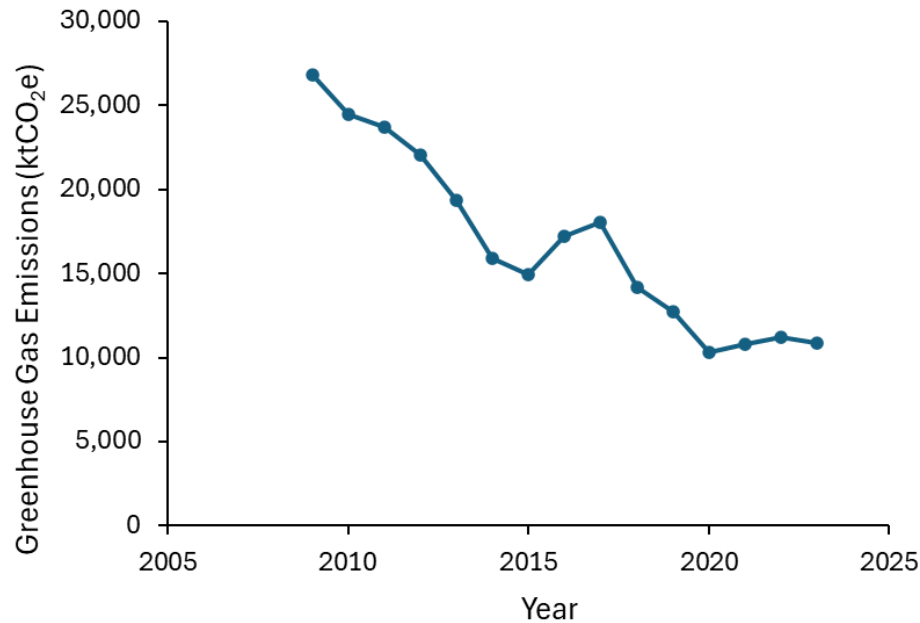


Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027

Progress Report 2024

1 A Carbon Neutral Comhairle

1.1 The Comhairle's Carbon Footprint



The Comhairle has been measuring greenhouse gas emissions since 2009.

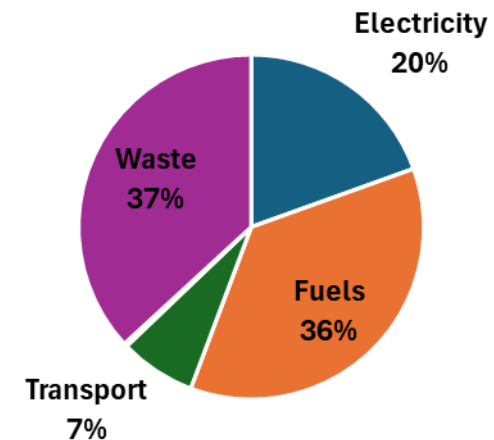
Significant progress was made in reducing emissions in the period from 2009 to 2015. An increase in emissions in 2016 and 2017 can largely be attributed to changes in emissions reporting requirements.

Emissions reached an all-time low in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions, with a slight increase in emissions in 2021 and 2022 as restrictions began to lift.

There was a slight decrease in emissions in 2023 compared with 2022.

A breakdown of the Comhairle's Carbon Footprint shows that waste to landfill is the biggest contributor to the Comhairle's carbon footprint (37%).

Fuels such as Gas Oil, LPG and Burning Oil, largely used to heat the Comhairle's buildings, are the next biggest contributor, making up 36% of the Comhairle's carbon footprint.










