



VisitScotland
Annual Internal
Sustainability Report
2021/22

Introduction

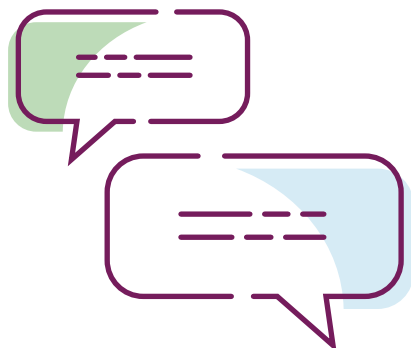
Tourism is a force for good. It creates jobs, sustains communities, enriches lives and contributes significantly to the economy.

However, with increasing concern around the impacts of climate change and changing consumer behaviours, it has become clear that the industry's future success is dependent on responsible and sustainable development.

In line with the Scottish Government's ambition and Scotland: Outlook 2030 Tourism Strategy, VisitScotland will play a lead role in the development of responsible tourism practices, making Scotland one of the most economically, environmentally and socially sustainable destinations in the world.

This will be achieved by taking direct action on issues under its control and engaging, influencing and supporting strategic partners, businesses, destination communities and visitors, to enable and encourage the adoption of responsible tourism practices (see [VisitScotland's Sustainable Tourism Policy](#)).

VisitScotland is a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency. It is committed to reducing carbon emissions in its own operations, in line with its sustainability policy and the Scottish Government's climate change targets. VisitScotland also continues to develop as a climate conscious organisation, recognising where it needs to make improvements and learn lessons from others.



Climate Change Reporting

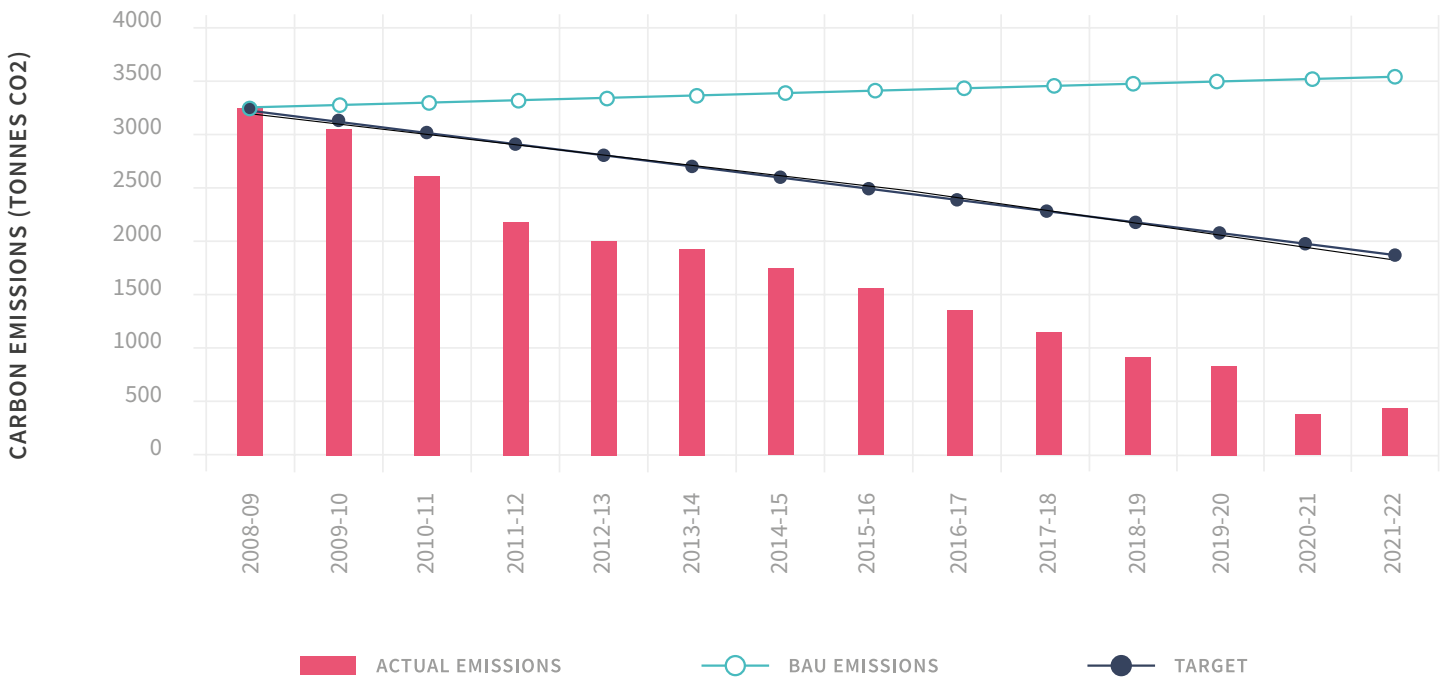
The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 requires all public bodies to exercise their functions in a way that best contributes to the Act's carbon emission reduction targets, delivery of climate change adaptation program and overall sustainable practices. The **Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019**, which amends the **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009**, the Scottish Government has set ambitions to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040 against a 2008/09 baseline.

