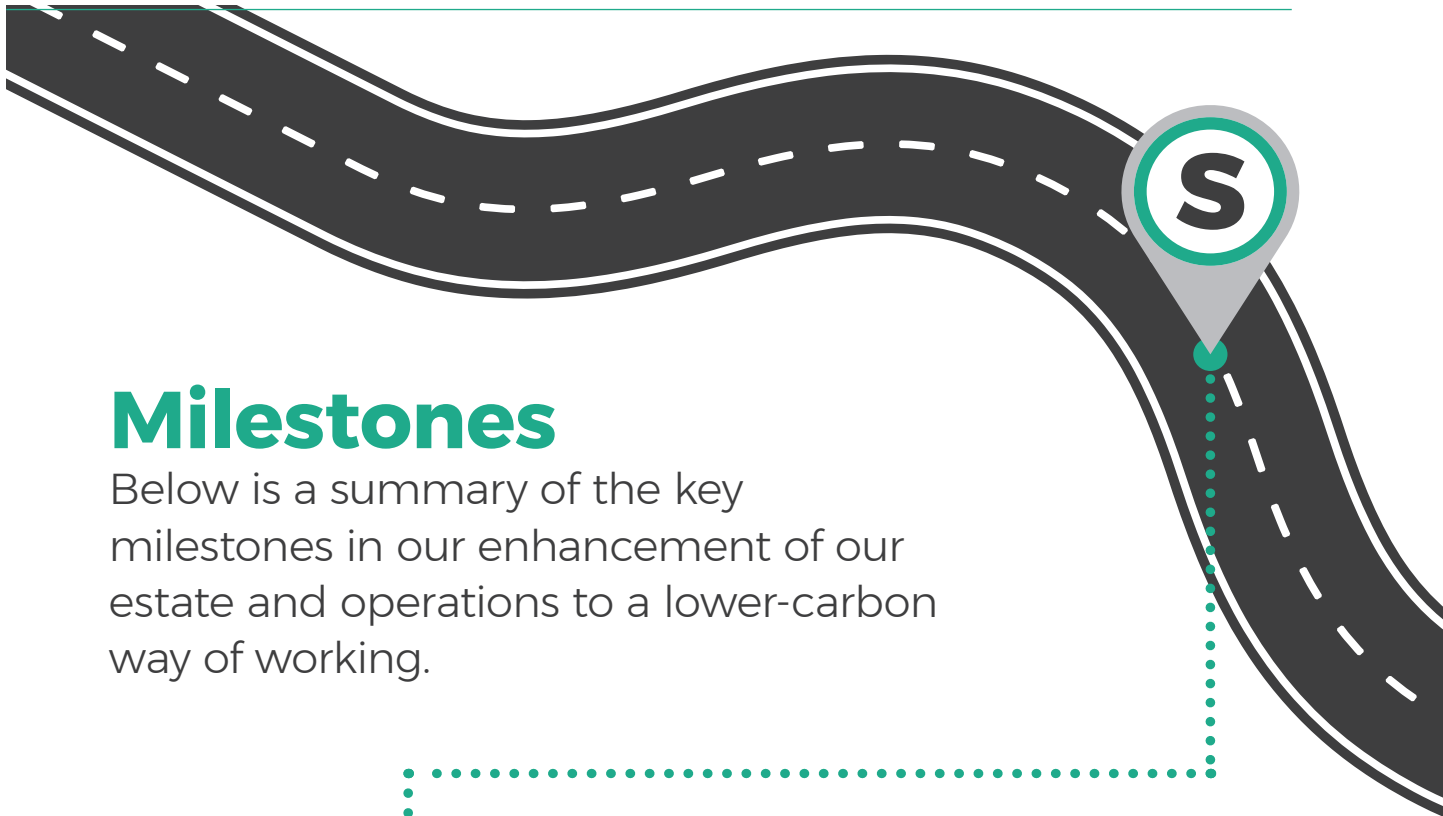
When we produced our Strategy for carbon, we looked at the data for the last normal year of operations- 2019/20. During this period our net carbon footprint was around 1150 tonnes of carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>e). This took into account our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as we were calculating them at the time; gas and electricity consumption combined with the impact of business travel. This figure is down to 858t this year- a reduction of a little over a quarter. Given we aimed to pretty much halve that figure by 2030 before looking to offset remaining emissions, we could be seen to be well on the way to meeting our goal.

