

Sustainability Annual Report
Public Board
Thursday 30 July 2026

Presented for:	Information
Presented by:	Chris Kelly, Associate Director – Estates Compliance & Risk
Author:	As above.
Previous Committees:	NONE.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption	☐ YES (restricted from the FOIA) ☒ NO (available to the public under the FOIA)
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Link to Strategic Objective	Focus on care quality, effectiveness and patient experience
Link to Provider Capability Assessment	Governance, risk and regulatory
Link to CQC Well-led Statement	Environmental Sustainability
Regulatory Impact	Regulation 17: Good governance

Key points	Purpose
- The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has a mandated target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040 for the NHS Carbon Footprint and by 2045 for the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus, in line with “Delivering a Net Zero NHS”. - Historically, the Trust has utilised a baseline year of 2013/14 for its carbon footprint reporting, against which the carbon emissions from all subsequent years have been compared. NHS England has now undertaken a review to determine a suitable baseline year for trusts, based upon the UK’s nationally mandated 1990 baseline reporting year, which enables for a level of standardisation amongst healthcare providers. - From the revised baseline year (2019/20) the Trust is expected to – - Reduce NHS Carbon Footprint emissions by 47% by 2032 / 100% by 2040 - Reduce NHS Carbon Footprint Plus emissions by 73% by 2038 / 100% by 2045 - The Trust aspires to become one of the greenest NHS trusts in the UK, improving sustainability throughout the organisation and the wider region. This report provides an overview of the progress the Trust is making towards these targets.	Information

Risk Appetite Framework			
Level 1 Risk	Level 2 Risks	(Risk Appetite Scale)	Impact
Operational Risk	Business Continuity Risk - We will develop and maintain stable and resilient services, operating to consistently high levels of performance.	Cautious	Operating within
Financial Risk	Financial Reporting Risk - We will deliver sound financial management and reporting for the Trust with no material misstatements or variances to forecast. Any variances to forecast that materialise will be well signalled & socialised with key stakeholders	Cautious	Operating within
External Risk	Regulatory Risk - We will comply with or exceed all regulations, retain its CQC registration and always operate within the law.	Averse	Operating within

1. Summary

This report provides an update on the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's (LTHT) progress toward its net zero targets and the goal of becoming one of the greenest trusts in the UK, underscoring the Board's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility through Sustainability strategic objectives & actions.

In 2020, the NHS became the world's first health system to commit to reaching net zero emissions. The *'Delivering a Net Zero National Health Service'* report set out the scale of the ambition. The *Health and Care Act 2022* reinforced this commitment, placing new duties on integrated care boards (ICBs), NHS trusts and foundation trusts to consider statutory emissions and environmental targets in their decisions.

Trusts and ICBs are expected to meet these duties through the delivery of board-approved green plans (mandatory requirement for all NHS organisations to have a Green Plan, approved by their board or governing body).

The Board is not required to take any specific action/s other than to continue to provide ongoing support to the Trust in achieving these goals through the implementation of the Board approved Green Plan 2025-28 (**See Appendix 1**), which this report will help to inform.

The key focus areas of the Green Plan:

- Workforce and system leadership
- Net zero clinical transformation & Medicines
- Digital transformation
- Travel and transport
- Estates and facilities
- Biodiversity and green spaces
- Supply chain and procurement
- Food and nutrition
- Adaptation

2. Update

The healthcare industry's extensive consumption of energy, resources, and supply chains makes it one of the world's most carbon-intensive sectors. The NHS significantly contributes to the UK's carbon emissions, accounting for approximately 5% of the nation's carbon footprint. Carbon emissions are exacerbating the impacts of climate change which is driving negative impacts on health. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events will disrupt healthcare services and negatively impact the health of our patients and the public.