As of the 31 March 2022, VisitScotland has achieved an 87% reduction in CO2 emissions from its base year, which exceeds the current 2030 target. The average reduction per year is 11% (averaged from its base year of 2008/9 to 2019/20), showing that

although its emissions have risen by 9% in the current year, due to relaxed Covid restrictions, it has still achieved a reduction of 51% against the last full pre-pandemic year.

VisitScotland annually reports on its compliance with its climate change duties through the **Scottish Sustainable Network** reporting tool. In 2020-21 reporting included homeworking emissions and in the next report due in November 2022, VisitScotland will be including commuting data and a date when it anticipates to be net zero in areas of direct emissions. VisitScotland's ambition is to be net zero by 2030. VisitScotland is not ignoring Scope 3 emissions but embracing them by developing a tool to identify all Scope 3 emissions which will lead to a more detailed plan for future reductions.

Comparison of the actual emissions with the BAU increases and reduction targets predicted



Climate Change Reporting

A full breakdown of VisitScotland's emissions per category from the base year:

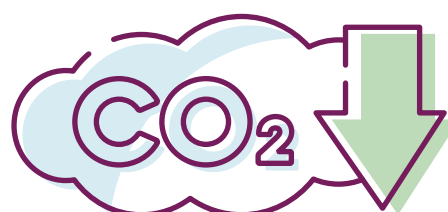
Year	Total CO2 Emissions (tonnes)	Emissions from building (tonnes)	Emissions from transport (tonnes)	Emissions from waste (tonnes)	Emissions from water (tonnes)
2008	3,235	2,563	543	124	6
2009	3,020	2,382	509	124	6
2010	2,596	2,013	453	124	6
2011	2,176	1,621	431	119	5
2012	2,014	1,548	373	90	2
2013	1,934	1,535	321	76	2
2014	1,777	1,317	383	75	2
2015	1,548	1,106	371	69	2
2016	1,370	1,000	317	51	3
2017	1,170	763	333	73	1
2018	918	527	330	60	2
2019	859	473	335	50	1
2020	387	374	7	5	>0.1
2021	422	355	55	11	>0.1

COP26

While restrictions remained in place for large parts of the year, due to the continuing global pandemic, there was a greater opportunity to attend and hold events than in 2020/21. The most significant event of 2021 was COP26. The Scottish Government had the aspiration to offer an ambitious programme of events, in multiple and flexible spaces, offering something to everyone and to support the achievement of their objectives for COP26.

The programme of events was successfully delivered by the Events and Exhibitions Team with more than 2,400 people attending in person and over 3,300 joining virtually. The Lighthouse on Mitchell Lane in Glasgow was the chosen venue and VisitScotland led on the operational planning and delivery of the project, working closely with the Scottish Government as a 'Team Scotland' partner. On site it took 61 staff to deliver the project over 12 days, of which 13 were VisitScotland staff. Seven members of VisitScotland's Events team were responsible for the planning and management of the project. All live events were also offered virtually to reduce travel and allow for those not willing or able to travel due to Covid but also to extend the global audience reach ensuring the Scottish Government sustainability message was shared as widely as possible.

