

FAQ for Lambeth Carbon Baseline Report 2018-19

Version 1.1 July 2020

1. How do we know the data is robust?

AECOM has peer-reviewed our initial data analysis, calculations and methodology. They have highlighted gaps in the dataset, which has been provided by different departments within the council, which reduces AECOM's ability to provide accurate estimates on emissions. They have provided a best estimate and are continuing to liaise with various colleagues to gain more data and refine their estimates. It should be noted we haven't calculated our carbon baseline prior to this year, and so we have had to develop a methodology and acquire the information from other departments in the council for the first time. The missing data has been identified and explained in the main report, and in future annual updates of the report we will aim to improve the completeness of the dataset.

2. Why is the borough-wide baseline reported for 2017 and the council baseline reported for 2018-19?

These are the most recent years available from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and from our records, respectively. We do not anticipate any problems doing this as the data are not like-for-like so are not for direct comparison.

3. Why is the borough baseline breakdown given as it is?

Detail on the borough's carbon emissions are given as they are presented by BEIS in the data tables download given [here](#). We don't have information on the data presented beyond what is published online by BEIS.

4. Why is the borough baseline reported in units of CO₂ while the council baseline is reported in units of CO₂e?

CO₂ and CO₂e are the units used by BEIS for their Local Authority emissions (for the borough baseline) and conversion factors (for the council baseline) respectively.

5. Why aren't emissions from waste in the main report?

There currently isn't a preferred methodology for analysing and presenting Local Authority waste data, and the methodology used for the rest of the document isn't suitable here for reasons outlined in the waste report. We have therefore created a separate report presenting the waste emissions, which also details the methodology used and explains in detail our reasoning for presenting the waste carbon baseline separately.

6. Why aren't emissions from staff travel in the main report?

Unlike other sources of carbon, staff travel will not remain constant from now until 2030, and therefore we cannot compare year-on-year. Members of staff will move to a new house for example, and there will be staff turnover, which means data from the carbon baseline year (2018) will continue to change. Staff travel has not been included in the main baseline as it will contaminate the data, but information will continue to be collected through the staff travel survey to provide an indicative position.

7. What is the purpose of publishing the top ten emitting buildings in each department?

To aid us in focusing our carbon emission reduction efforts we wanted to identify the highest-emitting buildings in our portfolio. This does not mean that to achieve our goal we will exclude the other buildings not among the top ten, nor necessarily even that we will begin with these or use this division into department to co-ordinate projects.

8. Why aren't emissions from the Civic Centre presented separately from the Town Hall?

The Civic Centre has a BREEAM Excellent rating due to its energy efficiency. We are unable to separate the gas emissions from the Town Hall as both buildings are fed by one meter and whilst we continue to look at ways to resolve this, we currently don't have a way to estimate the relative contributions to the overall figure.

9. Why is Phoenix House included in the baseline when we no longer occupy this building?

We left Phoenix House in May 2018, but continue to run services to comply with insurance requirements and to prevent damage to building fabric and services. This is expected to continue until refurbishment and letting is arranged. Until then we will work to keep energy consumption to a minimum.

10. Why are parking meters among the highest-emitting assets of the parks department?

These parking meters cover the whole of the Brixton area and consume electricity continuously. All the machines were decommissioned on 15-08-2019 (outside the baseline dates), so there was no use from the general public. In future, parking will be paid for by Pay by Phone and PayPoint so there will be a reduction in parking meter emissions. To aid data interpretation we have grouped services together where possible; the majority of outdoor spaces are under the control of Parks and so for ease we have categorised parking meters under this department.

11. Why is data for some schools' gas consumption missing?

Schools are responsible for their own energy bills and are no longer required to report to us their meter readings. As part of our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030, we will work with schools to access this information and to reduce emissions.

12. Are the named buildings the only ones for which data is missing?

It is likely that data for other buildings is missing but there is no easy way to know which. For example, Blue Star House was noticed to have a low energy consumption for such a big building and so this was investigated and found to be reported through manual readings and we were able to obtain these. However, we expect that these buildings are low-emitters as they are probably small properties, on the basis that we have looked over the portfolio and chased up the missing data for properties we expect to have high emissions.

13. There is no prediction of future years' emissions nor a plan for how you will achieve carbon neutrality.

The report presents a 2018-19 baseline of the council's emissions to provide a starting point for reduction measures and to allow measurement of progress to our 2030 target. It is a key part in enabling us to deliver our [Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan](#). Whilst this document does not make recommendations for actions, it will also inform the [Citizens' Assembly](#) and the subsequent Climate Change Action Plan. The document aims to provide a baseline for 2018-19, and so does not forecast emissions or commit to any individual projects to reduce emissions. In future, we will publish reports monitoring our progress to the carbon neutral target from this baseline.

14. Does 6 readings a year reflect actual consumption?

Some properties for which we've reported gas and electricity data are based on a combination of estimated and actual readings, and some have fewer than 12 monthly readings.

15. Why aren't floor areas given for housing?

The majority of our housing stock was built several decades ago and over time these records have been lost. Instead, we have provided an indication of efficiency using number of dwellings per property.

16. Do you have information on the age and condition of properties in the housing department?

Housing stock surveys were due to begin in Summer 2020, but this may be subject to change due to the COVID-19 crisis.

17. Are data from staff who use their own cars for travel for work included?

No – we were not able to acquire this data.

18. Why has the report been published with incomplete data?

We think that it is important to provide as robust a baseline as possible so that we can focus on our carbon reduction work as well as enabling it to be used as part of the evidence base for the citizens' assembly. Whilst the complex nature of the dataset and its sources from all areas of the council mean providing a full dataset is challenging, we are keen on transparency as we work towards carbon neutrality. Therefore, we have achieved what we feel is a level of completeness which is satisfactory for an initial report to show the greatest sources of emissions and areas for improvement in our operations. We will continue to collect data to calculate our baseline.

19. What is the future of the carbon baseline?

We will publish annual updates of the baseline for future years to report on our progress to the 2030 target, using the same methodology as used here.