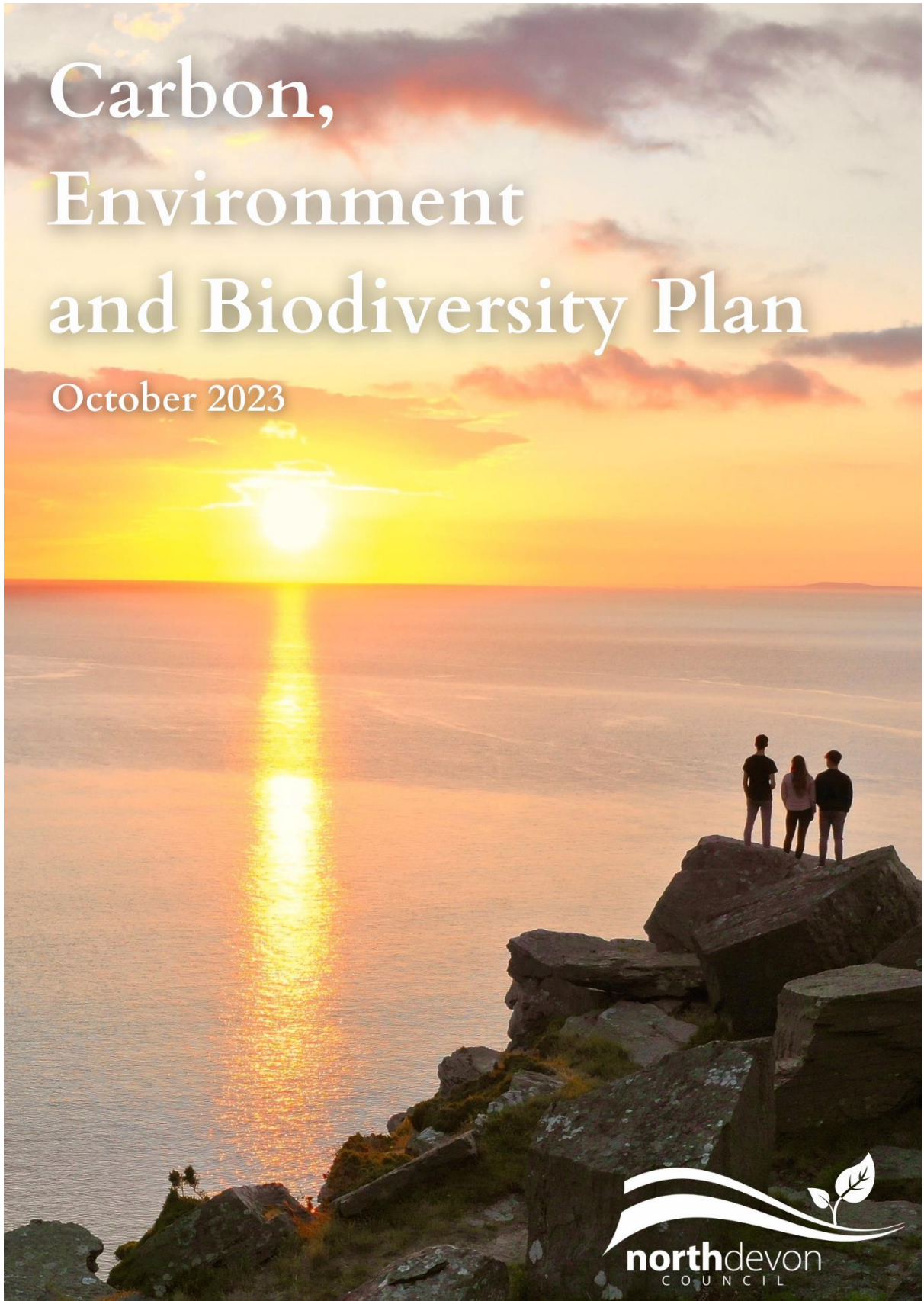


# Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan

October 2023



## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Background to this plan .....	1
Welcome to North Devon.....	1
The case for declaring a climate emergency.....	3
What we have already achieved .....	6
Opportunities arising from Floating Offshore Wind in the Celtic Sea .....	7
Our Vision .....	8
Our response to the challenge.....	9
NDC's Carbon Footprint.....	10
Opportunities for North Devon on the journey to Carbon Neutrality .....	13
Working with Devon County Council .....	14
Planning System – People and Place .....	16
Biodiversity and the Natural Environment.....	18
Communications .....	20
How our staff will help make us a greener authority .....	20
Supporting our Members in the journey to net zero .....	20
Outward Facing Communications.....	20
Risk Management .....	21
Our Priorities and Plans .....	23
Action Plan.....	25

Version	Date
1	June 2022
2	October 2023



## **Introduction**

### **Background to this plan**

In July 2019 North Devon Council (NDC) declared a 'Climate Emergency'. This was in recognition of the science and evidence of the impacts that climate change is having on our environment, population and communities and to acknowledge that we are committed to assisting in the response to this threat.

This declaration committed North Devon Council to reach net zero carbon by 2030. This plan will outline how we have aligned our organisation with this goal and will work towards meeting the commitment against climate change.

We recognise that climate change is a long-term threat and action needs to be taken now, at every level to slow and if possible, reverse, these effects. NDC is committed to taking responsibility and being fully involved in this process. We recognise that we are at the heart of taking action and promoting positive changes in North Devon to meet this goal. We also recognise that NDC cannot do this alone and are committed to working alongside others to achieve this important objective.

We also see the opportunities that these necessary operational and lifestyle shifts will bring, to help our communities and residents lead healthier, more sustainable lifestyles while supporting businesses and our economy to grow and flourish in this new green future.

### **Welcome to North Devon**

North Devon Council is located within the north-west of Devon. The district is divided into 25 Wards, comprising 58 parishes, and is predominantly rural. The main conurbations are Barnstaple, Braunton, Fremington, Ilfracombe and South Molton. The district is officially classified as 'Rural 50', with at least 50 per cent (but less than 80%) of the population living in rural settlements and larger market towns.

It is the second largest district authority area in Devon, covering an area of 1,106 km<sup>2</sup> (427 square miles). It is bordered by the largely rural districts of Torridge, Mid Devon and West Somerset, and the coast to the north. Most of the land in North Devon is classified as undeveloped, covering 95.4% (1035 km<sup>2</sup>) of its total area, and is designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Most of this undeveloped land is farmland (72.6%) and forestry/woodland (10.9%). The coastline, historic towns, nature reserves and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are valuable assets. As quality of life and environment becomes an ever more important factor in choosing where to live it is likely that population growth in North Devon will continue.

The extensive rural areas and popular coastline support an economy characterised by the very visible agriculture and tourism sectors, and support a population characterised by its resilience and self-sufficiency. The area is peppered with a few larger manufacturing businesses on which many rely for employment, but in the main northern Devon is notable for the large numbers of micro and small businesses.

The 2021 Census shows that in North Devon the population size has increased by 5.3%, from around 93,700 in 2011 to 98,600 in 2021. This is lower than the overall increase for England (6.6%)

It may be useful to understand the carbon dioxide emissions from the district in the context of the other local authorities across Devon. The graphic below highlights the differences between carbon emissions from rural district compared to urban locations. City areas have lower transport emissions as residents tend to be in closer proximity to amenities and therefore can walk, cycle and use public transport for a higher proportion of journeys than those in rural areas. Urban areas tend to be on the gas grid whereas dwellings in rural areas are more likely to rely on oil, and gas is a lower carbon fuel. Rural areas have higher emissions from agriculture, while manufacturing and other industrial processes tend to be located in urban areas, so these areas have higher emissions associated with these activities.