In 2020, the NHS established its aim to become the world's first net zero National Health Service. To achieve this, the NHS has established two targets:

- For the emissions, the NHS control directly (the NHS Carbon Footprint), reach net zero by 2040, with an 80% reduction from our baseline year by 2032.
- For the emissions, the NHS can influence (the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus), reach net zero by 2045, with an 80% reduction from our baseline year by 2039.

In recognition that the need for healthcare organisations to act on climate change is now urgent, the NHS has mandated that all trusts achieve net-zero carbon for their NHS Carbon Footprint (direct emissions) by 2040 and NHS Carbon Footprint Plus (indirect emissions) by 2045 (see figure 1).

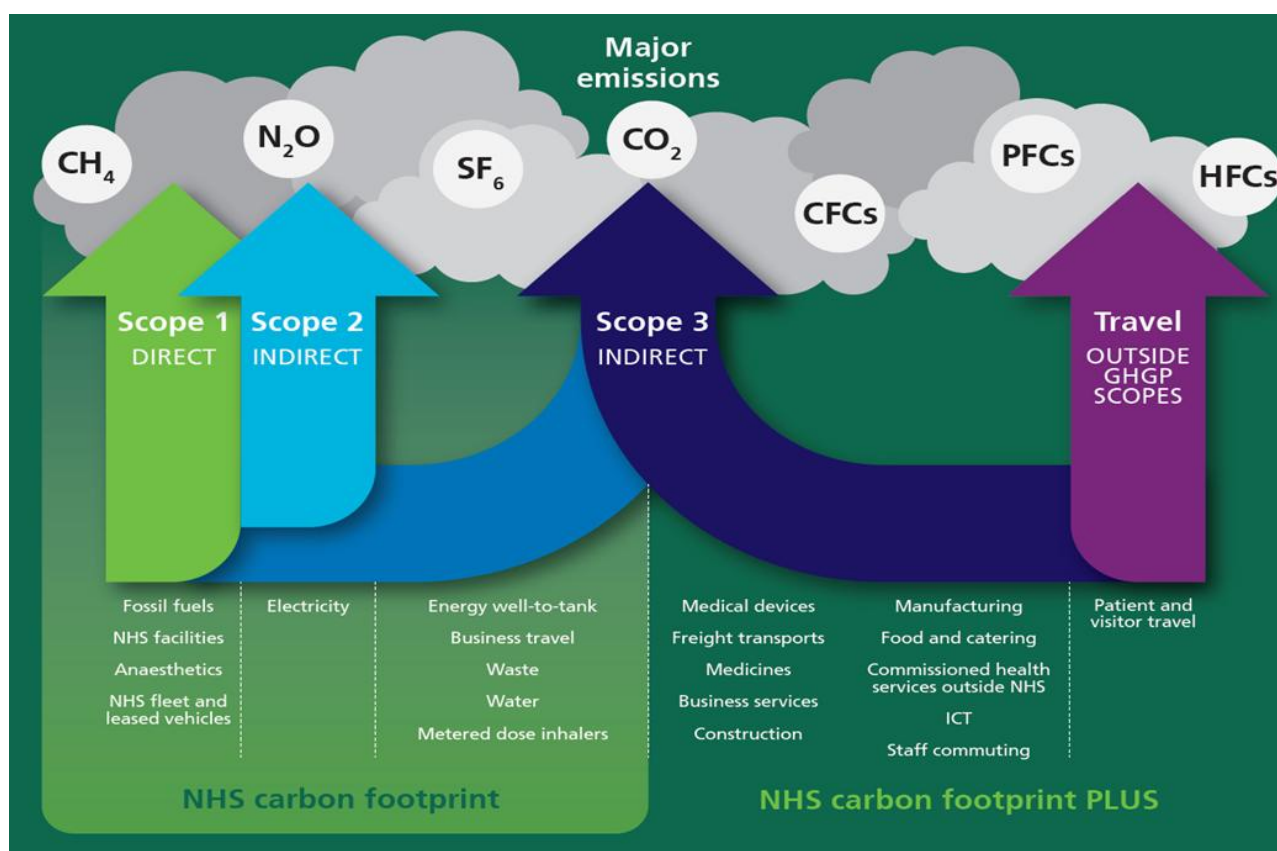


Figure 1: Scopes of NHS Carbon Footprint & NHS Carbon Footprint Plus

At LTHT, we recognise the significant threat climate change poses to our environment and the health of our patients. As an anchor institution and one of the largest teaching hospital trusts in the UK, we have a vital role to play in mitigating our environmental impact and reducing carbon emissions across Leeds. We aspire to become one of the greenest NHS Trusts in the UK, improving sustainability throughout our organisation and the wider region.

Our vision is to: Become one of the greenest NHS Trusts in the UK

Our mission is to: Empower the delivery of sustainable healthcare services through continuous improvement

Sustainability at LTHT

LTHT adopted the NHS targets in 2020/21 upon the publication of our first Green Plan, which was subsequently updated in 2022/23 and 2025/26. The Green Plan outlines our strategic sustainability objectives, aligned with national guidance, up until financial year-end 2027/28. Supporting the Green Plan is the Sustainable Action Plan (SAP), which details specific actions the Trust has undertaken and will continue to undertake during this period. The Trust is in year 2 of the 3-year period of its current sustainability strategy, with considerable progress made since 2020, over the last 12-month period, we have achieved numerous milestones through our actions, to improve accountability & engagement across the Trust.

LTHT is required to understand their 'Climate Change impact,' allowing the Trust to identify its emissions sources, track progress, and demonstrate their commitment to achieving net zero. The Trust is currently recording activities which contribute to the Trust's NHS Carbon Footprint, representing direct and indirect CO₂e emissions from the Trust's operations. This includes:

- Gas
- Oil
- Fleet mileage
- Anaesthetic gases
- Electricity
- Water
- Waste
- Inhalers

The above reportable carbon emissions are continuously monitored (quarterly) using the Trust's carbon footprint tool, which is independently verified/ validated by a Sustainability Consultancy utilising an NHSE approved methodology (**See Appendix 2**).

LTHT Carbon Footprint -

Whilst NHS targets serve as the ultimate carbon reduction goals that trusts should be seeking to achieve, trusts are also obligated, as part of the UK Government's *Climate Change Act 2008* (amended 2019), to meet the following interim targets, to help support them on their carbon reduction journeys:

1. Reduce NHS Carbon Footprint emissions by 80% by 2032 (from a 1990 baseline).
2. Reduce NHS Carbon Footprint PLUS emissions by 80% by 2039 (from a 1990 baseline).

Historically, LTHT has utilised a baseline year of 2013-14 for its carbon footprint reporting, against which the carbon emissions from all subsequent years have been compared. This baseline year was originally selected because 2013-14 was the first year from which an accurate and reliable dataset pertaining to energy and resource consumption could be obtained by the Trust. Prior to 2013-14, data pertaining to the aspects within the Trust's carbon footprint was not readily available and, tracing further back into the early 2000s and 1990s, credible carbon conversion factors for these years were not (and have still not) been explored or published by UK Government and/or other organisations who are now involved in undertaking this work.

Consequently, it is not possible to understand with accuracy or in detail what an organisation's carbon footprint likely was in the year of 1990, and this has posed challenges for NHS trusts in being able to determine the progress they have been making against the mandatory 80% reduction targets above.

For example, LTHT currently uses its historical 2013-14 baseline year to determine the progress it is making against its NHS Carbon Footprint target of an 80% reduction by 2032. However, an 80% reduction from the 2013-14 baseline year suggests the trust should be achieving an annual carbon footprint of 18,875 tCO₂e by 2032. With a carbon footprint for 2025/26 which currently totals 55,717 tCO₂e, this means the trust needs to reduce its carbon footprint by an additional 36,842 tCO₂e in the next 6 years to meet the legislative milestone target above.