The carbon impact of the programme was considered at every level including, although not restricted to: the menus; staffing, with support staff only chosen if they lived within a close radius to Glasgow; video content being used wherever possible and ensuring any in-situ branding was recyclable; single use plastics bottles being banned from site, handouts at events were restricted and there were no generic leaflets or give aways from main organisers. Organisations which were invited to participate also had to be committed to delivering the core outcomes of the zone and not be associated with any controversial environmental activities. The events provided a platform to share VisitScotland's vision for a sustainable future and to inspire the industry to take action.



Climate Change Reporting

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING*

VisitScotland has **Reduced CO2 emissions** since 2008/9 **by 87%**



Scottish Government target **was 75% by 2030** from 2008/09

MINIMISE RESOURCE USE AND WASTE PRODUCTION*

3% reduction in CO2e emissions from 2020/21



Scottish Government **recycling target is 70%** with no more than **5% to landfill by 2025**

62 % recycling rate in 2020/21

38% in waste to landfill

REDUCE IMPACT OF TOURISM TRANSPORT*

90% reduction in VisitScotland transport related carbon emissions since 2008/9



SUPPORT ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

95% of VisitScotland properties have achieved Green Tourism Certification

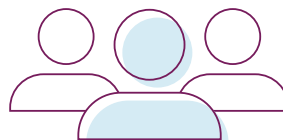
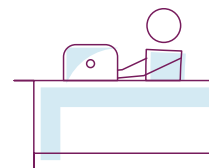
Remaining 5% to be assessed in 2022/23



Green Tourism

IMPROVE QUALITY OF JOBS FOR ALL

hybrid working model developed for staff which will give the ability to **spread job roles across Scotland**



thereby **contributing to local economies** and **creating more locally based jobs.**

* 2021-22 carbon emission reductions are different from normal due to the second year of pandemic restrictions, home working and less business travel

Internal Sustainability Policy Objectives

Minimise resource use and waste production

“Take action to encourage reduced resource use and waste production from our internal operations contributing to reduced carbon emissions and climate change impact.”

VisitScotland’s resource use and waste related CO2 emissions are continuing to reduce from its baseline year. In 2021/22, it saw a 3% decrease on the previous year, however comparing to 2019/20 (its last full year of pre-pandemic results), it has a 30% reduction compared to a “normal” year where its average reduction is only 11%. This year was another year of restrictions and does not truly reflect all its normal business premises occupation.

As VisitScotland offices opened again, it produced a video and “know before you go” guide supporting its staff to enjoy a sustainable return to office working. Its messaging included considering alternative commuting and business travel modes by walking, cycling or using public transport and encouraging staff to bring in their own reusable cups and lunch bags. VisitScotland also encouraged using online documents at any meetings that did take place to reduce its printing and a switch off campaign for screen, electronics, lights and printers. All of these actions will contribute to its emission reductions going forward.

Buildings Scope 1 (gas), Scope 2 (electricity):

Energy in VisitScotland buildings equates to 355 tCO2e, a 5% reduction on 2020/21 and a 25% reduction on 2019/20 the last full pre-pandemic year (86% from its base year).

- VisitScotland has continued with its programme to improve its buildings efficiency, through its planned preventative maintenance measures.
- During 2021/22 changes within the VisitScotland estate reduced its floorspace by 124.29m², however it leased additional space for the Cycling World Championship office which is an additional 137.68m² for the next 3 years.
- Wherever possible VisitScotland takes the opportunity to replace lighting with LEDs and this has been completed in its relocation in Stirling local office, in St Andrews local office, Ullapool iCentre and the first-floor office space in Balloch.
- In Stirling, VisitScotland also added sensors to lighting and installed a Quooker tap negating the need for a kettle and water cooler.

