

**NHS 24  
BOARD MEETING  
27 FEBRUARY 2025  
ITEM NO 9.4  
FOR ASSURANCE**

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME  
QUARTERLY UPDATE**

**Executive Sponsor:**

Ron Cook, Medical Director

**Lead Officer/Author:**

Graham Mirtle, Head of PMO

Frederike Garbe, Public Health Consultant

Rachel Masterman, PMO Support Officer

**Action Required:**

The Board is asked to take assurance from the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme (CESP) update.

**Key Points for the Board/Committee to consider:**

Responding to the climate emergency is one of the Scottish Government's highest priorities. CESP activities are part of the annual review for all health boards.

Main points to note this quarter are:

- Data collection and monitoring (particularly for energy consumption and waste) is improving over time and helping to drive the environmental and sustainability activities.
- The reduced travel target for mileage is 40% and YTD performance is showing a 45% reduction.
- The staff food growing pilot in Dundee, the "Crampy Growers" is engaging with other local food projects and planning for Spring.

**Governance process:**

The NHS 24 governance reflects that defined by the Scottish Government National Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme.

**Strategic alignment and link to overarching NHS Scotland priorities and strategies:**

NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy: 2022-2026.

- The Scottish Government (SG) Care and Wellbeing Portfolio and Public health priorities for Scotland are overall strategic reform policies and delivery framework within Health and Social Care.
- Chief Medical Officer – Realistic medicine annual report: 2022
- Realistic Medicine Action Plans
- NHS 24 Workforce Strategy
- NHS 24 Corporate Strategy

- NHS 24 CESP Strategy and Action Plan
- NHS 24 Finance Strategy

**Strategic alignment and link to Corporate Delivery Plan activity:**

7.1b Deliver interventions that seek to reduce negative impact to the environment and contribute towards net zero.

**Key Risks:**

Risk management is aligned with the standing corporate governance process.

**Financial Implications:**

There are three pillars of sustainability:

- Environmental,
- Societal
- Financial

Actions that are environmentally more sustainable can also lead to financial savings (through reducing waste and inefficiencies, for example). However, for some actions, there might be financial implications that will have a cost to NHS 24 in the short term but could lead to savings in the longer term or have benefits on a system level. When known these shall be presented through the appropriate governance routes for approval before progressing.

**Equality and Diversity:**

NHS 24 takes account of requirements in relation to equality and diversity in relation to Sustainability Development and environmental matters and is another of the three pillars of sustainability.

Social sustainability includes consideration on equity, reducing socioeconomic deprivation and discrimination.

Climate change as well as some actions to mitigate or adapt to climate change risks increasing inequalities. Some actions aimed at reducing the negative impact of climate change on health have the potential of improving health and reducing inequalities (sometimes referred to as co-benefits).

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Board is asked to review for awareness the CESP update following the Planning and Performance Committee on 10th February 2025.

## 2. TIMING

- 2.1 The NHS 24 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme update is reported to the Planning and Performance committee quarterly, as per the national governance agreement.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Climate change presents a serious risk to the health of people in Scotland and around the world. The [NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy](#) was launched in August 2022. The most recent [Annual NHS Scotland Climate Emergency & Sustainability Report 2024 - gov.scot](#) (NHS S CESS) showed progress against the targets set in the strategy.
- 3.2 In response to the NHS S CESS, NHS 24 has developed its own NHS 24 [Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy](#) and has defined deliverables and targets align to the [NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2022-2026](#). The Scottish Government corporate governance structures for Health Boards are in place at NHS 24, and the Climate Emergency and Sustainable programme is a key internal pillar of [Our Corporate Strategy 2023 | NHS 24](#).
- 3.3 Appropriate action to reduce carbon emissions, will reduce the impact on population health. This aligns to Scottish Governments [Care and Wellbeing Portfolio Board](#) priorities with net zero targets being a key pillar of the Value Based Health & Care action plan aligned to Realistic Medicine.
- 3.4 NHS 24 also has a key role to play in supporting its workforce to consider wider environmentally sustainable behaviours. This includes promotion of sustainable travel methods, procurement and a digital first approach for communication.