In using a baseline year 2013/14, which is 23 years later than 1990 (the year against which the 80% reduction target applies), and in consideration of the carbon emission forecast modelling, LTHT is has been aiming for a 2032 carbon reduction target which is neither feasible nor necessary.

To address the challenges faced by NHS trusts in monitoring against and meeting their respective 80% carbon reduction targets, NHS England has, has now undertaken work to determine a suitable baseline year for trusts, based upon the UK's nationally mandated 1990 baseline reporting year, which enables for a level of standardisation amongst healthcare providers. The NHS's Green Plan Support Tool, accessible on the NHS's Federated Data Platform, establishes the following carbon reduction targets, equivalent to a 1990 baseline:

1. Reduce NHS Carbon Footprint emissions by 47% by 2032 (from a 2019/20 baseline).
2. Reduce NHS Carbon Footprint Plus emissions by 73% by 2038 (from a 2019/20 baseline).

3. Quality and Performance Implications

In the 2025-26 financial year, the Trust recorded a total of 55,717 tCO₂e emissions, representative of a 40% reduction with a 2019/20 carbon baseline of 72,168 tCO₂e. This provides assurance that not only is LTHT currently in line with the NHS carbon reduction targets, but that it is also expected to achieve an annual carbon footprint of 38,249 tCO₂e by 2032 (a 47% reduction).

This indicates a high level of success in our recent emissions reduction efforts, highlighting the need for continued action in 2026-27 to remain on track with our net-zero targets. Progress has been supported by a combination of decarbonisation projects and the continuous progress of carbon reduction measures outlined in the Green Plan. These initiatives continue to contribute positively toward our long-term net-zero targets.

Carbon Footprint (Scope 1 & 2 Emissions) – Progress against LTHT/ NHSE baseline years

Reporting Year	Target Emissions Reductions (%)	Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ e/annum)
2013/14 (LTHT baseline)	0%	94,375
2019/20 (NHSE revised baseline)	0%	72,168
2025/26	41% (reduction vs LTHT baseline)	55,717 (current total)
2025/26	40% (reduction vs NHSE baseline)	55,717 (current total)
2032/33	47% (reduction target for NHSE Carbon Footprint emissions from a 2019/20 baseline)	38,249 (on track to achieve target)
2040/41	100% (reduction target for NHSE Carbon Footprint emissions)	0% (off track – expected to achieve 16,211 with key interventions delivered)

The graph below (figure 2) has been developed, considering these newly established baseline years, to provide a fairer and more accurate assessment of the progress that LTHT

is making on its carbon reduction targets. The graphs have taken the Trust's carbon footprint as reported by the Trust in 2019/20 and have re-adjusted the carbon reduction target trajectory in line with what the trust is reasonably expected to achieve by NHS England.

With a carbon baseline of 72,168 tCO₂e in 2019/20, the graphs show that not only is LTHT currently in line with the NHS carbon reduction targets, but that it is also expected to achieve an annual carbon footprint of 38,249 tCO₂e by 2032 (a 47% reduction). With a 2025/26 carbon footprint totalling 55,717 tCO₂e, a further reduction of 17,468 tCO₂e is therefore expected over the next 6 years for the Trust to be able to meet the 2032 target. This is a significantly lower, more achievable and far more justified carbon reduction target for the trust to aim for and will now be used to provide assurance to the relevant regulators and stakeholders for evidence-based assurance on the trust's carbon reduction progress.

