

Environmental progress report

Period: 1st May 2018 – 30th April 2019

Author: Alex White, Policy Manager

SUMMARY

The Aldersgate Group monitors the environmental impacts arising from carrying out its business. These environmental impacts are relatively low, with main impacts relating to the amount and mode of business and commuting travel and office tenancy. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to obtain data on these impacts from our suppliers (e.g. for office premises). Where this is the case, we seek to engage with those suppliers to improve their measurement and management of environmental impacts and share data with us.

BACKGROUND

The Aldersgate Group is an alliance of leaders from business, academia politics and civil society that drives action for a sustainable economy. Formed in 2006, the Group now has 53 organisation members and a permanent Secretariat. The environmental progress report refers to impacts of the Secretariat's activities and does not include environmental impact of the membership or Board of Directors, except where travel was undertaken by Directors on Aldersgate Group business.

The Aldersgate Group has prepared annual reports showing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions since its 2011-2012 fiscal year. However, changes in scope of data have affected the consistency of accounting over recent years, primarily arising from challenges in obtaining robust and comparable data from key suppliers and changes to suppliers. The Group determined that the ongoing effort to publish full GHG emission reports was not justified due to lack of comparability of data year on year but acknowledged the value of monitoring key activities to help identify and manage its impacts.

In line with the Board of Directors' recommendations, the Aldersgate Group Secretariat has not published a GHG report for the last three years, but has continued to review and record its environmental impacts and engage with suppliers.

ASSESSMENT

There were six full time members of staff at the Aldersgate Group over the course of this reporting period. However, as one member of staff was on maternity leave from July 2018 and another member of staff only joined halfway through June 2018, it is taken that The Group's Secretariat was equivalent to five full time members of staff over the reporting period.

Scope 1 & 2

A lack of data has limited consistency and accuracy in this reporting year. The Aldersgate Group is based in a co-working space, The Office Group (TOG), who own and manage the building. Based on annual metered building electricity consumption provided by TOG, the Aldersgate Group **estimates annual electricity use of 1,210.76kWh. However, as this figure is a rough estimate, we include it only as a benchmark for future reporting.** TOG has a waste portal and is introducing an energy portal to monitor electricity use (the building does not use gas), which would have helped to secure granular data. However, the energy data has not been delivered to schedule, and staffing changes within The Office Group mean that the Aldersgate Group have been unable to secure data on Scope 2 emissions or water usage this year in spite of early engagement. It is our belief that once a new Sustainability Coordinator is

established and the energy portal is running at TOG, with more consistent engagement the data collection process will be more straightforward in the future.

Scope 3

The Aldersgate Group has continued to closely monitor Scope 3 emissions, as this is the sole area where we have consistently held accountability. **The Secretariat's Scope 3 emissions decreased this year by 17%**. The decrease can be largely attributed to the lack of air travel this year and a 37% decrease in commuting emissions due to changes in staff commuting. Land-based business travel has increased by 46% year on year however: emissions related to car and taxi business travel have reduced (by 38% and 22% respectively), but train travel has increased by 62% and emissions related to international train travel have increased by 119%. This can be partly attributed to an increase in trips from the Aldersgate Group's Chair to various events in London and Brussels from six in the previous reporting year to 13 in this reporting year.

Overnight hotel stays have been included in emissions calculations for the second year. More conversion factors have become available this year, resulting in a 675% increase in accountable emissions related to overnight stays.¹ Whilst this significant increase is partially due to more conversion factors being made available it also reflects a greater number of overnight trips, from 8 hotel nights in 2017-18 to 27 in this reporting year. This reflects an increase in international advocacy and thus trips out of London (particularly to Brussels and Edinburgh), as evidenced by the increase in train and international train travel-related emissions.

This year the Aldersgate Group has also included data on waste for the first time as this has become available through The Office Group's waste portal. The Group will continue to monitor & manage these emissions over time.

Estimated emissions associated with use of paper increased by 3%. Whilst office printing fell by nearly 50% this year and the Secretariat produced fewer reports, the slight increase reflects that the Secretariat has increased its standard print run of reports from 150 to 200 or 250, due to increasing stakeholder interest.

FUTURE EFFORTS

The Secretariat has made progress on reducing Scope 3 emissions, particularly from business travel, but has continued to struggle with consistency of emissions measurement data from suppliers. We will aim to build on this progress to improve:

1. **Supplier engagement:** Once a replacement for The Office Group Sustainability Coordinator is announced we will seek to engage building management more closely to access a full data set for Scope 1 and 2 emissions. We will also continue to monitor overall waste and recycling volumes. Additional questions that we will pursue include:
 - a. Does TOG have a published sustainability strategy?
 - b. Does TOG purchase green electricity/energy?
 - c. Any narrative of variance in waste month to month (for example, recycling rates seem to be continually decreasing. Why is that?)
 - i. What is TOG doing to reduce waste produced?
 - d. Data on water usage to improve our reporting.

¹ Hotel stays only account for 17% of the overall emissions, so the 675% increase in this category only has a 9% impact on total Scope 3 emissions

2. **Scope 3 emissions:** The Secretariat will continue to monitor and endeavour to limit Scope 3 emissions, continuing to use low carbon transport methods as far as possible.
3. **Methodology:** The Secretariat continues to use Defra's guidance for compliance with greenhouse gas reporting regulation² and Defra's greenhouse gas conversion factors.³ The Secretariat will continue to seek a more appropriate methodology to measure emissions from our online data storage and emails, as current conversion factors are from 2012 and based on US data. As more conversion factors become available, such as hotel stays, the Aldersgate Group will also seek to include these in our future calculations to provide a fuller picture of the Secretariat's environmental impact. As additional data becomes available (e.g. on waste this year) the Aldersgate Group will also continue to build up its reporting for the same reason.

The Aldersgate Group's long term aim is to produce zero net emissions as a result of its activities. Our policy to achieve that aim is firstly to reduce those emissions, and secondly to purchase and retire a good quality carbon offset for Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (to the extent we are able to measure them). We will continue to engage with our suppliers, such as our provider of office space, to help us better measure and reduce emissions associated with Aldersgate Group activities.

² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (October 2013) <http://bit.ly/1cUDUtF>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2018>