

## GREENHOUSE GAS ACCOUNTING TOOL: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

August 2020

FAQs will be updated periodically.

For assistance and feedback please email [ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk](mailto:ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk).

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<b>1. What is the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool?</b>	A template that can be used to record council emissions, both Scope 1 and 2 plus basic Scope 3 emissions. Within it we have built some summary tables and graphs that may help convey this information to non-expert audiences. The tool automatically links your data with the relevant UK Government Conversion Factors, taking away some of the burden of the calculations.
<b>2. Why use this tool?</b>	The benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• standardising how local government measure and report carbon emissions</li><li>• knowing if your interventions have made a difference</li><li>• enabling consistent sector wide benchmarking and disclosure</li><li>• providing you with a robust and reviewed tool to calculate and store baselines and the outputs</li></ul>
<b>3. Is the tool free to use?</b>	Yes – it is free to use for all councils in England.
<b>4. Is there any guidance for filling out the tool?</b>	There are basic instructions throughout the tool but Local Partnerships may look at developing more detailed guidance if there is demand for it.
<b>5. What will the tool calculate for my council?</b>	The tool will calculate the council's direct CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions (Scope 1 and 2) which are directly linked to the council's operations, plus some of the basic indirect CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions (Scope 3). As such it will show the council the scale of the challenge (and potential cost) of achieving net-zero carbon targets. The scope sheet also enables you to record the basis on which you have collated the data to make consistency with future years easier.

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<b>6. Is there a minimum amount of data that needs to be reported?</b>	Currently the reporting of carbon emissions is voluntary for public sector organisations. However, the reporting of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions are recommended as a minimum basis for achieving net-zero carbon.
<b>7. How long will it take me to fill out the tool?</b>	From a few hours to a few days, it all depends of the amount and quality of the information you hold. Please note all council-owned assets must be included, incorporating vehicles and buildings that are leased and used for council purposes. Please also note that previous CRC reports exclude smaller buildings and thus do not necessarily align with the output from this tool.
<b>8. What type of information is requested?</b>	In order to make appropriate use of the tool you will need your gas and electricity consumption (expressed in kWh) as well as details on the amount of other fuel consumed by your buildings (for example oil or LPG) and your fleet vehicles (type of vehicle and fuel, plus amount of fuel used/mileage). Ideally you will need information on any leaks/top ups to the amount of gas in your AC systems so you can calculate and input any fugitive emissions (see Q11). Finally, if you do want to report on the emissions related to your “grey fleet” (staff mileage claimed back from the authority as business mileage), you will need information of fuel used or type of vehicle and mileage.
<b>9. What do I need before filling out the tool?</b>	<p>You will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gas and electricity consumption (expressed in kWh), for each building</li> <li>• details on the amount of other fuel consumed by your buildings and fleet vehicles (leased or owned)</li> <li>• leaks/top ups to the amount of gas in your air conditioning systems and, if you do want to report on Scope 3 emissions related to staff mileage, fuel used or type of vehicle and mileage. Please see the answer to the question above for further detail on emission sources and where to look for data</li> </ul>
<b>7. Where do I find this information?</b>	Utility invoices for gas, electricity (and other heating fuels) are a good place to start for buildings data. Data collected from any smart meters or half hourly consumption data supplied with invoices is higher quality data for buildings – speak with your energy team to see if they have a database holding this information. For fleet vehicles you may have data provided via fuel purchase cards, or via route mapping calculations for mileage. Grey fleet emissions data is most likely to be collected through staff travel expense claims (which may or may not include detail about vehicle type and fuel).

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<b>11. F-Gases</b>	We have included within the tool three types of F-Gases which we believe are the most commonly used. You are able to add another type manually if you need to. The F-Gases we have included are R22, R32, R410a. If you need further assistance please contact <a href="mailto:ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk">ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>12. What happens to the data once I have reported it?</b>	At the time this tool was created the reporting of carbon emissions for local authorities was voluntary, however you can still use this tool to start mapping your way to net-zero carbon and ascertain the scale of the challenge you face. To participate in benchmarking please email your completed tool to <a href="mailto:ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk">ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk</a> by 31 October 2020.
<b>13. Will the tool enable me to benchmark our council's carbon emissions against another council?</b>	There will be capacity in LG Inform to benchmark with other councils who submit their data free of charge.
<b>14. How will my submitted data be used by Local Partnerships and the LGA?</b>	<p>For councils choosing to participate in benchmarking through submitting their data please note that when using data submitted, in addition to providing you with a copy of the national report, the LGA may produce a report of individual authority data in its online benchmarking service LG Inform. If such a report is produced, only local authority level data will be published, and disclosure controls will be applied so that no individual employees (data subjects) will be identifiable.</p> <p>Once data is made live in LG Inform, all local authority registered users will be able to view it. Reports and data in LG Inform are accessible to the public, but such access will only be granted a year after the date to which data relates, i.e. public access to 2020/21 data will be granted on 1 May 2021</p> <p>You are, of course, free to publish your own results publicly on your own site whenever you choose. Freedom of Information requests received by the LGA for pre-release of the data you have submitted as part of this exercise will be refused, applying the exemption set out in section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, namely: "information is intended for future publication".</p>
<b>15. How often should I report?</b>	The UK Government currently recommends that public sector organisations measure their carbon emissions annually, and also recommends aligning your reporting period with the financial year. If you wish to link your carbon budgets with financial budgets you might wish to address progress on a quarterly basis, however this is entirely at your discretion. Please note different requirements apply to businesses so please check that any companies wholly owned by the council are reporting as they should.

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**16. How do I calculate data for previous years?**

You can use the tool for reporting your emissions for a number of years, back to 2014/15. Please select the relevant reporting period from the Overview Sheet and save it as a different file. The relevant conversion factors will be automatically applied so all you have to do is introduce the relevant consumption data for that particular year. Equally, if you find additional information and would like to update the data for a particular year, please select the relevant file/year and amend the consumption data.

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**17. If I disclose our council's carbon emissions to CDP (formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project), how do the two tools interrelate?**

This tool has been reviewed by CDP. The output data from this tool can be used to disclose council emissions data to the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System in the Local Government Emissions section. If you have any questions about reporting please contact [cities@cdp.net](mailto:cities@cdp.net)

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**18. What about wider Scope 3 emissions reporting?**

This tool captures a limited range of Scope 3 emissions. We recommend that councils begin to map emissions sources from purchased goods, outsourced services and contracts to identify the main sources of Scope 3 emissions and opportunities for reporting and reductions. For further assistance please contact [ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk](mailto:ghgaccounting@local.gov.uk)

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