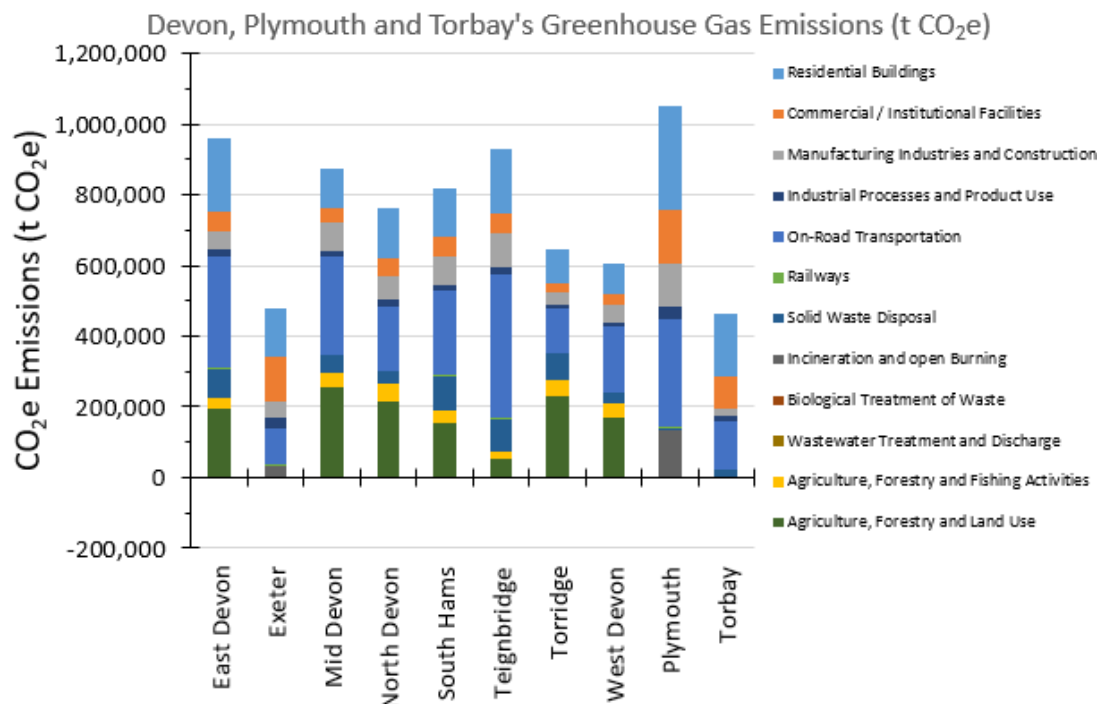
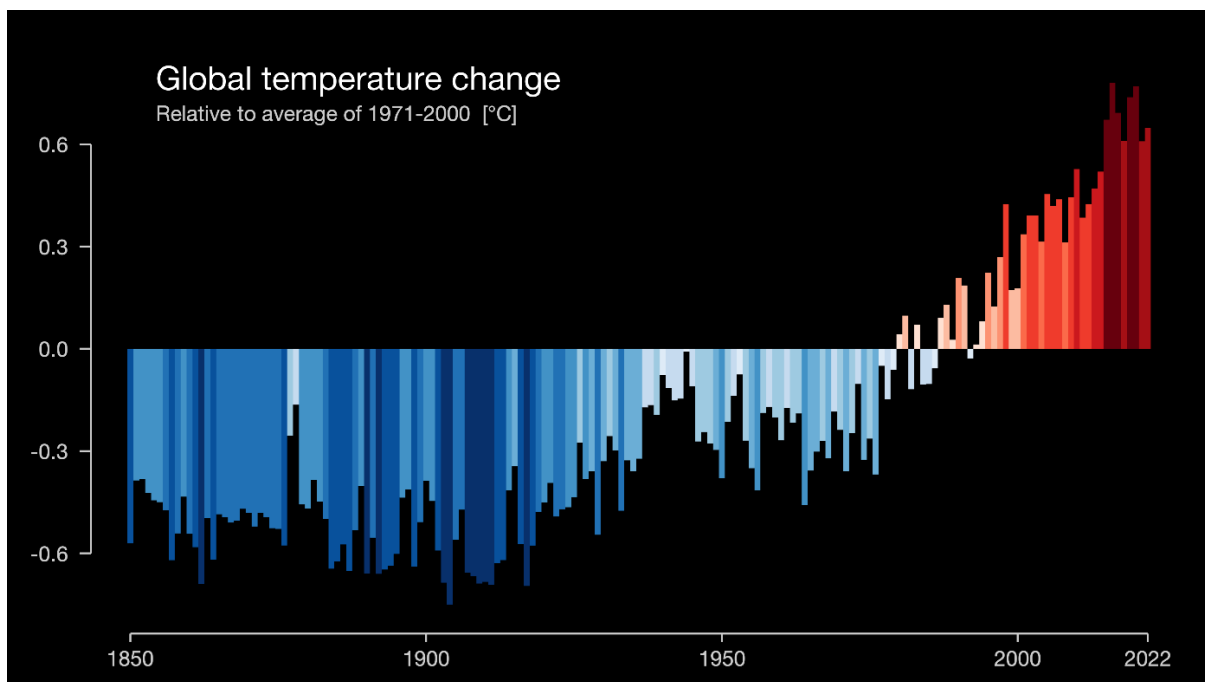


Fig 1 2019 Greenhouse gas emissions across Devon by Sector (with kind permission of Devon County Council)

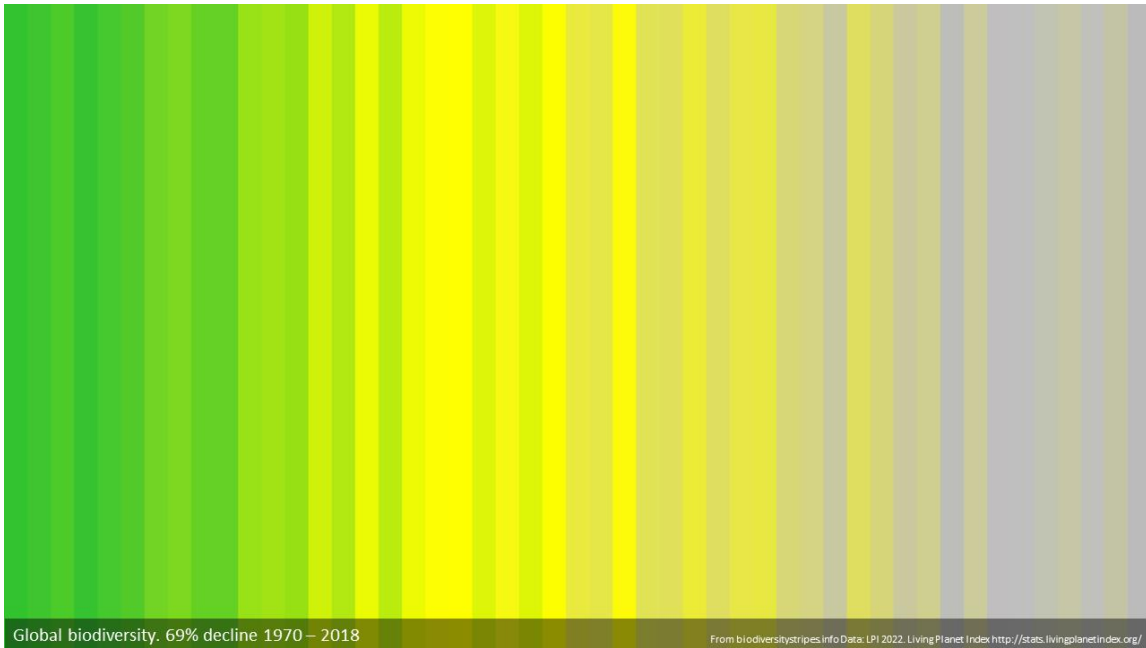
## The case for declaring a climate emergency

Our planet's climate is changing and warming is accelerating. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published their sixth assessment report in March 2023. It states that human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900 in 2011–2020. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred. Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people. Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.



*Fig 2 Global temperature change 1850-2022 (Ed Hawkin, University of Reading)*

In addition, a recent Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) stated that around 25% of the world's species are now at threat of extinction due to habitat loss and the effects of climate change.



*Fig 3 Global biodiversity decline 1970-2018 (biodiversitystripes.info data source Living Planet Index database 2022)*

North Devon’s coastal communities are at particular risk from the acceleration in rising sea levels. In 2021 the global mean sea level was the highest ever recorded. As sea levels rise, low lying and coastal areas will be at particular risk.

The Local Planning Authorities for Northern Devon, North Devon & Torridge District Councils, have identified the need for formal designation of Coastal Change Management Areas in the developing revised Local Plan in recognition of the impacts on our coastline from a range of factors, including climate change. This is underpinned by a detailed research project in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Marine Management Organisation and the University of Plymouth. This research uses the latest projections for sea level change, and particularly establishes the extent of potential flood risk across the Taw-Torridge estuary. In its worst case scenario modelling, incorporating up to date climate change impact predictions, it shows that more areas may be at risk of coastal change than previously thought<sup>1</sup>. This modelling will be used to help plan for managing future coastal change by the Council and other agencies. While the new Local Plan will set out policies about development in those areas, along with consideration of what might need to be relocated or protected, the research will also assist with coastal protection work and the operation and maintenance of existing sea defences and flood risk and coastal erosion measures. However, in conjunction with this it is vital that we play our part in addressing the causes of climate change as another means to mitigate these local impacts.

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<sup>1</sup> The Coastal Change Management Area Technical Evidence and maps can be found at [Torridge District Council](#)



Farming is also being affected by climate change. While hotter weather and higher levels of CO2 may make growing some crops easier, or even allow us to produce new ones, with more droughts expected, water may not be as easy to access, making it harder to plan the growing season. Some crops we grow today may also be unsuited to higher temperatures, and there are risks from new pests and diseases previously unsuited to our climate.

Floods, storms, and extreme heat can cause damage to buildings, disrupt transport, Cause power cuts and affect health. Buildings and infrastructure need to be adapted to cope with the new conditions. Businesses will have to plan around a changing climate, bringing additional costs and challenges as they look to adapt.