- In Balloch iCentre, old storage heaters were replaced with more efficient infra-red heating, and modern panel heaters to the first-floor office space. St Andrews local office also had more modern panel heaters which utilise timers installed, and Ullapool benefited from new infra-red heating.
- Since the return of VisitScotland staff to office working in March 2022, the estate requirements of the organisation continue to be reviewed due to the implementation of the hybrid working policy.
- The IT Team continue to drive projects that will significantly reduce power usage and remove the need for an on-premise data centre.
- VisitScotland continues to purchase REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) Certificates demonstrating its commitment to its energy supplier investing in renewable technology.
- VisitScotland has gas heating in five locations and will remove these over the next 6 years.



Internal Sustainability Policy Objectives

Waste and Water Scope 3 emissions

- VisitScotland's total waste currently sits at 38% to landfill and 62% recycled, its aim is to have no more than 5% to landfill and 70% to recycled by the Scottish Government target of 2025.
- VisitScotland's Green Champions rebranded all its bin signage this year to allow staff to easily see what should be deposited in which bin to reduce landfill waste and stop contamination.
- During reorientation for office working, VisitScotland encouraged staff to bring their own reusable cup and lunch bag, cutting down on waste generated from purchased items and single-use plastic, and also encouraged staff, where possible, to take their personal waste home with them.
- Printing is kept to an absolute minimum, favouring devices and the use of two screens to read documents. VisitScotland's IT Team continues to review print solutions across the network with a view to reduce the number of printers whilst meeting the organisational requirements.
- Water equates to less than 0.1 of a tonne based on our metered sites. Staff are encouraged to report any leaks and to use water wisely to reduce output.
- VisitScotland's Information Retail Team is looking into more sustainable policies of VisitScotland's suppliers and will, where possible, reduce packaging as well as focus on local products.