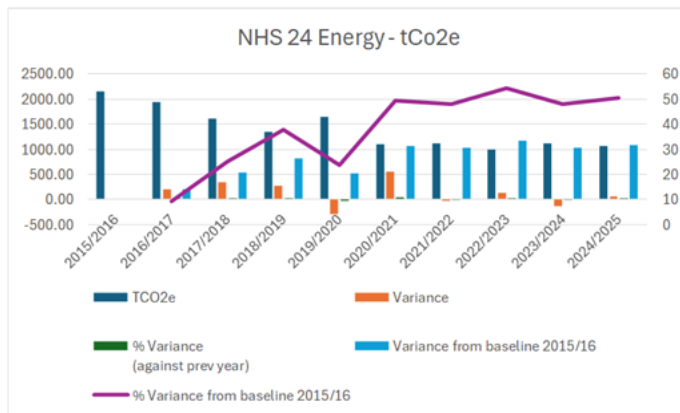
## 4 ACTION PLAN MAIN AREAS

- 4.1 In May 2023 the NHS 24 Board approved the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and Action plan. There are five principal areas aligned with associated delivery actions and targets to achieve our overall net-zero ambitions:

### 4.1.1 Buildings and Land

Energy consumption is continuously monitored with local sites implementing energy reduction measures. Individual site management plans are being developed to ensure ongoing improvement as we progress towards our Net-Zero targets. There are some issues still being worked through in relation to base data, however, from the information available it shows the following:

2024/25 NHS 24 Energy - tCo2e Performance



Energy Target

NHS Scotland aims for a yearly rolling energy reduction target of 1% across all boards. The primary goal is to achieve a 75% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, which translates to a projected 5% annual reduction for NHS 24 from the 2024/2025 period onwards. This target will be subject to annual reviews based on performance.

Progress

The forecast year-end position as at Q3 of 2024/25 indicates a 5% reduction compared to the previous year, resulting in a 51% reduction from the baseline year of 2015/16.

For Noting

It is important to note that in 2015/16, only Norseman and Cardonald were included in reporting energy consumption. Additionally, we did not have access to the figures for the other sites until late 2021 early 2022.

Energy performance metrics encompass electricity, gas, water, and district heating for the relevant sites.

The energy usage for Norseman and Cardonald has since been apportioned to reflect only NHS 24 usage.

Energy usage for Q3 has been estimated due to actual data not yet being received.

Q4 2024/25 Focus

To ensure accurate reporting and monitor actual performance against forecasts, the energy management platform will be updated accordingly.

Additionally, we will identify and implement feasible activities during the fourth quarter to ensure that end-of-year performance meets or exceeds the forecast.

Finally, a comprehensive Energy Management Plan for the period 2025-2030 will be developed.

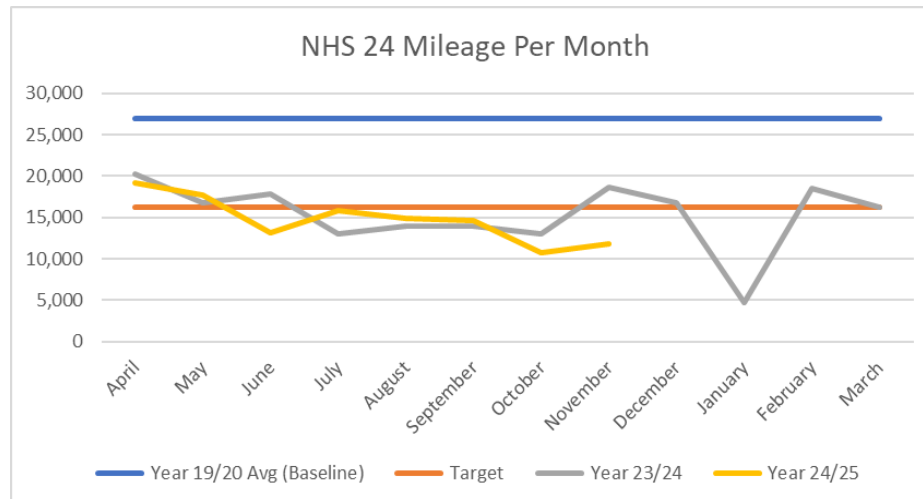
## 4.1.2 Travel

NHS 24 have targeted a 20% reduction in train travel and a 40% reduction in car travel by 2030 against 2019 baseline. This is in line with the Scottish Government's [Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032](#) which set out a world-leading commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2032 against 2019 baseline, with further plans to decarbonise passenger railways