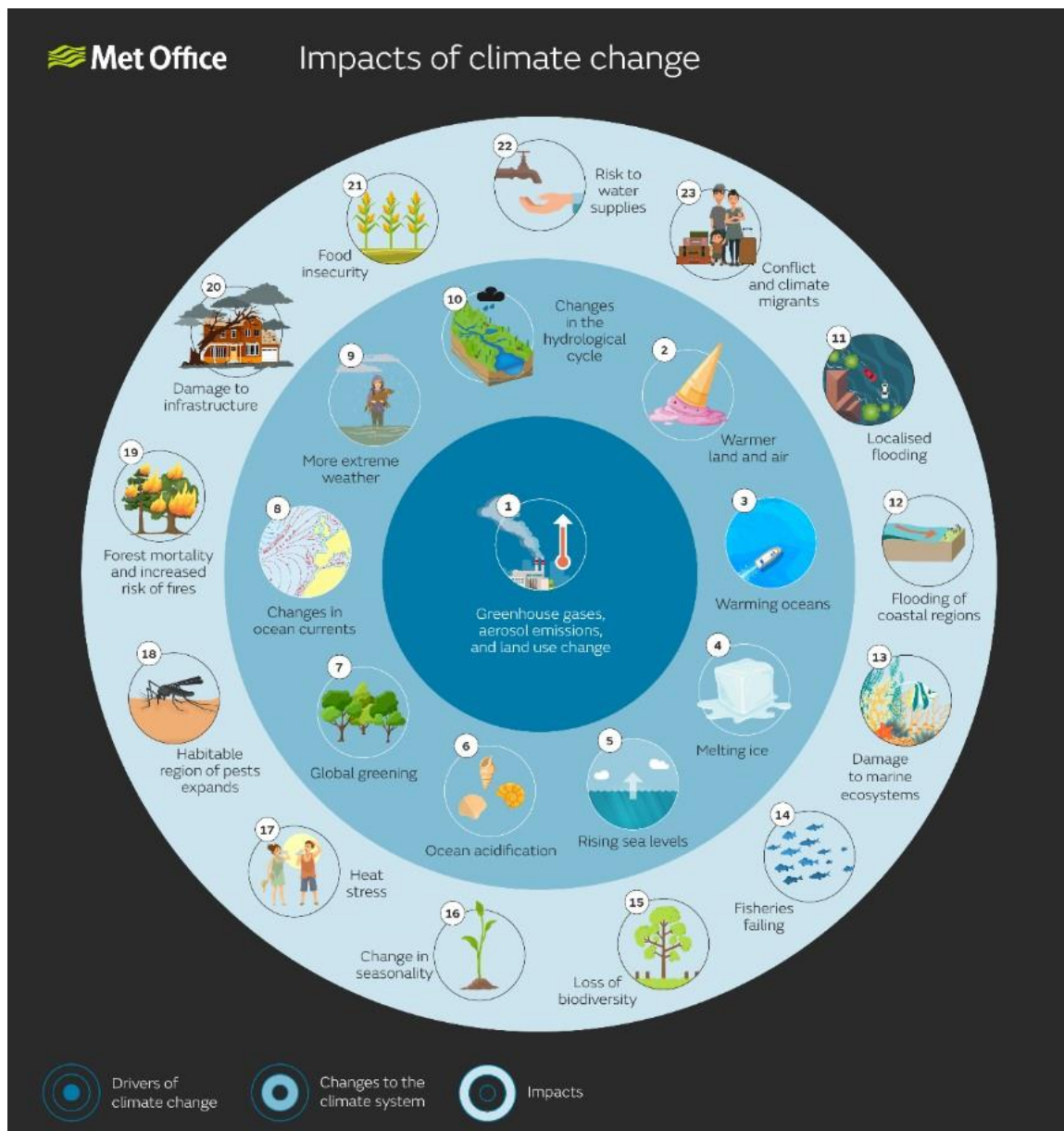


Fig 4 Met office graphic showing the impacts of climate change.



## What we have already achieved

North Devon District Council is a large employer and a significant resource user and we recognise that our operations and service delivery have an impact on our environment.

Our Environment Policy states our commitment to managing this impact.

North Devon Council has previously undertaken a number of projects which address the climate and ecological emergencies, including:

- Changes to our grounds maintenance regime to reduce carbon and encourage nature;
- Trial of the biodiversity net gain approach in our planning work;
- Improvements to kerbside recycling collection to include additional materials. Including food waste;
- Replacing our old Leisure Centre with a more energy efficient building;
- Working with 361 Energy to promote home energy efficiency advice.
- Used Low Carbon Skills Funding to carry out energy efficiency surveys of our owned and tenanted properties.

More recently, North Devon Council has:

- Submitted a further Low Carbon Skills Funding bid to take forward energy efficiency work at a number of our properties.
- Committed just under £100k to improve energy efficiency and reduce the carbon impact of a number of our properties.
- Begun to deliver Barnstaple's Future High Street Fund project, repurposing and redeveloping historic buildings in the town centre and enhancing the town's conservation area.
- Planted 18,500 trees with a further 5,500 to be planted winter 23/24 in a 37 acre extension to our community woodland in Yeo Valley, Barnstaple.
- Trialled use of an electric van in our Grounds Maintenance team, with a view to replacing diesel vehicles where practical.
- Resurfaced a pedestrian walkway at Ilfracombe Harbour using discarded plastic fishing waste collected on site through the Odyssey project.

## Opportunities arising from Floating Offshore Wind in the Celtic Sea

The UK is the global leader in offshore wind deployment, with a flourishing sector that is delivering clean, reliable power, green jobs, and making a vital contribution to the UK's clean energy transition.

The Government has set an ambition to deliver up to 5GW of floating wind by 2030, with rapid expansion anticipated thereafter. To support this, the Crown Estate are delivering a new leasing opportunity in the Celtic Sea for the first generation of commercial-scale floating offshore windfarms – unlocking up to 4GW of new clean energy capacity, kick-starting a new industry in the region, and providing power to almost four million homes.

Recognising the need to develop the supply chain and supporting infrastructure for this nascent technology in the UK, this approach is deliberately intended to drive social value, and provide opportunities for growth and investment, and for this reason social value has been included within the Invitation to Tender as a key gateway criterion for appraisal. This will also facilitate the co-ordination of the necessary infrastructure, such as integration ports and grid connections, all of which are key to the sustainable development of the UK floating wind sector over the long term.

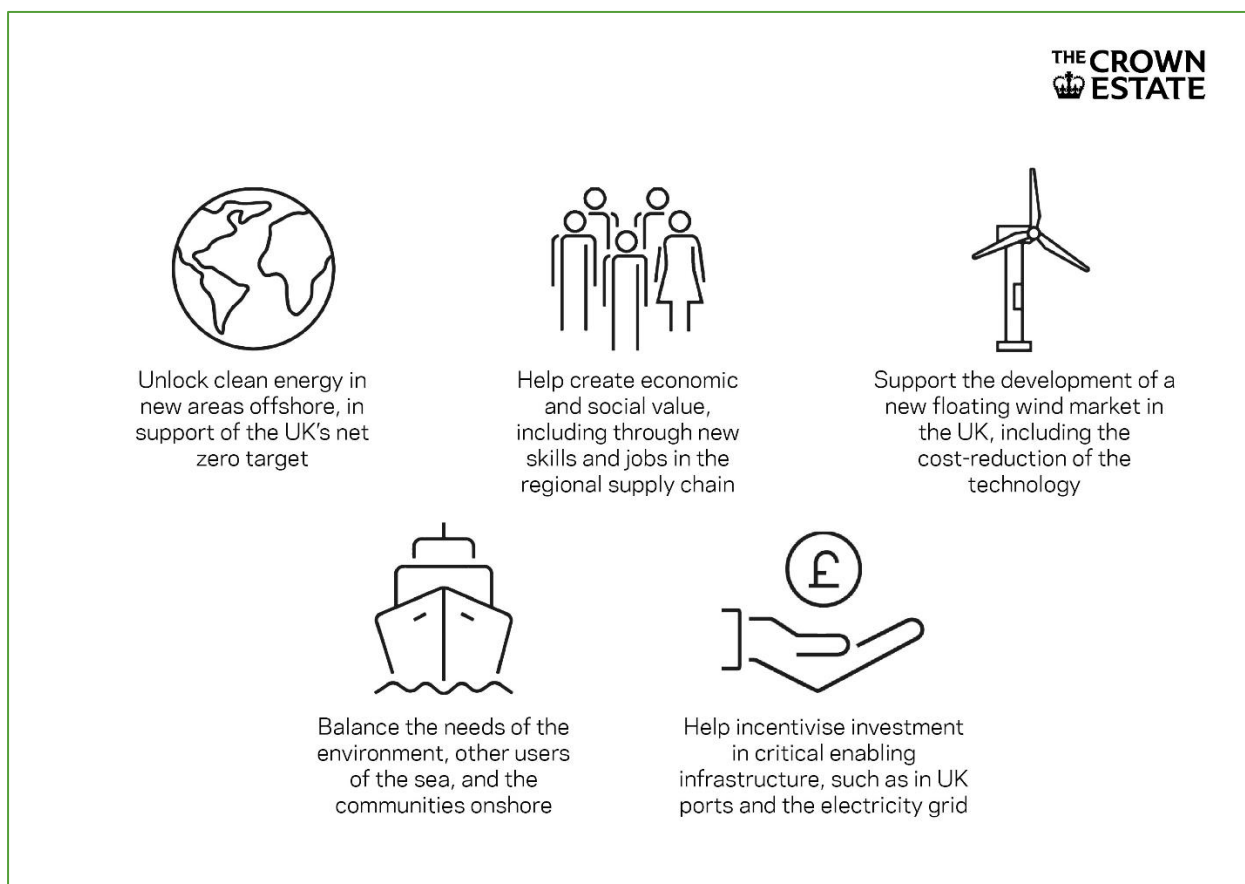


Fig 5 Aims for Floating Offshore Wind in the Celtic Sea (Crown Estate)

This leasing opportunity will provide the foundation for greater capacity in the future and help establish an exciting new industrial sector for the UK, creating opportunities for significant new investment in jobs, skills and infrastructure.

North Devon Council are working closely with Torrington District Council and a range of partners to ensure that northern Devon benefits from this once in a lifetime opportunity to deliver highly paid, skilled jobs in our area.

## **Our Vision**

- By 2030 North Devon District Council operations will be clean, efficient and net carbon neutral, leading by example in our community and to our residents and businesses.
- We will play a wider role enabling, encouraging and supporting the wider District of North Devon to achieve net-zero ambitions.
- We will work with our partners including Devon County Council, Torrington District Council and North Devon Biosphere and will cooperate, seek opportunities to develop projects, and take forward policies that will enhance our environment, biodiversity and improve sustainability of our communities and the wellbeing of our residents and visitors.
- We will seek economic opportunities and improvements for our communities and businesses in the new green future, promoting and directing sustainable development and seeking financial support for projects to enhance our environment and assist in reaching our carbon neutral target.
- We will promote our beautiful environment and rich biodiversity, and North Devon as a beacon for sustainability, community action and green opportunities.
- We will work with Central Government and Devon County Council to contribute at a local level in the delivery of national and regional climate change, biodiversity and sustainability programmes.
- We will work with our local communities to plan for and mitigate the effects of climate change within our district.
- We will seek to work with our local schools and young people to educate, promote and support the next generation to take on the challenges ahead.

We intend to deliver this Vision through a combination of changes to existing work programmes and staff responsibilities as well as new work programmes which will require funding.