However this data doesn't tell the whole story- this is still not a *normal* way of operating, with more activity now beginning to start back up on the estate, and the future way of working for the Senedd yet to be fully established. Sustainability will, though, be an important driver and objective for how we return to the office. Over the life of the Strategy, we expect to be able to realise additional carbon savings from these changes to working practices, post-pandemic. We are also still in the process of working with suppliers to calculate all of our scope 3 emissions. When we published our Strategy our methodology for what to include in our footprint was commonplace, but things have since moved on with more sources now included in scope 3 emissions.

As such we expect this figure to rise, at least until the new ways of working are established and new methods of carbon reporting fully embedded. We will continue our work to tackle it however, and still aim to halve our total footprint as a minimum before looking to offset any remaining emissions from 2030.



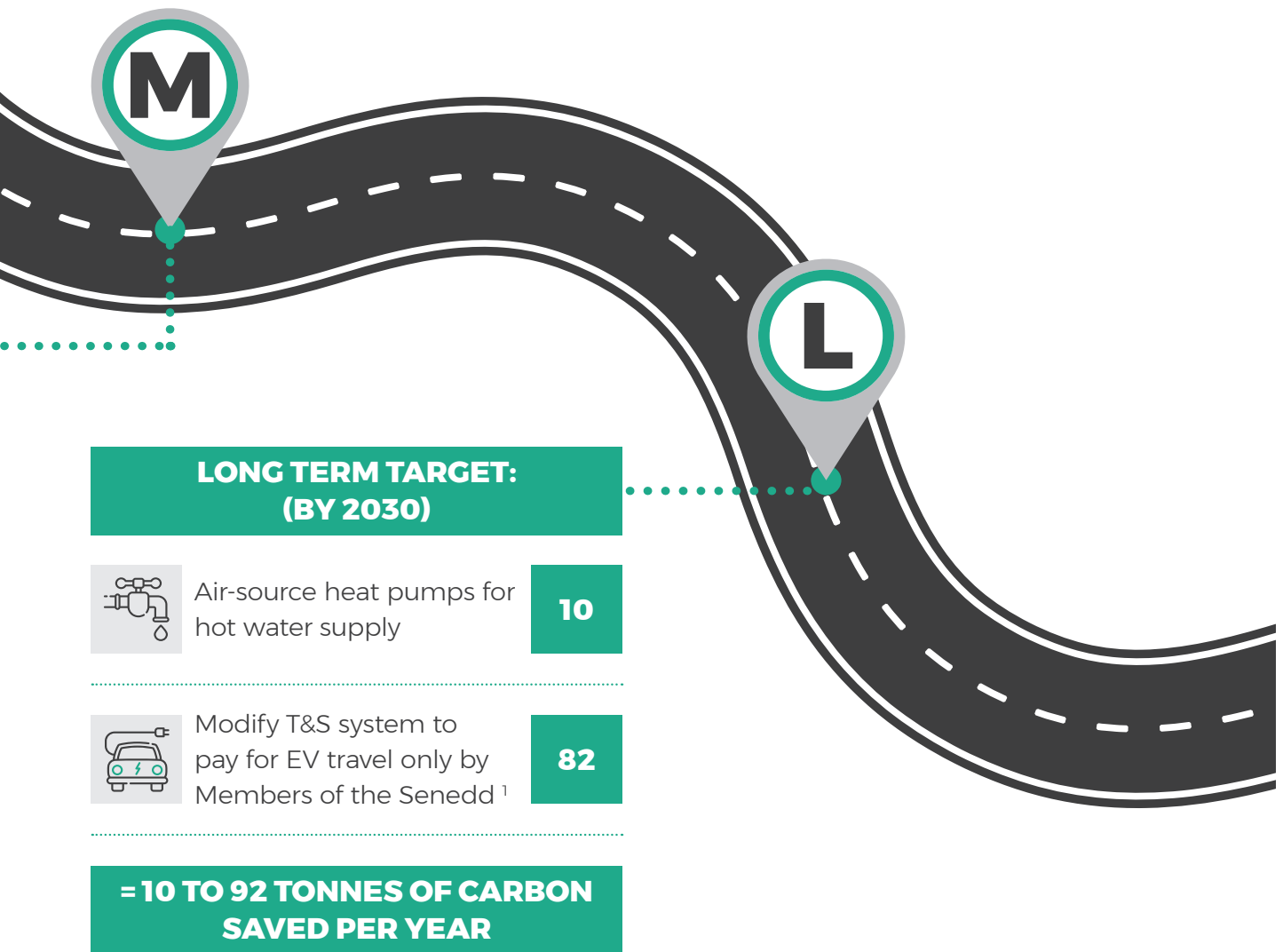
*Our carbon footprint for scopes 1, 2, & 3 (business travel)*



