

GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CARBON MANAGEMENT

Report by Head of Sustainable Development

Introduction

1. This report provides an overview of what Oxfordshire County Council is doing to hit its carbon reduction targets, and how it is looking to address the new financial and legislative drivers to hit current and future carbon reduction targets.

Oxfordshire County Council's Carbon Targets

2. Over the past couple of years Oxfordshire County Council has been working towards two complementary carbon reduction targets:
 - The first is the Carbon Management Programme's 18% carbon reduction by March 2012 target (based on 2005/6 emissions) launched in 2007.
 - The second target is the National Indicator 185 Local Area Agreement target which the council signed up to with the five district councils in 2008. The NI185 target looks to achieve an overall 6% carbon reduction across all the councils' activity by March 2011 (based on 2008/9 emissions). Although this target was agreed after the 18% target was established, it is in line with the county council's existing action plans to reduce carbon emissions.

Carbon Management Programme

3. In 2007 the county council launched the Carbon Management Programme and associated 18% carbon reduction target. The Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan (SIP) details how the county council can achieve the target within the 5 years. Within the SIP is an overarching action plan which is reviewed on an annual basis enabling resources to be focused on carbon reduction activities.
4. To meet these targets the work that the county council has undertaken has focussed on:
 - Improving energy management within **buildings**
 - Improving the efficiency of **ICT equipment**
 - Improving the energy efficiency of our **street lighting**
 - Reducing car mileage **travelled at work**
 - Reducing **waste** going to landfill from our buildings

5. Some achievements in the various areas during 2009/10 include:
- Reduced lamp wattages in new installations, installation of reduced operational times of photo cells, part night lighting, installed LED lamps in zebra crossings and illuminated signs reducing the carbon footprint from the 'street lighting'.
 - The development of Samuelson House (a new County Council office building) has achieved BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) excellent status. This means that the building has one of the highest building sustainability standards; solar panels, rain water harvesting and zoned lighting are all in place on site.
 - A trial of 4 BMW electric minis at County Hall, reducing carbon from mileage travelled at work
 - Installation of more efficient equipment such as boilers and upgraded lighting within schools
 - The launch of a schools climate change video designed and filmed by 2 Oxfordshire schools
 - The launch of the new energy bus, as part of the Energy Busters Project going out to schools

Progress against the targets

6. According to 2008/09 figures the county council is not on schedule to hit the 18% carbon reduction target if that target is applied to the whole of the council's property portfolio. Carbon emissions during 2008/09 actually increased from 2007/08 figures. This increase is attributable to a cold winter and schools increasing their carbon emissions primarily due to responding to external pressures such as the demand for longer opening hours and a significant increase in ICT (chart 1).

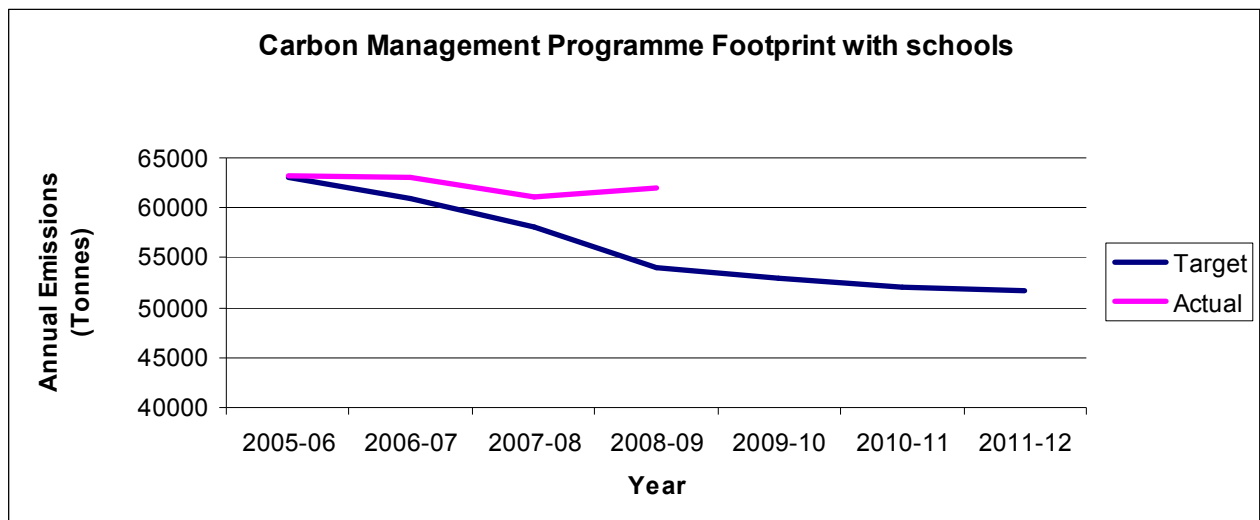


Chart 1: Overall progress against the 18% carbon reduction target

7. However, if schools' carbon emissions are excluded from the calculation the council reduced its carbon footprint by 8% (2,234 tonnes) in 2008/09 (chart 2).