## **Our response to the challenge**

While this plan sets out North Devon Council's roadmap to carbon neutrality, we recognise that we need to integrate climate change and sustainability into the heart of our governance and processes. In order to achieve this we have implemented the following:

### **Corporate Plan**

Our Corporate Plan was published in 2019 and has four priorities:

- We achieve financial security
- We become focussed on delivering the best for our customers
- Our environment is cherished and protected
- We plan for North Devon's future.

The Plan included commitments to:

- Protect and enhance our most valuable and unique coastline and countryside and ensure that North Devon remains a high class and internationally recognized natural environment
- Put the environment at the centre of our decision making and to lead on reducing any harmful effects on the environment including carbon creation
- Adopt community based approaches in planning and in implementing that vision whilst recognizing the threats and implications of climate change

These priorities will form the basis of divisional business plans going forward, so that all the services in the Council will be aligned to and working towards these aims.

Specific actions that will be taken forward by us and in partnership include:

- Work with partners to develop a County wide carbon reduction plan to comply with international targets
- Work with our communities on developing new practices that protect the environment
- Work to enhance green spaces and recognise and use the links with health enhancement
- Encourage and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.
- Adopt a policy for regulating energy efficiency in private rented properties.
- Explore investment opportunities in renewable energy generation and storage from the installation of renewable energy on Council buildings and land.

## **Management and Governance**

Members are at the heart of decision making at NDC. A Lead Member for the Climate has been assigned who is tasked with; overseeing, supporting and lobbying for sustainability and climate change to be at the forefront of Council operations and policy; responding effectively to need and maximise the influence of NDC as widely as possible in our communities.

We have developed a Member Climate Action Team who meet regularly to discuss environmental matters, feed into projects and provide a sounding board and feedback on actions and priorities before these are discussed at formal Committee.

Where specific work streams merit it, we will establish specialist Task and Finish groups to progress and report on actions and outcomes. These will provide a flexible response to issues and projects as required. These will utilise the expertise of external individuals and organisations and will promote collaborative and multiagency working to establish common goals and meet those aims.

## **North Devon Council's Carbon Footprint**

It is clear that in order to meet our stated target of net zero carbon by 2030 we must regularly measure our carbon impacts and usage accurately and use this as a basis for determining our actions and priorities over the coming years. We will regularly report on the effectiveness of our actions and demonstrate achievements.

The Government regularly publishes Local Authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics<sup>2</sup>. These provide the most reliable and consistent breakdown of estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across the country using nationally available datasets going back to 2005. These show a steady reduction in per capita emissions for North Devon, from 7.3 tonnes in 2005 to 4.5 tonnes in the last reporting year of 2019. This is below the average in the country but still some way off the 2-tonne per capita goal set by the IPPC. It is interesting to note that these improvements have come about through a steady reduction in carbon emissions across industrial, commercial and domestic sources (due in large part to switch from coal in electricity generation to gas and renewables) however there has been a marginal increase in emissions from transport sources over the same period.

There is an established methodology for assessing and reporting on the carbon footprint of an organisation as given in guidelines published by HM Government – Environmental Reporting Guidelines (updated March 2019)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions](#)

<sup>3</sup> [HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines](#)

The reporting guidance identifies the main types of emission sources in three categories known as 'scopes'. These are defined as:

**Scope 1:** direct emissions from fuel combustion, such as boilers for heating buildings, transport fuel used by owned or directly leased vehicles and 'fugitive emissions'<sup>4</sup>.

**Scope 2:** indirect emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity i.e. from power stations, and heat generated off site i.e. district heating.

**Scope 3:** indirect emissions from the transmission and distribution of electricity and from many other activities, including products and outsourced services which are bought on behalf of the council. For most organisations, these are the largest area of emissions, but are acknowledged as the most difficult to measure.

Reporting of scope 1 and 2 emissions is given as 'essential' by the guidance. Scope 3 reporting is discretionary, but desirable.

Following North Devon Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, the Centre for Energy and the Environment at Exeter University was asked to calculate a baseline carbon footprint for our organisation based on data provided from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

The footprint for 2020/2021 included an estimate of the carbon associated with our procured goods and services. Typically 70-80% of an organisation's footprint lies in their Scope 3 emissions, and so it is important that procured goods and services are considered. This is a spend-based calculation and whilst it is useful to give us an idea of the impact what we buy as a Council has, it is of limited use in helping us understand how this will change going forward. This metrics behind this spend-based calculation are not updated annually and, being based on an average across each industrial sector, do not allow us to show the impact of more sustainable purchasing.

We intend to work with our major suppliers to better understand the carbon impacts of this area of our business and work with them to reduce these.

A further footprint calculation is available for 2021/2022.

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<sup>4</sup> Some equipment, such as fridges and air conditioning units, not only use energy, but also contain chemicals which are greenhouse gases such as hydrofluorocarbons. A degree of leakage is inevitable. These gases are known as fugitive emissions and good equipment maintenance can reduce the problem.



The summary results are shown in the table below:

No.	Category	2018/2019 tCO2e	2020/2021 tCO2e	2021/2022 tCO2e)
Scope 1 Direct GHG emissions and removals		1392.4	1354.3	1201.2
1.	Stationary Combustion	190.7	181.5	174.0
2.	Owned transport	1201.8	1172.9	1027.2
3.	Process emissions	0.0	0.0	0.0
4.	Fugitive emissions	0.0	0.0	0.0
Scope 2 Energy GHG indirect emissions		351.0	197.0	256.3
5.	Electricity	351.0	197.0	256.3
Scope 3 Other indirect GHG emissions		2208.1	6207.7	2057.2
6.	Purchased material and fuel	748.1	3246.2	663.4
7.	Transport related activities	425.6	19.2	24.6
8.	Waste disposal	0.0	7.3	4.5
9.	Leased assets and franchising, outsourcing	Not included	2043.9	Not included
10.	Sold goods and services	1034.4	891.1	1364.7
TOTAL GROSS FOOTPRINT (scope 1, 2, 3)		3951.5	7759.0	3514.7
11.	Offset emissions	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL NET FOOTPRINT (scope 1, 2, 3)		3951.5	7759.0	3514.7

Scope 1 emissions remain about the same for all years. The use of gas or oil for building heating and our waste collection rounds were largely unaffected by covid lockdowns and is relatively uniform.

Scope 2 emissions decreased, this is mainly due to decarbonisation of the UK's electricity supply.

Scope 3 emissions show a slight decrease from our baseline. This is because the baseline carbon impact of transport related activities included an estimate of our commuting miles, ie where staff use their own cars to get to our offices. Data for this was very poor and took an average journey distance in an average car. We will consider how better to capture data for this element of our carbon footprint.

Overall, our main carbon impacts are seen in the following areas:

**Property** - NDC has a wide and diverse range of property assets, some leased or rented, including leisure facilities, the crematorium, and the council offices and buildings themselves. The heating and lighting of these buildings fall under both scope 1 and 2 emissions.

**Operational vehicles** - particularly in our waste collection service which provides the majority of our transport carbon usage. However, business mileage is also accrued over a range of services.

**Procured goods and services** – this is the most significant part of our footprint, but the one over which we have least control.

**Sold goods and services** – we sell diesel for boats at Ilfracombe Harbour.

We will update our carbon footprint annually in order to provide a sound basis to plotting our route to net zero carbon by 2030. We will consider how best to offset those emissions that remain. In addition, we will seek to standardise our reporting approach, particularly around scope 3 emissions, with other local authorities. This way we can look to compare and contrast our carbon usage and drive improvements through a collaborative approach with our neighbouring Authorities.

More detail on the outcome of this process will be provided in future versions of this plan.

### **Opportunities for North Devon on the journey to Carbon Neutrality**

For too long, climate change and the climate emergency has been portrayed in purely negative terms. This needn't be the case and we should look to the benefits that moving to a sustainable and low carbon future can bring to our district and economy.

Such benefits can include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting local economic growth by harnessing a low carbon economic strategy that identifies local opportunities and supports the development of local jobs, knowledge and infrastructure.
- Generating and supporting innovation to stimulate growth and develop real social change in our communities.
- Helping local businesses to diversify and grow sustainably, to cut costs and increase competitiveness by reducing their energy, water and resource use. Promoting and supporting the circular economy.
- Saving money for the council and local people by ensuring that local homes, businesses and public buildings use energy and other resources efficiently.
- Helping the most vulnerable at risk from fuel poverty and the impacts of extreme weather such as flooding, over-heating and cold.
- Boosting the local economy by supporting and promoting our green tourism base, protecting and marketing our natural assets and local sustainable services.
- Generating income for the council: making the most of the council's assets to generate power, enhance biodiversity and support the diversification and vibrancy of our communities in our new sustainable future.
- Helping households save money on their energy bills and keep warm and healthy by improving the energy efficiency of local homes.
- Promote wellbeing within our communities through the use of active travel and making our natural assets accessible to all.

- Direct cost savings: through initiatives to reduce the council's use of energy and water and to minimise waste.
- Pooling resources: working in partnership with others, sharing services and increasing purchasing power.
- External funding: maximising opportunities to bring in investment through external funding mechanisms available under the emerging climate and biodiversity agendas.
- Protection from future costs by supporting our communities to be fully prepared to manage future weather-related events, reducing costs such as the repair and clear-up from flooding and storm damage as well as the human costs of such events.

Embracing a low carbon, biodiverse, sustainable future will have huge benefits for this Authority, and for our communities, businesses and residents. By addressing the climate and ecological emergency we have an opportunity to create a fairer, healthier, more resilient and more prosperous society for generations to come.

## **Working with Devon County Council**

Since 2019 North Devon Council has worked with Devon County Council and a range of other partners to develop a Devon Carbon Plan, setting out the action needed for the county to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

The plan has been built around Devon's greenhouse gas emissions. Activity to reduce these emissions have been divided into five sections: economy and resources; energy supply; food, land and sea; transport; and the built environment.

