

# MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: George Wheeler

Date received by Chief Exec's Business Support: 4 January 2022

To the Cabinet Member for: Environment and Street Services

Question: The UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2019, published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and updated on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 indicates that Plymouth's carbon footprint overall fell from 1459.3 kilo tonnes CO2 in 2005 to 861.9 kilo tonnes CO2 in 2019, a reduction of 40.94%.

In the same period, the city's carbon footprint due to transport fell from 353.3 kilo tonnes CO2 in 2005 to 302.5 kilo tonnes CO2 in 2019, a reduction of 14.38%.

The Council has agreed a policy of becoming net zero in carbon output by 2030. Can you tell me how this will be measured and what baseline will be used, please? In terms of the city's carbon footprint, how many kilo tonnes of CO2 will the city be able to emit in 2030 in order to reach the net zero target, please? What is the best estimate of the amount that could be emitted due to transport, please?

**Response:** ( for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) Thank you for your question Cllr Wheeler.

I would like to start by saying that this Administration has kept faith with the overall strategic approach that was put in place on the back of the Climate Emergency Declaration unanimously agreed at the City Council meeting held on 18 March 2019. Since May 2021, and as we said in our manifesto, we will 'commit to improving the environment by creating innovative plans to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030'. As I have made clear at scrutiny committees on our climate action plans in July 2021 and December 2021, I am passionate about strong monitoring of our actions. As well as developing future action plans to support our 2030 net zero target, a crucial part of responding to the Climate Emergency is the regular monitoring of emissions. So, your questions are very timely.

**In relation to your question: The Council has agreed a policy of becoming net zero in carbon output by 2030. Can you tell me how this will be measured and what baseline will be used, please?**

The scope of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is a well-researched area. The most widely used definitions are those set by the Green House Gas Protocol ([GHG Protocol](#)), which establishes comprehensive global standardized frameworks to measure and manage greenhouse gas emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains and mitigation actions. These well-defined areas of scope are:

**Scope 1 - All Direct Emissions** from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel combustion on site such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.

**Scope 2 – Indirect Emissions** from any electricity, heat and steam purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions are created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.

**Scope 3 – All Other Indirect Emissions** from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control. These are usually the greatest share of the carbon footprint, covering emissions associated with business travel, procurement, waste and water.

This methodology is used for both the CEAP (Climate Emergency Action Plan) and the CCRP (Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan). The complexity of recording scope 3 emissions means it's not possible to monitor all of scope 3 emissions at this time.

The council will use emissions data from 2019 to form the baseline of its own emissions. In terms of the city wide emissions the base line data is from 2008 as this is when the Climate Change Legislation became law and the first national carbon budgets commenced.

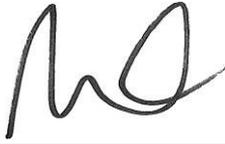
**In relation to your question: how many kilo tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> will the city be able to emit in 2030 in order to reach the net zero target, please? What is the best estimate of the amount that could be emitted due to transport, please?**

The net zero target means we are aiming for the City's total emissions to be equal to or less than those removed from the City environment. This is with the expectation that emissions are reduced as much as possible before offsetting is utilised.

As a result of this, and our action orientated approach, we do not yet have data relating to

the amount of kilo tonnes CO2 that the city emit could in 2030 and still achieve net zero. Our priority is to focus efforts on those activities which reduce and eradicate emissions first, rather than look to offsetting to provide the solution to the net zero target. We understand that offsetting is likely to play a role in reaching the net zero target, and as such will need to consider it in future iterations of our Climate Emergency Action Plans, and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plans.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'MA'.

Date: 21/01/2022

Written questions:

- must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer via the Chief Exec's Business Support
- will be replied to within 10 working days
- will be published on the last Friday of each month
- The completed form should be sent to [ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk) or by post to Chief Exec's Business Support, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