General

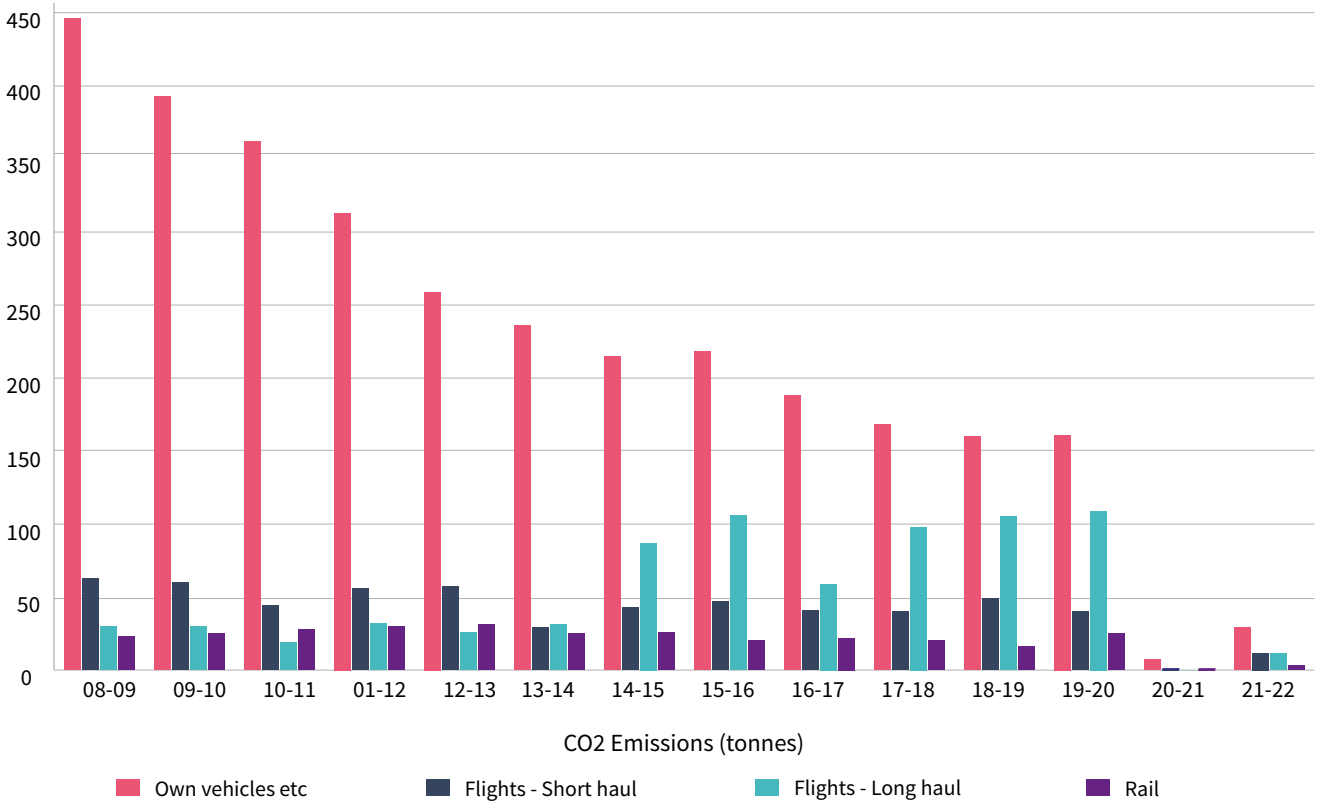
- VisitScotland's Green Champion network achieved Gold Green Tourism Awards for 95% of its sites, following on from the GreenCheck Assessments (with the remaining two sites to be assessed during 2022/23), supporting its sustainability objectives across the estate.
- VisitScotland continues to implement the Carrier Bag Charge (Scotland) Regulations across its iCentre network, which contribute to reducing litter and resource use. Plastic bags were phased out during the year. They were replaced with sustainable brown paper bags and a cotton shopper available to purchase at cost price + VAT.
- The Staff Innovation Group managed and encouraged a range of sustainable (and health and wellbeing) projects from the organisation-wide litterpick; 'growing for wellbeing' and sharing tips; support around COP26 in Glasgow (with signposting to online information and events around Scotland) and finally an eco-microsite encouraging 'greener and more sustainable' purchases at Christmas.
- The Internal Communications team used all channels available (including intranet and Elevenses - staff briefings) to promote sustainable themes such as: Climate Change week; Cycle to Work Scheme; Home Energy Scotland webinars on energy efficiency and electric vehicles.
- A major focus for VisitScotland's Corporate Communications team was its involvement in COP26 where it shared information externally and internally pre, during and post COP26. It also organised and hosted three events. It was important that its staff understood the importance and impact of this global summit, as well as VisitScotland's role in leading discussions around responsible tourism among stakeholders in Scotland.
- VisitScotland engaged in a pilot with Pawprint Eco app allowing 100 of its employees to measure their carbon footprint then take actions and create new habits to reduce their footprint. In the first year, its 100 staff completed over 22,000 actions creating 1,738 new lifetime habits, collectively reducing their carbon footprints by 249,226 kgCO₂e equating to driving a car 451,414 miles. The habits formed were home and work-related, under topics such as staying healthy, saving money, saving energy, food & drink and travel. VisitScotland's aim is to continue and expand this into next year.
- Requests for print, promotional items and display for all departments across VisitScotland are investigated to ensure new products are recycled or recyclable, examples include recyclable window stickers and wipeable posters.