1.2 Action Plan Progress

Strategic Priority: A Carbon Neutral Comhairle				
Strategic Outcome	Action Plan Task	Status	% Complete	Comment on Progress
<i>1.0 Zero direct emissions by 2038 and minimal indirect emissions</i>	1.0.1 Internal Climate Change Working Group to be established	Completed	100%	An internal Climate Change Focus Group has been established within the Comhairle. Membership includes Chief Officers and Managers representing service areas including Procurement, Corporate Energy, Planning, Housing, Economic Development, Energy, Flood Risk Management and Coastal Change Adaptation. The group meets quarterly to ensure corporate awareness of climate change duties and legislative drivers; progress implementation of the Comhairle's Climate Change Strategy and monitor progress; enable coordination of funding and projects; and facilitate information sharing on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
<i>1.1 Energy efficiency across the estate is improved</i>	1.1.1 Determine baseline data on energy usage and energy efficiency across estate	In Progress	50%	Data on energy usage across the estate is collated and used to determine the Comhairle's carbon footprint annually.
<i>1.2 Heating across the Comhairle's Estate is decarbonised</i>	1.2.1 Develop an updated Assets Strategy	Completed	100%	An updated Assets Strategy has been developed and was approved in April 2023.
	1.2.2 Develop an energy efficiency investment strategy for the Comhairle's buildings	In Progress	25%	Energy Efficiency projects are developed as funding becomes available. Projects are managed and monitored through the Carbon Footprint Project Register tool and reported annually through the Public Bodies Climate Change. In 2023, equipment with poor energy efficiency, including SMART boards in schools and a faulty CHP at TACUN were replaced with equipment with improved energy efficiency.
	1.2.3 Zero emissions first approach to new and replacement heating systems	In Progress	25%	Renewable heating systems are the first consideration when new and end of life heating infrastructure is to be installed/replaced. Air source heat pumps have been installed as the primary heat source at the newly-built Taigh Shiophoirt. Zero emissions heating systems will be considered for use as the primary heat source in any new Comhairle developments going forwards.

<p><i>1.3 The Comhairle's fleet is decarbonised</i></p>	<p>1.3.1 Implement a Comhairle Fleet replacement policy which improves efficiencies and moves fleet towards Net Zero emissions.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>Consideration is being given to a consultancy review to look at a Comhairle-wide fleet procurement and replacement plan. Fleet replacement policy for all Comhairle vehicles has still to be developed.</p> <p>A significant number of electric cars and small vans are being used by the Comhairle. In addition to the hydrogen/diesel hybrid refuse collection vehicle (RCV) currently operated, an electric RCV is also now in service and is the first split body electric RCV in Scotland. This will allow assessment of real-world range in local conditions to be carried out and may lead to additional eRCVs being considered.</p> <p>Four replacement battery electric vehicles (BEV) with improved range performance to replace leased vehicles were purchased in 2023. Additional EV charging points for Comhairle fleet are planned. Options for light commercial vehicles are being monitored but are not considered to have sufficient range when loaded to function as a direct replacement.</p> <p>The delivery of the Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre will allow the Comhairle to develop further pilot hydrogen transport projects. Production and refuelling capacity is anticipated to be in place in 2025 and this could enable trials of Hydrogen buses and mobile plant.</p>
<p><i>1.4 Electric Vehicles are available for employees to use</i></p>	<p>1.4.1 Review and maximise utilisation of Electric Vehicles in fleet</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>75%</p>	<p>The Comhairle has a pool of Corporate Electric Vehicles which staff are encouraged to use for Business Travel. A refreshed Electric Vehicle Induction Training Course has been developed by the Corporate Training Team and has been well attended, increasing staff confidence to use the EVs. An improved online booking process has been launched, and information on vehicle availability and FAQs is available on the intranet. Usage will continue to be monitored annually.</p>
<p><i>1.5 Staff are empowered to choose active transport</i></p>	<p>1.5.1 Become a Cycle-Friendly Employer</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>The Comhairle successfully achieved Cycling Friendly Employer status from Cycling Scotland in August 2022. The Award recognises that the Comhairle has cycle facilities, organisational policies and commitments that incentivise cycling. These include the Cycle to Work scheme which employees can use to purchase a bike and cycling accessories, and a policy allowing employees to use personal bicycles for business travel and claim mileage (up to max. of 5 miles each way). The Comhairle also encourages cycling to employees for example through sharing information on events such as Cycle to Work Day.</p>

