Agency Board Meeting
29 November 2022

Board Report Number: SEPA 47/22

SEPA's Statutory Climate Change Report 2021/22

Summary: Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act SEPA has a statutory duty to report annually on its action to deliver the climate change Public bodies' duty. This paper provides a short summary of the key points from our 2021/22 submission as well as provide an update on other work to progress towards our Regenerative target.

Risks: Our emissions have increased slightly from 2020/21, but these increases are explained by omissions from reporting last year due to data loss from the cyber-attack.

Resource and Staffing Implications: None

Equalities: None

Environmental and Carbon Impact: This paper reports SEPA's greenhouse gas emissions and other impacts in 2021/22.

Purpose and audience of the report: To make Board Members aware of the submission of this statutory report. When published, this information will become publicly available.

Report Authors: Neil Deasley, Unit Manager
Rebecca Badger, Specialist I
Derek McGregor, Senior Policy Officer

Appendices: 1 – SEPA's long term emissions 2014/15 to 2021/22
2 – Regenerative SEPA Targets

1. Introduction

Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, SEPA has a statutory duty to report annually on its action to deliver on climate change mitigation and adaptation. This is part of the Public Bodies' Duty discussed by the Board at its October meeting. This reporting is focused on greenhouse gas emissions from our buildings and travel. All public body reports are hosted here and SEPA's reports since 2014/15 are hosted here.

SEPA will submit its report for 2021/22 on 30th November and this paper provides a short summary of the key points. It also sets out some of the progress we have made in implementing our Regenerative SEPA routemap to continue to improve performance.

2. Background

The cyber attack of December 2020 significantly hampered our ability to complete our 2020/21 report and while we did report on time and to the best of our ability it contained omissions where data were not available. We made significant progress during 2021/22 in rebuilding our data gathering capacity and we have been able to return to reporting more or less normally.

3. The issues – Our performance in 2021/22

The full submission contains a lot of detailed information about emissions sources as well as other information about SEPA's contributions to climate change adaptation and mitigation. The team would be happy to explain some of the detail for those who may be interested. Please contact neil.deasley@sepa.org.uk to arrange this.

The following however are key points from our 2021/22 report:

Total Direct Greenhouse Gas Emissions

SEPA's total direct greenhouse gas emissions are 1,167.2 tonnes CO_2e[1]. Compared to our 2006/07 baseline emissions of 3,614 tonnes CO_2e, this represents a long-term reduction of 67.7%. SEPA's long term emissions reductions are set out in Appendix 1.

This compares with 1,106 tonnes CO2e reported for 2020/21 and represents an increase year on year of 61 tonnes (5.5%). However, this is not comparing like for like as Covid restrictions were different from year to year and a full data set was not available for 2020/21 due to the cyber-attack. For example, last year no grey fleet (private car) mileage emissions were included as these Agresso based data were not available, but for 2021/22 we have included them. When this is taken into account, we estimate that 2021/22 emissions were broadly equal to if not slightly lower than in 2020/21.

Our performance in 2021/22 was broadly as expected, disrupted as it was by ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. Travel remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels while our estate emissions profile changed considerably as offices remained closed and staff predominantly worked from home.

Estate Emissions

Our buildings emissions[2] are 1,009 tonnes CO2e. This represents a year on year rise of 2.2%, which is largely accounted for by including data for more buildings and stores than was possible in 2020/21 due to the cyber attack.

[1] *CO2e - Carbon Dioxide equivalent*
[2] *This includes emissions from buildings, stores and 95% of staff homeworking*

For the second year in a row, emissions from staff home working have been included in our inventory. For 2021/22 this was 332 tonnes CO_2e, as we estimated approximately 95% of our staff worked from home last year.

Travel Emissions

Our travel emissions[3] are 158 tonnes CO2e. This represents a year on year rise of 14.5%. However, travel emissions remain 83.2% lower than the last "normal" year pre-pandemic (2019/20). The year on year increase reflects the resumption in fieldwork activity following Covid -19 lockdowns in the previous year and as it also includes data (such as the grey fleet data referenced earlier) that we were unable to access last year due to the cyber attack.

4. Update – Regenerative SEPA

Board members will be aware that during 2021/22 SEPA adopted a new suite of long term targets (Appendix 2) and a Regenerative SEPA routemap which guides and prioritises our work to achieve these targets for the period 2022-24. Since then we have been busy implementing the routemap actions and some key developments include:

- An automated system for collating and reporting direct greenhouse gas emissions is now in place. This makes it quicker and easier to routinely report our emissions and keep track of progress. The system automatically gathers information from different sources such as our electricity and gas meters and our fleet, hire and private vehicle mileages.

- A Procurement Operating Plan for 2021-24 is in place which has a primary aim to support development of a regenerative organisation. It includes actions to:
    - Reinforce a 'do we even need to procure' mentality
    - Include standard regenerative SEPA text in all procurement requests
    - Capture and articulate regenerative successes
    - Include regenerative SEPA in the pre-approval stage for all capital expenditures

  Early successes include inclusion of regenerative SEPA requirements in the specifications for the Flood Forecasting and Information Management Service (FFIMS) contract and the Next Generation Telemetry contract. For both of these long term contracts, suppliers will be required to baseline the impacts of service delivery and work with SEPA to reduce impacts over the lifetime of the contract.

- Developing a Carbon Literacy training course for SEPA staff which provides Carbon Literacy certification for learners. The course will:
    - Help our staff have a common understanding about the science of climate change, Scotland's ambitions to tackle climate change and SEPA's role in contributing;
    - Help our staff feel confident communicating about climate change in their work and home lives;
    - Require SEPA staff, individually and in their teams, to identify, implement and report actions that they will take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change.

