

EI NET ZERO: 5 YEAR UPDATE & DELIVERY PLAN

March 2025

This report provides an update on progress achieved towards the EI's [Net Zero Pledge](#) during the first five years of the programme, plus an outline of future delivery plans.

The EI's net zero pledge and Science Based Targets

In May 2020 the EI embarked on an ambitious net zero journey:

- pledging to end the impact of its operations on the climate well before 2050.
- setting Science Based Targets for a 1.5°C warming pathway - GHG emission reductions of 26.2% by 2025, 47.9% by 2030 and 67.9% by 2035.

The commitments have been developed within the Society for the Environment's [Pledge to Net Zero](#) framework. The EI has also similarly signed up to the [SME Climate Commitment](#), which is recognised by the United Nations [Race to Zero](#) campaign.

2024 update

During 2024 the impact of coronavirus subsided, and new modes of working have settled down. Head office emissions have reduced significantly and were below our 2025 net zero target. Staff travel emissions rose, although still staying inside our 2025 net zero target. We have plans in place for 2025 which aim to bring this number down, giving a better safety margin against our target via enhanced planning and tracking activities.

The following sections give more detail on 2024 emissions and next steps for longer term delivery of our net zero targets, first for the head office, then for staff travel. The final section discusses how the EI has grown while best practice guidance on net zero has also progressed since we launched our net zero pledge in 2020. We outline the options we will explore in 2025 as we seek to stay at the forefront of delivering the net zero future.

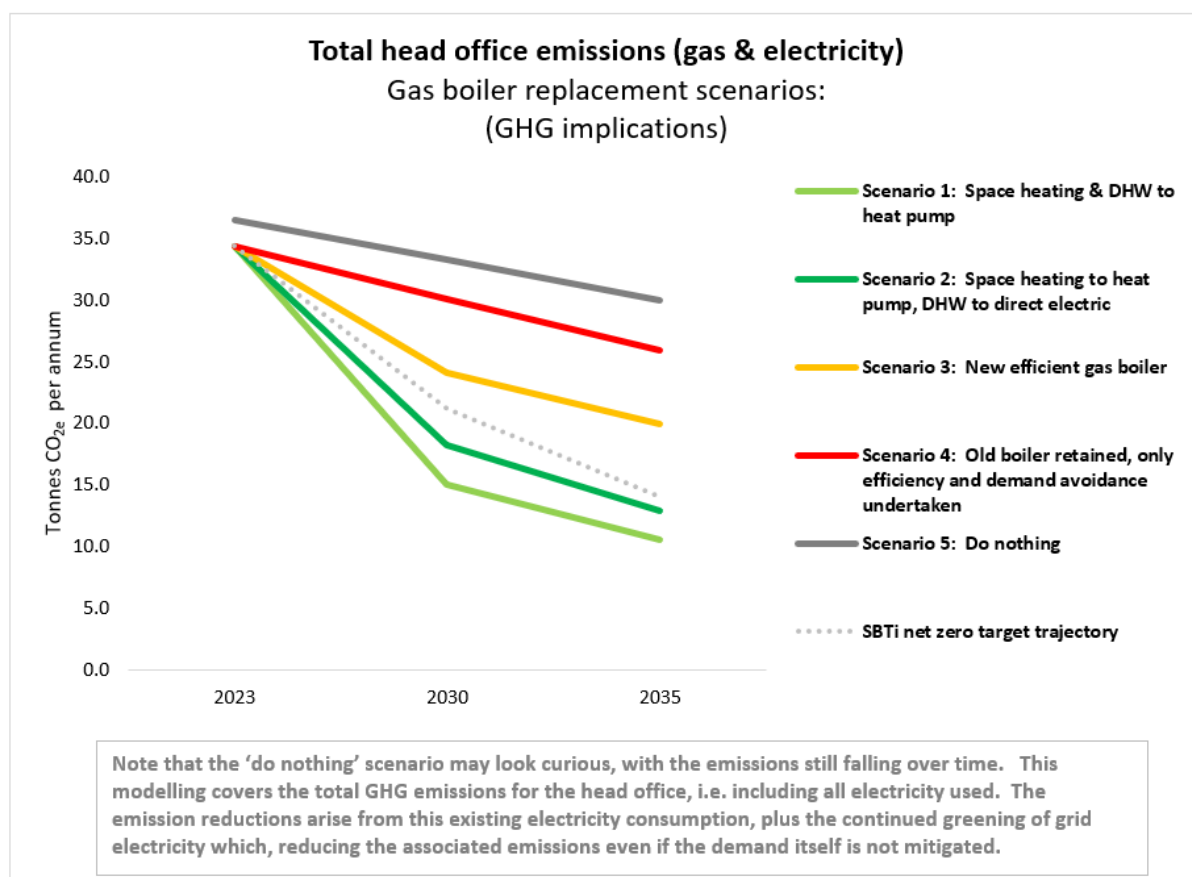
HEAD OFFICE emissions for 2024 were 29.49 TCO_{2e}, well below the baseline year's emissions of 53.02 TCO_{2e} and ahead of our 2025 interim target of 34.40 TCO_{2e}.