Each section of the Plan:

- Describes what needs to happen in Devon to achieve the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) Further Ambition Scenario for net-zero by 2050 – irrespective of the current legislative or financing environment.
- Displays the trajectory of emissions to net-zero by 2050.
- Introduces a set of goals which need to be realised to overcome barriers to achieving the CCC net-zero scenario.
- Proposes strategic-level actions to achieve the goals, identified by specialists, the public and the members of the Devon Climate Assembly. These are split into two categories – those that can be implemented locally and those that need action beyond Devon, generally by relevant organisations in Devon working with government on specific issues.

The plan was developed with extensive public consultation, including a Citizens' Assembly.



Figure 6 Approach for preparing the Devon Carbon Plan

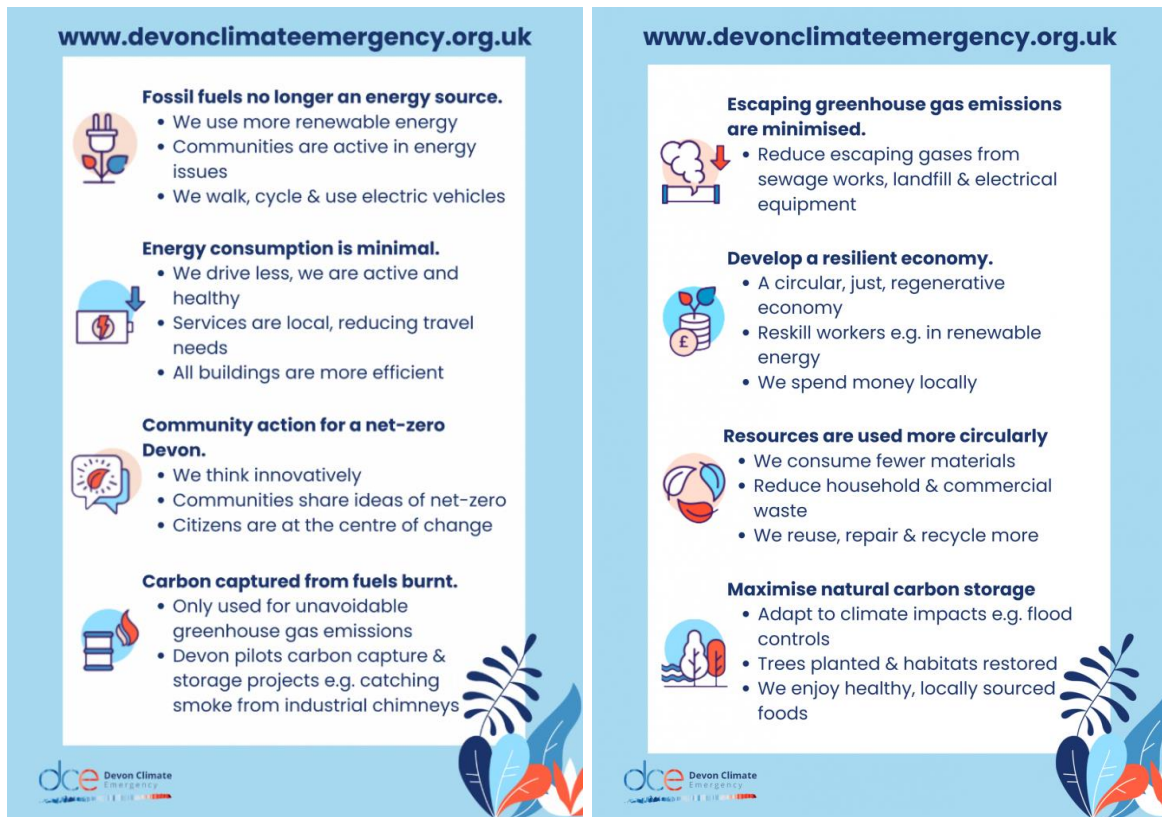


Figure 7 A brief summary of the changes that are needed to create a net-zero Devon (Devon Climate Emergency Partnership)

In total the Devon Carbon Plan has 149 actions. North Devon Council will continue to work with partners to deliver action in our area, and we will report progress on this through the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.

We have updated the action plan in this document to include links to relevant actions in the Devon Carbon Plan.

The Devon Climate Emergency Partnership have also developed a Climate Adaptation Strategy for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Public consultation on this document ended in June 2023. We will incorporate the actions we need to take to adapt to climate change in future updates of this plan.

## Planning System – People and Place

The planning system will play a central role in enabling a shift to a carbon neutral future. The National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the role of planning is to ‘shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions’. By supporting the right development in the right place, the planning process can have major impacts on sustainable travel behaviour, low carbon impact building use, and supporting the infrastructure needed for our low carbon future such as renewable energy schemes.

Central to this process is the development of statutory local plans. Torridge and North Devon District Councils adopted a Joint Local Plan in October 2018. This is currently the principal element of the development plan and is the starting point for the determination of planning applications across both districts. The Plan provides visions, strategies and policies that are intended to shape how northern Devon develops and it aims to ensure that development is well planned and managed effectively whilst having a positive impact on local communities, the economy and the environment and provides a consistent and transparent approach to planning across the whole of northern Devon.

A Joint Planning Policy Committee oversees the development of this plan, and includes the Lead Climate Members for both Authorities, indicating the commitment to the climate and biodiversity agenda in this process.

In March 2022 Torridge and North Devon Councils launched their People and Place project which will empower our local communities to play a key role in shaping the future of northern Devon through a review of the Local Plan.

The project encompasses a comprehensive review of the two Councils' joint Local Plan and, working with our local communities, will explore how the planning system can be used to help tackle some of the current and anticipated challenges we face in our area, such as:

- Providing enough quality affordable homes to meet the needs of local people.
- Improving access to the services and facilities that support thriving and healthy communities.
- Adapting to evolving economic challenges to support sustainable economic growth.
- Responding to the challenges of climate change.
- Protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environments.

This is a significant piece of work for both authorities.

We anticipate a number of policies will be developed through this process which will have a significant impact on the climate and biodiversity agendas. This includes Solar PV and Wind Sensitivity Assessments, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans, Coastal Change Management Plans and the development of Design Codes. More information will be provided on the progress of this in future iterations of this document.

Our current Joint Local Plan was already ahead of the curve in many areas on environmental and sustainability matters, and we will be looking to continue this by making our new Joint Local Plan a flagship of our climate and biodiversity ambitions for the future of Northern Devon. As this review progresses, further information will be included in future iterations of this report.



## **Biodiversity and the Natural Environment**

We recognise that climate change and biodiversity are closely linked: climate change has severe direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity and is predicted to be a significant driver of future biodiversity loss. At the same time, the loss of biodiversity magnifies the adverse effects of climate change. Biodiversity impacts linked to climate change include habitat degradation/destruction and the introduction of invasive alien species to ecosystems.

In the same way, biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation go hand-in-hand and are strongly co-dependant. Managing and protecting biodiversity will mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and help humans adapt to it; policies and actions aiming at limiting the effects of climate change will contribute to the protection of biodiversity.

It can be seen that ecosystems rich in biodiversity are healthy ecosystems, which are more resilient to the impacts of climate change. They provide us with natural buffers against the impacts of climate change, especially extreme weather events. Healthy ecosystems also produce other environmental, economic and social benefits such as the supply and purification of water, provision of food, purification of air and the provision of recreational areas which promotes activity and wellbeing. A significant benefit of conserving or restoring habitats is the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere which help to minimise the cause of climate change by carbon sequestration.

Here in North Devon, we have a unique resource on our doorstep – the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve<sup>5</sup>. Biospheres are designated by UNESCO to be sites of excellence for demonstrating sustainable development on a bio-regional scale. They have 3 functions:

- Conservation of ecosystems, habitats, species and genetic diversity
- Development that is environmentally, economically and socially equitable
- Knowledge management to promote learning and understanding to be an example for the local and international community.

The Biosphere seeks adaptation to climate change through the optimisation of natural capital and the range of ecosystems services from the area.

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<sup>5</sup> [North Devon Biosphere](#)



*Fig 6 North Devon Biosphere map*

The North Devon Biosphere Reserve covers 3,300 square km across North Devon and Torridge and extends into West Devon District. There are 63 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Biosphere Reserve and 671 County Wildlife Sites.

As well supporting and promoting these special landscapes and wildlife areas, the organisation also seeks to support communities who care about living sustainably and are involved in a range of projects from local food to transport, waste minimisation, from sustainable energy production to the role of the environment in supporting wider wellbeing.

North Devon also forms part of Exmoor National Park and the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, two of a family of 'Protected Landscapes' in the South West of England.

Exmoor National Park contains an amazing variety of landscapes that provide inspiration and enjoyment to visitors and residents alike. Large areas of open moorland provide a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity rare in southern Britain, while spectacular coastal views, deep wooded valleys, high sea cliffs and fast flowing streams all combine to form a rich and distinct mosaic. Exmoor supports a great diversity of wildlife including herds of wild red deer, rich lichen communities, rare butterflies, bats, and other species uncommon in southern Britain.

The North Devon Coast AONB contains a diversity of scenery, landscapes and habitats and encompasses the Hartland Heritage Coast, North Devon Heritage Coast as well as the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

We will continue to work with Exmoor National Park Authority, the Biosphere and North Devon Coast AONB and will look to align our ambitions and direction of travel to the maximum benefit of all organisations and more importantly, for our wonderfully rich and diverse environment.

## **Communications**

### **How our staff will help make us a greener authority**

We provide climate change training for all our staff. As part of this they are able to suggest how we can act to mitigate the effects of, or adapt to, climate change.

### **Supporting our Members in the journey to net zero**

Our elected members are at the heart of all strategic, policy and financial decision making of the Council. It is therefore vital that we develop an ongoing process to equip our Members with understanding on emerging national issues that may affect our local environment and communities and are able to participate in developing action in response to those issues. We have already put in place the governance structures needed to ensure democratic involvement in all aspects of our evolving carbon and biodiversity plan. We will develop ongoing communication routes to ensure that our decision makers are engaged and prepared to be fully involved in this agenda.