Internal Sustainability Policy Objectives

Reduce the impact of transport

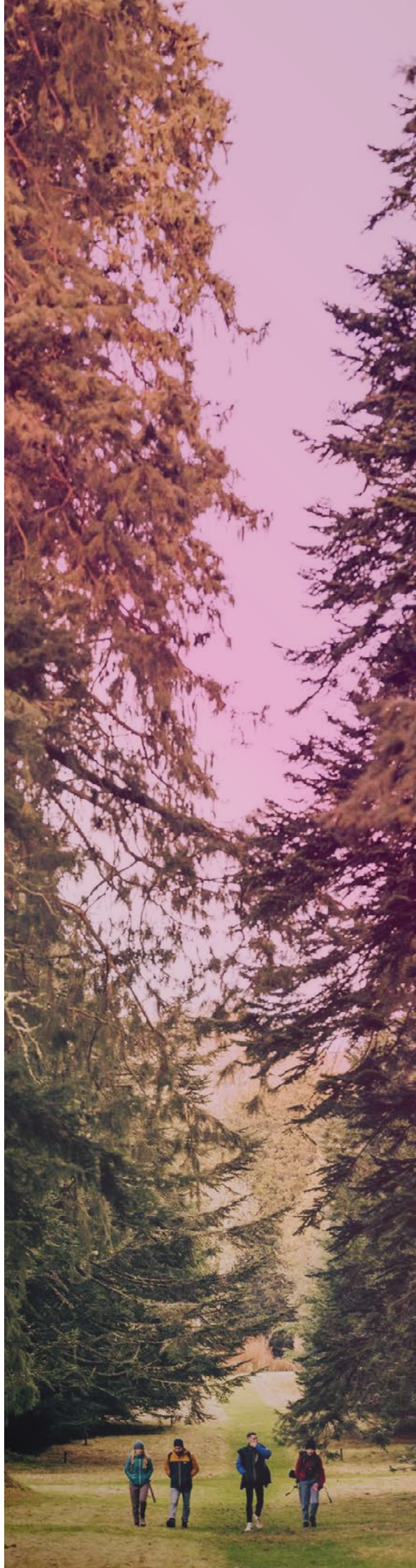
“Focus on promoting a shift towards more environmentally friendly forms of transport (train, coach/bus, ferry, cycle, foot) aiming to reduce carbon emissions, air pollution, and congestion.”

VisitScotland Carbon Emissions from Transport (2008-2022)



Internal Sustainability Policy Objectives

- VisitScotland has made a 90% reduction in its business travel related CO2 emissions from the baseline year but with an expected increase on 2020-21 where restrictions meant little business travel. Based against 2019/20 its business travel is 84% reduced.
- VisitScotland has reduced its Scope 1 leased car fleet to 17 vehicles during the year, with all cars under 130g/km and project that into 2022/23 this number will reduce again, mainly due to changes in working practices.
- Introduced Green Car Scheme to encourage staff to privately lease a greener car, further reducing its commuting and business travel emissions. Four staff have engaged with this to date.
- VisitScotland's business travel increased during the reporting year reflecting staff travelling to more events which had not taken place the year prior; however, the organisation is still embracing virtual activities, keeping travel to a minimum, with Teams the preferred way of meeting internally.
- With work from home guidance being the norm for most of the reporting year, commuting emissions were minimal for VisitScotland office workers, although its iCentre workers returned from the end of April 2021. When its office locations reopened to all in March 2022, the return was based on a hybrid working model which will continue to positively impact on its commuting emissions in the future.
- As many of its teams are regionally spread, meetings are predominantly held online to reduce the need for travel.
- VisitScotland's IT Team maintained the tools to enable everyone to work from any location and reduce the need to meet face-to-face.
- As an industry-facing department, engagement with businesses has long involved a great deal of travel across Scotland not least by its Industry Relationship Managers (IRM) and Quality Tourism Advisors (QTA) teams. As a result of a new segmentation of its target businesses, and making the most of business' adoption of virtual practices, IRMs will now be able to work more effectively at the same time as reducing their travel emissions.
- While still needing to travel to deliver their incognito quality grading service, the QTAs will be able to make a reduction in their emissions, by continuing to implement new virtual advice and quality assessment products developed during Covid-time, with fewer journeys taken to visit properties not yet ready to achieve their targeted grading.
- VisitScotland's staff engaged with the Sustrans Workplace Journey Challenge where over the month of March 2022, 1,534 journeys were recorded, either walking, cycling, e-cycling, running, or travelling by bus, car-sharing, train, subway, ferry and tram. Together its staff travelled 11,340 miles and saved 1,088kg CO2 – journeys that would normally have been taken by a higher emission mode of transport.