During 2024 we built upon improvements in half hourly metering, staff training, and engagements with specialist suppliers to deliver significant improvements in building control. For example, we achieved a ~20% saving during a shutdown / baseload campaign, with further opportunities flagged to take forwards in 2025. We also achieved a 20% improvement in daytime electricity consumption on Mondays by optimising how the air conditioning is controlled to take account of lower occupancy rates. We believe that these operational, staff engagement and behaviour change projects will take us to our interim 2025 net zero target and part way towards our 2030 target.

We also switched to 100% renewables via the top-quality supplier: Good Energy.

To stay on track for our longer-term net zero ambitions at the head office, this year saw the development of exciting plans to move the head office completely away from fossil fuels, by removing our final gas boilers. We undertook a study to explore the relative impacts of different replacement options.

As can be seen in the first figure, there are only two options which keep pace with our 2035 net zero target for the head office. The first is to replace the gas boiler with heat pump systems to supply both space heating and domestic hot water (DHW). The second would be to provide space heating via a heat pump and domestic hot water via a localised direct electric solution. Although the second option doesn't fully utilise heat pumps, local point of use electric solutions would potentially help to avoid distribution losses which can be high in central DHW systems.



We will further develop our modelling and seek quotes for these upgrades in 2025, with a target of completing the project by the end of 2026.

Beyond 2035, achieving full net zero for the head office will involve deciding how to account for our 100% renewable energy tariff. We currently report on a 'location' basis, i.e. in line with best practice for driving down actual energy demand, as well as avoiding double counting of renewables generation which is already factored into the grid average factor for electricity. As we approach the 2035 timeframe, and following significant emission reductions in line with a 1.5°C pathway, we will review the latest best practice on offsetting to neutralise any remaining unavoidable emissions.

BUSINESS TRAVEL emissions increased in 2024, reaching 221.44 TCO_{2e}. This was up from the 2023 value of 156.52 TCO_{2e} although still within our 2025 interim net zero target of 229.80 TCO_{2e}.

Until 2024 we had held emissions for staff travel to levels well below our 2025 target. This was supported by our staff travel policy which we launched in 2020 that helps teams avoid flights wherever possible. We also developed department level targets to allow each team to see their contribution to the pledge. Finally, we purchased state-of-the-art video conferencing facilities for our meeting rooms to help avoid travel wherever possible.

Although 2024 emissions are higher than hoped, we believe that we can bring emissions back down to give a better safety margin for the 2025 interim target, primarily via:

- Improving the timeliness and sharing of travel emissions results through the year.
- Tightening the criteria and sign off process for deciding when it is appropriate to fly, and which flight class to utilise.
- Sharing data to raise awareness of the significant differences in emission factors between economy, premium economy, and business class flights.

We will also examine changes in our organisation since we set our targets in 2019, as well as our approaches to connecting with our international partners, as we plan to meet our longer-term net zero commitments on staff travel.

Next steps

The activities discussed above will continue into 2025 as our journey towards net zero progresses.

Beyond 2025, we have a few decisions to make in terms of how we measure and track our progress. This review partly arises from the context that our average FTE head count has risen by 33% since the 2019 baseline year. We will explore all avenues available to minimise the impact of the growth of our team upon our emissions and will only consider adjusting the baseline if necessary and as aligned with best practice guidance.

There have also been updates from the SBTi in 2024 that we will review in the coming year. For example, the SBTi launched a new sector specific methodology for buildings, as well as a new target validation service. We will also continue to engage with the SME climate commitment on their requirements for scope three reporting and target setting.

This development work will take place in consultation with our teams, contractors and the EI Council to ensure all have a role in steering our net zero ambitions to keep us at the forefront of delivering the net zero future.

2024 performance: summary

The table below summarises performance to the end of 2024 and supports comparison with the 2019 baseline year, interim years since the launch of the net zero pledge, plus targets for 2025, 2030 and 2035.