<p><i>1.6 Staff are carbon literate and engage in energy and resource efficient behaviours</i></p>	<p>1.6.1 Energy and resource efficiency / carbon literacy training available for staff</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>Net Zero & Climate Change training has been developed and is available on LearnPro, where all staff have access and can complete it as appropriate. The training aims to provide staff with an understanding of climate change and net zero and enable all employees to identify and take actions to support the Comhairle's Net Zero goals.</p> <p>Staff in several services including Planning, Assets and Infrastructure, Strategy and Energy, have also completed Climate Change or Net Zero training specific to their roles. Training attended includes Carbon Literacy Training, Net Zero Leadership Training, Carbon Budgeting and Energy Efficiency Retrofit.</p>
<p><i>1.7 Emissions from business travel are minimised</i></p>	<p>1.7.1 Update Business Travel Strategy to align with Climate Change Strategy</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>The Comhairle's Business Travel Strategy has been reviewed and updated to align with the Climate Change Strategy. Relevant updates include guidance for employees on consideration of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, inclusion of the Comhairle's pool Electric Vehicles and inclusion of active travel options such as cycling in the policy.</p>
<p><i>1.8 Emissions from waste are minimised</i></p>	<p>1.8.1 Develop an internal Waste Management Strategy</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>0%</p>	<p>Waste to landfill makes up approximately a third of the Comhairle's Carbon Footprint. While an internal strategy to reduce this has not yet been developed, Climate Change and Net Zero training with a focus on waste and resource efficiency has been developed and made available to employees, with the aim of reducing emissions in this area.</p>
<p><i>1.9 The Comhairle's supply chain has minimal environmental impact and emissions</i></p>	<p>1.9.1 Update Sustainable Procurement Strategy to align with Net Zero targets</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>The Comhairle's Procurement team has taken action to embed Net Zero considerations as standard practice in procurement across the Comhairle, through implementing a number of changes to procurement processes. These changes include updating the Procurement Strategy Document to include a specific question asking whether Net Zero has been considered in the Procurement Exercise. It is expected that this will be complimented by accompanying PIs demonstrating that this has indeed been the case. Any Net Zero benefits will also be incorporated into the Procurement Award Report.</p>
<p><i>1.10 All of the Comhairle's greenhouse gas emissions are measured and reported on</i></p>	<p>1.10.1 Review and update carbon footprint boundary</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>The Comhairle reviewed its Carbon Footprint and updated it to include emissions from assets leased by the Comhairle. Consideration is being given to how the Comhairle can best measure and report on Home-working Emissions and Business travel emissions going forwards. The Carbon Footprint will continue to be reviewed annually, considering whether there are opportunities for additional areas of emissions which can be measured.</p>