# Milestones

Below is a summary of the key milestones in our enhancement of our estate and operations to a lower-carbon way of working.

SHORT TERM TARGET: (2021-2023)		MEDIUM TERM TARGET: (2023-2026)			
	Behavioural change and good housekeeping	<b>100</b>		Refurbishment of AHUs (air-handling units)	<b>42</b>
	BMS improvements (three buildings)	<b>59</b>		Connect to district heating network	<b>132</b>
	Monitoring- additional meters and software	<b>52</b>		Revert Ty Hywel to passive ventilation	<b>97</b>
	LED lighting: continued replacement and review of controls	<b>30</b>		Install solar PV (Senedd and Ty Hywel)	<b>60</b>
<b>= 241 TONNES OF CARBON SAVED PER YEAR</b>		<b>= 331 TONNES OF CARBON SAVED PER YEAR</b>			



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



## Energy

Whilst our bees will attest to a slightly milder winter this year, the prolonged previous winter gave us a very cold April and May to start the period off, as Degree Days data shows.

This, combined with a slight increase in the use of the offices meant gas use rose this year, although overall heating demand (including biomass) was still down on 2019/20. The work mentioned in the last report- efficiency savings stemming from commitments in the Carbon Neutral Strategy- has already begun. We have recently completed works to zone the heating in Tŷ Hywel; allowing us to tailor the heat supply to better suit occupancy levels. We have also been considering ways to improve the efficiency of the building management system (BMS). However, we will not fully realise the associated savings from these projects until next winter.

Electricity use has risen slightly this year as the buildings have been used more, but usage is still below pre-pandemic levels. Given our use of more long-term supply contracts, we have been reasonably-well insulated from price rises in the energy market. We were able to take advantage of very favourable rates this year, set for the whole year, thanks to a contract with Crown Commercial Services, via the Welsh Government. The overall cost of gas and electricity has therefore risen only about 10% this year. Similarly, next year's contract is due to protect us from the unprecedented price rises in the wholesale market seen during late 2021, as most of our energy was bought prior to this rise. We will experience a significant rise in unit costs for 2022/23, but nothing like we could have seen without these contracts in place.

As well as the improvements mentioned above, a quieter estate again this year has meant that the wider work of the Facilities and IT teams has continued apace, much of it offering carbon savings in the long-term. More hybrid meeting facilities have been installed, negating the need to travel to the office just for one or two meetings in a day. We have also continued the roll-out of LED lighting with more open plan areas now illuminated by LEDs, as well as Members' offices. These use less energy than the previous fittings, and staff feedback suggests the type of light they produce may actually have wellbeing benefits.

One longer-term project, and a key component of our Carbon Strategy, is the connection of the Senedd estate to the Cardiff Heat Network. Work on this district heating scheme has continued apace throughout the past year, with Commission staff working closely with Cardiff Council to analyse the feasibility and practical considerations of the project. Should this come to fruition, it will remove a significant component of the heating element of our carbon footprint whilst offering value-for-money and resilience to our energy supply.

