

Environment Partnership, 20 January 2012

Arrangements for reporting greenhouse gas emissions and progress on energy/carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work

Introduction

1. At its meeting in October, OWEP asked officers to review the arrangements for reporting on emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from member authorities, as well as energy reduction and climate change adaptation work.
2. Authorities have been reporting within the NI185 framework which has come to an end. In its place, DECC now asks local authorities to publish data on the previous year's GHG emissions by the end of each July. DEFRA and DECC have jointly published Guidance¹ on how the figures should be calculated.
3. One advantage of the approach set out in the Guidance is that it recommends a common approach for all organisations – large and small, public and private. It is also based on an internationally accepted protocol for reporting emissions.

Recommendations

4. We propose that the member authorities report yearly on their carbon emissions using the approach set out in the Guidance at the first meeting after the July deadline – normally in September.
5. When comparing performance against the agreed target, (3% reduction per year, in Oxfordshire 2030 refresh) we should use the figures for actual emissions.
6. In addition, we will report weather-corrected figures for heating, using the heating degree day approach, to help understand the impact of year-to-year variations in winter temperature.
7. We also propose to invite local authorities and other organisations as appropriate, to present to other meetings of the Partnership during the year as suggested in a forward plan presented to this meeting. The aim is to share their experience so as to support each other in making cost effective energy reductions, and to share tools and progress where relevant in developing climate resilience within their organisations.

Common approach

8. The Guidance includes a number of options to reflect different circumstances. Annex A sets out a common approach to ensure the figures are consistent and comparable.

Baseline

9. Table 1 sets out the baseline data for 2010/11 in the new format.

¹ DEFRA & DECC (Sept 2009) Guidance on how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13309-ghg-guidance-0909011.pdf>

Recommendation

10. The Partnership is recommended to agree the proposed process for reporting progress in reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions and for sharing practice as set out in paragraphs 4 to 7 of this report.

Annex A – Towards a common approach to GHG reporting

1. The DECC/DEFRA Guidance includes a number of options to reflect different circumstances. This Annex suggests a common approach to ensure the figures are comparable.

Target and Baseline year

2. Oxfordshire authorities have agreed to a target of at least a 3% year on year reduction in carbon emissions from their own operations, initially to 2014.
3. The Guidance was introduced for 2010/11 and we propose to use this as the baseline.

Organisational boundaries

4. The first step in the process is to set the organisational boundary: Authorities will report on emissions from activities over which they have operational control.
5. This means for example that the County Council will include emissions from schools and the City and Districts will include leisure centres.

Scope

6. Emissions are categorised into three scopes. In the case of local authorities this implies:

Table 1: Scope methodology applied to local authorities

Scope	Description	Possible sources to be included
1	Direct emissions	Heating of the Council's buildings – principally by gas, but including oil, kerosene and LPG. Fuel used by the Council's own fleet.
2	Energy indirect	Emissions associated with generation of electricity used in the Council's buildings and street lighting.
3	Other indirect	Business travel by the Council's staff and contractors. Waste disposal to landfill. Total indirect emissions - extraction, processing transporting of fuels.

7. It is accepted practice to exclude emissions which are a small proportion of the total and where the cost of collecting the data is significant. At the moment, Councils will not be reporting on the emissions associated with water, waste or commuting to work.
8. There are in fact six greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide. We will report on the most significant – carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O).
9. Emissions from the combustion of bio-mass – eg wood in biomass boilers – need will be included but shown separately.

Recalculation of base-line data

10. Comparing like-with-like over an extended period can become difficult as circumstances change. The Guidance includes advice on the approach to be adopted when this happens.
11. At the moment, there is significant pressure to reduce the size of the public estate. The Guidance distinguishes between organic growth and decline and mergers, acquisitions and divestitures.
12. Outsourcing a service to a contractor with associated building closures would be treated as a divestiture and would require the recalculation of the base-line as would a merger between services.
13. Opening a new building or closing an old one is treated as organic growth and decline which does not require a recalculation.

Table 1 – Baseline GHG emissions

Scope	Oxfordshire County Council	Oxford City Council	Cherwell District Council	West Oxfordshire District Council	Vale of White Horse District Council	South Oxfordshire District Council
Tonnes of CO₂e for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011						
Scope 1	23,723	4,181	2,541	2,836	2,806	2,856
Scope 2	39,722	3,565	2,505	1,229	1,603	1,622
Scope 3	4,387	91	895	670	681	719
Total Gross Emissions						
	67,832	7,837	5,941	4,735	5,089	5,197
Carbon offsets (including renewables)			3			
Green tariff (renewable electricity)	12,179		593			
Total annual net emissions						
	55,653	7,837	5,345	4,735	5,089	5,197