2024 performance vs. baseline, interim, & target years

	2019	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025		2030		2035	
	Baseline year (Tonnes CO _{2e})	Performance (Tonnes CO _{2e}) % **		Performance (Tonnes CO _{2e}) % **		Performance (Tonnes CO _{2e}) %		Performance (Tonnes CO _{2e}) %		Performance (Tonnes CO _{2e}) %		Science Based Targets for a 1.5°C warming pathway (Tonnes CO _{2e}) %		(Tonnes CO _{2e}) %		(Tonnes CO _{2e}) %	
Scopes 1 & 2: Head office emissions*	53.02	42.37	17%	42.28	20%	36.75	31%	36.06	32%	29.49	44%	34.40	35%	21.20	60%	14.00	74%
Scope 3: Business travel	305.06	21.49	93%	1.91	99%	99.70	67%	156.52	49%	221.44	27%	229.80	25%	165.30	46%	100.80	67%
(of which flights)	297.70	20.90	93%	1.69	99%	97.26	67%	153.48	48%	217.24	27%						
	358.08	63.85	82%	44.19	88%	136.45	62%	192.57	46%	250.93	30%	264.20	26%	186.50	48%	114.80	68%

* Includes a small quantity of scope 3 emissions relating to transmission and distribution of electricity consumed at the head office

** % columns reference the % reduction from target's baseline year, i.e. as opposed to year-on-year savings.

2024 performance: detailed view

		GHG Emissions (Tonnes CO _{2e})					
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Head office emissions	Scope 1 Natural gas	25.37	25.72	27.94	22.34	19.81	14.02
	Scope 2 Purchased electricity (excl. Transmission & Distribution)	25.49	15.33	13.17	13.21	14.96	14.21
	Scope 3 Purchased electricity (Transmission & Distribution)	2.16	1.32	1.17	1.21	1.29	1.26
Business travel, commuting & homeworking	Flights	297.67	20.90	1.69	97.26	153.48	217.24
	Rail (UK and international)	1.15	0.39	0.04	1.53	1.26	2.46
	Vehicle (taxi, car, uber, bus)	6.24	0.19	0.18	0.91	1.78	1.74
	Commuting*	16.17			10.21	12.33	16.30
	Homeworking*	0.00			32.93	30.74	30.85
		358.08	63.85	44.19	136.45	192.57	250.93
					179.59	235.64	298.08
					(inc. HW & commuting)		

* A review of commuting and homeworking emissions was completed during 2022, we continued to track these emissions for 2024. These emissions are relevant to new working patterns post pandemic. This new data helps us to better understand and manage our scope 3 emissions and to contextualise reductions in head office emissions. During 2025 we will decide whether / how best to re-baseline our targets to include commuting and homeworking.

Appendix: 5 year update

2024 was the fifth year of our net zero campaign. By means of a look back, primary activities since the launch of the net zero pledge include:

- **Investment in head office emission reductions:** Whilst noting that head office emissions have reduced by 44% since the baseline year, we are still pursuing ambitious plans to drive further reductions. To date we carried out benchmarking work, referencing data from the UK Green Building Council and LETI's (London Energy Transformation Initiative) target for commercial offices. We also reorganised the facilities team roles to support delivery of the head office targets. In 2023 we worked upon the Building Management System (BMS), metering, and control improvements. We then capitalised upon these in 2024, successfully delivering baseload and control improvements.
- **Pilot study for waste emissions:** During 2024 we estimated that our emissions from waste were less than 5 TCO_{2e} and have identified the best way to track these in the future as an extension of our scope 3 emissions.
- **Quantifying our commuting and homeworking emissions:** Since 2022 we have undertaken a staff commuting and homeworking survey to track emissions in line with new working patterns. This helps us to better manage scope 3 emissions and to contextualise reductions in head office emissions as staff work more from home.
- **Implementing our low carbon travel policy:** Since the launch in 2020, we continue to promote the low carbon travel policy which encourages alternatives to flights; be that online, or via other modes of transport. We have also put in place the mechanisms required for department-level GHG emissions reporting, assigning GHG travel budgets to each team, so they can track and manage their contributions to our net zero journey.
- **Investing in state-of-the-art video conferencing:** To maximise the benefit of the online opportunities to meet, we have invested in new state of the art video conferencing equipment at the head office.
- **Improved tracking of business travel emissions:** Travel data is now collected via an updated travel expense form, allowing us to better track our business travel emissions.
- **Powering our head office on 100% renewable electricity:** We first switched to 100% renewables in 2020. This move continues and as of 2024 the contract sits with Good Energy, one of the best respected suppliers of 100% renewable electricity.
- **Maintaining our onsite renewables generation:** We have an onsite solar array which provides approximately 6% of our electricity requirements.
- **Sharing our experience and fostering wider action:** We continue to engage with the wider energy community on the development of the net zero journey. For example in 2020 we ran a conference highlighting the role of energy efficiency in delivering net zero: [Energy Efficiency: The Road to Net Zero](#) and we have successfully delivered both standard and custom versions of our ['Net Zero for Professionals'](#) course which we launched in 2023.