This has been achieved through transport, waste recycling, energy efficiency measures in non-school property and street lighting. Given the fact that schools have a large degree of independence in how they manage their property and energy use it makes sense to treat schools' carbon emissions separately from other county council emissions.

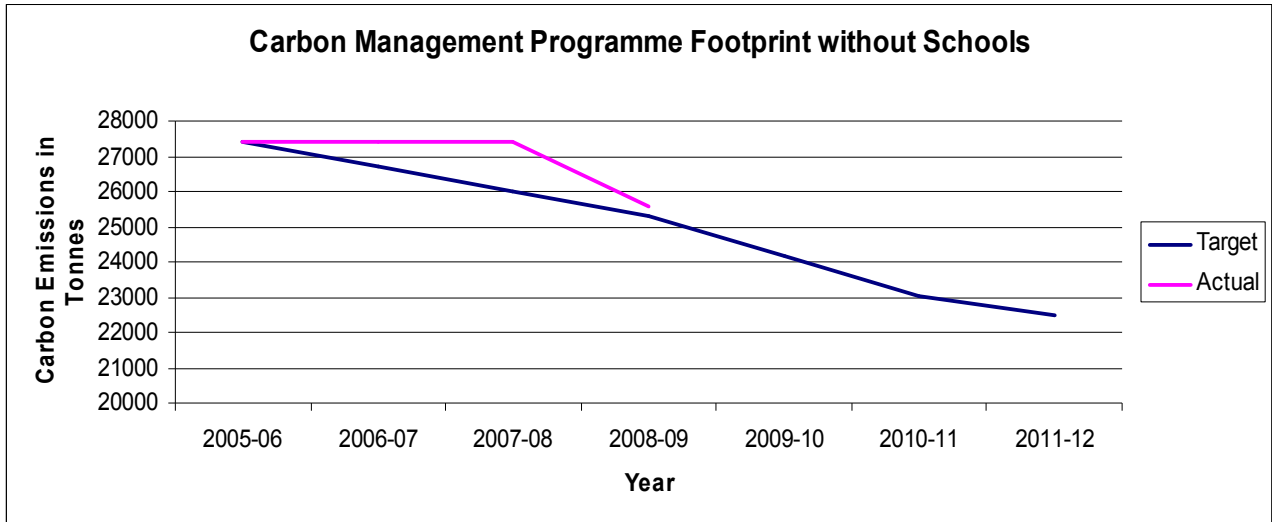


Chart 1: Progress against the 18% carbon reduction target excluding schools

8. Emission figures for 2009/10 are currently being collated, so progress against last financial year cannot be confirmed until July 2010. Due to this lag time in reporting, we are similarly unable to publish progress against the NI185 6% carbon reduction target until July 2010.

New Drivers to Reduce Carbon

9. The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme. The scheme, which started on the 1 April 2010, is a financial 'cap and trade' mechanism that has put a price on every tonne of carbon that is emitted through energy consumption. This is in effect a tax on carbon emissions designed to help the Government meet its legally binding carbon budgets and has crystallised the business case for carbon reduction.
10. From April 2011 the county council has to purchase allowances for every tonne of carbon it emits through its energy use, including all street lighting, schools and non-schools property. Through the scheme the council will be rewarded for improving its energy efficiency, and financially penalised if it does not. This performance will be relative to over 5,000 other organisations registered within the scheme including private sector organisations.
11. The CRC Energy Efficiency scheme will require the county council to move into new carbon management territory including forecasting carbon emissions, incorporating carbon into strategic decisions, and trading on a competitive market to reduce the financial risk the council is exposed to through the scheme.

Future carbon reduction work

12. Oxfordshire County Council is looking to implement further carbon reduction measures during 2010/11 – 2011/12 by:
- Converting 14,000 street lights to part-night lighting
 - Reduce mileage travelled at work by 10%
 - Continue to improve energy efficiency of our buildings
 - Develop a Schools Carbon Reduction Strategy specifically designed to support schools with reducing their carbon footprint.

Conclusion

13. Through the implementation of the approved actions within the Carbon Management Programme's SIP the council has achieved carbon reduction in a number of key areas. It is apparent, however, that through new carbon reduction drivers and external pressures that may lead to increasing carbon emissions (such as those imposed on schools) the council will need to continue to evolve its approach to reducing its carbon footprint.

RECOMMENDATION

14. **The Scrutiny Committee is invited to:**
- (a) **note the work conducted by the carbon management programme over the past six months;**
 - (b) **advise on planned work, particularly with regard to:**
 - (1) **converting 14,000 street lights to part-night lighting;**
 - (2) **developing a Schools Carbon Reduction Strategy;**
 - (c) **appoint a task group to consider further and report back.**

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May 2010