  We plan to pilot the course in January with a view to commencing roll out in 2023. Staff participation will be voluntary.

[3] *This includes emissions from grey fleet, SEPA fleet, hire vehicles, rail, air, ferry and our survey vessel The Sir John Murray*

5. Looking forward – Our emissions trajectory in 2022/23

In the 2022/23 Annual Operating Plan, we set a target to reduce emissions by 70% compared to our 2006/7 baseline. Board members will note from the Q2 performance report that we currently consider it unlikely that we will meet this target. While some continued reduction in emissions is expected from reduced travel through higher levels of digital working, continued greening of the electricity grid and improvements made as we re-open our estate, these are expected to be offset by increases. This is due to two main reasons:

- We expect to largely re-open our estate in 2022/23, however there remains a high level of homeworking (estimated at 91%), which results in two significant emissions sources from our estate where previously there was only one.
- Travel, while expected to remain below pre-pandemic levels, has begun to return to a new normal and this will push travel emissions up compared to the past two years when covid restrictions prevented non-essential travel.

We expect, therefore, to see an increase in overall emissions in 2022/23. This will need to be managed in particular through our Future of Work programme as this establishes - and then implements - a strategic review of our estate to best suit the needs of the new flexible, hybrid way of working. Other measures, such as the introduction of a "digital first" based travel hierarchy (part of the hybrid working policy) will also need to play their part.

6. Recommendations

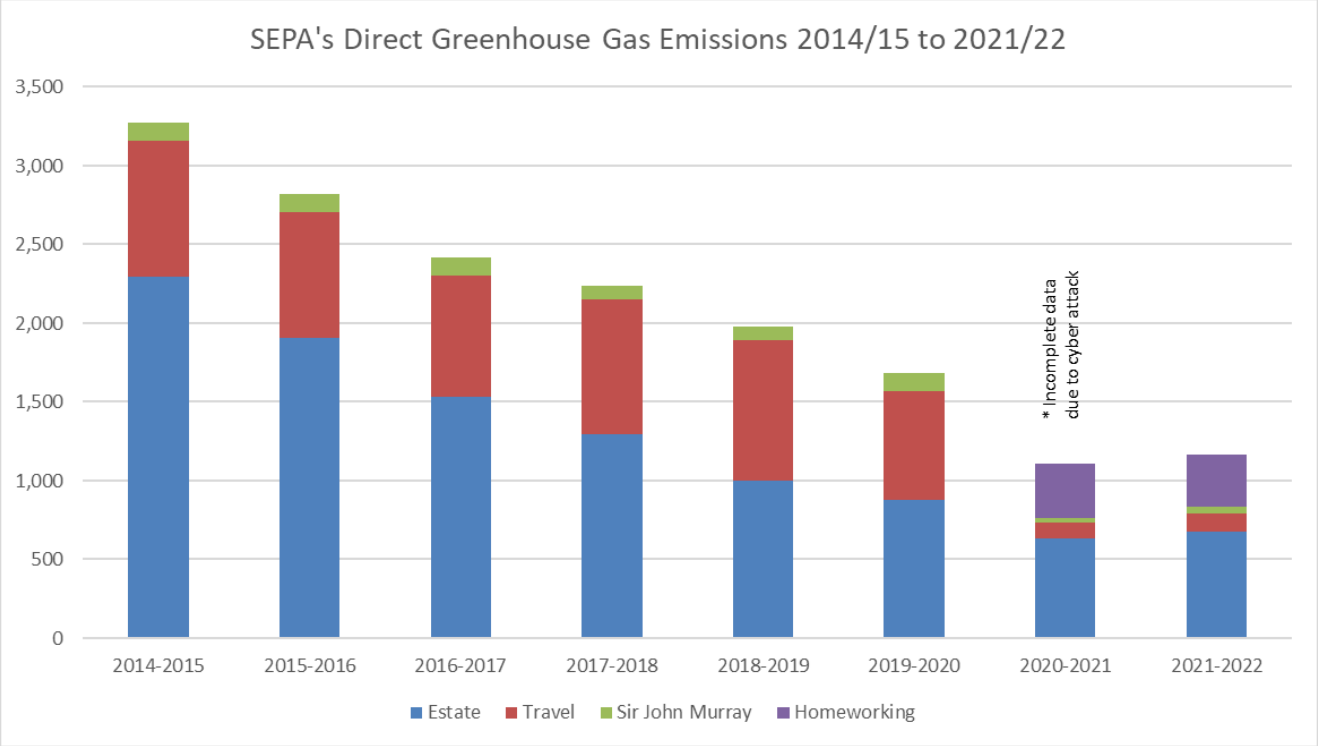
This paper is for information. Our statutory Public Bodies Duties Report for 2021/22 will be submitted on time for 30th November and will be published online by SSN in the spring.

Note: Our work to become regenerative is involving many people and in time will involve many more. We are grateful to colleagues for their support. Achieving our goals will depend on their continued commitment and enthusiasm. Particular thanks go to Derek McGregor for his work on compiling the emissions data, to Róisín Murray Williams for her work to help the team to automate future data collation and analysis, and to Rebecca Badger for her work to take forward the Regenerative SEPA routemap.

Neil Deasley, Unit Manager
Rebecca Badger, Specialist I
Derek McGregor, Senior Policy Officer

21 November 2022

Appendix 1 – Long Term Emissions



Appendix 2 – Regenerative SEPA Targets