### **Outward Facing Communications**

We recognise that we will need to develop a communications plan for a variety of reasons – from supporting our local communities and businesses with information and guidance to assist on their sustainability journeys, to celebrating our achievements and leading by example. We have a climate change communications plan in place, which aims to:

- Raise the profile of what we and other key partners are doing to improve and protect the local environment.
- To keep our website up-to-date and relevant.
- Maintain a strong and consistent message across environmental communications issued by NDC and our key partners.

- Inspire, promote, and enable action and collaboration towards improving the environment in Devon.
- Support targeted awareness raising and behaviour change campaigns through collaborative working and better understanding of public perceptions and behaviours.

We will maximise the use of our social media presence to enhance these messages. In 2022 we will launched an updated web resource to provide up to date information on a range of climate and biodiversity matters.

## Risk Management

It is acknowledged that a demanding target has been set for our organisation and there are factors that could negatively impact on our journey to net-zero. The risk of failing to meet this target, as well as the potential financial implications of progressing this agenda, has been acknowledged in our Corporate Risk Register and will be monitored through the management process in place to oversee these risks.

Some of the key risks noted with the delivery of this plan are as follows:

**Resources unavailable or not secured to achieve actions identified.** This includes failure to secure external funding to support carbon reduction measures on major capital projects such as a retrofit programme, but also securing funding for identified measures through our own budget setting process. It is acknowledged that financial savings from the implementation of carbon reduction measures are finite; there comes a point where carbon and biodiversity improvements come at a financial cost. The financial constraints on Local Authorities mean that Members are faced with increasingly difficult decisions when it comes to budget allocations and in the face of this, carbon reduction or biodiversity enhancement may not be prioritised.

**Reputational risk to authority for not pursuing or meeting carbon reduction targets.** In light of the above, it is likely that decisions made by the Council will receive heightened scrutiny, especially if those decisions are seen to negatively impact on our stated climate and biodiversity ambitions.

**Loss or lack of resource necessary to maintain and develop the carbon reduction programme.** Dedicated resource has been allocated to this programme but this is shared with a neighbouring authority and is not yet secured on a permanent basis. While we are seeking to embed this within the wider organisation through the management team, it is the nature of a small organisation that this is seen as an ‘add-on’ and is competing with, rather than complementing, other organisational requirements and pressures. There is a risk of failure to understand the scale of resources needed (human and financial) to deliver this programme.

**Lack of buy-in reduces participation in relevant carbon reduction projects.** This applies as much to staff as it does to Members. Again, this may be due to wider

competing pressures but lack of acknowledgement of the climate and biodiversity emergency, or our ability to affect meaningful positive change, may also play a part. There is an element of cultural change that will be necessary which may be resisted in some quarters.

**Potential for an increase in carbon demand due to wider pressures and projects impacting on our ability to meet the carbon reduction target.** This includes the purchase of hostel accommodation to meet our statutory homeless duties, the development of our recycling service necessitating the additional purchase of vehicles. It also must cover the carbon impacts of legacy estate – buildings which are difficult or costly to retrofit but have value to the Authority for wider reasons.

**Wider legislative landscape.** Forthcoming legislative changes are likely to enhance opportunities for investment and improved market availability and viability. If this is delayed or shelved, this may impact on our abilities to deliver effective change within the timescales set.

**Downgrading of carbon and biodiversity management as a corporate priority.** There is a risk that the priority assigned to this agenda in the future may be reduced, either due to competing pressures, or change in political will either at local or national level.

**Mandating of changes at national level.** This is a constantly moving agenda that is playing out both nationally and globally. There is the possibility that actions and changes will be dictated by Government, the meeting of which may detract from this central programme. While such a mandate will be made to meet centrally set priorities and targets, it may mean that we lose the ability to direct and focus on our own priorities.

The above is an outline of the pressures faced in delivering this programme. Future plans will expand on this and include the mitigation measures that have been put in place or are planned to address these issues, and this will be integrated into the action plan moving forward.

## **Our Priorities and Plans**

### **Introduction**

By declaring a Climate Emergency, we have made a clear commitment and have set a target to reduce our carbon emissions from the estate and operations of NDC. We recognise however that we need to go further than this – as a Local Authority we can direct, influence, lever and support our businesses, households and communities in moving to a sustainable future. So, our plan going forward is wider than just Council operations – we want to be at the heart of this transition for all in North Devon. The following action plan is a summary of all the measures we will be putting in place to reach these goals. While we are already progressing a significant number of the actions given, we recognise that some of these are key to this plan and shall be pursued as a priority following consideration of the results of our carbon audit.

Since our Climate Emergency declaration, we have further integrated our commitment to our net zero carbon vision by putting the Climate at the heart of our Corporate Plan. This is the core vision that informs the business plans that will be developed across all of our services. Our Council is already changing to meet the challenges ahead. As part of this, we have put in place the means to measure our carbon usage over a range of our services and estate. We will collate and report on this annually, and these audits will be the basis of the detailed action plans that will be used to prioritise our plans, creating a roadmap to net zero carbon for North Devon District Council by 2030.



<b>Energy</b>					
<b>Commitment</b>	<b>2023 Update</b>	<b>CO2 Potential Saving for NDC</b>	<b>Project RAG Status</b>	<b>Lead Department(s)</b>	<b>Due for Completion</b>
<p>1.0 We will carry out a review of our energy consumption across our estate, develop an options appraisal plan for our sites, and where necessary put in place carbon targets and seek funding to implement improvements. This will include options for retrofit, smart energy controls and energy generation and storage opportunities. We will assess whether the council could generate all of its energy needs from its own resources.</p>	<p>We have energy surveys and heat decarbonisation plans for the majority of our owned/occupied and owned/tenanted properties.</p> <p>We have secured Low Carbon Skills Funding to develop additional reports for some of the biggest energy users with end of life heating systems with a view to getting grant funding for delivery of these heat decarbonisation plans.</p> <p>We are investing just under £100K to implement energy saving measures at a number of properties.</p>	High	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	<p>Completion of surveys and options reporting 22/23.</p> <p>Additional reports 2023.</p> <p>Progress of actions dependent on subsequent funding.</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: B7, B16, E1.2</i></p>					

Commitment	2023 Update	CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
1.1 We will review our energy tariff and investigate the feasibility of moving to a renewable energy supplier for all our energy needs, once energy efficiency and renewable energy measures are complete.	Electricity for the majority of our properties is supplied by EDF's 'Clean Renewable' tariff, specifically sourced from wind, solar and hydro assets.	Low	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	Complete.
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E5</i>					
1.2 We will promote the use of renewable energy tariffs with our tenants across our estate.	'Green leases' promoting renewable energy tariffs are not the most effective way of reducing the carbon footprint associated with our owned/tenanted properties. This action will be removed and replaced with action 1.3 below that will have a more practical application.	Low	Amber	Place, Property & Regeneration	Target date to be determined but likely to be long-term aspiration.

Commitment	2023 Update	CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
1.3 We will work with tenants to deliver measures that improve energy efficiency or increase renewable energy generation, where funding allows. <i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E1.2</i>	We are working with a number of our tenants to identify and get funding for measures that improve energy efficiency.	Low	Amber	Place, Property & Regeneration	Target date to be determined but likely to be mid-term aspiration.
1.4 Develop a Local Area Energy Plan for Devon. <i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E1</i>		Low	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	Dates TBC

<b>Transport</b>					
Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>2.1 We will continually improve the efficiency of our vehicles across our fleet ensuring that our vehicle purchases meet the highest EURO engine emissions standards, and that these are maintained to a high standard. We will regularly review refuse fleet routes to maximise efficiency. At the purchase of any council vehicle we will review options for electric, ultra-low emission or hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.</p>	<p>This area continues to be a focus given the potential carbon savings involved. Viable options remain limited. Current electric HGVs are not able to service the needs of our Waste &amp; Recycling fleet. We have recently trialled use of an electric van in our grounds maintenance team with a view to replacing diesels with EVs where practical.</p> <p>We are working with partners to develop a green hydrogen economy in the district, centred around Appledore. Hydrogen-powered HGVs may be a more viable alternative to replace our Waste &amp; Recycling fleet, as is the industry expectation.</p> <p>Harbour vessels yet to be reviewed. The Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre will support our ambition for clean maritime vessels.</p>	High	Amber	Environmental Enhancement; Place, Property and Regeneration	Target date to be determined but likely to be a long-term aspiration

*This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C1, R1.4, R1.6, R5, R11, T35*

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>2.1 We will explore, implement and promote electric vehicle charging infrastructure, particularly utilising partnership working and external funding to develop schemes across North Devon for the benefit of our residents and businesses and supporting our sustainable tourism ambitions. This will include exploring energy generation and storage opportunities in our car parking facilities.</p>	<p>We have installed EV charging at seven of our car parks: Cattle Market Barnstaple, Wilder Road Ilfracombe, South Molton Central, Belle Meadow Barnstaple, South Molton Sheep Pen, Upper Lyndale Lynmouth and Hillsborough Ilfracombe. We are installing additional charging in Barnstaple through our Future High Street Fund project. Queen St will have an EV hub with 6 charge points with capability to expand to 'future proof' the site. We have no major plans to expand provision on our own land. National rollout of local EV charging infrastructure (LEVI) has been announced and we are working with Devon County Council and other partners to improve provision across the district through a Devon-wide bid.</p>	<p>Medium if supporting our own fleet/ grey fleet.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Place, Property &amp; Regeneration</p>	<p>Target date to be determined but likely to be a medium-term aspiration incorporating opportunities arising from the national infrastructure rollout</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T32, T33</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>2.2 We will identify and develop active travel options across North Devon to create a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. This includes identifying rural cycle routes and electric cycle charge points in line with central Government recommendations. This will be progressed in partnership with a range of stakeholders including Devon County Council through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.</p>	<p>We have developed a Local Cycle &amp; Walking Infrastructure Plan for Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam with partners which will help us provide better routes.</p> <p>Funding for improvements will be on a project by project basis.</p> <p>We are working with Devon County Council on a bid for funding which would enable us to make small-scale improvements to access on land we own.</p>	Low	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	2023
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T6, T7</i></p>					



Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>2.3 We will carry out a review of our Taxi Licensing Policy and will use this as a basis to encourage our taxi operators to move to electric and ultra-low vehicles, including exploring the provision of dedicated taxi charging point(s) to support the trade.</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Planning, Housing &amp; Health</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T36</i></p>					
<p>2.4 We will investigate the use of alternative, low carbon fuels for our vehicles.</p>	<p>Discontinuation of funding for the Energy Savings Trust mean this review did not take place.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>September 2022</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T42</i></p>					

<b>Planning</b>					
Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
3.0 We will use the review of the local plan to embrace opportunities to deliver carbon reductions and improvements in sustainability and biodiversity making use of guidance, expert evidence and best practice to best deliver on a range of environmental matters. We will use best endeavours to maximise the potential of new developments to be highly efficient and incorporate low carbon heating and cooling solutions and support sustainable travel for future residents, customers and visitors. Through the plan review we will revisit and consider the opportunities to support on and offshore wind energy development.	Following election of new Councillors in May 2023 the scope and timing of our Local Plan Review will be revised.	Medium insofar as to potentially increase opportunities for our own estate such as onshore wind generation	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	December 2025
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C6, C7, E1.1, E1.2, E1.3, E4, B12, T12</i>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>3.1 We will seek to take forward the relevant principles and actions of the Devon County Council's Carbon Plan through the review of the local plan to ensure joined up direction of travel to meet our mutual carbon, environmental and biodiversity aims and targets.</p>	<p>Devon's Carbon Plan published September 2022. The plan will be considered as part of the review given in 3.0 and incorporated as appropriate through that process.</p>	<p>Medium as above.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Place, Property &amp; Regeneration</p>	<p>Devon Carbon Plan by December 2022.</p> <p>Project and Place review December 2025.</p>
<p>3.2 We will seek to take forward and build upon our pioneering work that seeks biodiversity net gain from development through the local plan review.</p>	<p>Developers will be required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on developments in 2023.</p> <p>A requirement to deliver additional BNG in northern Devon will be considered through the Local Plan review (see 3.0 above).</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Place, Property &amp; Regeneration</p>	<p>December 2025</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F14</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>3.3 We will seek to engage with wider partners to develop local biodiversity off setting schemes to provide choice and assurance to developers obligated through the planning process within Torridge.</p>	<p>We are actively engaged in developing this approach with the North Devon Biosphere.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F17, F18</i></p>					
<p>3.4 We will lobby Government for improved building regulations for energy efficiency and making renewable energy sources compulsory for new builds.</p>	<p>New Building Regulations were introduced in June 2022 with higher performance targets for conservation of fuel and power, and a new emphasis on low carbon heating systems.</p> <p>The Government launched a consultation on review of the National Planning Policy Framework and its role/ contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation in December 2022. NDC responded to that review, supporting development of onshore wind.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Member Lead</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E6</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>3.5 We will lobby Government and local providers for improved digital connectivity to order to promote further flexible and remote working patterns, enhancing access to services, supporting our isolated communities and reducing the need to travel. A Digital Strategy will form part of our emerging Economic Strategy.</p>	<p>The government intends to deliver nationwide gigabit-capable broadband as soon as possible, and aims for the majority of the population to have 5G coverage by 2027. As progress in this area becomes clearer this will be kept under review. Over the course of the year significant fibre networks have been built out in rural areas both by Airband (Connecting Devon and Somerset) and other private providers, including Openreach and Jurassic Fibre.</p>	<p>Medium insofar as supporting NDC's own operations and flexibility</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Member Lead, Place, Property &amp; Regeneration</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T1</i></p>					

<b>Biodiversity</b>					
Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
4.0 We recognise the benefits of carbon sequestration and the value of tree planting to future offsetting needs, and so we will continue to develop our tree planting programme on land owned by the Council and will look to take full advantage of funding and schemes available to support this plan.	<p>Over the past year we have planted 18,500 trees with a further 5,500 trees to be planted in winter 23/24 for a 37 acre extension to our community woodland in Yeo Valley, Barnstaple. This has been funded through the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer.</p> <p>Over the woodland's life, we will receive 3,500 woodland carbon credits which we can offset against the Council's carbon footprint.</p>	Low (though with offsetting potential)	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Target date to be determined but likely to be a medium-term aspiration

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>4.1 We will develop a Tree Strategy which will acknowledge the value of our Green Infrastructure including our approach to the management and protection of trees across North Devon, promote sustainability through the 'right tree right place' ethos, promote partnership working and lead by example with our communities.</p>	<p>We are working with partners to develop a Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy as a first step.</p>	<p>Low (though with offsetting potential)</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>Devon Tree Strategy 2024</p>
<p>4.2 We will integrate our climate and biodiversity ambitions with our ground's maintenance operations, developing sustainable options that can be implemented and maintained as part of this programme including developing 'rewilded' areas across our North Devon estate.</p>	<p>This is ongoing work for NDC. Over the past year we have added 1.3ha to our meadow programme this year (1ha in the new woodland, 0.3ha in Ilfracombe and Lankey).</p> <p>In total we now have 15.2ha in meadow management and are making good progress towards our target of 20ha by the end of 2025 (target from Biosphere Nature Recovery Plan).</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>2025</p>

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>4.3 We will support the Smart Biosphere to build a data-driven response to climate challenges. Working in partnership with the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Torrington District Council and other key stakeholders such as the Environment Agency we will develop a network of sensors to measure and then respond to a range of sectoral needs.</p>		Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	No date set
<p>Action 4.3 above will no longer form part of the Council's action plan. This is a Biosphere project in partnership with Siemens.</p>					
<p>4.4 We will work in partnership with the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to ensure that actions stemming from the innovative work of the Marine and Landscape Pioneers can be delivered.</p>		Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	No date set
<p>Action 4.4 above will no longer form part of the Council's action plan. This is a Biosphere project. A new action has been added, 7.7</p>					



Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>4.5 We will work with the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to support delivery of their Nature Recovery Plan.</p>	<p>NDC signed up to deliver the Biosphere's Nature Recovery Plan in summer 2021. We chair the 'Towns and Villages' delivery group and report regularly on progress. Over the past year we have worked with the community to achieve nature gain in public spaces and through our planning system.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>By 2030.</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F14, F18, F23.2</i></p>					

<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>					
Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
5.1 We will fully participate in the review of the Resource and Waste Strategy for Devon and Torbay, and actively promote its aims to minimise the waste we create, to reduce the impact of resource and waste management on climate change by tailoring operations to reduce the waste carbon footprint, and to seek to preserve natural capital and practice resource efficiency.	<p>Strategy published 2020.</p> <p>Key milestones for 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Roll out of a deposit return scheme – delayed.</li> <li>ii) Legislation for mandatory separate food waste collections – North Devon already have separate food waste collections.</li> <li>iii) Extended producer responsibility for packaging comes into force – delayed.</li> <li>iv) Revision of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2023/24) – outcomes from Environment Act will be reviewed.</li> </ul>	Low	Amber	Environmental Enhancement	Target date to be determined but likely to be a medium-term aspiration
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R2, R6, R13, R15</i>					
Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion

<p>5.2 We will promote and support the development of the circular economy and waste hierarchy and will review and be open to all options available to reduce the carbon footprint of our waste collection activities which may include, but is not limited to, maximising recycling and developing new waste recycling opportunities, promoting the waste hierarchy through review of the residual waste collection programme and exploring options to reduce, reuse and repair.</p>	<p>The Environment Act will help the transition to a more circular economy, incentivising people to recycle more, encouraging businesses to create sustainable packaging, making household recycling easier and stopping the export of polluting plastic waste to developing countries.</p> <p>A ban on single-use plastic cutlery and plates will be introduced in England in October 2023.</p> <p>We have installed a 'BinForGreenSeas' at Ilfracombe Harbour through an award from the GreenSeas Trust, enabling plastic bottles to be collected for recycling. We are also installing 3 new bottle/can recycling bins.</p> <p>We collect plastics from the fishing industry at Ilfracombe Harbour and through Odyssey this has been reprocessed in Devon and mixed with other waste plastics to produce a new pathway around the harbour.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>No date set</p>
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*This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R1, R7, F23.5*

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>5.3 We will work with Plastic Free North Devon to support delivery of their Strategy.</p>	<p>In 2022 we partnered with Plastic Free North Devon and Torridge District Council to develop advice on how to have a green Jubilee celebration. We ran this campaign again for the King's Coronation in 2023.</p> <p>We worked with Plastic Free North Devon, Parkdean Resorts and Devon County Council to run a Clean Devon campaign at Croyde beach in May 2023.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>Target dates to be determined</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C4, R1</i></p>					

<b>The Council</b>					
<b>Commitment</b>		<b>CO2 Potential Saving for NDC</b>	<b>Project RAG Status</b>	<b>Lead Department(s)</b>	<b>Due for Completion</b>
6.0 We will carry out an annual review of our carbon plan and will be transparent about our direction of travel, achievements and challenges in meeting our stated ambitions. This will be reported on annually to Full Council and is part of our wider commitment to making our climate and biodiversity ambitions central to the governance and operations of the Council.	2023 is our first annual review of our carbon plan.	Low but this is the basis of our understanding of progress against our stated carbon target.	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Annually