Year to date for 2024/25, as of November 2024, the organisation has achieved a car mileage reduction of 45%, and a reduction of 60% for mileage in train travel.

Travel reporting is now included in the finance report each month highlighting directorate level achievement on travel reduction targets, with consideration continuing to be given on most appropriate format for meetings, noting that some meetings are more productive/beneficial in person rather than virtual (e.g. stakeholder engagement).

The table below shows the current travel data:



**TARGET:** The Sustainability & Value group calculated a target by taking the 2019/20 mileage as a baseline and applying a 40% reduction. The target is 16,181 miles per month, totalling 194k miles for the financial year.

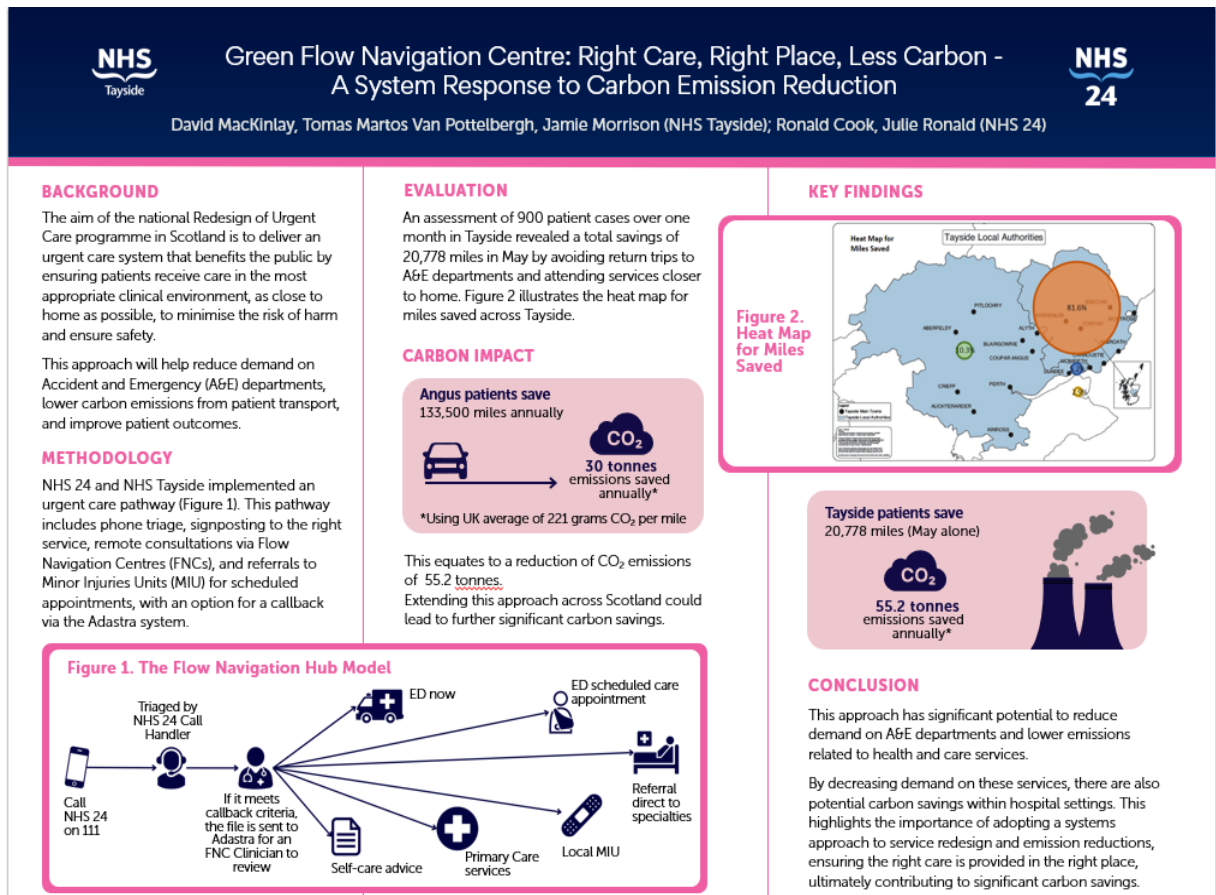
**PROGRESS:** The graph shows the mileage for financial year 2023/24 and 2024/25 to date against the target. In 2023/24 a total of 183k miles were claimed. In 2024/25, year to date the average is 14,749 miles per month, which is an improvement on the previous year and 45% reduction achievement.