1.3 Performance Indicators

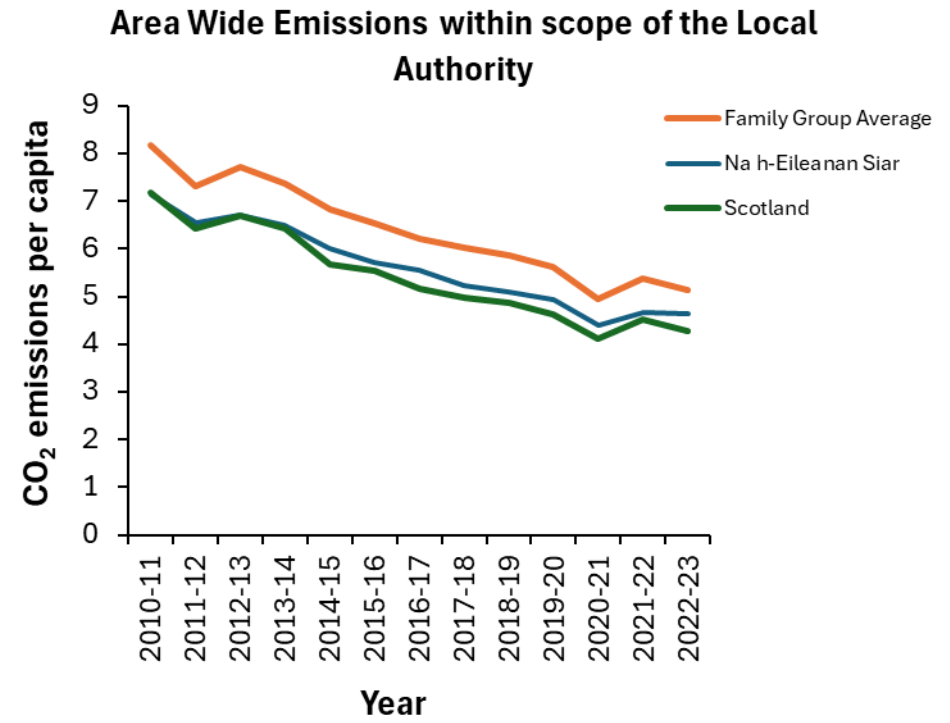
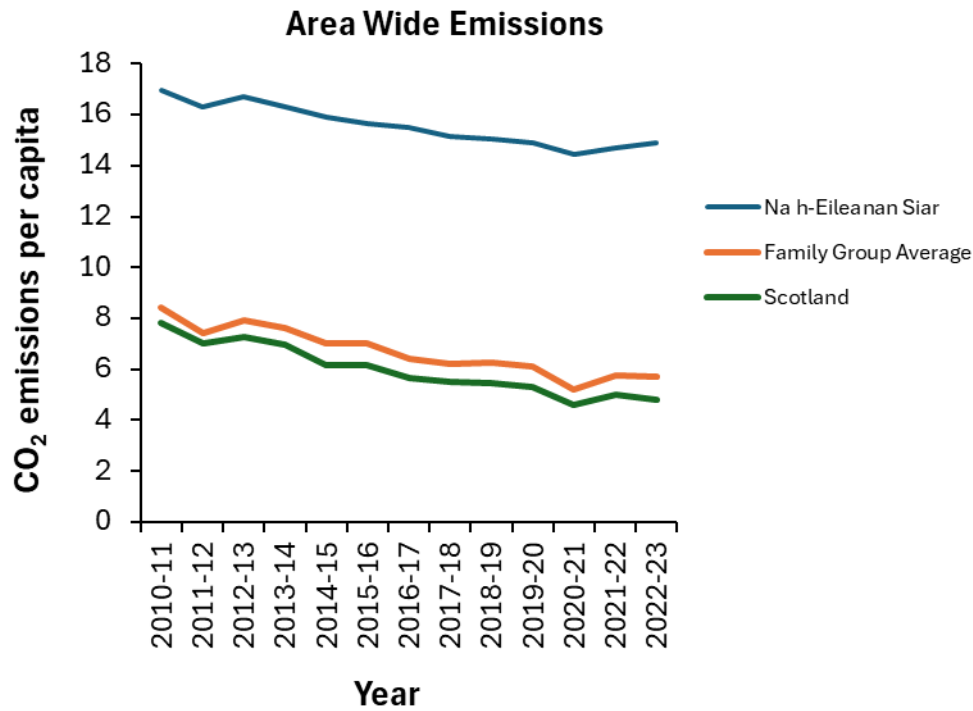
Strategic Priority: A Carbon Neutral Comhairle	Unit	Baseline (21/22)	Actual 22/23	Actual 23/24	Trend (compared to Baseline)
4.1.2.CS09 – CE136: The Comhairle's carbon footprint	tCO2e	10,935	11,212	10,861	
4.1.2.CS12 - AFR107 The Comhairle's emissions from electricity	tCO2e	1911	1816	2119	
4.1.2.CS13 - AFR108: The Comhairle's emissions from fuels	tCO2e	4044	4431	3931	
4.1.2.CS14 - AFR109 The Comhairle's emissions from transport	tCO2e	696	855	778	
4.1.2.CS14-AFR110 The Comhairle's emissions from waste	tCO2e	3961	3910	4002	
4.1.2.CS10 – CE137: Total estimated annual carbon savings from all projects implemented in the report year	tCO2e	65	30	401	
4.1.2. - CE111: Percentage of fleet mileage from Zero Direct Emissions vehicles.	%	4.98	10.03	7.87	

While data is not currently available for the following, consideration will be given as to how these can be measured and incorporated into future performance reporting:

- Staff completed Climate Change and Net Zero training
- Emissions from business travel
- Number of contracts where Net Zero is considered

2 Net Zero Islands - support the islands towards Net Zero by 2045

2.1 Area-Wide Emissions



The Local Government Benchmarking Framework uses both Area-wide CO₂ emissions per person and Area-wide CO₂ emissions within the scope of the Local Authority per person to measure progress in reducing emissions in the local authority area.

While Area Wide Emissions per capita for na h-Eileanan Siar are estimated to be higher than both the Family Group Average and national average, Area Wide Emissions within the scope of the local authority are lower than the Family Group Average.

This difference is largely due to the impact of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry emissions, which are estimated to be high in the islands and over which the Comhairle has relatively little influence.