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.1 We will develop and approve a sustainable procurement policy to incorporate sustainability, the environment and corporate social responsibility into our financial procedures. We will guide and support smaller businesses who work with us to meet these ambitions. We will regularly review our sustainable procurement policy application and weighting to further develop this approach to maintain continual improvement and encouragement of the most sustainable suppliers to the Council.</p>	<p>Policy project yet to start due to expected update to the Procurement Bill, likely not to receive Royal assent until summer 2023.</p>	<p>Low due to our carbon accounting process currently used</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>Possibly 2024 following review of legislation and lead in time.</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R19</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.2 We will integrate carbon, environmental and biodiversity ambitions into all our capital projects and ensure that stated standards and targets in these areas are included into those projects.</p>	<p>We will review how this is working as part of a wider review of how carbon, environment and biodiversity are addressed through our project management and Committee processes</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement/Finance</p>	<p>Q4 23/24</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R19</i></p>					
<p>6.4 We will carry out a full audit of the Council's carbon footprint to current Government guidance, ensuring parity of scope with Torridge District Council to provide future opportunities for comparing performance and best practice, in order to drive change and improvements across both Authorities.</p>	<p>2021 and 2022 reported, and the 2023 update will be available autumn 2023.</p>	<p>Low but this is the basis of our understanding of progress against our stated carbon target.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Environmental Enhancement</p>	<p>Annually</p>

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.5 We will review consumables purchased and used by the Authority and will seek to move to environmentally positive options. This will include areas such as cleaning materials, stationary usage, tools and machinery.</p>	<p>Consumables will be reviewed as contracts are renewed.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>Target date to be determined but likely to be a medium-term aspiration</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R11</i></p>					



Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.6 We will support staff and members to reduce their carbon footprints by facilitating hybrid working models that support elements of home working and mobile working practices and promoting sustainable transport options such as mileage reduction methods, developing or promoting the use of electric and ultra-low emission vehicles for business purposes and encouraging cycling, walking, car sharing and public transport.</p>	<p>NDC have a flexible working policy, and the majority of staff able to work flexibly take advantage of this.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: T4, T7, T26</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.7 We will review our treasury management policy and resources to determine feasibility of divestment and NDC including and developing ethical investment vehicles within its portfolio.</p>	<p>Our Capital Strategy for 23/24, approved by Full Council in Feb 23, considered Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance investments. We have invested in sustainable alternative such as the Standard Chartered Bank Sustainable Fixed Term deposit.</p> <p>Pensions fall to DCC, and their commitment to a net zero portfolio is given <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>Treasury Management Strategy reviewed on an annual basis.</p>

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.8 We will develop and maintain a communications plan integrated with all departments across the Council to showcase the work of the Authority in leading the response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. This will include a community facing webpage of information, support and resources, as well as a staff and Member facing information source to internally promote our plans and achievements</p> <p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C4</i></p>	<p>We have a communications plan in place.</p> <p>Website has community facing pages.</p>	Low	Green	Customer Focus	<p>Summer 2022</p> <p>No date set</p>
<p>6.9 We will encourage staff participation in our carbon ambitions by including 'green' idea generation through training and the corporate appraisal process.</p>	<p>Currently the appraisal system does not support the inclusion of these matters but we will keep this under review.</p> <p>An online climate change training module for officers and members was launched in Dec 2022.</p>	Low	Green	Organisational development	Staff training programme to be delivered by end 2022.

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>6.11 We will support members on their role in championing, influencing and implementing positive climate change and biodiversity measures within NDC and the wider communities they represent.</p>	<p>The Member Climate Action Team provides strategic input and oversight into a range of areas and reports their recommendations to S&amp;R Committee.</p> <p>Expert speakers on a range of environmental matters report to various committees.</p> <p>An online climate change training module for officers and members was launched in Dec 2022.</p> <p>Following election of new Councillors in May 2023 we are holding a number of 'climate' site visits in the area.</p> <p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C4</i></p>	High	Ongoing	Environmental Enhancement	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Member training programme to be delivered by end of 2022.</p>
<p>6.12 We will seek to improve the quality and extent of the data in our carbon footprint, particularly for Scope 3 emissions.</p>	<p>Ongoing improvement in data quality and inputs.</p>	Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Ongoing

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
6.13 We will lobby Government and local providers to ensure grid capacity in northern Devon supports our low carbon ambitions.	Ongoing discussions with National Grid.  We will develop a Devon Area Energy Plan with partners.	Low	Green	Member lead	Ongoing
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: E8</i>					
6.14 We will develop an offsetting strategy.	New action for 2023	Medium	Green	Environmental Enhancement	2023
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F18</i>					
<b>Our Communities</b>					
Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
7.0 We will support communities in adapting to climate change, sustainability and carbon reduction in community and emergency plans.	We are working with partners to deliver an Adaptation Strategy for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.	Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Ongoing

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>7.1 We will support our towns, parishes and communities with information and support on carbon cutting and biodiversity enhancing projects, funding and opportunities. We will promote the development of local schemes around tree planting, allotments, community gardens and orchard provision.</p>	<p>We run a series of volunteer events and schools education days at Yeo Valley woodland, Barnstaple and Bicclescombe Park, Ilfracombe.</p> <p>We also provide advice on waste and recycling to schools, at events etc</p> <p>Sustainability &amp; Climate Officer attends talks, community events, energy fairs etc as required.</p>	Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Ongoing
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C2, C3, R1</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>7.2 We will support households experiencing fuel poverty by working with partners to promote and implement energy efficiency measures through the adoption of a fuel poverty strategy. This will develop a multi-agency approach to tackling fuel poverty in the district from maximising leverage of existing options to creating enhanced services to residents on energy efficiency/ money management advice and retrofit options.</p>	<p>Fuel Poverty group for Northern Devon under review to ensure it's still fit for purpose.</p> <p>Progress with grant schemes:  LAD2 – completed  Sustainable Warmth (1) LAD3 – installations to be completed by September 2023  (2) HUG1 – installations to be completed by end June 2023  HUG2 – approx.100 transitioned from HUG1 into HUG2 and recently launched for applications <u>Home Upgrade Grant 2 - Energy Saving Devon</u></p> <p>NDC went live 1<sup>st</sup> February with ECO Flex (route 1 only) and to date have approved 26 cases. We aim to include route 3 NHS referrals asap.</p>	Low	Green	Planning, Housing and Health	Ongoing

	<p>Promotion of Lendology schemes in 2023 to support wider schemes - Various media campaigns and event in Green Lanes (28<sup>th</sup> February &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> March) to promote Empty Homes Awareness Week.</p> <p>New Energy Saving Devon website launched to promote home energy efficiency to owners, landlords and tenants.  <a href="#">Home - Energy Saving Devon</a></p> <p>NDC have an Energy Efficiency grants &amp; loan webpage (updated as appropriate)</p> <p>NDC commissioned 361 Energy to provide a home energy service. The service was from October 2021 for 3 years for the client groups, in the following priority order: i) Residents who have applied for a Disabled Facilities Grant. ii) Homeless applicants who have been supported to move into private rented accommodation. iii) Residents in receipt of state benefits in relation to Affordable Warmth Criteria. iv) Residents</p>				
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	<p>that meet the criteria in North Devon Council's Statement of Intent. v) Residents with a low household income that live in a property with high running costs (this can be determined via a fuel poverty assessment).</p> <p>The advice would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Behaviour tips</li> <li>ii) Fabric measures</li> <li>iii) Heating</li> <li>iv) Funding</li> <li>v) Fuel switching</li> <li>vi) Tariff switching</li> <li>vii) Renewable energy</li> </ul> <p>For 2022- 23, there have been 110 households referred with an overall financial benefit to them of £78,141.</p>				
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: B2, B6</i>					
7.3 We will develop guidance for supporting and promoting sustainable events through licensing function and North Devon's Safety Advisory Group.	Guidance published 2022.	Low	Green	Planning, Housing and Health	Summer 2022
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: C2</i>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
<p>7.4 We will seek opportunities for developing a low carbon economy, promotion of green entrepreneurship and investment through our new Economic Strategy. We will provide businesses with information and support on energy generation, improving energy efficiency and reducing their own carbon footprint. We will support North Devon employers, communities and organisations in declaring their own Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies and developing action plans. We will work with Petroc and support local schools to maximise opportunities for the next generation in our new green future.</p>	<p>We are partners in a Green Economy Group for northern Devon which will provide advice and support for businesses interested in sustainability and regeneration. This includes the Decarbonise Devon project, <a href="https://devonenergycic.co.uk/our-projects/decarbonise-devon/">https://devonenergycic.co.uk/our-projects/decarbonise-devon/</a></p> <p>Development of Floating Offshore Wind projects in the Celtic Sea offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to develop a green, high tech economy in northern Devon. We are working with Petroc to develop courses enabling young people and adults to obtain qualifications enabling them to access these jobs.</p>	Low	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	Ongoing
<p><i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: R3, R22</i></p>					

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
7.5 We will promote shopping local, promoting farmers markets, direct fish sales and local green start-ups and develop the local green economy and economic generation by pursuing opportunities, funding and seeking cooperation to take full advantage of opportunities.	We are delivering this in Barnstaple through our Future High Street Fund project and ongoing town centre management.	Low	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	Ongoing
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F1, F1.1, F1.2</i>					
7.7 We will support our farmers and the agricultural industry to produce more sustainable food.	North Devon+ are supporting the agricultural sector to understand the changing funding landscape and biodiversity requirements.	Low	Green	Place, Property & Regeneration	Ongoing
<i>This action links to the following Devon Carbon Plan actions: F9, F19</i>					
7.8 We will work with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to deliver actions enabling Devon to become net zero carbon by 2050.	New action in 2023.	Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Ongoing

Commitment		CO2 Potential Saving for NDC	Project RAG Status	Lead Department(s)	Due for Completion
7.8 We will work with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to deliver actions enabling Devon to adapt to climate change.	New action in 2023.	Low	Green	Environmental Enhancement	Ongoing