#### 4.1.3 Goods and Services

Work is continuing with our procurement colleagues to ensure sustainability is one of the factors when assessing potential suppliers. Staff are challenged to think creatively about ways to lessen the environmental impact when putting contracts out to tender. For example, reducing the number of deliveries can help both with the overall costs and the environmental impact. Where possible local suppliers are also being used.

#### 4.1.4 Care and Realistic Medicine

A poster presentation of the Green Flow Navigation Centre collaboration with NHS Tayside was presented at the Greener Surgery Conference in Birmingham on 17<sup>th</sup> December. Proceedings at the conference highlighted a strong focus on increasing sustainability within the hospital setting, and presentation reflected the need to think more about preventing admissions and taking a wider systems perspective for future conferences. This is in line with the aims of the Green FNC project.



### Figure 1. The Flow Navigation Hub Model



The Realistic Medicine action plan is progressing well, with the most recent update presented to SG in October.

The action plan presented updates on work supporting increasing awareness of Value Based Medicine to staff as well as the public. As well as updates on progress on the use of data to focus on population health and reducing inequalities.

There were also updates on the sign off and successful reinstatement of remote prescribing process. Prescription pads were made available for all NHS 24 ANP and pharmacist prescribers.

NHS inform was updated with information on environmental impact of inhalers and reference to guidance on safe and sustainable use of inhalers. Accessibility to information on self-care & safe and effective use of medicines was also improved.

There was also a successful completion of User Research which identified some gaps regarding medicines information on NHS inform which is being addressed.

#### 4.1.5 Communities

NHS 24 has collaborated with Design Hopes to pilot a “staff food growing” project based in the Dundee Centre. In this project we were supported by the Community Food growing project “[Campy Growers](#)” in Camperdown Country Park, Dundee. Campy Growers provided support including seeds, seedlings and soil for the project.

The pilot had a positive response from participants, but because of a delay in starting, the main growing season was missed.

There are plans to set up another growing project to start in spring 2025, hopefully extending to other Centres and engaging with local food growing projects, close to the Centres.

To support an improved awareness of NHS 24, the services we offer, our career opportunities and our volunteering opportunities, we regularly engage with communities across Scotland. When promoting our services, we seek to help communities understand what the appropriate health and care pathways are for them, particularly when unforeseen circumstances arise.

Each year, in the lead up to the festive and new year period, when GP surgeries and pharmacies close, we undertake an engagement campaign to help promote awareness of the importance of being ready for this period. We share key messages, such as encouraging people to collect repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, to consider what over the counter medicines they might need, and we signpost them to our online resources that might offer them information and guidance in their time of need.

In 2024, we focussed our winter engagement events in lower SIMD areas, and areas that were identified as being more likely to contact NHS 24's 111 service for a query that resulted in a self-care outcome. Promoting an improved public awareness of our online self-help information was intended to help alleviate pressure on the 111 service during a peak demand period. This year, there were 19 winter events, with over 836 people engaged and 5,870 leaflets handed out.

Additionally, as part of our winter engagement, NHS 24 runs an annual Christmas Card Competition. Each year we select schools local to an NHS 24 centre to design a greeting card. Information about NHS 24 is shared with the schools and this engagement helps to develop a positive relationship within local communities. This year, schools from Hillington and Cardonald took part, with Dundee and Clydebank based schools taking part in previous years.