We have provided some advice to staff to help them improve their own energy efficiencies when working from home, and will continue to do so. We are also in the process of calculating the carbon impact of homeworking.



## Waste, Water & Other Resources

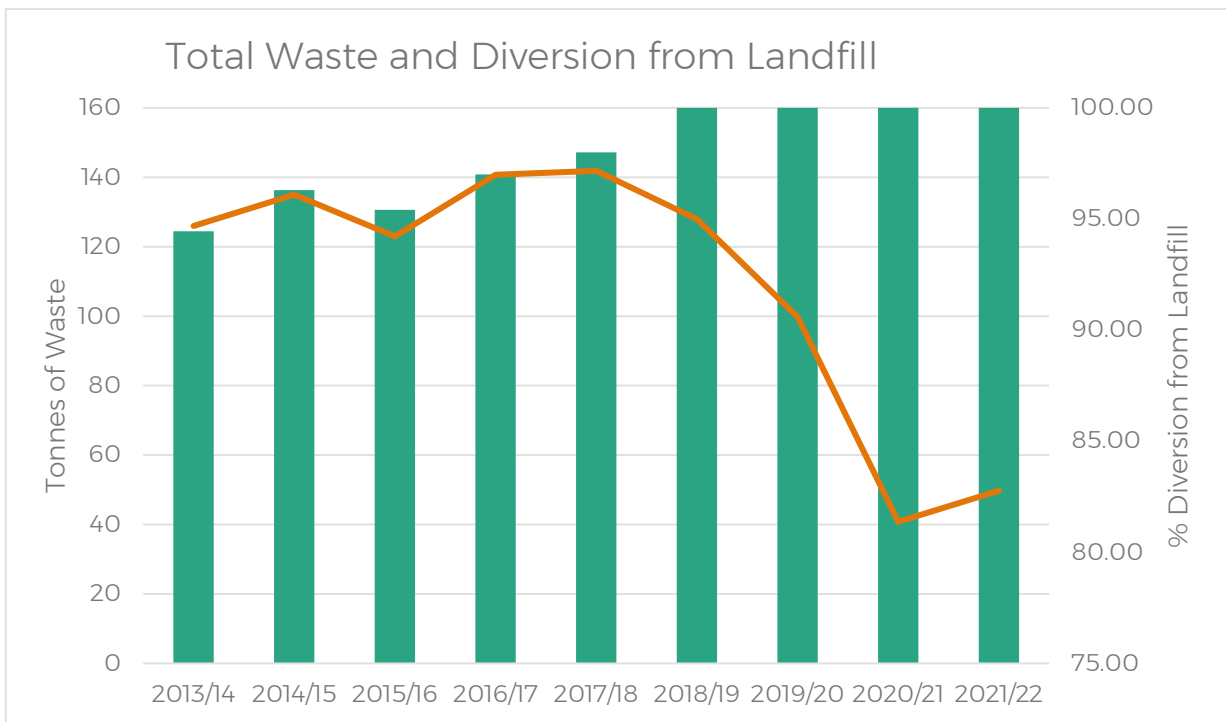
Water use has increased slightly this year but is still well below a *normal* year's consumption. This reflects the return of some staff to the estate, as well as the requirement to flush the water facilities periodically to minimise any risk of infection.

Following historic issues with the accuracy of the external meter, we continue to report internal meter readings. However, these two figures are now closely aligned, giving us even greater confidence in our reporting data.