2.2 Action Plan Progress






Strategic Priority - Net Zero Islands				
Strategic Outcome	Action Plan Task	Status	% Complete	Comment on Progress
2.0 <i>The islands are supported towards net zero by 2045</i>	2.0.1 Work with and support partners working towards Net Zero in the islands	In Progress	25%	<p>As a member of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Climate Change Working Group, the Comhairle works with partners to advance and collaborate on climate action, and to develop actions and targets around climate issues. This includes work on both climate change adaptation and mitigation, both in the community and corporately, through collaboration with other organisations to maximise the impact and efficiency of climate action in the islands, and through increasing understanding, involvement and community knowledge and capacity on the impacts of climate change and potential actions for the Outer Hebrides.</p> <p>The Comhairle is also working with partners to support delivery of the Island Centre for Net Zero (ICNZ). The ICNZ is an Islands Growth Deal project which has been established through interdisciplinary partnership between Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, EMEC, Community Energy Scotland, UHI, Heriot-Watt University and Aquatera. The ICNZ seeks to support our islands to become lighthouse communities in the energy transition by exploring, trialling, and accelerating solutions to decarbonisation that have replicability and application worldwide, generating GVA and green jobs for the Islands.</p> <p>The Comhairle is supporting Barra and Vatersay as part of the Carbon Neutral Islands project, which aims to see these islands become neutral by 2040 and has submitted an application to the Carbon Neutral Islands Capital Fund for the decarbonisation of Cobhair Bharraigh.</p>
	2.1.1 Update Outer Hebrides Energy Strategy	Not Started	0%	A Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Officer was appointed to a fixed term post and provided support in exploring solutions to a Local Energy Economy and the delivery of green hydrogen solutions.
2.1 <i>The islands potential for renewable energy and green hydrogen production is maximised</i>	2.1.2 Collaborate with partners to support renewable energy activities	In progress	25 %	With a significant number of major renewable energy projects and activities anticipated in the next few years, a Major Developments Forum has been established to bring together local public sector representatives, and the renewable energy development community, to explore key issues and identify areas of collaboration over the next period.




				Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will continue discussions with proposed wind developers to ensure that all developments benefit the economy of the Western Isles and strengthen our community resilience.
	2.1.3 Support development of hydrogen production and refuelling	In Progress	25%	<p>The Comhairle successfully secured £1.13m from the Emerging Energy Technologies Fund for the delivery of a Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre at the Creed. The project builds on existing hydrogen infrastructure, expertise and partnership arrangements across the three project partners, the Comhairle, PlusZero Ltd and UHI Outer Hebrides. The project aims to expand and enhance the existing green-hydrogen production and refuelling infrastructure at Creed Park to support the deployment of a wider range of hydrogen-technology in the Western Isles and create a “hands on” training and test environment to support UHI's hydrogen training programmes and new innovations. The project also aims to create learning and experience that can be transferred to other Islands and areas of Scotland.</p> <p>Delivery of the Centre will allow further pilot hydrogen transport projects to be developed. Production and refuelling capacity is anticipated to be in place in 2025 and this could enable trials of Hydrogen buses and mobile plant.</p>
2.2 <i>Buildings in our communities are energy efficient and use low carbon heating systems</i>	2.2.1 Develop and deliver Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy	In Progress	25%	<p>A Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan for na h-Eileanan Siar has been developed and were approved by the Comhairle in November 2023. The LHEES sets out the long-term plan for the islands to decarbonise heat & improve energy efficiency. The LHEES considers the decarbonisation of buildings Off the Gas Grid, decarbonisation of buildings On the Gas Grid, decarbonisation using heat networks, poor energy efficiency, poor energy efficiency where this is a contributor to fuel poverty, and mixed tenure and historic buildings.</p> <p>The vision of the LHEES is that: “Highly energy efficient buildings throughout our islands reduce fuel poverty, enabling the transition to decarbonised heat and decreasing our buildings’ contribution to climate change.” The Comhairle’s LHEES Delivery plan focusses on using the evidence-base from the LHEES to better target key priority areas, align with existing plans, programmes, and activities, engage with stakeholders, and develop a portfolio of projects. Focus is now on working with partners to deliver the Strategy.</p>
2.3 <i>Low-carbon transport infrastructure is available throughout the islands</i>	2.3.1 Work with partners to develop Active Travel Masterplans	Completed	100%	<p>The Outer Hebrides Active Travel Strategy presents a vision for high quality places where walking and cycling for everyday journeys to school, work or shopping are easy, pleasant and safe. Specific Active Travel plans have been completed for Stornoway, Tarbert, Lochmaddy, Balivanich, Lochboisdale and Castlebay, identifying targeted actions to support a transition to low carbon transport. Actions identified includes Safe Routes to School, Cycle-friendly routes, and other improvements to foster improved environments for active travel. The actions set out in the plans will enable the Comhairle to take the next steps towards identifying funding to develop feasibility</p>