## **5. ENGAGEMENT**

### **Internal**

5.1 NHS 24 is committed to contributing to a more environmentally sustainable and conscious NHS Scotland. The NHS 24 communications team has been proactive in sharing and promoting key actions and activities in the last quarter as follows:

- NHS 24 continues to promote key sustainability and climate emergency messages. We shared news of the significant reductions in train and car travel mileage with staff, including future ambitions.
- We held a 6-week internal sustainability campaign to encourage environmentally sustainable behaviours among staff and highlight existing organisational initiatives. Each week focused on different areas including Sustainable Travel, Paper Reduction, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability at Home. We included



staff stories and advice about being more sustainable. The campaign was heavily promoted through Team Talk, the intranet, and wallboards.

- We also launched the Estates Sustainability Project Board and their work to ensure our estates continue to be as efficient as possible. We updated staff on the review of our estates, and the outcome and decision from the review. Q&As and communications were created to support staff – with ongoing communications being driven by key milestones. Communications continue to play an important role in the project team, and subsequent workstreams.
- We continue to share key messages throughout the year, with updates/reminders on printing wisely, recycling correctly, quotes from our EMT, and senior managers, recipes, cycle to work etc.
- A plan is in development for activity across 2025/26

5.2 Moving forward, the team will leverage seasonal events to promote waste reduction, the circular economy, and sustainability. By leveraging internal communication channels, the team has ensured that staff remain well-informed and engaged in collective efforts to address the climate crisis. The dedication to these initiatives underscores NHS 24's commitment to fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

5.3 The [Sustainable Insights](#) page has been added to the [Climate Emergency and Sustainability](#) SharePoint page to continue to support and encourage staff in making positive changes. As well as advice and resources, there is also a comments and feedback section to submit ideas on how to encourage and support ways to live and work more sustainably.

## **External**

5.4 The Programme Manager for the NHS 24 CESP programme, is a member of several national CESP groups. These groups include membership from health boards, Scottish Government, NHS Assure and subject matter experts.

5.5 We are collaborating with colleagues in PHS and NSS on merging and aligned the Anchor Progression Framework and NHS Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy (NHSCE&SS). The purpose is to “*support NHS Boards fulfil their anchor institution responsibilities and contribute to creating net-zero, nature-positive, climate-resilient, healthy and equitable communities across Scotland,*” and to develop a model, suitable for NHS Specialist Board. This model is currently being finalised. Once signed off by the Executive teams, the plan is to trial this out in PHS, NSS and NHS 24.



## 6. NATIONAL E-LEARNING MODULES LAUNCH

- 6.1 The national eLearning module on Environmental Sustainability is now live on Turas. NHS Assure have advised comms and notified L&D teams across Boards and signposting at the end of the module links to the NHS 24 Sustainability intranet page.
- 6.2 Within NHS 24, the module was reviewed by the Training Quality Assurance Committee on 28th August but not made mandatory. The module has been promoted to staff via Team Talk and there are additional sustainability modules for staff to complete on LearnMore24 which include similar content.
- 6.3 Completion rates for LearnMore24 Climate and Sustainability learning modules:

	<b>Sustainability and Environmental Issues</b>	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>Love Food, Hate Waste</b>
<b>Aug-24</b>	3	1	1
<b>Sep-24</b>	3	0	0
<b>Oct-24</b>	1	2	0
<b>Nov-24</b>	0	0	0
<b>Dec-24</b>	1	0	0
<b>All 2024</b>	17	6	2
<b>Since launch</b>	29	8	2

- 6.4 We are liaising with our Workforce colleagues to determine the status of all sustainability learning modules across both Turas and LearnMore 24 platforms with a view to streamlining these and fostering more focused promotion of the learning going forward. Monitoring completion rates will also be simplified when we move to a single platform.