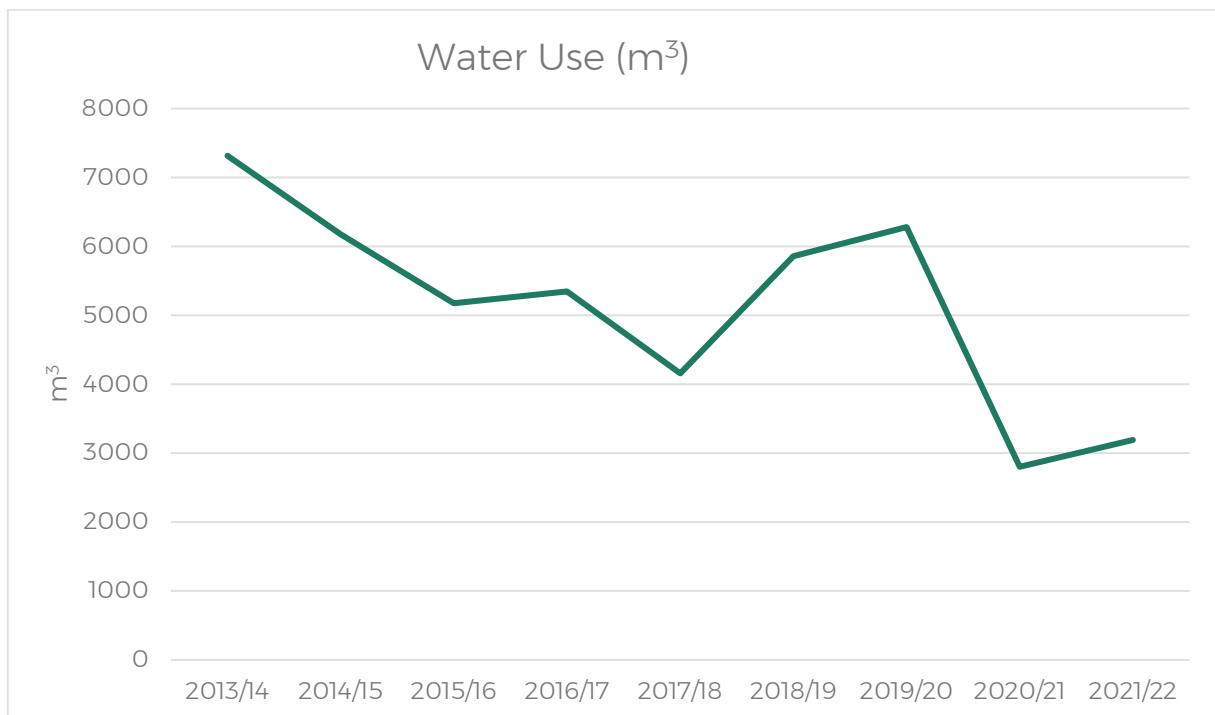
Waste production is slightly below half of a normal year's production. Significantly fewer staff and visitors coming to our estate has been offset slightly by some work continuing in the buildings during this past year, as well as the contribution of PPE and cleaning waste. We continue to divert all waste from landfill; ensuring it is recycled, composted, or sent for energy recovery. We are also continuing to work with our catering contractor to avoid single-use plastics wherever possible; offering alternatives to traditional plastic take-away containers and bottled water. We hope to do more in this area as staff return to the offices.

Paper use is down again this year; down more than 20% when compared to the already low volume used last year. This reflects not only the low numbers of staff in the offices, but also a change to the accountability of printing internally, as well as the use of the follow-me printing (copies are only produced when a staff member swipes their card at a machine). Furthermore, the wider changes in the ways people work is perhaps meaning printing documents rather than reading them electronically is no longer the default approach.

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 (Forestry Stewardship Council) are specified wherever relevant. We have also recently been requesting suppliers begin calculating the carbon footprint of goods, in order to help us more accurately calculate our own footprint, as well as beginning to include *circular economy* requirements in specifications where applicable.