				studies and detailed designs of potential options, undertake further consultation, and implement actions.
	2.3.2 Work with partners to develop an EV Charging Strategy and Plan	Completed	100%	The Comhairle has developed a combined islands EV Charging Strategy and Plan in collaboration with Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council, supported by HITRANS. This was submitted to the Transport Scotland Advisory Board in November 2023. The Comhairle's Strategy and Plan focuses on providing a fit for purpose network and the development of EV hubs at key strategic locations across the Western Isles. The plan also included the potential to explore commercial interest opportunities in the local EV network, and to consider a potential to develop alternative business options for EV charge point ownership and management.
<i>2.4 Waste is minimised and circular economy opportunities throughout the islands are maximised</i>	2.4.1 Implement a waste management and circular economy plan which meets the environmental considerations of the Outer Hebrides	In Progress	25%	<p>Progress has been made in expanding kerbside recycling and in the procurement of an Electric Refuse Collection Vehicle. Trials of residual waste shipment for energy from waste treatment will be carried out in Spring 2024 to determine haulage payloads, gate fees and ferry capacity requirements using bulker transfer.</p> <p>Some uncertainty remains regarding the future design of collection services due to the proposed started date for the Deposit Return Scheme being delayed to 2027.</p>
<i>2.5 The carbon sequestration potential of our natural landscape is maximised</i>	2.5.1 Develop Peatland Vision for the Western Isles	In Progress	25%	A project on Peatlands is being progressed through the Island Centre for Net Zero and will be developed and delivered as a pan-island project in collaboration with partners in Orkney and Shetland.
<i>2.6 Biodiversity across the islands is increased</i>	2.6.1 Update Local Biodiversity Plan	Not Started	0%	While work on updating the Local Biodiversity Plan has not yet started, monitoring and delivery of the current Biodiversity Action Plan is ongoing. The Comhairle has also worked in partnership with Community Land to deliver nature restoration activities such as the invasive species control project.
<i>2.7 Our communities are empowered to take climate mitigation action</i>	2.7.1 Make climate change resources available and facilitate events	In Progress	75%	Leabharlann nan Eilean Siar established 'Climate Corners' and created two collections of books about climate, with one for children and one for adults, to inspire public engagement and positive action in the Western Isles. As part of the Outer Hebrides Climate Beacon, Lan Thide, Leabharlann nan Eilean Siar and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) created a programme of climate change focused public events.

				<p>The Comhairle continues to work with the OHCPP to facilitate Climate Change events. To mark Scotland’s Climate Week on the 23rd –29th of September, an “Outer Hebrides Conference of the Parties”, or OH-COP1 was organised by Climate Hebrides, supported by the OHCPP Climate Change Working Group. The event took place at an Lanntair, with Young People’s voices featuring throughout the day. The Comhairle’s primary and secondary schools also participated in e-Sgoil and OHCOP Climate Assemblies, in addition to a range of climate change challenges to mark Climate Week. The climate challenges were designed to encourage young people to have conversations about the climate and local climate issues, commit to climate change action and take part in climate activities. The Comhairle’s Strategy Team also presented an overview of the Comhairle’s Climate Change Strategy, commitments and strategic priorities relating to Climate Change at the event.</p> <p>The Comhairle is also supporting the development and delivery of local resources on Climate Change and Net Zero through the Island Centre for Net Zero.</p>
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2.3 Performance Indicators

Strategic Priority – Net Zero Islands	Unit	Actual 2021/22 (Baseline)	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Trend
1.1.1.CS04 - AFR102 (LGBF: CLIM01): CO2 emissions area wide per capita	tCO2e per capita	14.69	14.87	*	
1.1.1.CS04 - AFR103 (LGBF: CLIM02): CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of Local Authority per capita.	tCO2e per capita	4.66	4.65	*	
1.1.1. AFR105 (LGBF: CLIM03): CO2 emissions from transport per capita	tCO2e per capita	24.15	30.26	*	
1.1.1. AFR106 (LGBF: CLIM04): CO2 emissions from electricity per capita	tCO2e per capita	78.09	74.43	*	
4.1.2.CS11 – CE138: Number of electric vehicle charge points	Number	24	36	43	

4.1.2.CS08 – CE135: Investment secured for the development of low carbon solutions	£000	1149	194	2205	
4.1.2.CS03 - CD164: The amount of household waste generated	Tonnes	14125	13469	*	
4.1.2.CS04 - TS014 (LGBF-ENV6): The Percentage of total waste arising that is recycled (Jan-Dec)	%	33.5	31.8	31.5	

*Data is not yet available for 2023/24 – the trend shown is therefore the trend between the baseline 2021/22 and actual 2022/23.