## 7. FORWARD LOOK TO 25/26 AND BEYOND

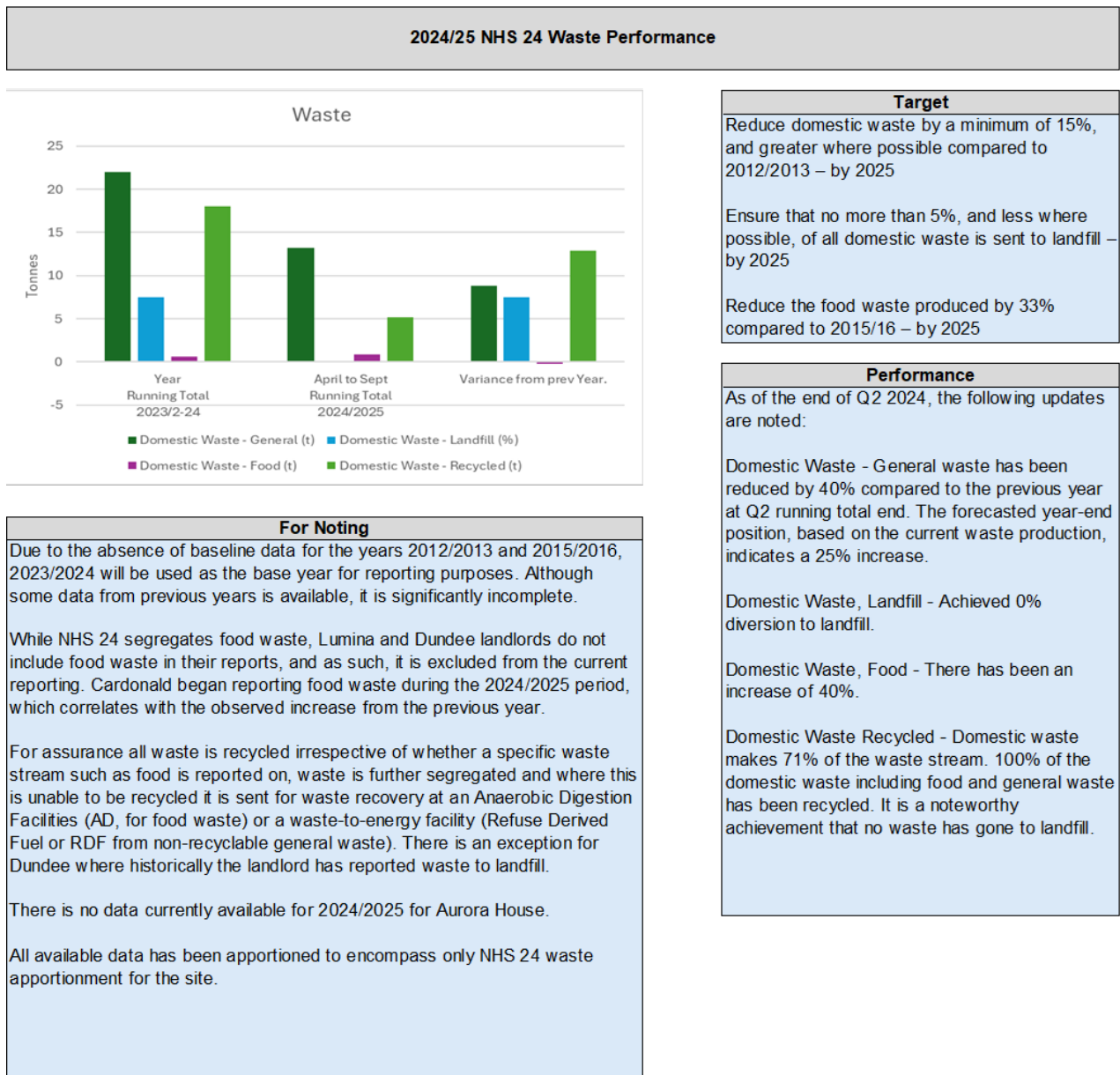
- 7.1 The Estates Sustainability Programme Board recently recommended enacting of the lease break on two of the floors at Lumina, with NHS 24 exiting them by September 2025. This shall result in recurring efficiencies towards the financial savings target but, importantly, supports the move to net zero by lowering the carbon footprint. This decision has received the support of EMT, with assurance provided to the November Planning and Performance Committee.
- 7.2 Staff were notified of this decision on the 13th of November and notice has been served to the landlord. Work is now progressing through the estates and workforce implementation groups.
- 7.3 Reducing the estate footprint at Lumina will have a significant impact on lowering NHS 24's carbon footprint. Closing the 1st and 2nd floors reduces electricity usage by 347,799 kWh and prevents 67 tonnes of CO2 emissions. This is comparable to burning 33,500 litres of diesel or the annual electricity consumption of 47 households. Additionally, the savings could power 8,040,000 smartphone charges, highlighting the