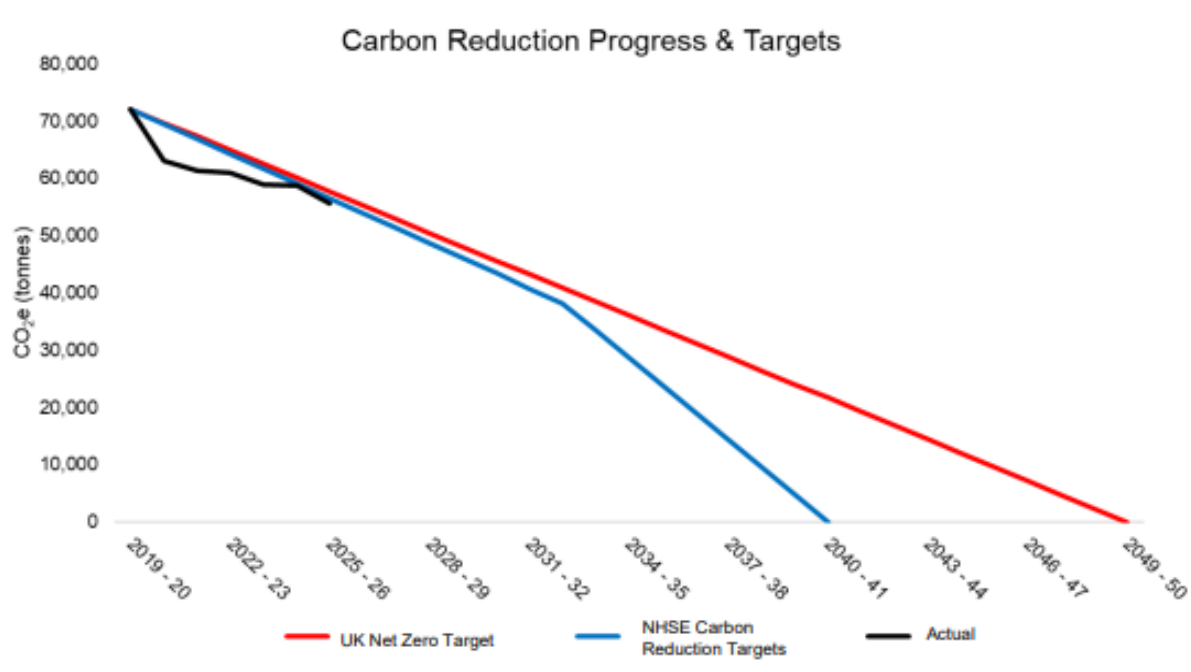


Figure 2: LTHT Carbon Emission Reduction Forecast against a Re-aligned Baseline year

4. Financial Implications

Achieving net zero involves significant investment to decarbonise the estate, to achieve long-term cost savings, enhance competitiveness, and mitigate exposure to climate-related financial and regulatory risks.

One key area in which progress has been made when comparing 2025-26 to 2024-25 is in natural gas consumption (largest proportion of our scope 1 emissions), which has recorded a reduction in emissions from this source over the past year of 1,547.02 tCO₂e, highlighting the sustained effort in the delivery of complex infrastructure heat decarbonisation projects delivered by Estates and Facilities (E&F). Additionally, a key area of progress across the year, when compared to 2024-25 has been in anaesthetic gas use (scope 1 emissions). This is shown by a reduction of 667.93 tCO₂e over the year from this source, highlighting successful work in decommissioning piped nitrous oxide, further decarbonising clinical care.

To ensure further progress is made during 2026-27 and the Trust returns to its trajectory for reaching net-zero by 2040, the Trust continues to require substantial funding and sustained investment and support, particularly in areas such as Estates and Facilities, to

enable a reversal in the rising emissions from sources including natural gas, non-clinical waste and electricity consumption.

Costs and Investments –

- Capital Expenditure - LTHT face considerable upfront capital expenditure to transition to a low-carbon economy. This includes investing in clean/ low-carbon energy infrastructure, energy efficiency measures, sustainable transport, and innovative technologies.
- Operating Costs - Initially, some innovative technologies or processes may be more expensive than existing high-carbon alternatives. However, increased operating costs can also result from the physical impacts of climate change, such as damage to facilities from extreme weather events.
- Carbon Pricing - The implementation of carbon pricing mechanisms (e.g., a carbon tax or cap-and-trade system) directly increases the cost of greenhouse gas emissions, creating a financial incentive to reduce them.