3 Climate Resilient Islands

3.1 Action Plan Progress

Climate Resilient Islands				
Strategic Outcome	Action Plan Task	Status	% Complete	Comment on Progress
<i>3.1 Climate risks to Comhairle services are minimised</i>	3.1.1 Climate Risks to Comhairle services are identified and minimised	In Progress	75%	Climate Change Risks are included on the Comhairle's Strategic Risk Register as SR16 - Risk Event "The Comhairle is unprepared for Climate Change. Failure to adapt to the effects of Climate Change." Controls have been put in place, including the development of the Comhairle's Climate Change Strategy and Resilience Strategy and other emergency plans and ongoing work with the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Climate Change Working group. Climate Change Risks will continue to be reviewed annually as the Strategic Risk Register is updated as part of the Comhairle's Corporate Risk Management process. Work is ongoing with services to ensure consideration of risks relating to climate change are embedded into Service Business Plans.
<i>3.2 Local climate risks and opportunities identified and addressed</i>	3.2.1 Work with partners to identify local risks and develop Local Climate Risk Register	In Progress	75%	As part of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Climate Change Working Group, the Comhairle has worked with partners to collate risks and potential hazard impacts identified by communities, local groups and planning partners. This work is summarised and published in the Outer Hebrides CCWG Climate Rationale (flippingbook.com) and Outer Hebrides CCWG Case for Action (flippingbook.com) . The CCWG aims to develop a climate change adaptation plan for the islands and will continue to explore potential avenues of funding to progress this.

<p><i>3.3 Transportation, infrastructure, and natural environment and assets are protected against flooding</i></p>	<p>3.3.1 Develop and deliver an updated Flood Risk Management Plan</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>50%</p>	<p>The Outer Hebrides Flood Risk Management Plan for cycle 2 (2021 to 2027) takes a long term, risk-based approach to flood risk management decisions and one that considers the impacts of and adaptability to climate change. Flooding risks are identified through records such as historical flooding, consultation with local communities, projected future flooding and will be further informed by future flood studies. Progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the Outer Hebrides for Cycle 2 will be monitored through ongoing joint working arrangements under the Local Plan District partnerships.</p>
<p><i>3.4 Our islands are prepared for adverse weather events and climate-related shocks</i></p>	<p>3.4.1 Develop Resilience Strategy</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>50%</p>	<p>The Comhairle's approach to Resilience, including Climate Resilience, is set out in the Resilience Strategy 2023-28. The Strategy recognises that many of the potential risks for the islands are likely to be exacerbated by climate change and sets out strategic actions and outcomes against four priority areas - Working Together, Anticipating Risks, Preparing for Response and Recovery, and Communicating Effectively.</p>
<p><i>3.5 Our communities are aware of the effects of a changing climate & empowered to take climate action</i></p>	<p>3.5.1 Work with partners to develop local climate change resources and facilitate events on climate change adaptation</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>50%</p>	<p>The Comhairle worked with partners in the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership to develop a Climate Rational and Case for Action for the islands. These documents present an overview of the changing climate for the Outer Hebrides and how to improve resilience to climate impacts in the Outer Hebrides. In addition, the Comhairle collaborated with partners to develop maps to illustrate hazard projections, bringing together datasets from Dynamic Coast on coastal erosion and sea level rise projections with layers on habitats, historic environment, public facilities, transport and infrastructure and more to enable visualisation of potential impacts.</p> <p>The Comhairle also supported Climate Hebrides to facilitate an “Our Climate Story” lunchtime workshop at the Comhairle. Our Climate Story aims to capture valuable experiences around how islanders are experiencing climate change, gathering stories from a diverse range of people and communities.</p> <p>Leabharlann nan Eilean Siar established ‘Climate Corners’ and created two collections of books about climate, with one for children and one for adults, to inspire public engagement and positive action in the Western Isles. As part of the Outer Hebrides Climate Beacon, Lan Thide, Leabharlann nan Eilean Siar and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) created a programme of climate change focused public events.</p>