*Waste production has increased slightly this year*



*Water use has been fairly consistent throughout the pandemic*

**PEDESTRIAN**

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**CERDDWY**

gwasgwch y botwm ac arhoswch

ymddangos gyfnewid

**W A**

wait

arhoswch



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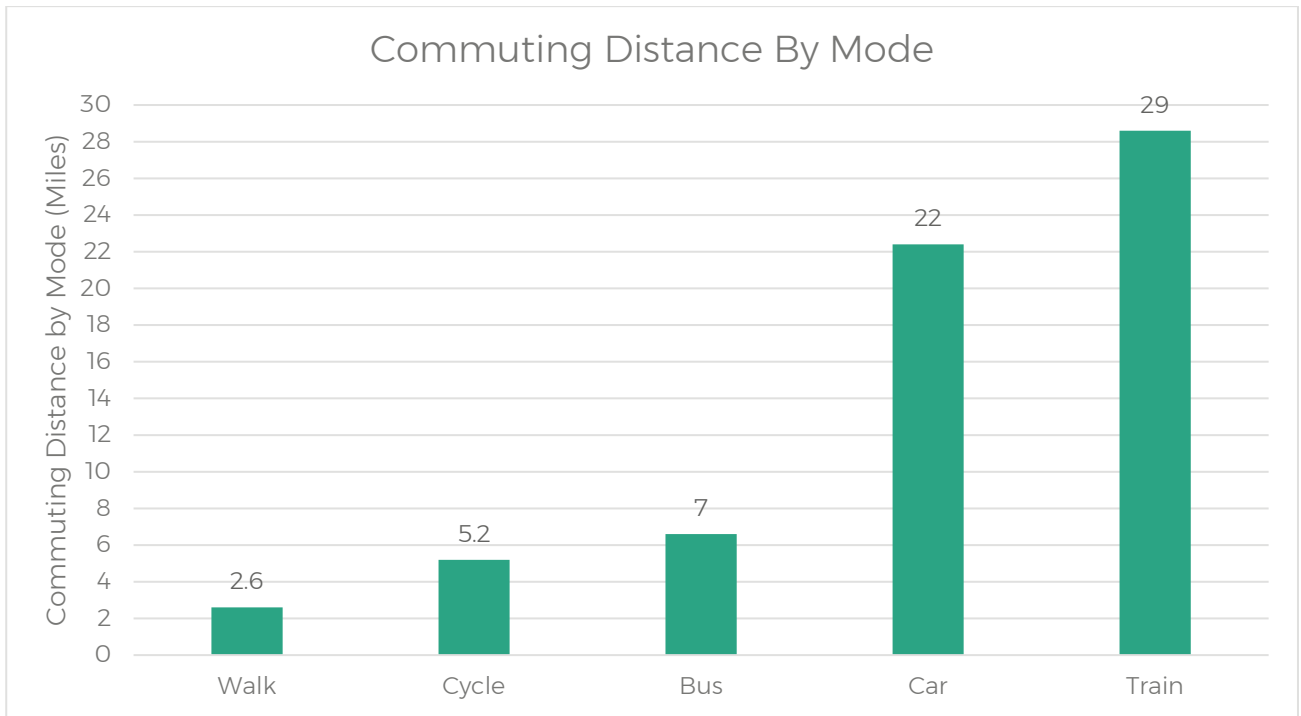
## Travel

Whilst last year was exceptional, with a 90% reduction in travel, this year demonstrates a slow return to more movement of staff, but still demonstrating a 75% reduction on a normal year's mileage claims (average of three years prior to the pandemic).

The work of the Senedd has continued to function in a largely hybrid format- from Plenary sessions to Committees and through to Commission staff team meetings. Following Welsh Government advice, the organisation has promoted a more flexible working pattern, with non-essential journeys not being undertaken when the guidance requested as much.

Whilst we are yet to run our next biennial travel survey for more accurate data, we have seen overall volumes of commuters reduce significantly, with far fewer bikes in the storage facilities and much lower numbers of cars parking on site. When we run the survey we will be asking staff about their expected return to commuting; allowing us to build a carbon footprint of this impact as well as ensure active travel modes continue to receive the support required to make them a popular choice.

Our work to support active and sustainable travel modes has continued this past year however, in anticipation of the changing demands on our facilities as staff return in higher numbers. We have introduced a new electric bike area to our Bay estate, allowing e-bike users the opportunity to charge in situ before their return journey. We have also been planning for more electric vehicle (EV) users, as the cost continues to fall and range improve on this low-carbon option. We will shortly be installing more EV charge points on the estate, and have been investigating a salary sacrifice scheme for Members and staff to lease EVs.