5. Risk

There are several recorded risks linked to the Trust's ability to reach net zero & the impact of climate change. Operationally, there is a growing business continuity risk associated with the increased frequency and intensity of climate events like heat waves & increased rainfall, which will affect service delivery and the ability to manage and maintain the Trust's estate. Clinically, there is growing risk to patient safety and outcomes, as the failure to ensure our services are resilient to climate change could compromise our ability to provide safe and effective care for our patients.

The risk of Trust operations being impacted by the physical environmental changes that climate change presents is owned by Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response.

Externally, there is a legal requirement/ regulatory risk concerning the Trust's ability to meet its net zero targets set by the NHS (2040; 2045) and UK Government (2050). Trust risk appetite framework (2025) – *External Risk is 'the risk of direct or indirect loss as a result of a failure to comply with regulation, operate within the law and deliver on our partnership obligations.'* The Trust's appetite for external risk is averse. Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is key objective.

Whilst the Trust is currently progressing towards net zero targets, non-compliance with the mandated requirement is not yet deemed a significant risk but is documented on the E&F risk register and monitored regularly. However, the delivery of these targets is contingent upon the drawdown of significant funding to implement the estates decarbonisation strategy. The future clinical strategy, and allocation of funding for decarbonisation projects, remains the biggest risk to the ability of LTHT to meet future net zero targets.

6. Communication and Involvement

The Trust communicates its sustainability progress to external stakeholders through participation in various regional and city-wide steering groups. Our Green Plan is published on our website and serves as the primary tool for the public to view our progress to net zero, our sustainability strategic plans and initiatives.

Sustainability updates are consistently communicated to the Trust's internal stakeholders via the Strategic Sustainability Group (SSG). The SSG continues to oversee the

implementation of the Green Plan, convening every two months. Regular updates on our progress towards achieving net zero carbon targets are reported to the Board.

Staff engagement/ collaboration on sustainability initiatives is enabled via the Greener Care Network and progress is communicated to all staff through the various LTHT communication channels. The Trust's new Green Plan, supported by the Greener Care Plan provides an opportunity to re-engage both internal and external stakeholders in our sustainability plans. The 'Greener Care Plan' is specifically targeted at engaging Clinicians in 'reducing our carbon footprint through greener patient pathways,' developed and supported by our Clinical leads for Sustainability. The Lean-to-Green (L2G) team (a team of sustainability specialists including quality improvement/KPO, Clinical leadership and the E&F environmental services) have continued to support Clinical engagement & the delivery of sustainable Clinical practices across the organisation, utilising the principles & practices of the Leeds Improvement Method (LIM).

The Director of E&F, as the Trust Executive lead for Sustainability, has regular engagement and is kept updated on our organisational strategic objective to become one of the greenest Trusts in the UK.

These reporting mechanisms are significantly enhancing oversight and increasing leadership accountability on the greening and decarbonisation of care models, thereby accelerating the Trust's transition towards achieving the NHS targets. The progress the Trust has made on Sustainability was reflected in the recent publication of our Care Quality Commission's Well-led inspection report, scoring (3) for '*Environmental sustainability – sustainable development*', providing assurance that the Trust are performing well and meeting expectations in delivering the essential standards.

7. Impact on Equality & Health Inequalities

This annual update is for information; therefore, it does not have an impact on the way people (including staff, patients and communities) are treated, therefore the Equality and Health Inequality Impact Assessment is not required.

8. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act

This paper has been made available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9. Recommendation

This evidence-based assurance report has been provided to update the Board on the Trust's progress towards its NHS mandated net zero targets and the vision to become one of the greenest NHS trusts in the UK. The Board is not required to take any specific action/s other than to continue its commitment, through the implementation of the Green Plan 2025-28.

10. Supporting Information

The following appendices support this report:

1. The Green Plan (2025-28)
2. LTHT Year-End Carbon Report (2025-26)

Chris Kelly
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16/07/26