critical role of energy efficiency in meeting sustainability objectives and minimizing carbon footprints.

- 7.4 The West of Scotland Regional Planning Team (RPT) has recently successfully relocated to the ground floor of the Lumina building, following the termination of their lease agreement elsewhere. This relocation exemplifies the benefits of shared space, enhancing space utilisation and adopting a collaborative approach to reducing the carbon footprint. The RPT typically utilises the available space during regular business hours, while NHS 24 utilises the same space during out-of-hours periods.
- 7.5 To advance the Estates Sustainability Plan, it is essential to leverage upcoming lease break opportunities at Lumina (ground floor), Aurora House and Caledonian House (Dundee) ensuring sustainability considerations are incorporated into options appraisals. Additionally, collaboration with other Boards and public sector bodies, shall be prioritised to explore the feasibility of shared estate opportunities and optimise space utilization. This approach not only aligns with Government policy on public sector buildings but also supports the goal of reducing the carbon footprint.
- 7.6 Initially, OOH security was introduced at the Dundee site to support the transition into the new building, during which enhancements such as improved car park lighting, upgraded CCTV, and access adjustments were completed. A short-life working group analysed local service support team data, which showed no significant security incidents, and received feedback from Police Scotland confirming the area as low risk. Consequently, OOH security services were deemed unnecessary. This decision will result in savings of c£56k annually from 2025/26 onwards.
- 7.7 Additionally, close collaboration with the Digital and Service Transformation Programmes to assess the impact on future estates requirements will be essential

## **8. WASTE MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Gathering accurate waste data from sites other than Norseman House continues to be challenging due to the manner in which waste is managed by landlords, inclusion within service charge agreements, and the overall difficulty in obtaining the necessary information. However, NHS 24 has the capability to capture data for waste that falls under its direct control, specifically Clinical and Hazardous waste (WEE).



- 8.2 NHS 24 has been actively collaborating with NHS Assure to develop the first NHS 24 Waste Management Policy. Additionally, there is a focus on providing necessary training to NHS 24 waste leads, which includes Estates and Facilities personnel as well as local Service Support Teams. A continued emphasis at various sites is to reduce overall waste tonnage and actively promote effective recycling practices.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Sustainability and Value Group continue to review savings proposals, taking into consideration any unintended consequences, or impact in other areas from proposals prior to implementing.
- 9.2 The shift to remote working and the increased use of Microsoft Teams for meetings have significantly reduced the need for leased cars, which were previously used for travel to in-person meetings. This change has resulted in savings of £43,296 FYE and is feeding into the travel mileage reduction figures.

- 9.3 A review of domestic cleaning services at Aurora House and the Lumina Building, prompted by natural attrition and the Lumina landlord's new cleaning contract, has led to cost reductions. By adjusting the required 'dedicated' cleaning hours, savings of £32,063 (based on 2023/24 actuals versus 2024/25 forecasts) have been identified. Finance will assess the budget to confirm cash-releasing savings.

## **10. MEASURABLE BENEFITS**

- 10.1 NHS 24 reports to Scottish Government annually on key sustainability metrics. Quarterly internal updates enable us to monitor progress toward our targets and objectives, ensuring alignment with Scottish Government's long-term goals.

## **11. NEXT STEPS**

- 11.1 Work will continue to improve the data capture and monitoring of the various environmental indicators. Action will also continue to reduce the impact of NHS 24 on the environment.