*Prior to the pandemic, a lot of our staff were already using sustainable travel modes for shorter commutes*



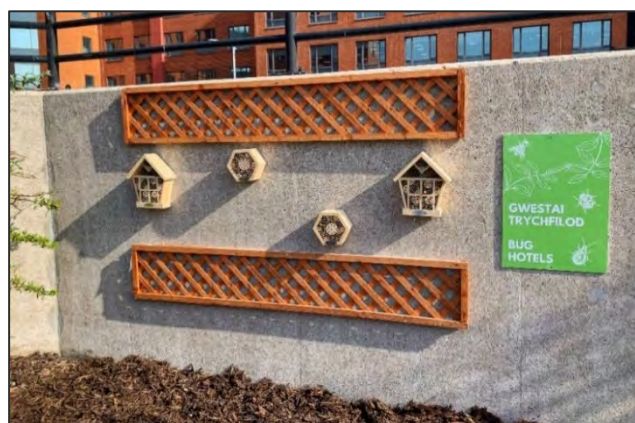
## Biodiversity

In response to the nature emergency, we have been increasing our efforts around the estate, to maximise opportunities for biodiversity on the small amount of land we have available to us.

Our Carbon Strategy commits to a doubling of the green space on the estate—something we have this year started on with a significant increase in the Tŷ Hywel garden area, utilising what was previously a stone-covered area to add in new pollinator-friendly plants and a second small pond to support invertebrates. We are also investigating the site's ability to support hedgehogs, in order to help reduce the decline of these wonderful animals.

In partnership with National Trust, and with the support of the Commissioner for Sustainable Development, Janet Finch-Saunders MS, we have recently introduced a new *Bug Hotel* area to the Tŷ Hywel garden. This features bug boxes for creatures such as solitary bees and spiders to nest and overwinter in, as well as being an area where the trunk of the Senedd Christmas tree can be left to become an insect habitat.

The Pierhead Bees project has continued throughout the pandemic, with the bees taking little heed of the changing working patterns of staff, and indeed public life in general in their normally-busy surroundings of Cardiff Bay. Overall they increased their honey crop again this year. Without extracting any from the new third hive, the other two increased their honey productivity by almost 30% this year; surely a reflection of the benefits of hybrid working for them too!



*The new Bug Hotels area in the grounds of Tŷ Hywel*

## 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 PV systems which provide further protection against an uncertain future. We have already started working on the feasibility study for solar systems, as well as conducting other work to adapt the buildings to more extreme weather events, including work on the Senedd roof.

Our estate is in an urban location, and our activities in maintaining it do not directly impact on rural areas. One small, positive impact which could be construed as affecting rural life is that we purchase as much of the foodstuff supplies for our catering service from within Wales and encourage the use of produce from small and medium size suppliers.



## 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 previous Welsh Youth Parliament, a driver for whom was single-use plastics and litter, and look forward to working with the new members to ensure their priorities are reflected in the way we operate.

This past year saw us work with RSPB to support a small event discussing wildlife preservation with Members, and we recently worked with the National Trust as part of their #BlossomWatch campaign. The Trust kindly donated the bug hotels now sited in the Tŷ Hywel garden - a catalyst we hope for further biodiversity work.

## 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

<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Total net greenhouse gas emissions (scopes, 1, 2, 3), tCO <sub>2</sub> e	2,051	1,841	1,654	1,296	1,150	764	858
Total energy emissions, tCO <sub>2</sub> e	1,663	1,563	1,364	1,066	962	730	799
Total waste (tonnes)	123	141	142	128	100	41	50
Total water consumption, m <sup>3</sup>	5,174	5,347	4,158	6,064	6,281	2,802	3,191
Total business travel emissions, tCO <sub>2</sub> e	252	206	207	174	180	24	58*
Paper Use (million sheets)	1.93	1.99	2.92	2.73	2.33	0.86	0.65

\* Excludes MS and MSSS travel January, February & March 2022 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.