



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Greening Government Commitments: Defra's Performance

June 2023

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 35 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk

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Performance Summary

For the last 4 quarters (2022-23), compared to 2017-18:

- Paper: reduced by 87% against a target of 50%
- Domestic flight emissions: reduced by 67% against a target of 30%
- Total greenhouse gas (GHG): reduced by 30% against a target of 50%
- Direct GHG from buildings: reduced by 17% against a target of 15%
- Landfill: 16% of waste went to landfill against a target of less than 5%
- Recycling: 50% of waste was recycled against a target of more than 70%
- Total waste: increased by 20% against a target of 15% reduction
- Water: reduced by 7% against a target of 8%

Quarterly Figures

Time period	GHG from buildings and travel (tonnes)	Recycling ratio	Landfill ratio	Waste (tonnes)	Water (m ³)	Domestic flight emissions (tonnes)
Total Baseline data (2017 to 18)	76,188	49%	20%	7,244	612,505	265
2021 to 22 Q1	11,379	38%	14%	1,096	122,929	0.3
2021 to 22 Q2	10,705	29%	13%	1,109	103,024	5
2021 to 22 Q3	13,301	35%	13%	1,278	73,892	11
2021 to 22 Q4	15,509	43%	18%	1,346	105,953	11
2022 to 23 Q1	11,408	31%	22%	1,858	158,947	24
2022 to 23 Q2	10,350	38%	14%	1,717	163,424	20
2022 to 23 Q3	15,191	55%	20%	2,575	89,731	18
2022 to 23 Q4	16,025	65%	9%	2,539	158,480	25

Defra Greening Government Commitments: commitment statements

Overview

Defra comprises of a number of bodies which undertake diverse activities ranging from policy development and environmental compliance, land and flood management, and research into marine, plant and animal disease. Energy and water usage is by necessity, higher in these specialist areas, which makes management of the department's estate and operations more complex.

- The [Defra annual report and accounts](#) contains a sustainability annex outlining the Department's performance and commitment to sustainability;
- Defra also reports on its property performance through the pan-government '[State of the Estate](#)' report;
- In 2023 Defra published the government's [Environmental Improvement Plan](#), this is our delivery plan for the environment.

Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)

We are taking steps to understand and plan for the risk of climate change to our operations across Defra group. This will form the basis our work to meet our Greening Government Commitment to develop a climate change adaptation strategy.

Climate Change Mitigation

Defra group is committed to utilising renewable energy technologies and has already installed a number of self-generating installations onto its sites, such as wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, solar water heaters and ground source heat pumps.

The department is also committed to using low carbon technologies to mitigate our use of higher carbon fossil fuels such as biomass boilers.

Nature Recovery

Defra group is responsible for a large and diverse portfolio of land; from the grounds of our offices and depots to nationally significant protected sites. In 2022 we began a collaborative project across Defra group to better understand the distribution and habitat classification of our natural assets. This work will support the development of our Greening Government Commitment to develop and deliver a nature recovery plan.

Sustainable Procurement

Defra has specific sustainability procurement policies.

Sustainable procurement is a core objective for procurement staff and is built into the commercial governance approach through category boards and the Senior Leadership Team. Management of risks must be demonstrated before sign off.

A sustainability risk assessment is completed at the earliest opportunity to determine which impacts and opportunities are relevant to the contract and how they will be managed throughout procurement and for the entire life of the contract.

Government Buying Standards are mandated to each of the relevant procurement categories.

A carbon calculator tool allows the Environment Agency to monitor and report emissions from construction activities at the project level and they are working with service providers and suppliers to track the embodied carbon impact.

To avoid the introduction of harmful plant diseases, a specific question on biosecurity and non-native species is part of the contract letting process and supported by risk management techniques where relevant.

The commercial plan for Defra group's Commercial Team clearly sets out its commitments in relation to sustainability. These include addressing priority areas such as Net Zero Carbon, modern slavery and social value, and ensuring they are embedded within relevant contracts and monitored throughout the contract life-cycle. A key area of focus is to provide category-specific guidance and training on sustainable procurement.