Internal Sustainability Policy Objectives

Improve the quality of tourism jobs

“Support initiatives to improve the quality of jobs within VisitScotland.”

VisitScotland’s offices re-opened to all staff during March 2022, firstly following restriction guidelines before they were all lifted on 21st March. Staff returned under a hybrid working model which will drive how they work in the future and contribute to working in a more responsible manner. The benefits will be reflected in reduced costs in travel, in time and in energy; improved communication, quicker decision making, greater collaboration and ability to spread job roles across Scotland thereby contributing to local economies and creating more locally based jobs. In addition, it aims to provide a better work-life balance for VisitScotland’s staff.

- Although halted in 2021-22, volunteering opportunities for VisitScotland have restarted, allowing up to one day per year per staff member to undertake activities such as litter picking and beach clean and clearing invasive species.
- During May/June 2021, as guidance allowed, staff backed the Keep Scotland Beautiful’s Clean Up Scotland campaign. More than 170 staff covering the length and breadth of Scotland completing 280 hours of litter picking equating to the equivalent of 840 miles.
- A brand-new education programme for the business engagement and quality staff has been developed and is being piloted (with later roll out to wider departments intended) which, in addition to building their capability in advising businesses on the most appropriate adoption of responsible tourism practices, first starts internally with building their own understanding of responsible tourism and undertaking climate change awareness and other courses.

Support climate change mitigation and adaptation

“Recognise the importance and urgency of addressing climate change and take action, not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation), but also to adapt to the unavoidable consequences of climate change.”

- VisitScotland has reviewed mitigation needs across the estate as part of the buildings review with a focus on energy performance certificates and recommendations to reduce rating.
- Condition surveys undertaken on all locations to identify opportunities for sustainable improvements.
- VisitScotland has a responsibility under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 to further conservation of biodiversity in Scotland and publicly report on its related activities. VisitScotland published its latest **Biodiversity Duty report for 2017-20** in 2020, with the new report for the years 2020-2023 due in 2023.

Internal Sustainability Policy Objectives

Future Sustainable Planning

- VisitScotland will keep its sustainable management plan under review through regular meetings of its Internal Sustainability Steering Group.
- VisitScotland will continue to drive reduction in all scopes of emissions.
- As well as developing and understanding its Scope 3 emissions, VisitScotland will create a Scope 3 prioritisation strategy and reduction targets.
- VisitScotland will quantify the carbon emissions of included Scope 3 categories through the creation of a measurement and calculation tool.
- VisitScotland will create a tool to allow carbon budget forecasting for future projects and business as usual activities.
- VisitScotland will establish the major emission sources across its value chain through undertaking an Environmentally Extended Input Output (EEIO) sector mapping to match internal supply chain procurement data with a standardised input-output database which converts economic activity into carbon emissions; along with a Hotspot analysis to rank its top suppliers for UK operations by contributions to total supply chain emissions.
- VisitScotland through its Scottish Government Public Duties Climate Change Duties reporting will confirm its ambitions to be net zero in Scope 1 by 2030.
- VisitScotland will also work within its own events activities, such as Thistles and trade events, to ensure they are aiming to be net zero events.

VisitScotland recognises its role as a leader in the development of responsible tourism practices across the industry to make Scotland one of the most economically, environmentally and socially sustainable destinations in the world. This will be achieved through four key objectives under its Responsible Tourism Strategy:

- Supporting Scotland's transition to a *low carbon* economy
- Ensuring tourism and events in Scotland are *inclusive*
- Ensuring tourism and events contribute to *thriving communities*
- Supporting the protection and considerate enjoyment of Scotland's *natural and cultural heritage*

VisitScotland will prepare the industry, destinations, communities, and visitors for what a future centred around responsible tourism must look like. This will be reported in VisitScotland's **Annual Report**.

